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(Note: Article recreated due to illegibility of original copy)

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Meet the Voodoo Chile

by Jim Thomas

From birth, man carries gravity on his shoulders. He is bolted to the earth. But man has only to sink beneath the surface and he is free. Buoyed by water, he can fly in any direction. Up, down, sideways. Underwater, man becomes an Archangel. (JY Cousteau)

Gravity was the original sin committed by the first living being who left the sea. Redemption would only come when we returned to the sea as already the sea mammals have done. (Sensitive Chaos, Theodor Schwenk)

In defiance of gravity, we surf, we skate, we generate music. We get air, we get off, we get high. In the ecstacy of our defiance, we are outside, we are free. All exceptional skating, extraordinary surfing, and breathtaking music defies gravity: whether the gravity of physics or the gravity of what is accepted as "normal." These arts are archetypal forms of movement done in different flowing mediums. The music of flowing forms is surf music. Surf music is music that defies gravity, music that cuts you loose and connects you with the power of the otherworldly.

'Scuse me while I kiss the sky ("Purple Haze", Jimi Hendrix)

In his song, "Third Stone From the Sun," Jimi Hendrix proclaims "You will never hear surf music again." Why does he say this? If you play this song at 66rpm, you find that Jimi's point of view is one of an alien viewing the earth from a spaceship in outer space. He presents himself as someone who communicates with his "Starfleet Command" (maybe God himself?) They tell him that the earth is known to have some form of intelligent species. He tells Starfleet he is going to check earth out. Then, after observing a while, he speaks as a prophet to the people of earth.

Oh strange beautiful grass of green with your majestic silken scenes your mysterious mountains I wish to see closer; may I land my kinky machine? Although your world wonders me with your majestic superior cackling hen your people I do not understand so to you I wish to put an end and you'll never hear surf music again." ("Third Stone From the Sun", Jimi Hendrix)

Under too many restrictions and limitations, he looks to earth and doesn't find an intelligent species. He finds people are no longer free, no longer liquid. They live within the limitations of gravity. Jimi does not live under these limitations. He is one who defies and challenges, as one who is both above and beyond, continually exploring the "possible which is inherent in the impossible" (Jimi Hendrix, Electric Gypsy, Harry Shapiro). Who is able to kiss the sky? Or who is able to say:

"Well I stand up next to a mountain and chop it down with the edge of my hand" ("Voodoo Chile", Jimi Hendrix)

Water, one of the most formless substances imaginable, was one of Jimi's favorite metaphors (the other was sand) (Jimi Hendrix: Electric Gypsy, Harry Shapiro). Water is the source of all life. It is the prototype of everything fluid and lends itself to constant metamorphosis and change. "you will never hear surf music again," because man, who owes everything to water is a monstrous saboteur of nature and its cycles. Jimi looks down and says "There ain't no life nowhere." ("I Don't Live Today", Jimi Hendrix).

If you can just get your mind together/we'll hold hands and then we'll watch the sun rise/from the bottom of the sea/but first are you experienced/have you ever been experienced?/well I have ("Are You Experienced", Jimi Hendrix)

Jimi was experienced. Jimi allowed no restrictions, no limitations. "Freedom of action" was Jimi's credo, his religion--he often autographed his photos with the words "Stay Free" (Jimi Hendrix: Electric Gypsy, Robert Shapiro). Water is the source of life and Jimi was watching the sun rise from the bottom of the sea. Neil Young said of Jimi, "He was completely gone--so liquid" (Guitar World Magazine). That is the essence. Jimi defied gravity in his medium. His sonic imagery is filled with unfettered flights of freedom. His aural maneuvers call up the most extreme images of energy blasting, penetrating, saturating, rearranging and purifying space. Jimi finds redemption in his song "1983 A Merman I Shall Turn To Be." The song is his anti-gravity anthem.

Hooray I awake from yesterday/alive but the war is here to stay/so my love Catherine and me/decide to take our last walk through the noise to the sea/not to die but to be reborn/Away from lands so battered and torn/Forever

Well it's too band that our friends can't be with us today/the machine that we built/would not save us that's what they say/they also said it's impossible/for a man to live and breathe underwater/anyway you know good and well/it would be beyond the will of God/and the grace of the king

So my darling and I make love in the sand/to salute the last moment ever on dry land/our machine has done its work well/played its part well/we bid it farewell/starfish and giant forms greet us with a smile/before our heads go under we take a last look/at the killing noise out of the out of style.