

HARRY'S "HAUNTED" PIECE (Star Island Chapel – 1977) [[click here](#)]

Harry Baya 3rd

There is an experience we share, for which I have no name—call it a sense of mystery, call it awe or even fear. It is an ancient human emotion from deep within our racial memories. I find it in the arts, music, poetry, drama, literature, visual arts—it is that which makes an experience haunting. It is one of the common dimensions of dreams. I hear it in William Blake's poetry. I see it in paintings by Hieronymus Bosch or Dali.

It is the concatenation of events, of images, that invokes a sense of unseen powers, moving phantom-like within us. *T'was brillig, and the slithy toves. Did gyre and gimble in the wabe: All mimsy were the borogoves,. And the mome raths outgrabe.*

It is if some timeless beast cried out and its brother answered back from deep within us—in us, can there be such awesome power in us. The experience I'm trying to define is strongly associated with death, and all its trappings—ghouls, demons, werewolves, and ghosts—surely there are ghosts. In each human there are the ghosts of the human race—millions of generations of life, and fear and love and death. The ghost of everyone we ever knew lives in our memories, waiting to be called.

It is part of art, part of dreams -- haunting, awesome, ghoulish ? . and what else, religious? No, not quite. More like sacred, holy, . . the mystic's experience, the trance, the Shakers, . . the rituals of worship, especially the ancient ones, are bubbling with this raw stuff—something that speaks to us in magical ways. Pictures of Stonehenge are powerful. Imagine how it felt to serve as a priest in the middle.

Perhaps it is not too difficult to explain. Perhaps it is some neuro-phenomenon in the right hemisphere of our brain—a patterned stimulus creates a patterned response, a response we perceive as mystery or wonder or—I still don't have a name—but it does not matter that we can explain it, it does matter that we can feel it, that we can sense it as confirming our essence, our nature. That we can feel it flowing between us and others.

I have had such experiences here, in this building, especially here. Wherever people are together to make life more worth living for one another, to see the best and the strongest that is in them, they stand on holy ground. Surely we are in a holy place. Listen! Perhaps the forces will speak to you, or from you.

II. We are haunted, by the ghosts of what we have been, perhaps the ghosts of what we are becoming, the echos of our race, sex, death, and hanging on in hard times, sometimes for 10 million years. And we are the ghosts of the past, for future generations. . . will the circle be unbroken?

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