I-sense 1991
prepared by Theodore Smith & friends...

...I was a descendant of the toads & polliwogs
...a programme for the Jamaican balm yard
...vegetable dwellings (nature and spirit in Jamaica)
...videotape: "balm"
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The following words are the result of skimming the custard off the top of seven months of blissful personal experience on the isle of Jamaica, mixing it together with some grated carrots, scallions, garlic, and pepper, (no salt) then carefully stirring in the meringue from the deep middle of Tom Robbins's book, "Skinny Legs and All." This blend was simmered (to taste) on the embers of inspiration that glowed in brilliant recognition of the divine, manifested in the life of a man named Hutchins.

note:
Dis Ital blend of I-gredients stay like God-Food mon! I-n-I tell you mon! Respect every time! Irie serve wid de bannana puddin, and-a whole 'lass-heap' of me Irie-mon cake...... Jenny's Special Cakes!
hypothesis:

Architecture is an I-cient way of being which evokes the unification of all plants, animals, and inanimate objects within the living body of nature. If simmered down with the epic cooperation between humanity, God, and psycho-tropic vegetation, architecture can approach the divine by illuminating the ultimate biospherical mystery which unites hero seed with heroin egg.
Was the garden dance of our beloved agrarian uncle really architectural? Is afterlife pie as sweet as it sounds? Is religion, architecture and culture a balanced diet? Is Moshintau the name of a willy temptress lost to the age of patriarchy? Where do pods come from? Are they anything like yokes? Do they procreate? Do they giggle? Do they wiggle? Is reality relatively real...really? Did plants exist before the development of Hyponex? Won't plants that grow without containers get viney, ugly and out-of-hand? Is that nutmeg in your cup of tea? Is architecture that grows, good for salads? Is architecture a function of nature, or vice versa? Is living I-ationly an extension of being a Skatalite? Does those niggers down there really smoke that funny weed? How come everything is funny? Why are hernias connected with stones? Where does time start and stop and how do you break through to the other side? What's Armageddon? Who's the River Maid? What's nice about space? Is there really a time and season for everything? A time to swallow? What's self reliance? Who started it? Can we live to love? Can we live through the things we love most? Can we expedite the enlargement of our souls? Can we light up our brains? Can we experience an hour, possibly a day, even a life filled with being present to moment by moment happiness? Do these riddles have answers? What is our mission anyway? Can I have that when you go home?
This is the place of original cognition! Where our agrarian uncle splashes cane juice over the earth, to provide sweetener, for my friends and yours, the ants. Honey bees come here to suck the breasts of the Mother/Father, Goddess/God while spitting comb between her/his swollen thighs. The lizard-lip dawn touches down where our planetary yoke is welcoming us at a philosophical plateau of natural environmental sensitivity.

This is the ancient Balm-Yard set in motion by our favorite uncle who spirals round and round and round, patiently churning out conscious life principles that serve to light up our brains and lift up our souls toward a blissful experience of being present in moment by moment living.

This is the glamour level, where institutions of dogma have been sold for scrap iron by a society that recognizes the value of all naturally varying possibilities of human expression.

This is the layer of experience perceived by those who have discovered the clock which has no hands. A handless timepiece with a face that reflects its owner's joyous expression having crossed paths with one's self coming from opposite directions of time. The reflection of a face that knows what it feels like to live in unity. All together, hand-n-toes-n-wings-n-vines-n-roots-n-earth-n-stones-n-suns-n-moons-n-stars-n-galaxies-n-unknown spirals churning beyond infinity, all together round-n-round we dance! Rooted to life in a natural process-sort of orgiastic bubbly-bubbly way.
This is the fertile terrain where bachelor degrees are sticky residue of a tense society, stricken with so-called educational institutions that perform dogmatic rituals to train brains as components of an unnatural machine, a machine programmed to get someone else to do it for you! To think for you! To drag around your cross and nails!

Do you remember the children who knew? The molecules that bonded? The seeds that swallowed themselves into vines and roots of magic buds of self discovery? Here we are travelling together with thoughts that Bala fresh squeezed with jack-fruit through the callous wrinkles in his perfect palms. Were they your dreams too? Can we make a difference? Will psycho-tropic vegetation keep us philosophically apace with our technological advances?

This is the fertile yoke of our subconscious. The lining of our dreams! The gift of the woven ark of the Goddess! Laughter can be heard from the ribs of the Bamboo Kitchen! From the woven waddle inside the History House! By the veranda that melts into the inquenol pool of stone and intestinal convergences!

This is the Balm Yard of reptilian freedom! Of feeling like licking the moon with your tongue, and doing it! This is the place where we all danced round and round and round, while our original mother milled out the ancient sweetness that would touch the original love spot in us all.....chuckle...chuckle.....chuckle........f.n.l.t.t.t!
third world be as daring as the Chaplin had made me feel? What security did I have in this bizarre reality? "Negril! Negril! Negril! Mon, me know de way you troddin! Negril-Mon, me show you Jamaica." Where was I going? "Where you is going mon", was exactly what the man with the taxivan wanted to know. "Hey Rasta, where you troddin man?" "I'm going to Caledonia," a squeaky ready-to-return-West reply, accompanied by my own not so commanding stare of bewilderment at where the other hundred and fifty eight passengers in a single V. W. van were troddin? Was this one of those jokes that got played on the fresh green 'white-e' anthropologists just arriving from the west?

It was the International Bomb that Quashi so unknowingly had boarded on that first day of arrival. We know that the Bomb is a legitimate method of modern day transport in Jamaica, but we, not Quashi, know that it is the machinery that alters consciousness through the rapid acceleration perception. A machine designed to intensify one's sense of time and space, redefining life (at approx. 280K per hour, around curves) through the retina of chance.

I'll never forget.- Quashi continued.- D.J. music pounded so loudly that it vibrated my elbow up the window of the van until it had wedged itself between the shag carpet ceiling and the cellulose of a woman's stray breast. OOOOWWWeeee, I certainly was not occupying my proper physical space according to Western etiquette, but when I apologized and made an effort to pull away, the woman smiled and pressed her other tit into my hand! Sweet Jesus! I never suspected there could be so much sweaty skin on such a tiny island, or so much physical\emotional jism in a drive. Butts bonded, noses squished, elbows to knees, faces to thighs, palms to breasts, humming along in a self propelled bomb we made our way to Westmoreland. "One Stop, Caledonia-Mon, dis is de place mon! Step good and lively!"

I had finally arrived at the gate of contentment lawn. A sign read, "Cucumbers sewn! Cucumbers grow! Cucumbers flower! Cucumbers make irie-mon soup mon!......Bredda-mon." Yep, I remember thinking, (while wiping certain sweet sensations from my brow), according to professor Jim, this was where the mission of my architectural/anthropological grassroots case study could be facilitated. Which meant to me that I could get some land to squat on, some soil to cultivate, some time to grow on, some thoughts to think on, all in return for my cooperative care of the Hutchin's farm. Actually I trusted, I mean, I thought this was the deal. You mean, in the teeth, I was going to get kicked in the teeth! Was this whole thing reality or highly romantic illusion? What about the forty hour
work week with scheduling for special meetings and conferences? What about the torturous Guilt that acts as a side effect for life situations that work to the advantage of one individual and not his or her family and friends?

It is a requirement of personal sanity to constantly recognize the realness of one's roots and heritage while contrasting this realness with the unreality of suddenly finding oneself existing without roots, within a bizarre new cultural context. I'll never forget ole Mr. Hutchins, the keeper of Contentment Lawn extending his dreadlocks in my direction, affording me a welcome that left me in a blissful state of knowing, if nothing else, that I had the right address. A complete family, village, something akin to tribal welcome was wholeheartedly extended in my direction. Mackrel, red-peas and rice, washed down with carrot juice and pudding sweetened with songs and riddles of Westmoreland joy. Even though I had come without announcement, I knew that they knew I would be arriving. How could they know that? A thickness seemed to exist in the air in that small village of Caledonia. Thickness that comes from so many folks existing with a central sense of organic collectivity. A sense without a doubt that stemmed from the Rastafarian philosophy of "one blood" and from the stream of psychotropic consciousness that came from smoking plantain sized psychotropic spliffs.

Who was Moushintau and why was I not exposed to her/him in the West? What was this particular Goddess/God the Goddess/God of, and why was she/he being shown to me through the words, emotions and food of the family I had recently been named, 'Quashi'? When Mr. Hutchins asked about my knowledge of Moushintau I replied "all I know is ignorance Mr. Hutchins." Why weren't the masses aware of Moushintau? When I asked Mr. Hutchins about this, he suggested something about the possibility that some were unaware of the God/Goddess because veils of ignorance, disinformation and illusion separated them from the meaning which is central to their evolutionary journey as human beings on earth? "Wow, Mr. Hutchins!" "Yea-mon, them can fool some of de people some of de time but them can't fool all de people all of de time," was Mr. Hutchins commentary on prescribed ignorance. The old Rasta-Man said, "you see, dem can't see out of der one cylinder of vision into de vision of de other man's cylinder....dem stay dat way, but me.....me just love all different scenery, me love me little herb."

As time went on Ken and his Rastafarian family, lifted the veil of ignorance from the face of the mysterious God/Goddess his family called Moushintau. After the parting of many lips for many spliffinton's, the parting of many days by nights which were divided
by the slapping of dominoes, after the rites and rituals of suspended moment to suspended moment of every day life had been absorbed into my rapidly altering consciousness, I remember beginning to understand that life for life's sake was Ken's secret to happiness & bliss. He carried his secret over his shoulder like a sac-full of ripe jack-fruit, ready at any moment for the puddin pot. No one name could be used to describe the Farmer-Man with ripe jack fruit slung over his shoulder, he knew this as well as anyone and would prove it with a recitation of names that all personified some dimension of the man the government called Kenneth Hutchins. "Some call me Lizard, some call me Dread, some call me Rasta, some call me Wise-Man, some call me Bredda, some call me Slippery, some call me Busha, some call me I-tal, some call me Rude-Boy, some call me Soldier, some call me Solomon, some call me Naughty, some call me Roots, some call me I-Man, some call me Frog-Man, some call me Bubbly, some call me Revolutionary, some call me a whole rass heap of names!" The name I called Ken was "Bala." It was the perfect vibration for the man that above all else, articulated uncommon connections which like baby talk, forced folks to scream 'uncle' with laughter. The name Bala was created by a small boy who tried to say Bredda-Man, but could just barely squeeze out the sounds BALA! BALA! BALA! A word that rolled off your tongue with a slippery effortless excitement. This was the true vibration of the amphibious child/man that I had come to respect and love. Bala!

I had never been so content in sharing labor with another man. In the name of cooperation, Bala and I forked the mother yoke, we sowed her with seeds, fondled her breasts, cultivated her plants and prepared the food which she bore, all with a new softened sensitivity in myself towards life and the natural principles that represented the Goddess/God Moushintau. Bala showed the I-cient ways of the blue/green yoke which bore in plenitudes when the flow of floral energy was allowed to pass uninhibitedly between person and plant with an absence of preconceptions or compromising laws of favoritism between self and yoke. As time went on (as Bala had promised) a kind of floral essence began to uncurl in my consciousness. Bala had planted the seeds of wisdom & understanding while we both nurtured them along with the daily parting of lips for the sacrament of each others weight, in psychotropic vegetation. Spliffington ratoon!....I pondered yam while watching the newborn calf rub her rusty colored skull on the pussy willowed bannana palm in Bala's front lawn.

The rain fell down and soaked the yoke while Bala forked my soul. "Ev-ry-ting come from de earth mon, de flesh, de limb, de
goat, de cow, de man, de woman, de life, de tree, de plant, de food, de house, de EVERY-TING!" She is universal scenery"! "You can't scorn yur mother yoke mon, me tell you, for den you scorn yur-self! Fertile dust is what we is! I'd what we made of!" All is born of the planet and all forms are on their own collision courses with an eventually return, this was how Bala looked at the vital tailless circle of life. Men can't create new resources, they can merely build from the rich organic substances found in our mother's planetary womb. She is the primordial pudding from which everything including herb has emerged. She is the omnipresent, the sacred, the axis mundi of all. The magic source of energy that perpetuates the eternal mystery of how those little seeds planted by children around the globe sprout curiously out the tops of tiny styrofoam cups. The fertile mush that squishes up between your toes, the rich compost that makes the garden grow. The specks of nutmeg in your cup of tea. Scorn this mystery and your sure to scorn us all.

I hadn't been sewn all that long ago, but, but, but then came the moment when I passed (which I could only describe later) into a liquid realm where emancipated souls like mine were swimming in a murky deep way beyond the shallows of ethnocentricity.

Moon struck! One Love Baby! Star lights were beaming against the dew moistened folds of the greening garden terrain. The coital leaves were opening upon themselves exposing a honey comb temple nestled in the cozy crotch of an oasis of feminine floral delight. This is the sacred place (mentioned in the prelude), where magic buds keep chattering something about staying philosophically appace with technological advances. The garden where warm mushy reptilian freedom squirms up between your toes like, you guessed it, like mud! This is the place where I found Moushintau, cooker of the cauldron of soul and plantress of the vine of Astarte. The vine which bears the fruit which when ripe, sweet, and plump would one day (if we're lucky, in the not too distant future) be sliced and spooned into the original soul cauldron which would sweeten us in our original love spots. But for now, Moushintau began stirring understanding into the electrochemical process, and not so electrochemical processes of my brain. I knew her/his every thought. She/He had penetrated me like how sour sap penetrates ones nervous system. The sensation was short lived but for one giddy moment in a brainful of orgasmic nonaccredited thinking all cultural barriers were lifted and I for the first time realized that the great
society of Western civilization, (in which I was reared) was
drowning its personal self on fear of rejecting the secure blessings of
society in order to woo the unpredictable ecstasies of the solitary
soul. In the West, life was so neatly prepared, controlled and
administered in bite-size pieces, regulated by every possible
insurance policy, pension plan and uniform building code, that nekid-
natural, security-free, living had virtually become an impossibility.
The Babylonians were feeding themselves exact quantities of high
nutrient Tetra flakes in climatically regulated hermetically sealed
drywall containers, instead of gobbling at the food-roots that grew
wildly in the muddy shadows of the mystic lilly pads.

Moushintau continued masturbating Quashi's mind so that he
ejaculated more and more of what Quashi could only describe later
as... information. She/He, they, us continued: The statist theme in
the Western world view, designed to protect the rights of the
majority had the whitewashed effect of allowing the policy makers to
propagate acquiescence while protecting its devote masses from the
inconvenience of having to think. Life, for the over eighteen under
sixty five wild-at-heart age bracket, was defined by a nine to five
weekday with time and a half paid for the weekends. The collective
exaltation of the mystery of life was saved for Sunday morning
services held between eleven and twelve o'clock. Senior citizens who
had waited forty five years to escape the rigorous Monday thru
Friday workday usually had just enough energy left to keep
themselves and their belongings hygienically appace with the Jones'
next door. Clean, clean, spotless Armor All clean. Kids were kept
clean too. Tide-ized from the responsibilities that come from the
possibilities of free thinking. Penalties given for accidental soilings.
The youth in that sterilized Western breakfast bowl, were
conveniently conditioned at an early age to prefer synthetic smells
and tastes to natural ones. General Mills started it, tapping the
public's insatiable appetite for Lucky Charms a multibillion artificial
breakfast cereal industry that children now depend on for their
recommended daily allowance of vitamins and minerals. "Man" those
efflorescent lucky charms sure are yummy!

Moushintau no doubt understood the shortcomings of the West,
He/She continued in Quashi's head, which was swimming in virgin
woods where our Goddess/God and Mother/Father most loved to
masturbate. Quashi learned that Moushintau (since the time of
origins) had existed through the eyes of those who looked upon order
as lovingly as disorder. She/He, us who balances masculinism with feminism, intuition with logic, altruism with animalism, paganism with socialism and orgasm with them all, just because orgasm ends with the letters sm and because that word is on her/his, our mind a lot these days. After catching a whiff of Nature’s tuna, and being deeply frightened by it, the industrial age patriarchs introduced a concept known today as deforestation. Walden’s trees were chopped down to make way for shopping malls that wielded everything from potted palms to rubber porkchops. Quashi realized that the facts were, that the Western world view was no longer rooted in the mystery of Mother Nature. Nor in the mythic tales of ancient folklore which illustrate the cycles of the seed and the fertility of the earth. In fact nothing was rooted in the West, not even its food. It was as rootless as those rubber porkchops that they sell in the pet department at K-Mart. While Farming remains an art and science of mystical proportions for most non-Western process oriented societies (in the West referred to as third world societies based on the first worlds game rules), where as in the West, mystical proportions are associated with the amount of emulsified plastic that McDonald’s can mix in their shakes for long shelf life with no apparent after taste. This was the modern world where story telling had been replaced by television commercials, and the essence of nature could be purchased in an aerosol spray for only a buck thirty a can. It was the Renaissance of consumerism, fast food advertisements served up with golden fried sticks of extruded hot air. Education was now institutionalized into an abstract system of bureaucratic mind games that without a doubt, was stone cold reality. Bachelor degrees were seen in the eyes of society as a proper evaluation of an individuals worth and potential marketability. Accreditation of these academic institutions of course was warranted by the same folks that warrants K-Mart’s rubber chops. A company located, we think, somewhere in the suburbs of Terre Haute.

It was these collective thoughts that squirmed in and out of Quashi’s skull and in a lasting orgasm led him to a turning point decision which flipped his bioemotional thermostat on natural. Quashi had come to certain intuitive understanding about life and was prepared to risk the secure blessings of a civilized society for a giddy immature feeling that took flight in his dreams. He knew somehow, that he was prepared to transcend the so-called first refrigerated world and readjust his internal mercury to rise and fall with the natural, naturalness of the nonreformed Walden south of all
borders. Oh the third world yoke! The old world, land of a biblical present. It was well documented that the Caribbean isles, served as havens to people that still maintained a metaphysical understanding about life. But it wasn't the westernized urbanites on the Third World yoke it was the farm folks, the planting people, the Rastafarians that weaved into their culture the importance which came with planting, reaping and eating. Rasta-folk that over eternity and with the cooperation of their Gods and Goddesses, had built into culture the rites and rituals which set in motion the turning of nothing less than the entire Mother planet. Quashi was now starving to be a slave to the struggles of third world martyrdom. He could almost sense the pangs of world hunger already. The promised land was harkening. The rootsworld that had not yet conformed to the convenience of in-home network shopping. A Rasta society that had maintained simplicity in the face of the newest Pepsi generation and in the ass of the autosodomized virgins of M-TV. A third world seemingly so human, that before he left without even knowing why, Quashi mustered a grant from the department of "very cheap student grants" at his local state university (who by the way hold all legal rights to this document) in order to study architecture in the third world. An experiential thesis of architecture which might shed light on the possibilities of environmentally appropriate architectural design, using as a philosophical model the mythos of the Rastafarian world view. Or more appropriately summerized in the title, Vegetable Dwellings (nature & spirit in Jamaica). Now, Quashi was beginning to understand that the title of this thesis was created with his own free will in the recognition of personal individuality and Moushintau's floral illumination. This occurrence as you will discover, happened at the exact moment of original cognition in the Balm Yard of Bala in the name of the Genne that does stuff cause it feels real nice.
You could say (besides the Rasta-tribe and family of Bala) that the third world was a religious pod, a neocolonialized isle with Christian seedlings thumping wildly under its perennial skin. The masses took part in jumping round and round in foot stomping testimony and praise for the all mighty gaseous vertebra in the sky. Praise God! Praise the Lord! I regretted that it was my own Western relatives, the neocolonial patriarchs who were to blame for the glazing of the aquariums of Christianity which as in the West, consoled the suffering, comforted the family of the dead, and made sure that dinner was on the table when they got home, by God!

The patriarchal aquariums were built to contain the mystery/spirit of the purple swirling liquid that surrounded our bobbing planet. To Bala's great distress the masses of the pod population were hooked on a definition of God. For the missionaries it was necessary to pigeonhole God at a level of psyche that every condemned human could understand and fear. Religious dogma that would occupy enough of the persons time to spurn the possibilities of rebellion or uncontrollable spread of free thinking. This made life a whole heap easier to manage for the colonialist, less messy and more rationally accountable. "We the chosen few!" The people of the bible. The book that reveals ultimate truth, with proper ethnocentric interpretation. No seedling in his or her fallen state could ever question that the bible was not the original word of God or that this word may have been so watered down by the prophets of the prophets of the prophets of the Messiah that it may now afford false interpretations.

Christianity was all fruit and milk to its believers, but death and eternal damnation to Bala and those Rastafarians who had a different version of the word. Bala was aware of the neocolonial Christian theme, in fact his vision of a vital existence was reinforced by the Christian missionaries of death. Maybe that's why Bala was so old, he said death was just a bad human habit, "death is merely speculative," Bala said. A condition for life that Bala made clear about his vision was that he would not renounce his own heart and his natural human fate to be accommodated into the gaseous beatitudes of heaven. The fact was that Bala loved life because life to him was heaven. Heaven was where he already existed. Heaven was the church of the satisfied soul which afforded an original, uncompromising experience of natural living. "Live through the
things you love!" His honey suckle eyes would burst into millions of droplets of light as his face opened with laughter like flowers open with sunshine. Sensitive was he, the old gardener of his own soul, careful in life not to repudiate his humanity for the beutitudes of an unknown super transcendent after life. Instead, Bala straddled the original vibration that swept the deep waters giving form to the primordial energy of life.

Bala recognized that ancient religions like those that gave thanks and praises to Moushintau, were undoubtedly like muddy ponds with lots of foliage. Concealed there the fish of the human soul could splash and feed. Eventually however, with the relentless missionaries of the Western world, religions became aquariums, then hatcheries. From farm fingerling to frozen fish-sticks is a very short swim. Eurocentric missionaries struck our little Caribbean isle a century ago to help free the enslaved pagan worshipers from sin, the fire of hell, and eternal purgatory. Fortunately the missionaries did help to ease the problems of physical slavery but unfortunately they condemned the masses of Podlings to a life of anxiety, anxious, thought Bala, to sink their chops into the sweet taste of afterlife pie.

The missionaries performed religious exorcism on the masses, saving them from white plantation owners while introducing them to the concepts of death & hell or blessed with eternal salvation. Amazing, an omnipresent God with such a limited menu to chooseth from. In the slavery days, when our "primitive" podlings were most desperately longing to transcend the chaos of neocolonialism, the missionaries taught the multitudes how to gamble the only life they may ever have on a dark horse in a race that has no finish line. In their deal to establish freedom, African slaves had to swallow a death wish on a grand scale, an eschatological extension of Kissinger's perverse logic---"In order to live forever, we must die as quickly as possible." To die to the present in order to receive the gift of immortality. Fortunately for believers, they see signs everywhere that the apocalyptic end is near. So what, was the cherry of accomplishment for those hero missionaries that risked their skin on a bunch of wild natives who may have toasted them like saltines on a stick? As a JNP party politician once whispered to me, "a population that has bought into the concept of an eternal hereafter is much less dangerous to our status than a population that believes in the fullness of the experience of life on planet earth." People will put up with all sorts of
tyranny and miss treatment if they're convinced that they'll eventually escape to some resort in the sky where life guards are superfluous and the pool never closes.

While the afterlife philosophy renders the masses manageable, it renders its' masters destructive, a Pod leader who's convinced that life is merely a trial for the mere valuable and authentic afterlife is less hesitant to start Armageddon. A corporation executive who's expecting the rapture to arrive on the next flight to the planet beyond all borders is not going to worry much about polluting oceans or destroying rain forests. "Why should he?" (Robbins).

But oh to Bala, how could he have known the consequences of blind faith? How could he love life so, so much? Why wasn't this very old fish gliding in numb circles inside a glass box of religion? Bala (who got his name from a child) wouldn't hesitate to directly attribute the success of his relationships with other people to his lack of belief in formal religion. If he were actively religious it would have been impossible for him and the world to have been such good pals. Dogma and tradition would have overruled any natural instinct for brotherhood, for "Brotherman," for "Bala."

It was as if our agrarian uncle had been granted a sneak preview while dancing along the path of original uninhibited experience of his life. A dance that had led to a life of unending self discovery and to the wisdom that organized religion is a major obstacle to peace and understanding. It was a gradual revelation even to the wise ancient Bala who admits that Rasta consciousness unfolds slowly, a natural outgrowth of each man's continuous devotion to humanity and emphatic rejection of an easy certainty afforded by institutionalized belief. Being Rasta, is being alive to the fullest potentiality of the collective individual soul.

When the dance of Rasta is finally flowing throughout the fountains of consciousness Bala at least, will be capable of with standing the shock of this truth: religion is a paramount contributor to human misery. It is not merely the opium of the masses it is the cyanide (Robbins).

Of course, religion's omnipotent defenders are swift to point out the comfort it provides for the sick, the weary, and the disappointed. Yes, true enough. But as Bala knows, the deity does not dwandle in the comfort zone! If one yearns to see the face of the Divine, one must break out of the aquarium of religion, escape the fish farm, to go swim up wild cataracts, dive in deep fjords, swallow gill fulls of dark murky mystery. One must explore the labyrinth of the reef,
the shadows of the mystic lilly pads. How limiting, how insulting to think of God as a benevolent warden, an absentee hatchery manager who imprisons us in the "comfort zone" of artificial pools, where intermediaries sprinkle our restrictive waters with sanitized flakes of processed nutriment.

A longing for the Divine is intrinsic in Homo sapiens. (For all we know, it is innate in squirrels, dandelions, and diamond rings, as well.) We approach the Divine by enlarging our souls and lighting up our brains. To expedite those two things may be the mission of our experience.

Well and good. But such activity runs counter to the aspirations of commerce and politics. Politics is the science of domination, and persons in the process of enlargement and illumination are notoriously difficult to control. Therefore, to protect its vested interests, politics usurped religion a very long time ago. Kings bought off priests with land and adornments. Together, they drained the shady ponds and replaced them with fish tanks. The walls of the tanks were constructed of ignorance and superstition, held together with fear. They called the tanks "synagogues" or "churches" or "mosques." After the tanks were in place, nobody talked much about soul anymore. Instead, they talked about spirit, Soul is hot and heavy. Spirit is cool, abstract, detached. Soul is connected to the earth and its waters. Spirit is connected to the sky and its gases. Out of the gases springs fire. Firepower. It has been observed that the logical extension of all politics is war. Once religion became political, the exercise of it, too, could be said to lead sooner or later to war. "War is hell." Thus religious belief propels us straight to hell. History unwaveringly supports this view. (Each modern religion has boasted that it and it alone is on speaking terms with the Deity, and its adherents have been quite willing to die--or kill--to support its presumptuous claims).

Not every silty bayou could be drained, of course. The soulfish that bubbled and snapped in the few remaining ponds were tagged "mystics." They were regarded as mavericks, exotic and inferior. If they splashed too high, they were thought to be threatening and in need of extermination. The fearful flounders in the tanks, now psychologically dependent upon addictive spirit flakes, had forgotten that once upon a time they, too, had been mystical (Robbins).

Religion is nothing but institutionalized mysticism.
The catch is, mysticism does not lend itself to institutionalization. The moment we attempt to organize mysticism, we destroy its essence. Religion, then, is mysticism in which the mystical has been killed. Or, at least diminished.

Those who witness the bandelooop dance of Bala might see clearly what our agrarian uncle dimly suspected: that not only is religion divisive and oppressive, it is also a denial of all that is divine in people; it is a suffocation of the soul (Robbins).
Oh wonderful, wonderful, Oh wonderful, I am food, I am food I am food, I am an eater of food, I am an eater of food, I am an eater of food (Upanishad).

What shall we learn of yam or yam of us? Early each morning before sunrise Bala and I worked unhurriedly, encouraging vines we had planted with little mounds built around each stem, earthen alters worshiping food roots as underground Gods. That was the feeling of reverence I had while working next to Bala. Existence for the old agrarian uncle depended heavily on the ways of the seeded soil. We eat to live. This is unavoidable truth or for Bala, "personal knowledge." Eating is the perpetual process of composting and cultivating the soil, planting the seed, death of the seed, birth to the new plant, harvest of the plant fruit, preparation, and ultimate consumption of food. Recomposting and recultivating the soil, replanting the seed, redying of the seed, rebirth to the new plant, rehearvest of the fruit, repreparation, and ultimate reconsumption of food. Over and over again. Bala's complete conviction lie unified with the natural processes of planet earth. Mother earth afforded life, food and shelter; for Bala, scorning her would in effect be an insane rejection of his own self. His body was as large or as small as the entire body of the blue/green bobbing yoke-of-a-planet that we all dwell upon. This body/earth philosophy led Bala to take immense responsibility for securing the health of both his body and our planet. A collective cosmic responsibility which counters the ludicrous Western rational, defining planetary health in terms of statistics which provide a basis to avoid stupid exhaustion of the world's natural resources. Bala, on the other hand accepted the responsibility as Man/God of life on earth. This meant that his garden was the same garden we all know as Eden. That's right, Eden Earth and why not? Heaven did not exist in some Christian gaseous realm beyond Earth, for Bala heaven was Earth! Heaven existed right now in Bala's soul, I know it existed there because I watched it flow down his arms, through his hands out his palms, born into leaves and blossoms, spilling over the edges of the valley in the form of lush blue/green edible garden delight.

There, working in Bala's garden my own body seemed like a food plant too. Sometimes my toes would melt deep into the soil, stuck
momentarily, taking root with toe sensations, love toes, warm calves, calves and toes in sensoral paradise. This was our daily work: calves and toes in sensoral paradise, removing weeds, turning their roots to the sun, saving the organic left-overs for compost, and forking the bare soil into formations of cool moist liquid earth formations. The dew was friendly in the morning causing leafs to drip,,,,,,,,, splattering on my fleshy leafy arm. That's what it seemed like after all that hoeing........a fleshy leafy arm. Bala showed me how working in the garden could be a kind of ancient meditative labor resulting in an experience of garden consciousness. In other words a state of mind which transcended the anxiety of routine, past durative time we flowed into a therapeutic daily experience of cultivation where all opposites had been transcended, black & white, male & female, God & Goddess were unified through our participation in this primordial activity of becoming one with our blue/green garden.

The garden for Bala was a church of life. It's structure built on the way of the seeded soil, the way which I discovered, joins seeds with the fertile yoke for the collective perpetuation of all existence. Whether you realized it or not, I Bala, you, and healthy yam roots are a singular organism living an "I-ation" life where we see, feel, laugh and riff on the offbeat with all creation. Moment by moment Bala could easily recognize the beauty in life where beauty was the original recognition of the quality, essence, divine fluidic stuff, which is at the center of the thing he looked upon. This wisdom/ experience is what Bala and I and you hoed, forked and planted in that dewy morning garden in Caledonia. Bala knew the meaning of self reliance and continually demonstrated how he not only survived through self reliance and cooperation with our fertile Earth, he and his plants prospered from it. No slave labor or bureaucratic system was required for the building of Bala's temple, because his temple surrounded his self. His temple was his body garden and his interest in the fine tuning of his temple with the big fat yoky pulp--the whole Mother Earth temple. The food that one nurtures into existence can never be separated from the food of one's own body. We are food remember, every last liquid, protoplasm drop.....food. Food for life. Food for Moushi. Like a perpetual hiccup,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,, foodooooooooooWe swallow, we wait, we feel the sensation grow--foooood. We want more food! Our stomach swells, we wait, it says to us, "eat food!" Eat good food! Eat God food! Food from your hands, of your hands, that's the value of this essentially Rasta experience. Living through food. Swallowing..... no, just a minute, first plant, cultivate, reap, prepare, then swallow, yea man that's
how Bala riffs. Hiccup-cultivate, plant,-hiccup... Feed me, for me is food! Love me, I is food! Live through me, for the "I" is food! I'm swelling, dieing, falling away from myself, bursting forth with new life that sends a vine above and a root beneath. Mound the yoky pulp so my root shall swell, and my stem will gather strength growing up the stick you set for me. Give me water, nutrients, and light so that I can process it into floral buds of self discovery. The more we touch, the sooner we shall dwell together. You inside of me and I inside of he/she and you. 1-n-I as one food. One heart, one love. You carrying me and I carrying you in life. Cooperation without the fear of swallowing, even to swallow yourself. Because you remember sometimes that you are food, and that you have a sweet & bitter flavor which is distinctly your own. "Even a salty delicious taste," Bala says. So testing this hypothesis in the morning dew, you find your self (accidentally at first) reaching out to one of your sappy ripe limbs, (cautious not to disturb the honey bees that are working there) fondling with your moist tongue at first, gently savoring that flavor of your leafy limb, which is distinct from your leafy foot with the flavor that is an original valuable self flavor. Excited by this first taste you hastily tear off a piece of flesh and pop it between your salivating lips, swallowing your being which in the same instant is you again. You have filtered yourself through your-self and can feel yourself grow with integrity this way. This is the Bala experience of self sustainability, the much sacred event of taking life between your leafy lips, sucking at her/his/our tender sweetness, sending her/his/our fluid to that love place at the core of your own temple heart and desiring to do-it again because this is how rock-steady flows.

You spin this way and that and this way again, spiralling with Bala and growing as a vine creeping up your own spine. The spine! Gosh, spine! Waaaho, spine! A spine from which you grow, radiating in every direction from you, you radiating from you. Where are you? I'm at my spine! Oh my! A spine to climb! A spine for my vine. A spine which bears the fruit of time. No other spine. Not a spine besides that spine, right there in all space and time! Bala chuckles, the rain falls, round and round, spiralling pods of liquid joy turning from the blue liquid sky eye. That drop drips, that one squishes that one misses, more will fall. Happy, joyous water pods with little messages of love which trud from the clouds with this place of impact targeted in their pod souls. Reaching your fragile leaf, they are bursting on contact into a billion sensations of love. Pouring over your head like anointments do. As it drips, splatters, love, patters, drops from the highest leaf to the next.
lowest, running to prove gravity, dripping along the stem, finally reaching the feminine yoke, who giggles and swells with organic delight. Down, down, spattering every root, every tiny cuticle of the collective body, flowing oooover we, through we's deepest pores beyond into we's veins, we's flesh, we's heart, we's mind and processed into thoughts of pure contentment, which is the condition of all life. The power/energy of growing, the force of choosing, the experience of seeing this center for as long as life comes this way. Oh my!

I am divine! I am divine original experience! I am original experience! I am original experience! I am original experience! I am original experience! I am original experience! I am original experience. I am original experience.

A fierce jab with the fork, rocking backwards and forwards, foot to fork, rocking backwards and forwards, foot to fork using the weight of our collective body, sending another slab of earth over into the rippling contours of fresh turned soil. Foot to fork, this was the rhythm which set up the mento tempo that throbbed over a heavy watt amplifier in our collective burning soul. Bala explained that mento was an African derived musical trait, a "skamation creation" where the syncopation comes on the second and fourth beats. This rhythm was strictly a rural concoction which was sure to be frowned upon in the drawing rooms of St. Mary. Bala said, "dis is the people's music, food music, the music of our Lord Fly."

As the sun rose and set year after year, this vibration of husbandry wound round and round in every generation past. This was the natural process of the of the agrarian way of life. The event of cultivating, making the earth say YAM, instead of millet grass and milkweed. This annual process was outside of durative time it was for Bala a sacred reactualization, an event that took place in a mythical past, properly speaking, in the beginning. By the harmonic repetition of fork to soil, season after season, time after time careful to bend your knees, over and over again, Bala showed how he passed without danger from ordinary temporal duration to mythical sacred time. The essential difference between these two qualities of time struck me immediately: By its very nature, sacred time is reversible, in the sense that it is an original past made present. With each new season, Bala participated in the same sacred event, in the same sacred original time--- the same time that had transpired in the previous year, or in a time three centuries ago when Bala's great, great grandfather was bending his knees, always careful not to over use his
spine...........this is the time of illo tempore. This is the impulse of origins, the repetition of a way of being that maintains a sense of primordial purity. Bala and his great, great grandfather and all their ancestors desire to live in the world as it came from the Creators hands, fresh, pure and whole. It is this nostalgia for the perfection of beginnings that explains Bala rifting in the dewy dawn surrounded by his temple, which when sewn and forked properly speaking vibrates him into a paradigmatic garden Eden that constitutes the same Eden that his ancestors have sewn and forked since illo tempore. Repeating the paradigmatic act of garden cultivation, Bala was not tilling his ground to exploit it, rather he was reproducing a sacred event, a sacred cultivation of an eternal present, a "succession of eternities" which made possible the profane duration of historical events (Eliade).

Bala's central intention (which made my toes tingle) during garden time was the conscious reintegration with a primordial situation; that is through our actions of cultivation we were bringing forth the presence of ancestral spirits (thickening the grove), collaborating with them in nothing less than the original divine creation of the world. Life feeds upon life and for Bala, garden consciousness is an affirmation of life swallowing itself to continue its inbeingness. On a cosmic plane, Bala was accepting his responsibility as guardian of Eden, ensuring the perpetuation of life through cooperation with the natural phenomenon of creating and consuming food.

It is not a matter of theoretical speculation, that Bala and Moushintau riffed to the process of cultivation, planting, reaping, cooking and swallowing the original pudding/universe since illo tempore, this my friend is the process that precludes all reflection in this world. Bala's garden Balm Yard is where trillions of organisms, mammals, molecules and seedlings like yourself are sown, cultivated, nurtured, forked, reaped, peeled, sliced, diced, squeezed and stirred, into the most rich delicious, creamy, sweet, nutritious, divine, formless, indistinct, stew, pudding, universe, dwelling that Bala had ever so joyfully tasted. For anyone to taste this primordial recipe is to swallow one's self in a true outburst of general love, initiating at the same moment the concept of space and, properly speaking, space itself, and time, and universal gravitation, and the gravitating universe, making possible, eggs and seeds and billions and billions of suns, and planets with infinitely informed layers of organic life, with
bannana, corn, and of mountains from which water flows to irrigate fields, and valleys, where cows, and goats are grazing and children playing, and swinging and Bala, yes Bala (and his every ancestor), are sent in the form of an expanding, collapsing heat energy pure love halo, hurled to the four corners of the universe; scattered through the continents and planets, eternally sowing, raking, planting, nurturing, cultivating, us into a giant expanding, collapsing cosmic pudding/yoke/universe.

A pudding that is made of me, you, the universe and us, grown to plump juicy ripeness then blended with an impulse of pure joy which Moushintau was sure would make us turn round and round in love, in time, in space, in unity, in toe tingling satisfaction doing it all again and again, because this loose state of egoless soup/pudding is the most beautiful, divine, art/architecture sculptural essence manifested in every human soul. The potential to swallow it, chuckled Bala, is purely up to us!
unfurling a dwelling:

You mean... Quashi replied... the act and process of making a vegetable dwelling? There isn't much I can tell you, except maybe not to forget that you don't have dominion over the food chain. Form? Well, we didn't have any particular one in mind, or more accurately we were not sure we had one in mind, or rather we didn't accept that only one existed. Yes, true enough, I did study architectural design for what seemed to be lifetimes and I'm sure you're correct when you say that form and space considerations are the most valid criteria for judging good architectural design in the eyes of (besides me) professors teaching behind the ivy covered walls of every ivy league school of architecture throughout the nation. But according to the school of Bala, form and space are part of an event which occurs when the builder feels that the object of construction is no different from his/her own peace of mind. In other words this is when there is no separation of the identity of individual and identity of form, which involves a sense of unself-consciousness and a complete identity with one's circumstances as well as a complete peace of mind about those circumstances. Peace of mind produces right values, right values produce right thoughts, right thoughts produce right actions and right actions produce work which is a material source for others to see the serenity at the center of it all, this was something like the philosophy Bala maintained about building. Bala felt that architecture was an inner reflection of our central soul/spiritual reality. He thought that when one isn't dominated by feelings of separateness from what he/she is working on, then one can be said to 'care' about what he/she is doing. That is what caring really is, a feeling of identification with what we are doing. When we have this feeling, then we feel the inverse side of caring, quality itself. Quality is the parent, the source of all architecture. Quality exists outside the view finder of intellectual reason, it is truly the core experience that occurs at the moment before intellectual criteria can be considered. Preintellectual form and space are in constant flux, evolving as the subliminal self finds harmony or peace with it's memory of what it is, along with the constant sense of what the environment around it is saying (Pirsig).

Quashi continued his stream of conscious muttering...........on the isle of Jamaica I was a seedling in an unfamiliar context which made it easy to imagine myself having no form. Existing without
form, was a way of finding peace of mind by recognizing all possible forms that I might or might not take. Bala showed me how to perceptively sense all possible forms within my self, and all possible processes to get to one particular form or another. In thinking back on it there were no limitations or strict specifications on what I should end up being or looking like. My mission according to Rasta vision was to be, not to choose one being over another being. I remember simply and full heartedly existing, feeling myself intensely, there, which did not prevent me from feeling myself equally there in some other way. When one considers existing straddled like Bala upon the wave of an unconditional world with no limitations or conventions of form, compared with choosing one form over another (like architects), which excludes the potential manifestation of any other form again, well, I don't mind saying the way of formlessness is the beautiful way for me.

As far as the process of building, Bala showed me how to more or less just grow on all sides at random, or according to that which felt most natural. Of course what was natural was very much dependent on the inherent phenomenology of the natural environment.....the sun, moon, ticks, dew, mosquitoes, pollywogs, food, fuel, and most importantly the availability of indigenous resources that were afforded to wrap one's self in shelter. Bala showed me how I-n-I as roots could exist acutely aware of the natural environment which afforded stimulates that affected every aspect of a dwelling. Bala's advice was to remember that the environment, I and my dwelling were all reciprocating a common I-sense of total peace and harmony as one undivided cosmic omnipotent thing.

The dew and sunlight were vast sources of information, reliable and precise, they brought me edibles which I absorbed through the surface of my pod and inedibles which I processed into ideas about the nature of the universe that I existed within. Kinesthetically sensing the universe was as important as eating good food. By both swallowing the universe and feeling it, I learned about the source of my own origins and my place in the larger cosmos that I was truly a holographic portion of. There were many other sources of information that I learned from, besides the sun and dew, there were the stars, moons, trees, animals, birds, buds, storms, beetles, winds, the humidity, the temperature, the slope, the buds, the flowers, the roots, the buds, the gravity, the density, the colors, the buds, the buds and the buds. Did I mention the buds?

You never could predict how all those stimuli were going to turn out after transforming them into physical form. The only thing I could know for sure, is that no matter what happened, I would
remain focused on the beautiful experience of receiving all those different stimuli. Sometimes a stimulus tickled so much that I couldn't help inverting inside-out (like a kaleidoscope) with laughter. Other times an itch, a shudder, a cold chill up my vine. It was a sensory showering of contextual experience. But you shouldn't assume I just lay there passively, dumbly accepting everything that came. After a while I had acquired some experience and I was quick to analyze what sort of stuff was arriving, then decided quickly how I should behave to make the best use of it, or to avoid the more unpleasant consequences. It was all kind of complex dance of contracting and relaxing at the right moment. I could reject, attract, stimuli or in the end even move to another place. By moving from place to place I soon learned that space indeed was not homogeneous. There were interruptions, breaks in it, some parts of space were qualitatively different from others. I spent quite a lot of time in those days moving between places, comparing the experience of stimuli, context and relative orientation. I soon learned that unusual elements at different places in space, like abandoned stone dolmens or broken down clothes lines and old shoes, helped me to piece together the history/mythos and meaning of one particular environment and distinguish it from another environment, which otherwise, rationally speaking, occupied the same vast expanses of space. The elements that I observed proved that many ancestral podlings (living and unfurling like me) had also responded to environmental stimuli and had chosen one particular place over another, this decision, I noticed, was based on the beneficial affordances provided at that place. The recognizable artifacts from past podling settlements, always could be found just where I too had felt there was a kind of convergence of special environmental and spiritual forces. These forces made life more sustainable and simple. Bala agreed, it was this convergence of special past and future energy which broke the vastness of space making 'place' instead of space. Place which created a center where inner peace was most easily attainable. I was relatively sure, that while time in years had gone by since a seedling like me had occupied a particular environment, some of the same meaning that existed years ago was still active and useful today. Those podling artifacts served well as models for building my own habitation in the same place. In fact the more I understood about incoming information from environmental stimuli and from artifacts built by previous podlings, the more I understood the nature of what I began describing in this section as the nonhomogenity of space. I found, just as all podling settlers found before me, that there was one particular event that existed
outside of time, so far outside of time (not in the past, present, or future) that it originated the concept of time itself, this was the event of self illumination when we find out we are in harmonic reciprocity with that original dance of love which sent the formless universe of our minds into an expanding/collapsing crystallization of the original universe from which we all have been born. All along in this story I have been returning to this primordial event because everything, including us, time, the universe, and this story was not proceeded by any other event. We could not have existed without this original vibration that was sent (special delivery) from billions of moving legs rubbing rapidly backwards and forwards and forwards some more from the mythic original Balm Yard of Bala.

This is the Balm Yard where Moushintau spanked the first pudding/universe/dance so that it gasped and finally took root. A pudding/universe that could not be found in the historical past, an original pudding in the sense that this pudding came into existence all at one time. Nothing (not even the world) could have existed before Moushintau cooked this nonhistorical original recipe, which sent the world spinning on an axis. This is the ancient Balm Yard where Moushi stirred and danced, round and round, turning out the mento rhythm which is the throbbing pulse of our own hearts. The Yard of origins which affords that funny break effected in space, a nonhomogeneous place that allows the world to be constituted, this is the Yard where one finds an axis mundi for all future, present or past orientation. The place, I recall where Bala chuckles and accidentally swallows both of his lips, over and over and over again. Where every thing is so abnormally real that your sure you've come to the right spot. This is absolute reality, opposed to the relatively real illusion of the vast surrounding expanses. When we find this place, we have found the place where we begin to grow, swallowing ourselves, sending roots beneath and vines above, a vegetal existence where you and everything else is constantly swallowing itself to be renewed in a closed circle which has a beginning, an end and a new pure beginning. Bubbling round-n-round and up & down in Moushintau's pudding. Moushi's hands stir an eternal-present, indistinct soup that constitutes a sacred place in the world, a place where we without doubt are rooted in existence.

This is the sacred place of our world where we purposefully keep returning, because this is where time is a succession of eternities and where space is ruptured by a sacred site. Where the universe was
born from a seedling like me or you, unfurling out of its feminine yoke from which it/we spread in all directions. Every construction, every inauguration of a new dwelling is in some measure equivalent to a new beginning, a new life, another rendezvous with Bala's garden Balm Yard, and every beginning repeats the primordial dance of origins when Bala and Moushintau riff to the facilitation, the I-ation, the coming together of hero seed and heroin egg. This repetitive riffing together of egg and seed constitutes the paradigmatic I-sense of origins, the moment when our History House & Bamboo Kitchen /universe sprouted and saw the light of day.

Now it's no use piling up words, and expressions to explain the novelty of my intention to make a History House and Bamboo Kitchen just as Moushintau cooked cosmic pudding, this repetition of the supreme event of existence, in and of itself, represented for me and certainly all those seedlings that had come before me, a big event. This was the event that had always been missing in my Western world view. I felt now, after the discovery of Moushi's pot of pudding, as though I was part of a much grandeur process that had begun long before I came into the world, and would continue long after I had gone. Naturally, like Moushintau stirring formless everything soup/pudding/universe with no specification or particular requirement of a finished product, I too would make, without considering what I was making.

So I can honestly say that my house and kitchen made themselves without my taking any special pains to have them come out one way rather than another, I was just happy with what came. This of course does not imply that I absent mindedly sprouted, vined, expanded and collapsed without applying myself, instead, I continually blended my own original sensations with all incoming environmental information, without allowing myself a moment's distraction, never thinking of any thing else, or rather, thinking of everything that it would be potentially possible to make from the incoming stimuli. The physical expression that matched the omnipotency of a core experience of life, is the interface of information that I continuously pondered during this time of manifestation. Every implement, that could be used to sculpt one media or another media, every color and mixture of colors that would characterize an infinite ambience of moods. All types of pegs, rivets, hooks and hardware that could be used to fasten this form with that form making this attached to that with these, I looked at the various patterns of light, and its
articulation and penetration of surfaces, the texture and feeling of form, I even contemplated the mystery of light itself, the time and distance that it had traveled, the Balm Yard that it had come from, the cauldron it had simmered in, the dynamics of wind, fire, along with the effects of rain and dew. I thought about the sustainability of landscapes, the astrology of alignments, the sounds, the rhythms, the thermodynamics of moving air, the efficiency of insulation, and the biodynamics of my own personal comfort. I thought about the taste of these forms, the bitter/sweet taste of my own limbs, the touch of these forms. The history of form. The cultivation of form. The spiralling, the collapsing, the unfolding, the forking, the growing, raking, reaping, the slicing, the dicing, the squeezing, the stirring, the cooking, the blending, the unification, the coming together, the impregnation, the 'sensorial', all encompassing bursting, swallowing, opening, closing, squishing rapidly backwards and forwards, hands-n-toes-n-fingernails-n-claws-n-wings-n-ears-n-eyes-n-suns-n-stars-n-planets-n-galaxies-n-quasars, with dense souls of gravitational energy, spiralling, twisting outward and inward, inverting, expanding, rapidly backwards and forwards with no dominion, with unification of all love, with flight with joy, with inexhaustible natural sensation, rapidly backwards and forwards, this is the way I relentlessly prodded the divine mystery of my own form, while I worked at the same moment building it, rapidly backwards and forwards. This was architecture for me, this was the real process of design. This was sculpture, painting, carving, making, building, pure life expression. This was the entire fast tracking process which moved rapidly backwards and forwards from programs to bubble diagrams, to figure plans, to C. D's, to concrete pours, to framing, roofing, lighting, detailing, to happy expressions on faces of unknown clients and unknown contractors and architects, all flashing rapidly backwards and forwards from body to mind to heart to soul.....from body to mind to heart to soul....from body to mind to heart to.....

As Bala would say, this is "hearticle" design, a cooperative Rasta approach to the natural proliferation of environmentally appropriate shelter. Through the joy of self reliance our life experience rooted, vined, sprouted, unfurled and bore the fruit of shelter at the balmy crest of Bala's Contentment Hill. This is the original shelter that has become known in Caledonia Jamaica as the History House and the Bamboo Kitchen. Both dwellings are like vessels of personal wisdom that spill'th over with reverence for food and compassion for a special man sweetening the world with a way of being that constitutes being present to the dance of everyday existence.
This is the yard of the ancient agrarian uncle, the place where productivity is monitored by those that feel that a 'string and yam' (texturally dense/taught) sensation is absolutely essential to understanding the processes of evolution. A green vibrant sunny place, all over the world where Moushintau is busy stirring a cauldron of sweet puddin' pie. The oven is well stoked and radiating a liquid vapor of heat that mixes with the sunlight pouring between the cracks in the walls of the Bamboo Kitchen. Moushi engages the stove's stone damper sending it deeper into the cavity of the combustion chamber causing the fire to calm with a thirst for air. A fiesty young cock encroaches on Moushi's territory ready to peck at the spoon that she had just stirred the pudding with when "shoooshing" cock-talk flies off the old cook's tongue, a well rehearsed statement of discipline to the chicken for coming too near. The chicken trotted over to the fence where Syerica was begging Red-Man for one last push in Bala's big fat swing. At the side of the History House Bala reaches behind the bar pulling out the silhouette of his ambassadors rake, under the bar he fumbles with his pail dented and worn by this daily ritual of collecting compost in his yard. Strolling, rake and pail in hand, he taps the two together scaring the chickens from the porch. Bala walks to the banana palm at the center of the lawn where he drops the pail to one side of a cluttered area of fallen leaves. Leaning over the rake, the old Rastafarian pauses to draw on his brown paper spliff. The rake scrapes the ground and Bala turns round and round scratching up little piles of organic trash. The sun peers its red tip over the edge of the eastern horizon making the dew soaked jungle shimmer with fresh morning reflections. The rooster and cow cry for food and the children dressed in blue and tan are on their walk to school. "Allright me Bredda"- Bala greets a visitor at the front gate. The gate bangs hard, then not so hard, then almost not at all. Pablo steps lively onto the lawn dropping a little sacrament into Bala's hand. Bala sings "Take away me lil' herb-no-no-no...Give me Westmoreland!" "Respect every time," says Pablo as he heads back out the gate. The rooster sings again just as Rocco appears (towel over shoulder) big boots stepping with long stride down the winding path beyond the water tank and Nya's one stop. "Baloooooo!" comes Rocco's vibration, "soon come," he says as he dips his head going into Nya's shop. Nya's voice comes, barely audible "just cool mon" then passing beyond audibility their conversation continues in Nya's shop. Bala responds, "good-good-good," and shuffles to the compost heap, spliff in lip, dumping a overloaded pail of leaves over the crest of his
posted pile. Wild chickens fight for snacks of worms and ticks that plummet from Bala's fresh find. Our agrarian uncle then grabs his watering bucket hanging by a rope tied to the rodwood waddle of the History House. The rain had fallen hard during the previous day so the drum at the corner (resting on a platform of stone beneath the bamboo eave) of the house was spilling over with plenty. Bala shoves the pail into the water drawing out a quantity that would serve well for every fowl. After providing enough water and grain for the fowl Bala disappeared into his garden for the last of his morning chores. The sound of Bala's machete chopping cane and his voice chanting, "come-come-come" sent a message to the cows who were filing in order down the steep paths of Contentment hill. Bala began flailing fresh cane over the zinc fence, chopped in bite sized pieces that were perfect for the jaws of the gathering number of cow. Bala emerged from the garden, sharpening his cutlass with the file that had the red ribbon tied around its palm frond handle. The veteran agrarianist, having finished his morning chores moved silently up onto the porch beside me, just as Moushi lifted fried plantain and pure potatore puddin out of the warm adobe oven. Bala stepped out of each of his shoes and sat, leaning his back against the door jamb of his woven wooden dwelling. His cutlass, propped carefully, balanced at an angle between the woven wall of the house and the stone floor of the porch. One last puff on the burnt down spiliff before passing it over to me. Moushintau sat the well blackened pot baked full of golden pudding on the porch floor in between Bala and I. Her raspy voice sung "JA-works everytime! One love baby!...give thanks and praise! JA-works every time." Bala looked upon the pudding then, sitting forward away from the door jamb, looked into my eyes and said, "right now we are in Canaan...right now we are in Canaan, right now we are in the promised land. Right now, right here, we live forever! oooooo WE LIVE ooooo JA LIVES ooooooooooooo FOREVER!"
resources:


resources (continued)


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interviews:

Bala. Agrarianist & Teacher, Caledonia P.A., Westmoreland, Jamaica.

Coffin, James. Professor of Anthropology, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana.

Moushi. Mother & Cook, Caledonia P.A., Westmoreland, Jamaica.

Schaller, Art. Professor of Architecture, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana.
slides:

1. Bala (planting)
2. Rocco (reaping)
3. Moushintau (cooking)
4. Contentment Lawn (site)
5. Bamboo Kitchen (frame)
6. Bamboo Kitchen (roof)
7. Bamboo Kitchen (wall)
8. Bamboo Kitchen (southwest elevation)
9. Bamboo Kitchen (southeast elevation)
10. Bamboo Kitchen (earth connection)
11. Bamboo Kitchen (roof overhang)
12. Bamboo Kitchen (interior)
13. Bamboo Kitchen (cookstove)
14. Bamboo Kitchen (cookstove)
15. BSU Improved Adobe Cookstove
16. Improved Cookstove (lighting)
17. Improved Cookstove (fueling)
18. Improved Cookstove (cooking)
19. Improved Cookstove (building process)
20. Coconut Catchment (models for water collection)
21. History House (foundation)
22. History House (frame)
23. History House (floor)
24. History House (stone terrace & wood floor)
25. History House (waddle)
26. History House (waddle)
27. History House (waddle)
28. History House (window)
29. History House (door...interior)
30. History House (door...exterior)
31. History House (east elevation)
32. History House (northwest elevation)
33. History House (east wall...exterior)
34. History House (east wall...interior)
35. History House (east elevation)
36. History House (entry)
37. History House (detail...exterior)
38. History House (detail...interior)
39. History House (southeast elevation)
40. History House (southwest elevation)