

Paseure Passages

are an ongoing series of writings dealing with my relationship to the installation "Paseure." Throughout the development and life of the piece I have experienced a variety of feelings, thoughts, and emotions never felt before. These writings are about those experiences as they happened. Although no editing or revisions have been made of the original writing, a series of passages have been written (in plain text) throughout the entire book that contain my reflections and thoughts concerning the original text (written in scripted text). Since the afterthoughts incorporated with the original text can seem disjunctive you may want to read through the original writings first and then go back and read the reflections upon them. These writings will continue for an indefinite amount of time and are available upon request.

October 25, 1991

my midterm critic went pretty well. i'm writing a little bit after the fact right now for a variety of reasons. too many things have happened lately for me to even think about writing things down. i guess i just need to write it down now because everything that has happened has been so important to me. i wish i wasn't writing this on the computer right now, handwriting would seem so much more personal, but this is the best and easiest way for me to put down my thoughts. it seems strange that documenting or writing about such a natural and organic piece on the computer would be easier, but it is. Oh well. what was i saying... oh, i know, there have been a lot of changes in my life since this project began and i really don't know where to start. i didn't document the first part of my project for various reasons. one is laziness. i've never thought of documenting as very important and even now i still have questions about how important what i'm doing now is to me. i'm sort of worried that i will end up overrationalizing the situation and explaining something that really can't be explained.

After writing this over the course of 2 months I think that what I've been doing is extremely important to me. Like I said before, documentation was never really important to me but at least in this piece it was very important. These writings have served as a kind of meditation and reflective period for me concerning my conscious/unconscious, religion, spiritual well being, relationship to my environments, the plants and the list goes on and on. The spirit and life that I have experienced throughout these pages are special to me. I realize that I can never truly share those experiences with other, I feel as though I need to set them free and to let others have a small glimpse of what is running through my head as I created Paseure.

i think i will just start with what is most prevalent in my mind right now. this piece has stirred up and created an incredible range of emotions and feeling that i really wasn't prepared to deal with. probably the greatest feeling and experience for me was "life." however corny or strange it may seem the experience of creating life out of the most dismal conditions and circumstances really blew me away. the first time i noticed it was one night before i went to bed. i had planted a little test box in a round tupperware container. i put some seed in it and about 1 inch of soil and only watered it once. i also at the same time, planted some seed in a cardboard box with about 1/4 in of soil and only watered it once. after about a week just before i went to bed as i was saying, i walked into the planting room and saw all of this life come out of nowhere. it had grown about 3 1/2 inches and almost immediately i felt really great. not trying to be cliché, it was a realization that no matter how dismal and dark the world can get, there is a will for life that is beyond our

comprehension. i guess that is what i am still most amazed by. and that has to do a lot with why i did the piece.

i'll stray off the track a bit now and talk a bit about the making of the piece in general. i was really dumbfounded by how naturally and smoothly the whole thing has gone. when i work on a piece there are almost always quite a few complications and problems that i know will happen or have the potential to happen. this one (from the start) appeared to be one that would totally fall apart given all of the potentials for disaster. for instance, i had never tried to germinate seed in such awkward conditions, i had never experimented with the "power" or "will" of the plants, i planted quite a few seed that i gathered from the wild and had no idea of what i would get, the structure that they sit upon should never have held up that much weight, (i'm guessing that each section weighs as much as 100-150 lbs, so in all probably 1000 lbs), the light that i placed amongst the dry leaves during the critic should have burnt the phot building down, trying to build a box structure to contain the soil in should never have gone so easy and worked out so well, etc. i could go on and on but you get the idea. the piece was very different from my others in that way, and in the sense that everything seemed to come extremely natural and just flowed right along. i still don't understand why it went that way, all i can say is that more than likely it was meant to be. there is more to that story but i won't get into it right now.

Well as you might have guessed, later on in the piece I hit the rough of the storm. I got really worried many times throughout the piece and ended up planting bird and grass seed and bulbs in the piece. I had begun the piece by telling myself that I would just let things happen but I obviously wasn't content enough. Sometimes as much as I would like to believe that I am strong willed, I am not. I didn't really believe in the plants and myself enough to just "let things happen." I'm kind of sad about that but I'm almost glad that I made it through that hurdle of at least admitting it. I really can't truthfully say that I trust myself or the plants totally but i'm a lot more trusting than I was when I started and I know I'm on the right track, I think. I think its just a matter of time before I have complete confidence in myself. That'll be a wonderful time, I hope. Until that time comes I've been enjoying the exploration of my interaction with the plants. I think that I've learned a lot and I've just hit the tip of the iceberg but its a start. I don't think we can ever fully understand nature or ourselves but I think that the very least we can do is live in harmony with it.

This brings me to an important note that I want to express. During my final critic a few people were almost irrate at how I was controlling the life of the plants and not just letting them be in nature and leave them alone. I have a big problem with this but I'm glad that it was said because it made me realize something very important. We really do need to learn how to interact and work with our environment. It seems like so many poeple do just let nature be and this bothers me. I see people all the time that get a plant for Christmas or for a present and say "Well I think its beautiful but it'll just die in my house if I kept it." or "I really don't have much luck with plants, I water them now and then but they still keep dying on me." Is that any excuse? Maybe instead of just giving up, why not listen to their needs, learn a little about them and put a little care into them. I find it really sad when I think about how popular "plastic/artificial" plants have become. I seems like a big cop out. But they justify it by saying "Well at least it won't die on me." If I had just let the piece be in its own environment I wouldn't have learned very much at all. I think that by interacting with the piece and to a certain extent, controlling it helped me learn a lot more about myself and the plants. I think that ultimately we are going to need to know how to interact and realte to our environments. We've gone too long by ignoring its needs and idly sitting by. It's time to experience it more truthfully and learn about its needs, not from a text book or speech but from direct experience. In a way we are already learning soemthing. The ozone hole has already grown to over 4-times the size of the US and has caused a lot of diseases and problems consequently forcing people to look our interaction with the environment a little more closely. That's a hard way to learn such and important lesson.

back to the plants. monday night (two days before crits) i felt very strange. i had only felt that way one other time in my life and it was my freshman year in high school when i had an "experience" with God. all i will say is that during that experience i felt like there was never anything to be afraid of and so surrounded by love and life that i new it was true and i knew what it was all about. sort of like an enlightenment but much more powerful than i could have ever imagined it. anyway monday night i felt like i had a tremendous amount of life welling up inside of me. i only felt that way when i was alone, and when i was alone there would be frequent times when that well would just explode and it would be so powerful that it would surge through my body starting from my center and rush out of my limbs and nerves. it was so intense that i would always lose control of my arms and legs. they would just fly out as if i was just shocked with 100,000 volts of electricity. it was strange how it related to my piece. the piece was partially about how we grow from the center, we spread out but still understand where we came from. the past is always a part of us and it always will be, in more ways than you know. another part was the rebirth process and seeing life come out of death. this was definitely a part of my emotions and the piece. i felt rejuvenated and cleansed. i actually was expecting an experience like the one that happened 6 years ago but i finally realized that the constant welling of life inside of me was the true experience and enlightenment. i guess i was expecting something external rather than internal, but looking back it seems very logical that it would be internal this time. it was so much a part of my concepts and thoughts that i don't know how i had overlooked it. i was working with the plants that night and placing the photographs on top of them. they had really started to take off and this was probably the start of my amazement regarding them. i remember 1 week before (which was a few days after i had planted them) that i was so paranoid that they weren't going to germinate and grow (even though i had planted about 15-20 pounds of seeds in them. slowly, as they began to grow that disappated. now i forgot what i was talking about. i hate it when that happens.

How many times do we expect miracles and hope for those "moments" in our lives when all along they are right in front of us. Maybe just think about all the beauty and incredible life that is right in front of you waiting for your presense and spirit to make it whole.

well, anyway onto tuesday. the day went ok, i felt really rushed and didn't know if i would get everything set up at all. i hadn't done the sound, and had to gather all the leaves, take a test in psych, haul all of the structures and boxes to school, finish writing the quotes and influences paper that i had decided to include and had to set it all up. it went amazingly well. the only problem i had was all of the labor in moving the work. i was and still am pretty out of shape and my body didn't like me too well that evening. i set everything up and it all went quite well. i was worried about one of the tree structures since it didn't seem as sturdy as i wanted it so i went back home and got another brace for it. i probalby could have made it but i was paranoid again. i had never seen all of the pieces together at all and when i was finally finished i was somewhat pleased but still pretty unfeeling about it all. i just didn't know what to think. i wasn't in my "run around everywhere with my head cut off moods" but was just sort of languid and mellow. looking back i think this was where my emotions and feelings began to change. but of course i had no idea of what was to come.

what did come was something that turned me upsidedown. it really hit me during the critic and especially afterwards. it was basically a feeling of emptiness. the plants had in a sense become an entity all of there own. i felt like, ok, i had done this piece, now what do i do. that kept pursuing me and the feeling intensified. i started feeling like this was what i was here to do, and now it is done. i felt and still feel somewhat like the plants would really make it ok on there own. they didn't really need me anymore. i felt a little resentment towards them like, ok, i gave you life, and i gave you this place to flourish, now what have i got out fo it. a good friend thought that maybe what my gift was, was that fleeting experience of life that i had on monday. however short it was, it was still something that i never would have gotten otherwise. anyway, my emotions really got wierd. i felt later like i was going to die, literally. i felt like those dam plants

had taken all of the life out of me and now i was so empty and void of that life that i once possessed. i became scared of dying and scared of going anywhere for fear that something would happen and i would die. i also felt like if i stayed still i would also be in danger. that nothing i could do was going to keep me from dying. it was very scary. almost like a total reversal from monday night when i wasn't scared at all and would welcome the lord if he came down and took me away with him. just thinking about it and sitting here writing about it, i have become very numb and depressed. even though i was pretty exhausted, physically and mentally, i needed to talk about it and resolve the dilemma. i hated those feelings and i didn't just want to just simply sleep them off. that wasn't going to make it go away. someone during the critic made a very profound statement. i laughed and shrugged it off at the time but looking back later in the day it really hit me and knocked me down. he basically said (in a very serious voice) "this piece was going to affect my entire life." it really has affected my life, and i really don't think i will every be the same. and not just in a minor way, the piece really has and still is a major part of my life. i have no doubt that 25 or 50 years from now, i will still remember this. i hope others are affected by it as well.

Two and a half months later the piece is still influencing me a great deal and playing a major part in my life. I can't help but think about a quote that was taken from a lady in Russia on a show about the era of Gorbachev. I can't remember the exact quote but it went something like this: "The times I had while Gorbachev was in power were probably the ones that I will remember the most and always treasure, they were the best and worst times of my life." I feel similar in regard to my experiences with Pasure.

i mentioned during the critic that when the plants go to seed, i was going to take some of the seed and give a little packet to everyone that goes to see it. maybe they will then experience a little bit of that incredible will, and the power and tremendous life within those plants. i'm sure each seed will still contain a small portion of that life that it took from me. this is part of what i wanted to say through the piece, that you can never escape the past or say that you have no relation to any part of it. the past survives and lives on in everything. you may want to refer to the passage from vivekanada that i may have included in this book or article or whatever it may turn out to be.

sitting here i still am amazed as i think about the will of the plants to survive and grow. maybe that is one of the things that i feel like i have lost. part of my will and spirit. or maybe it was simply transferred into something better. anyway i know that i am a part of them and they are a part of me, as we all are. that spirit can be so strong. the night before critic i reglued the photos back onto the structure since during the moving process they had come loose and by the will of the plants as well. everything was firmly attached. when i came in the next day. (within 8 hours) they had begun to assert their strength. they had pushed all of the loose in some way or fashion. they were and still are very strong. i walked by the room where i am storing them until the opening in the relay zone and was blown away again. even though i hadn't watered them in 4 days and had paid no attention to them since the critic they had pushed up half of the photos, some as much as 3 inches. in a way i am almost intimidated by them, in the sense of thinking "what have i created.?" i have thoughts of hatred towards them, and sometimes want to kill them, but they are so much a part of me that, it would almost be suicide. well, the probable turn out is that they live truly live on forever, if not physically, then spiritually in all the people they touch and all the people they don't. they are a part of everyone in some form or fashion.

time to go to the printmaking closing and maybe go visit the plants and bring them a little light and water. i'm sure our relationship will keep changing as time goes by.

One thing I've found or come to realize is that all of life is in a constant state of change. Maybe that's part of why photography is such an intriguing thing for so many people. It allows people to "stop" time and reflect upon that one particular moment. It's an interesting thing

and I think that reflection from time to time is important but one thing I also have come to realize is that just because we may "fix" a problem at a given moment in time, it doesn't make everything right. I see so many people doing something good for the environment and then saying, ok, now everything will be alright. We sometimes forget that we must always keep adapting and changing along with our environments.

October 28, 1991

looking up at the last text i wrote last friday, i can see where i was on the right track when I said, i'm sure our relationship will keep changing as time goes by. I went in, sort of out of guilt to see how the plants were doing last night. they do need me. i hadn't watered them in about a week, and they were showing it. the larger plants had survived ok, but for the small seedlings that were just beginning to sprout, it was lights out for them. i didn't water them for so long because after last wednesday i sort of felt like they really didn't need me anymore, but i can really see now how they do. i have been thinking about it and i am most definitely a part of those plants and they are a part of me, as well as everyone else to a smaller extent. after realizing that some of them had died, i felt as though part of me had died too. i pretty much deliberately hurt them, by neglect and in a sense i hurt myself as well. i think there is a lot to be said about that in terms of the earth and life in general, but that is something for you to realize yourself.

i don't want to kill the plants anymore. that would be suicide. i want them to grow forever. in my concept of the piece, i had talked about and thought about how the past is always a part of us and that we can never deny it. we can say that the whole past is not a part of us, but in essence it still really is. i can say that but it is still hard to accept it and feel comfort in it. understanding that when you die, your life lives on both spiritually and physically in terms of everything that you touched or interacted with upon earth, is something that takes time. it seems as though the problem may lie with in dealing with the death of those things or events around me. although this is true, i think i'm beginning to see the presense of dead things or the past exerting it's influence upon me more and more, rather than just looking for how things in the present are affecting me. i think i may plant a few tree sprouts in the midst of the rest of the plants. right now, they are somewhat short term plants. maybe a year or two. there will still be plants growing 5 years from now, but it will be plants that have been sown from the plants that are there now. in other words, the plants will be generations down the road, and i think that if i planted a few tree sprouts or something more long-term it might add a nice contrast between the constant rejuvenation of life and death and more of a "tree-o-life" figure to act as sort of an overseeing being. we'll see.

I never did plant the tree. I'm not quite sure why though. It may be that I was lazy or just didn't feel like it. I have a feeling that it may have been a time when I felt that I would just let things evolve on their own. It could be that I felt like I would be replaced if there was a tree acting as the "overseer." Maybe sometime I'll be able to get over that and finally plant it.

among other things, i have also been thinking about my relationship with the plants on a psychological level. i have come up with a variety of explanations for why they have affected me and the different ways our relationship can be termed, but i'm still not sure. and i don't know if i really need to know. they represent my shadow/alter-ego, or my persona, or some freudian sexual nonsense, or a mothering figure, etc., but right now it really doesn't matter to me. what exists is a spiritual relationship however it may be termed, and that's really all the farther i feel like examining it right now. so there

I think that at the time I wouldn't be able to handle having things be uncovered and explain my darker side and have it be revealed to me. I think I'm in a position now where I can do that and not feel ashamed, guilty, or scared about finding out what lies inside of me. There seems to be a cleansing notion running through this process. I've noticed that I've been gradually "sterilizing" everything around me and myself. I came back to Kansas City last

night and remembered how before I left the previous weekend I was frantically cleaning and striping everything in my room. I guess I go through those stages from time to time but something different has come about. I've found myself more spiritually and mentally going through my thoughts, beliefs, and relationships and reexamining everything just like I am now with this book. I guess from time to time that's necessary to do in order to move on with things. What I've found out about myself I really can't say right now since I'm still sorting things out in my mind. It takes time.

as far as the documentation, it's been more and more important to me lately. today during crits i was looking at steve mingle's piece and really got kind of nostalgic and sentimental. he documented, if that's the right term for it, a three week vacation with some friends and i guess that i enjoyed looking at the piece as a sort of visual representation or memory of the trip. i guess i have been relying on my memory a little too much lately, partially because i get depressed when i look back on old times and didn't want to get depressed like that, but at the same time, i want to be able to remember if i choose to. i guess what it all comes down to is that we are all linked with the past, but sometimes to realize it or remember our past we need at times, some icon or stimulant to pop open the seal we sometimes place on it.

October 31, 1991

Well, its halloween and things are still the same. the plants are growing ok but the bulbs that i planted still haven't come up. i peeked inside of one of them and found that they had rotted and started to decay. i really don't mind the moss, and decay that much. it is just as much part of the process as anything. thinking about how i didn't water them after crits has me a little confused. i'm not sure whether it was me that caused them to die or if it was a natural process since there were so many of them and they all couldn't survive. i have a feeling it was a combination of both. the vines are really stretching for the light, so much that they have grown very long and string-like. i almost feel that if i touched them they would die. they're fragility is pretty incredible, yet if the will is there they will search out and conquer. i'm going to plant some more seed in the top portion of them and guide them along so that they feel comfortable growing through the van-dyke/sunprint, as well as plant some more bulbs a see what happens.

it is kind of ironic. i took such great care in planting and forcing the bulbs and they didn't come up, yet the materials that i let grow more naturally are now flourishing and doing just fine. i guess that's a lesson to be learned.

back to what i was previously talking about. like i said, i'm going to plant some more seed on the surface of the forms, since i killed a lot of them thorough a combination of non-hydro fuelization and stupidity. i don't think it is all my fault though. i noticed that a lot of them could have grown directly through the sunprint, even though it may be the fastest route to the light, but most of them chose to go around the photos. it's almost as if they knew that the sunprint was a symbol of their ancestry and their past and they didn't want to destroy it but hold it and cuddle it in their arms. i thought about it and have come up with a thousand different technical reasons why they are doing what they are doing but none of those reasons compares to the spiritual presence and rays that they seem to be giving off. call me crazy, call me stupid, even call me Don Ho, but that's the way it is to me.

I guess what seems like what I wanted to say there is that for all the material/superficial/rational things we have to work with and experience, the spirit and life within everything is something that is seems to be very important to me right now.

the spe conference is next week and the plants will be in the show. i wish they would look more presentable for the event but i really can't tell them how they should dress for the occasion. they simply seem to have an innocence and rawness of beauty that can't be denied. i haven't thought about it yet, but i should

dress them up for halloween. that might be kind of interesting. they could masquerade as a forest or desert or oil field or something like that. it's kind of corny but i almost feel like altering their appearance from time to time as a comical relief. nothing that would physically hurt them or damage them but just some minor modifications. a friend and i used to do this sort of thing to another friend's VW Bug over the course of a few years. once we made a 15ft x 75ft flyswatter and placed it on top of the bug during the night. another time, we placed a 15ft by 7in (diameter) needle through the middle of it as if it were in a bug collection for someone's science project. if i was in science at the time i probably would've turned it in. well, there's lots more but that's enough for now. i've wanted to do the same thing to a stupid classical sculpture of Thomas Hart Benton on campus. i have nothing against him personally, just the person who made the sculpture. i wonder if others will feel the same way about the plants in a few years. will they look at it and think it was non-sense. will they see them as "beings" like all life should be looked at, or will they just talk about it as some useless organic shit. only time will tell.

Halloween is an interesting time. We all put on masks and costumes and yet we seem to reveal our most personal sides while we have them on. I guess it is a time for our inner self and the dark side to emerge and explore the world while under some guidance by our ego. It seems like my wanting to dress the plants up was almost a cry for help from my shadow saying that it wanted to get out and love life too.

i finished the "voyage" video today. for some reason i've been trying to relate the video to the plants but don't know why. maybe because the video was something that preceeded the plants and if i hadn't been involved in the video i probably wouldn't have done the plants. it's funny how that works and how we fail to notice it in our everyday lives. they are basically different but have some strong similarities. i guess the video was like a learning process for me. it helped me released some of the feelings of death, rebirth, the soul, etc. that were stuck inside of me over the summer. it's also funny how i could really finish the video or bring it to some point of completion, that I was happy with, until i had created the plants. i spent three nights editing it and it all seemed to fall together similar to how the plants came about. i think that before i grew the plants, i was so involved with death and destruction (mentally) that i didn't really see an outlet, or as cliché artists put it "the light at the end of the tunnel." shit i hate some clichés, even though they fit perfectly. anyway, i think the plants showed me that light and they helped me learn about birth and how wonderful it is, life. i guess, now after thinking about it, the video was a part of the plants too, and vice-versa, as all things are.

November 3, 1991

Well, there's a lot to say today but that's ok, cause it's not the middle of the day, and i'm not lying in the hay. sorry, it seems that i got off on a tangent, (like Dewana Jones) does on occasion.

i transported the plants and their trusty companions, to the student gallery for the spe show. they really didn't do too well at all. a lot of them were crushed, broken, crucified during the move. i feel like a family member, waiting to see if the injured relative makes it out of the coma, or out of intensive care. they are really weak right now, and i know a lot of them won't make it, but hopefully the majority of them will pull through. i guess i do see it in medical terms, where the plants represent the whole person and the amount of the plants that die tell you how affected the person will be after they recover. i'm just worried that my plants will never make it out of the coma, and be a vegetable the rest of their lives where they can maintain their life, but can no longer flourish or transform into something better, and healthier. i think that they need some psychological help. tommorrow i'm going to take some classical music in for them to listen to, or else some natural sounds.

I never took them some music. Maybe its just as well. Some music does indeed have a good amount of spiritual influence over me but I sometimes forget how wonderful and equally

moving silence can be. As I think about it, it concerns me when I think of how awfully we have cluttered the air with any sound we choose to make. How sorry I feel for all the environments that have been invaded by mostly unwanted noise. It seems ironic that even in our own spaces we have to go to great lengths to construct a room unaffected by outside noise. I don't want to make a case that says that noise is bad but some interesting things can happen when you are in those rooms, such as hearing your heartbeat or the sound of yourself breathing, etc., but none the less, the absurdity of having to build something like that bothers me. I think that we have gotten too used to the amount of noise that we encounter everyday and I think that we need to reexamine this aspect of our lives better. I don't have many solutions but the least we can do is acknowledge sound as a more integral part of our lives and think about it in terms of how we relate to each other and our environments.

but if i give them natural sounds then one of two things might happen. Either they will respond well and the sounds will reinforce them or they will get depressed and feel sorrow because their archetypal instincts recognize the sounds and want to be in the environment that their parent plants came from. sort of like being transported to another planet and then seeing what your life could have been like if you stayed there and feeling that sense of homesickness that i myself have been feeling lately. i wish they knew that someday they might be put in that environment, provided it is still around by the time they grow up to the point where they can make it on their own in the wild.

anyway, they need some mental help. i think that they need to know that someone cares for them. lately i think they've been treated like some inanimate and lifeless object that is meant purely for others enjoyment. just like how we treat the earth, in the sense that we do use it for our own pleasure and we don't treat it as if it had feelings, or even life at all. plants are people too. i want the plants to fight back and tell us about their feelings. in a way, the earth has done that and still is trying to tell us things. the problem is that we are too lazy to make an attempt to understand it and communicate with it. that's not the only problem by any stoke of the imagination, but it's a start. i love the commercial on tv where this woman says, "i don't have economic power and i don't have political power, but i have energy..." i don't remember the very last part, but you get the idea. well i'm off on a tangent again. oh well. the plants are being treated as objects for peoples enjoyment and amusement and that concerns me. i have put them in this foreign space where people will come to stare at them as if they were something unusual. look outside the window dammit, there is life all around you. take note of it. well, there's more to the piece that people want to see. i guess what i don't like is how i have given in to peoples demands and made them conform to the surroundings. i guess that's because it's the easiest thing to do. for instance, would you normally plant a house around a tree or would you just cut the tree down to make space for the house to fit. i would love to see a community where they tried there best to not damage the environment. i understand that you can only go so far, but wouldn't it be so incredibly interesting if a whole community was built in the middle of a forest without cutting any trees down. there would be houses with trees growing through them, trees with houses molded around their bodies. it would seem so much more practical anyway. in the summer it you would have fresh air, lots of shade to keep the house cool, a more natural water supply, not so dependent on water-towers. in the winter the trees would be bare and the sun would shine in through the windows warming the house, etc. yet another tangent. but it was a good one.

A lady approached me at the opening of the SPE conference and made reference to the above passage and wanted to talk to me more about it. I don't know how she felt but I think I confused myself more than anything. At that time I think I really didn't know exactly what I thought but now I think that I don't mind so much putting the piece in a gallery space. I think that each time I put it up it forces me to deal with another set of circumstances that are always drastically different. It forces me to learn how to help keep life alive when the circumstances don't call for it. I hope that in the future more people learn to adapt better to the environment instead of hoping that it will adapt on its own, to us. We need it just as much as it needs us.

i wish i could have put up the whole installation where people entered into the plants space and not a place like it is now where the plants are in a "gallery" space. yet another compromise and example of conformity. i think though that the plants will still exert their influence on people. one thing that the other pieces can do well is create a definite smell. someone noted that anyone with allergies is going to have an interested time in the space. almost everyone, has mentioned to me how the piece smells. i don't see it as a bad smell like everyone else does, mainly because i know that the majority of the odors are from the dead plants and those smells are part of the death and rebirth process that the piece is mainly about. the dead plants are in a sense adding their life to the soil in hopes that new life can flourish from its death. how many times do we praise people who give their life for another. i just deleted a part of this passage because the thought disturbed me too much and i think it is also something that everyone must realize for themselves, so i'm not going to leave it in. think to yourself, how you relate.

november 4, 1991

well the plants didn't do so well last night. there are a few survivors but most of them will definitely not make it. i'm at a point now where i need to totally rethink everything and find out exactly what i need to do to keep the plants alive. i realize now that i really didn't think things through enough and didn't take into consideration all the other elements involved in a piece like this. i tried to make the piece conform to the space and didn't allow any margin of error for either. i didn't let the space flex a little to accomodate the piece and i didn't change the piece to help it to survive. i have really killed the spirit of the plants and i really need their forgiveness. patrick wants me to incorporate plants from the outside into the piece. i have some reservations about this and it is something that i have been thinking about myself lately anyway. i think if i added plants from other environments to the piece along with the seed that has been planted, it might lose some of its power and feel disowned. like i had no faith in the plants and this is my answer. i'm not sure exactly what i will do but i have a feeling that the answer will come at the end of this passage.

i think that the plants would grow quite well on their own as they started to until i covered them up and punished them after the critic. i know that i will replant seed within them and try to get some new germination to build the rest of the piece upon. the problem is that i need to make sure that the environment that they will be placed in is right for them. i have been thinking about creating an environment where birds, fish, insects (although i hate them), and the plants would survive together, but i'm not sure if that is what it needs, or even if that is the right direction to go with them.

I thought about adding the birds, fish, insects, etc., but as it turns out I didn't really need to. After awhile there were hoards of insects flying around and there also ended up being a group of mice that found a temporary habitat to play in. Today I just put up the bottom forms at the CSPS gallery and the cats that roam the building found an instant playground. It seems that I have among other things created a habitat for a variety of forms of life. After putting a light in the center of the piece, Mel mentioned that the two cats had cuddled up around it together. He said it was one of the few times he had seen them spend a little time together in a small space. I like that.

I don't know if I've mentioned it but I plan on putting the piece outdoors at some point and it'll be interesting to see just what kind of animals take shelter in it as well as how those animals might change the piece by their interaction with it.

i was just reading some passages from "tales from topographic oceans" by steve howe and jon anderson. it was quite enlightening and i'd like to study it some more but i don't have enough time right now. it's funny how you can read something, and then a week later you can read the same thing over again and its totally different. sort of like the plants. they were doing very well, 4 days ago. now there's almost nothing left but their tattered remains and ruins. I guess that is as much a part of the piece as anything. the ruins of the

plants acting as a metaphor or myth for people to mentally reconstruct and try to determine what was there before. the soil should be quite rich now, with micro-biotic cultures and bugs and compost and nutrients left from the plants before. yet there are some plants still living who are doing quite well and give a glimpse of what was there and what was to become. it reminds me of the minoan culture that was wiped out by a huge tidal wave caused by a volcano hundreds of miles away, things were preserved and even though there are ruins there are still parts of the villages that are thriving and give us a taste of the culture no matter how small that taste is.

One thing I have to say here is that we can always retrace our history and find out interesting things about our ancestors but I guess sometimes I forget that we can see our ancestors in ourselves. They are what made me and to some extent determined a part of my life. And they will always be with me and with my children as I become an ancestor myself.

maybe the plants won't feel disowned, but instead like there is someone who cares and wants to see them survive. if i put plants that are healthy into the piece then the surroundings and nature of the system will hopefully provide an environment where they can live. if i don't then the ones that are in there might not make it. thinking about it now, i believe that i have approached it in the wrong way, possibly. i've been trying to get these plants to grow on their own without taking into consideration any type of unity between species of plants. it would seem that we all need each other to survive and we need companions and mentors to look up to for support and rely on. i think that the plants may know this already and have been trying to tell me it but i simply haven't been listening. i felt really guilty this morning because i didn't stay up with them last night to help them make it through the storm. maybe the other plants will be able to be there for the seedlings and smaller plants when i can't.. they could function as the gatekeeper, and guardian of their souls and spirits. sort of like bodyguards in a way.

now onto the next problem. so they have a guardian and series of mentors to keep watch over them. just as i'm sure the guardians will learn from the smaller plants. now i need to create an environment where they can survive and be provided with the staples of food that they need. the main thing that comes to mind is a greenhouse tent that will keep the air and water with them, but this isn't the proper solution. they need a womb to grow in until they can make it on their own. right now i keep seeing these branches of trees cuddled around them caressing them at night and keeping them warm and dark and in the daytime opening outward as if it were a flower. this might work well. i would like to incorporate the moon cycle and a better sense of time into the piece to give it more of a unity. there needs to be a cycle where the plants call for air moisture and water and vice versa. the ecology calls for the plants to grow and replenish the atmosphere. they need each other to survive. i have provided the plants but not the atmosphere that it needs. i need to listen to them to find out more about what they need and relate to them better. they are dependent upon me and i don't want to let them down. we both need each other. friends have said that i seem really down lately and it seems as though we do indeed need each other both physically and mentally, and spiritually.

i'm not going to let them just wither away. both of our spirits are weak right now and it seems like it is in these times that you and i must call upon our archetypal spirit and body to bring us back to that level of being. i feel quite overwhelmed with emotion and energy right now. i don't know where it came from but i have a feeling that it was indeed both of our inner spirits that can never be diminished that have resurrected us and brought us back. i don't know how the plants feel right now but i would venture to guess that they are going through the same emotions. it may even be that they are the ones who have given me that extra boost of life to get me going again. whatever it may be there is much to be said for the spirit and soul.

November 10, 1991

the spe conference is over now. right now i am really struggling with my feelings concerning the plants and the whole project. the conference brought up a lot of issues and i have been trying to think of what sort of future the plants will have. it's kind of hard to sort out all of the problems and concerns but in this case it is definitely something that must be done.

basically, i got some good comments on my piece and the general impression seemed favorable. the plants weren't at a stage where they weren't engulfing or entering through the sunprints at a good level, so that seemed to be a bit strange for some people, but that was to be expected. I guess it has been awhile since i've written anything and i should probably backtrack for a minute.

the night after i wrote the last passage i created a cove or sheler/womb for the plants with dead branches i liberated from an industrial site nearby. most industrial sites have no need or concern for tree or plants so it was nice to make use of their mess.

i spent all night working on interlacing the womb together and it turned out to be a bigger task than planned but that's ok. the night was pretty nice. kelly was working too and we seemed to both be motivated towards our own projects and it was an exciting night of exploration, growth, and sentimentalism. i even got to see tarzan on tv again.

Its funny how after looking back upon that night, i now find myself in the same situation where both Kelly and I and a new friend are about to embark upon a new situation. it seems like we've all hit another road to travel upon and the joy will come from not so much the end of the journey but all the wonderous things that happen along the way. I hope that in the future we do more installations together. there is something special about working with someone else not knowing where your going or what will come but just enjoying the ride and loving every bit of life you find along the way. the time i spend with a piece, just it and me, is really special sometimes. Nothing can ever come close to replacing it. I have to think of Mary Beth Evelson, I think that's her name, and how she claimed that she talked to the caves that she performed ritualistic meetings with. When I first heard about her i thought that those "experiences" she had were kind of trite or silly but now i really see how powerful they must have been for her.

I think that it is mainly the spirit and life itself that I am talking about here, and i think that it's much greater and more powerful than a lot of people seem to think. Some people have the ability to touch and feel the power of spirit of life everyday and yet so many choose not to. Instead they do just the opposite. They act as if the only life that is worth experiencing is in some bottle or tv show or sexual fantasy. Is it that they are scared of really touching life? Is it that they are afraid that if they do they will loose all control of their emotions and feelings? Is it that if they get too close to anything containing life they feel they will be exposing a side of themselves that they are afraid to see? Could it be that if they know that whatever kind of life they interact with will eventually have to die and leave them? Do they not understand that life doesn't end with death, but continues on and on transforming into different forms? Is it possible that by denying life we are just denying ourselves any enjoyment as a means of punishment for our wrong doings? Well, I think I've just said more about myself and my own insecurities than yours, but that's good. I just wish that more people would take a better look at the life around them and not hate it all so much. I seem to have gotten a little off track, but i know that it was about time for that to come out. Life.

i struggled quite a while with the form, but looking back i think it helped out a lot. it still isn't to the level that i wished to develpe it but that will take work. i think the next time i construct it i would like to create more of a spiral with it, so that it creates a little more dynamic tension. i think the plants would like it as well. the main purpose of the outer structure is to cuddle, warm, and protect the plants and i think i would feel more comfortable if the structure was sort of wrapped around me. when you go to bed do you normally just pull the blankets over you or wrap them around the contours and figure of your body. well, that seems to be the least of my worries right now.

it seems as if i had a great urge to be a mother at that point in time, by cradling and holding my baby, keeping them warm and loving them like a true mother. A lot of times I wish that I could just hold and love something, anything. The human touch is a great thing, and it seems as though a lot of us need to be held as well as hold something else. the notion of the cradle is noticeably still part of the piece, and i still have some urge to work with it. it seems as if my wanting to cradle the piece is simply another means to please my ego and fulfill its needs. how many times do you think "rock-a-by-baby" has been sung?

what i am concerned with is the final home and journey towards the plants resting place or place where they can live without being bothered by gallery onlookers. a place where the viewer will feel like an outsider and the plants will feel like they have a visitor walking amongst them. maybe that is the key to what needs to be done with them right now. it seems like they indeed are on a journey to a foreign home land where they can live their lives. maybe they will take a vacation now and then maybe not. more likely a part of them will take a vacation while the others watch and guard the house. right now it seems as though they need a vessel to travel in. especially after having moved them out of the gallery yet one more time. maybe they would have a better sense of what they are about and purpose.

So what is it all about????? I wonder how many times I have wondered what i was put here for. it seems like a hopeless task to try to find out or say that you know, but i think that each of us has some desire to at least get to a point of contentment and tranquility within ourselves. if i knew, i still wonder whether i would be happy with knowing. maybe the mystery has locked onto something in itself that gives it meaning.

Last night i was driving and thinking about my existence here. I thought about it and i got mad at God for a minute. I said, ok, so what makes you (God) so special that you think you can just put all of us on this earth as some sort of experiment and play with us like were guinea pigs? What gives you the right to torcher and tease us like that? Well he didn't strike me down after i said that so maybe that's a good sign. but i still wonder. What does God think about his own existence? Does he have trouble like we do thinking about what life is all about? Being one of God's little creations I would almost venture a guess and say yes.

I guess this is as good a time as any to tell you about a story. Every once in a while when i was yanger some strange things used to happen to me. It usually happened while i was day dreaming and mowing lawn at the same time. (Not many flowers lived through those times.) I would all of a sudden stop and forget all about who i was, what i was, where i was, and what everything was around me. I would have no preconception of anything, and be back at i guess you could say a very primitive state of mind. I could say things like "you are gene cooper and you are cutting lawn" but none of the meaning in the words would make any sense to me. they were just sounds. I was always scared when these events happened, but i was also always intrigued and wished that i could stay in that trance like mode for a bit longer. I never knew how much time i spent in them, since i really had no conception of it while i was in the trance either. time simply stood still. maybe it was indeed at those moments when i was open to see life in its most spiritually basic form.

i have noticed a definite shift in how i have been talking and thinking about them. it seems as though i am not as close to them as i once was before. i'm not exactly sure why, but i'm sure i will find out. i wonder if they are somewhat discouraged with me and not very happy right now. i don't think it is really that. i think the problem might be that they are in a state of confusion and disillusion. i know i would be, if i were them. i seem to be that way right now anyway. not knowing where things are headed or what is to come. they almost seem to be in a subdued coma. where they are growing but they have no definite light source to grow towards. they need some guidance and i think that i need to be that guidance. i have't really been there for them all the time and i guess that they might have missed me before but may have given

up on me now. i mus'nt let them down. i didn't give them any music, or anything to comfort them aside from the womb. it could be that they are simply content and may know that i am thinking about them, but i still want to spend more time with them and see what's on their minds. from all the different explanations i have just written it would seem that it is more me than them that are confused. but that's no excuse and we do share that link to each other and when i am confused so lies the potential for them to be so as well. maybe it is time for them to help me out. to give me a little guidance and comfort. i keep acting as if they are the helpless ones when they too can give love and comfort.

One short note. La.

another thing that seems to be bothering me lately is religion. i really don't know where to go anymore and i think that it is time for me and the plants to find out.

i gave out the previous passages to people who came to see the plants and it hasn't occurred to me until now that both of us have given a part of ourselves to others. before, i could talk about the plants and myself in a very direct way and now it seems as though we are not as tightly contained as we used to be. parts of both of us are by now all over different parts of the country. it is indeed a strange feeling. almost frightening in the sense that god is most definitely that way as well. he has spread out a part of him into a vast amount of space, much like how the plants and i are right now. i don't feel that way about most other things but for some reason the plants and my "self" in these writings have become something more.

Over the last few days I have been very self conscious of how afraid i am of exposing myself. I think that so many other people have that fear as well. I think that now i am more free and willing to let myself come through. I have begun to tell people things that have never been told. and to some extent i feel as if i'm finally beginning to be really true to myself. It seems as though i'm in a period of cleansing myself and cleaning out all of the musty rusty dusty ghosts and fears that have been locked away inside. I don't necessarily think that i was always simply afraid of letting people see who i really was. i think that instead i was probably just afraid to let myself know about the dark and deep shadows that have traveled around inside of me. I think that this piece has really led me towards that openness. Nature has a funny way of being extremely truthful sometimes, to such an extent that we revolt against it because we feel that we will never reach that level of truthfulness. it seems as we find out a lot about ourselves and God when we look into nature. Maybe its time to do a little more looking and a lot less covering up.

thinking about god, it seems that he is indeed there and the problem lies with what stories and prophets to believe. could it be that christianity, budhism, hinduism, etc. are all partially true and that the combined structures and parts of all of them reveal god and his existence. there are many similarities between religions and i guess i need to search through them to find what my self believes.

another thing that i have been thinking about is the documentation of the project. i really have been thinking hard about this and have come to a suedo conclusion in part. i think that nothing can ever replace or truly represent the experience of exploring and seeing the plants. i don't want to approach the documentation this way at all. i think that if you are going to document something like this you need to do so in a manner that makes the documentation something other than just a representation of the piece but instead a work of its own being and has something of its own to give, not just show. the documetation is a piece of art that exists and complements what it was derived from, not replaces. documentation can not and should not try to replace the piece. in some cases this can be a problem. sometimes you want something, anything that will remind, give you some clue, explain, etc. what the piece is about, mostly for presentation purposes, but here again it would seem that this can be and maybe should be taken a bit farther and not used as an excuse like i have just tried to. i have been taking slides of the piece and am not yet sure what to do

with them. i have only taken slides of each show and not anything else. it seems that what i am doing right now is a way of documenting the piece that is working fairly well. i don't consider it a straight forward documentation of the piece but instead something that adds to it and is a direct part of the piece as well as something that others may read and converge with to have some feeling of its presence. i guess my task is to do the same with images if it would add to the piece or complement it and not reduce it to a mere glance at an image. something that would do more.

well, i've been writing for awhile and i have a lot more to do and think about tonight but i think i've had my share of interaction with the computer. hopefully my interaction with the plants will never be that way. we seem to be on opposite ends of the telephone cord and i think it's time to experience a little more personal interaction with them. hopefully the next time i write i will have more to say in terms of their feelings and thoughts. i better go before i start saying stupid things again. i probably already have. that's ok. that's me and that's them as one.

Looking at those last few sentences, i can see where a lot of criticism is coming from concerning this book. I have been cutting myself short for quite awhile now and I guess its time to face up to myself. it seems kind of weird to end this part without saying more but i've been sitting here for quite awhile now and i haven't come up with anything at all to say further.

November 11, 1991

hi ho. kermit the frog here. (sorry, just reminiscing)

well, the day has been quite an interesting one. i brought in a radio for the plants to listen to. i put it on a classical station thinking that it might relax them and be good for them, but if they have any part of me in them it will probably just annoy them. i have nothing against classical music, but sometimes it can be so classical. it would seem that if i wanted them to grow i should play some flower people music. or at least something with a little more get up and go in it. i don't want to relax them so much that they get lazy. i mean, there's work to do, photos to destroy, stenchs to create, fun to be done in the sun.

I used to joke about listening to classical music, but ever since i have introduced the plants to it, I myself have been really interested in it. so much so that i've been listening to it everyday now for the last two weeks. there's something really tranquil about listening to it. maybe its not the music at all. maybe the plants and i have come to a point where we are making some wonderous music of our own. and the "classical" noise that we've been listening to is just a persona for our own.

anyway, i've been getting closer to figuring out what lies ahead for them. as far as their travels are concerned i think i already have been on the track to creating a vessel for them to move in. the spiral form that i talked about earlier could also be seen as a metaphor for the plants traveling through space in the eye of the storm, so to speak. if i plan it in the right manner, it would seem to take on the appearance or feeling of a cyclone or hurricane whirling about from place to place and not stopping until it finds a point where it can return back to the earth. that would seem appropriate for the plants. they are in a sense being whirled about from gallery to gallery, almost with no sense of direction or at least with no sense of the underlying direction (not known to the plants or me). that probably doesn't make sense to you but it makes sense to me and that's the main thing right now.

i have thought about putting the plants in vanderslice hall in the center of the stairwell. they might be happier there. there is a little nich for them to cuddle into and with the spiral form i think they might feel ok. right now they aren't getting that much light from theirs and our secondary source of life, the sun. if they were in the stairwell they might be able to make more use of the existing light that channels down around the spiralling stairs. the only problem i forsee is that the space for them to fit into is a bit tight, but

that in fact might be ok and hopefully i can find a good way to make use of it and help the plants adapt to it. only time will tell.

the plants seem to be doing better lately. i gave them some more food last week and have been watching them a little more closely lately, and not getting pissed off and not watering them for a week; thinking back, it almost seems as though our relationship has been smoothing out almost into something that is too inactive. i almost wish they would piss me off again. i kind of miss that tension in a strange sort of way. i have a feeling that i might see some more battles in the future though. i think right now we are both in a time of reflection and thought. it seems to be that it is times like these where i tend to separate present, past, and future so that i can make sense of everything. i guess the trick is to not forget about their relationship to each other and the world. it almost seems like time has slowed down a bit and has offered the plants and i to take a look at ourselves and go through a series of examinations that seem necessary to do from time to time.

it seems very obvious to me now that the plants are simply an extension of myself and the ways that i have been talking about them are merely my unconscious energies flowing out. i'm not saying that that is the only thing the plants are to me by any means, but that in some cases they have indeed taken on a part of myself and vice-versa. i haven't ever written anything like this before. its all kind of new to me and it seems to me strange that i would have a hard time realizing that i am talking to another part of myself but in a sense i am. in another sense i'm also talking to the plants in a spiritual manner. maybe it is just the opposite though. maybe saying that i've talking to my shadow is just a way of suppressing an unfulfilled desire or fear. somehow i don't think so, but in any case i know that i have a partner to carry me along when i fall, whatever he/she may be.

One last thing tonight. heart, life, spirit, flow, down into the gorge. what does it mean. what has happened and... i'm not sure, but somewhere we'll go. together.

November 17, 1991

well a lot has happened since the last time i wrote. basically i have been working on finding out how environments work and how you really have to consider the whole and not just the parts. I have been trying to make the plants grow well and yet i have totally forgotten about their friends and mentors. they need companions and helpers to survive. they need decomposers, natural resources, (not like we think of them, but how nature thinks of them). I think I have found a way to design a self-sufficient environment for them, where the air, water, land, atmosphere, creatures, and myself, can function as one much better than we are now.

That self-sufficient environment didn't turn out quite like i planned. It has sort of evolved into some form of healing device now. references were made to "IV-tubing" and it really does seem to fit it. i was trying so desperately to help those plants out and i ended up implanting the plastic tubing into the piece as a means of watering them and sustaining them. As i was putting it up i noticed that it looked a lot like the veins of a body and the blood of the plants was water. seeing it circulate through the piece was really kind of refreshing. the sounds that it made seemed tranquil and yet desperate which it was.

i guess you could say that the piece is really a healing medium for me. i've really progressed a lot in terms of my own peace of mind and my feelings about the world. i don't think i could say that for any other piece that i've done. art as a healing process is now very evident to me. i feel as if i have totally ripped myself apart and then let the spirit of the plants bandage me back up and keep me well just as i have been doing for the plants themselves. i guess we both have a lot to give each other. what a profound statement. maybe we aren't so different as we appear to be.

there are some problems with this though. i don't want to feel like i am dominating them and controlling the plants too much. they need their freedom and creativity just like i do. i need to find a way to provide them with their necessities and act with them rather than against them. we should be as one not two. another problem is that i am losing touch with my initial concept of the piece. i have sort of forgotten about the photogaphs and it seems ironic in that way. When you think about it i really haven't lost touch with it. in a sense that losing touch with it is a part of the process and my initial concept dealt with that. Keeping in mind our past and remembering that we have the past forever ingrained within us no matter how much we "seem" to be loosing touch with it.

the new growth of the plants has really been different than before. the seeds that i planted last week have been growing upwards and not outwards like they were before. i think i know why but it still fascinates me. it seem as though through the dying process they have created an outer wall along the sides of the boxes. all that is left on the side is primarily decayed dead material and fungus rot from the plants that died a couple of weeks ago. they have in a sense built up a structure or in any event have been affecting and influencing the new plants a great deal. it is almost as if they have warned the new plants that "danger lies beyond these walls" and that they are in a sense protecting them and shielding them from the dangers that killed themselves. the tops of the boxes have decayed growth on them too but the new plants seem to see the top decayed rubble as something valuable and have been flowing through it like mad. i hope they stop along the way and learn from their ancestors. it is comforting to know that the ancestors will always be along side them and will be watching over their base and will protect it in the case that something might happen to them above the surface. it is also the ancestors knowledge and bodies and spirit that are with the new seedlings as are my emotions, feelings, and spririt as well. it is almost fitting that the most of the initial plants that began have died. they have now given way to a new breed that will thrive upon their souls and wounds. the energy has been transfered not lost.

i have been reading a book lately in which i was introduced to negentropy which is sort of anti-entropy. this concept make perfect sense to me. what i have been dealing with has a lot to do with entropy and decay. but it has always troubled me, the notion of entropy. negentropy has given me new light, just as the plants have recieved over the past week. negentropy is basically a transference of energy into a new form. the best example is evolution. energy hasn't been really lost, but transformed into a new state of being. this is nice.

anyway, things are moving forward. the plants are coming to a point along their oceans where they will dock at another port to discover new things. i know a little bit about what they will find but i think i will make it a suprise for them. knowing how they know me, i have a feeling they already know what is to come.

I think it has come to be about time that i introduce them to YES, formally. yes has already been a part of them as it was an influence of mine in their creation, but i think that they should meet their long lost companion and friend. the actual members of yes wouldn't do it justice. the music says it all and it in a sense would be better for them to meet them through the music. maybe later we can join up, both the plants and i and meet them in person. for now, tales from topographic oceans. and if they don't like it, then that's tough. they have no choice. --that's what scares me. their not having a full power over choice. i guess it's something i need to work out. i'm still a little confused over how much choice they have. maybe the problem is that... oh hell, i don't know. maybe someday. maybe never. that's life...and death.

I've thought some about the choices that they have and I guess what I've decided for now is that everything and everyone has a certain amount of choice. But the main thing seems to be is that we all need to think about how we relate to each other and be considerate of the tremendous amount of life that we have around us.

November 23, 1991

well my back really hurts right now. i think its probably part psychological because of my reactions and problems with the plants. i still haven't gotten out of the weird mode i was in last night. there was a gardening seminar today but i didn't go to it. i kind of wish i would have because it might have sparred new ideas for me but i guess there was still something inside that said to follow your heart and make it your own, not something that would come out of some lecture given to hundreds of people. i guess my only reservation about this is that i know it will be harder for me to work through but thinking about it, that is really kind of stupid. i know that in order to realize my ideas as i see them in the plants it is going to take some hard work, but i'm so lazy right now that i almost wish it would just happen like all the other events. i guess this is just one of those times when you realize that even though life is a wonderous process and the natural progression is so incredible, it still takes a lot of energy to cultivate it and realize how within every bit of life lies millions of micro-chasms that sustain and nourish new forms of life that could never be uncovered without that effort. how much are we missing in life currently. are we so stupid as to just float on the surface taking in and raping the life out of everything not realizing the value and fact that life exists within other life, which exists within other life and on and on. well i guess that didn't make a whole lot of sense but i know what i mean and i don't mean to be selfish but i'd rather let you find your own way and own sense of it, on your own. just don't forget to take in the whole and realize the past/present/future--paseure, within yourself.

well, well. well what. i just went and visited the plants for a moment. they were just fine. and dandy. i think they are more content these days. times were harder back in the olden days. that was then, this is now, and there is what is to become. what a day.

November 25, 1991

I'm really not doing well right now. I don't know what to do with the piece. Things are so confusing. its' as if the chaotic sense of the piece is taking over and i'm not sure whether i should run with it or slow it down. somehow i feel the running with it would be better but i don't know. i have really strong feelings right now in terms of what i want to do and how our spirits are interacting but i almost feel as if the trickster from my dreams is influencing me in the wrong way. so what happens now. what do i do.

lately i have been really driven by an inner sense and i'm still trying to figure out what that sense is all about, what its telling me to do, and whether it is lying to me. i fear the later. yesterday i went and gathered vines and thorns and more dead growth. it was wierd because i was so obsessed with them and got really engrossed in gathering them that i lost all sense of reality. i cut myself up and was punctured many times. one puncture in my hand is starting to fester and swell. i feel as if i have been cruxified by my own ego. what is happening. even today, i went out to get some more vines and i was still obsessed. it was as if i stepped into a whole other wworld when i go out and gather the materials and matter for the plants. i feel as if i'm walking on sacred ground and and raping the landscape. it's not that i'm destroying new life, the things that i gather have been dead up until now. yesterday when i saw this huge dormant tree of thorns that towered up into the sky, i was in awe and was so obsessed that after i had taken the dead growth from the tree i took some growth that probably would've kept on growing. i feel terrible about this and yet am almost hooked on it. today when i was gathering vines i gathered all the dead first and then i saw these amazing vines that were wrapped around the surrounding trees. i uprooted on of them that wasn't attached and went of planning to plant it in the installation. why. i feel bad, but i feel so damned motivated to do it. somehow i think the trickster is really on my case now. maybe its time to stop my shadow from taking over before i kill anymore. or i could just give in to it. no!!

December 2, 1991

well i think this will be one of the last normal entries for awhile. I think that it's about time to have a few interviews with the plants and see how they are doing. I left them be themselves over the weeken while i went back to iowa for thanksgiving. i hope they are ok. I haven't stopped back in yet to see them but i have a feeling that they are alright. I sort of prepared them for the long haul before i left anyway. they probably had loads of fun anyway. they probably threw some huge party or something while i was gone. they probably do that every night after i leave. i can just see it now. after i'm gone at night they all put on their little leather jacketes and sneak out underneath the door. then they head over to Westport, have a few beers and the next thing you know, they're being booked at the police station for beating up a group of little old ladies playing bingo on a Sunday night. i'm sure that they are good little creatures but if i ever see headlines in the paper that read "PANIC STRIKES AS OUTLAW BAND OF TERRORIST PLANTS INVADE CITY" i'll know it was them. they probably already started gangs called the "Xylems" and "phloems." I wonder if lie detector tests work on plants. I guess i could always threaten them with my kirlean photography high voltage generator. all i'd have to do is show them a film of what happens to naughty little plants. My luck they'd like it. you know i'm joking but just don't tell them that. the plants and i have a faithfull relationship but a little humor and fun never hurt.

well enough fun and games. i just read through what i just wrote. it seems like my joking about them is almost a way for me to conceal something that's been bothering me. i just can't figure out exactly what it is though. i wonder if our relationship has gone temporarily stale and i just haven't figured out a way to keep it strong and vital. i guess time will show the way, whatever it may be. i guess my task then is to listen a little more carefully to what it is saying so that i don't get led astray. lord knows i've done that enough times. anyway, i guess i'll leave now for awhile and cuddle back up into that passive ball for awhile and think about what might lie ahead. I wonder if the plants are doing the same.

I'm not sure why in the previous passage I felt like I had to stray off the track or do something different just for its own sake. I don't think I was very wise in this since I didn't feel right about doing it at the time. Doing things I don't truly honestly want to usually ends in not so good results. I haven't been very true to myself lately as I talked about earlier and it seems as though this is just another example.

While we are on this subject I guess I should talk about this process of reviewing what I have written. I've lately been making some unopen minded statements that I really don't like. I feel as if I'm acting like I know everything which I obviously don't. I hate to make conclusive statements since my beliefs and viewpoints are always changing. I also hate feeling as if I'm telling people what they should believe. I think that each person must decide what's right for themselves from their own heart and soul. In a way I've been using the influence and criticism for others maybe a bit too much lately in reviewing everything. I've been criticized quite a bit on the writing but when compared to the feeling of this review it seems like the original passages held a whole lot more honesty and feeling than these do. I've been trying to please other a bit too much and I think its time to make sure that I feel good and right with my writing. I've gone back to writing by hand for awhile so I think that when I enter the new writing that I'm doing right now into the computer I'll re-write alot of it so that I feel and know that I am saying things that I really want to say and really mean. I value the criticism and it has played a part in my writing but I have to be true to myself and make it my own.

After reading that passage I feel kind of disturbed about it. It seems like I was really having some trouble in my life and covering it up with a lot of projected remarks. At the same time I think that it is these rough and troubled times that I enjoy. I've noticed in myself that I can't stand complete order and I like to experience the spirit of chaos quite a bit. I think that even though this is true, I still need a sense of order to balance things out and get me through things at certain points in my life. I almost think that might be one reason why I used the grid in the piece. For me, something wonderful happens when order and chaos unite.

The chaos helps me a lot in my work. I find a lot of interesting things happening when I have a million things on my mind. It kind of gives me an opportunity to see how sometimes opposing things can fuse together and create something wonderful. Ideas intertwine and mingle with each other and multiply as they go. And out of all the confusion incredible things emerge and I think one of them really came through strong in the piece. I started to hit upon it in the middle of the last passage and lately it has been on my mind a lot. That is, life itself. The following is something I wrote last week late at night as a description to post at the show.

In my life I have experienced a great number of feelings and emotions, but most of all I think that the greatest of these is life itself. Pleasure is among other things, as Kelly put it, "A Celebration of Life." The life within the PAST collective, the life PRESENTLY within each of us and our surroundings, and the FUTURE life that is yet to be born into existence. What an incredible thing...life.

December 4, 1991

there isn't much to say really. something has died and i don't know what it is. i feel at a loss somehow in conscious emotions right now. i feel as if the only thing speaking to me is my unconscious and any other time i would probably be scared, but somehow i feel secure lying in its arms. there is a kind of comfort that i am getting from it that nothing else seems able to give to me. i wonder if i'm the unconscious of the plants. or vice versa.

there's a wonderful kind of meditative state that is rarely found. it's not one that you plan, but one that gently says "hey, it's ok. just relax and take in life for awhile." somehow i think the plants have always understood this, just as most of nature does as well.

let me enjoy this for awhile.

there's a place in the heart that contains a wonderfully majestic world. the world is a place where things flow together in harmony. a utopia of sorts but not so much in the sense of how we think of utopias. more like a place that actually exists but few people ever find it. those that do find enormous wealth and riches of the spiritual kind. those riches are so great that nothing can ever replace them or be duplicated. they are indeed unique and individual yet they share the energy and spirit of each other set into a rhythm that encompasses more energy and feeling that can ever be reached by only one of the entities. it is an addictive thing to be attracted to. but the most ironic thing is that even though i seem to understand what part of it is about, i am not close enough to join in with them. it's like looking at candy in a window. you can sense it but not experience it. and right now, i really wish i could have some. in some ways i think death is very similar to this, if not one in the same. i don't think that death is such a bad thing. actually i think that the place within the heart is a place that thrives on it and contains the seemingly lost energy that comes from death and dying. look at all the incredible life and beauty that comes from the death of others. how wonderful it can be. you see something physically die and most generally feel bad. that's fine for the people who grieve for it. it's a part of healing for them but for the entity that died, i almost envy it. being freed from the bodily constraints able to let the soul soar free seems like a wonderful thing. i mean where would we be without death. could it be that in his wisdom God has realized or come to believe that he may never die. that he would live on forever

unfortunately the rest of that passage was lost on the computer. it exists in my mind but i don't think i could preserve it's integrity by trying to re-write it just as i wrote it before so i think that i will pick up where i left off before the computer crashed.

i was saying how some people tell me to live life to the fullest. i wonder if they say this because they fear death. are they afraid of the unknown. or are their spirits not ready yet. i don't know the answers. what i do

know is that we still need to savor life no matter what form it reaches us in. i say this not out of fear of death but out of love of it. death and life can be seem as opposites that negate each other. i don't think so. i would say that they complement each other in such a wonderful fashion. i wonder if they could exist without each other. somehow something tells me that they couldn't. anyway, life is such a wonderful thing as is death and simply dismissing them seems to be such a tragedy. I feel a great deal of sorry for those who miss out on it. what is it that could make a person neglect something like that when it almost totally surrounds them. too much is lost. too much is missed out on. when does it stop. does it take universal death for everyone to realize life.

I'm at a loss of what else to say. I guess i'll just float back to that little niche of mine and have a cup of life. maybe two or three.