Erowid Experience Vaults Report Id: 86863

Jedi Mind Tricks
by Ben Kenobi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dose: T+ 0:00</th>
<th>3 hits oral LSD edible / food</th>
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<tr>
<td>T+ 3:30</td>
<td>3 g oral Mushrooms dried</td>
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<tr>
<td>T+ 4:00</td>
<td>1 bowl smoked Cannabis plant material</td>
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<tr>
<td>T+ 4:30</td>
<td>1 tablet oral MDMA pill / tablet</td>
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<td>T+ 5:00</td>
<td>1 tablet oral MDMA pill / tablet</td>
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<tr>
<td>T+ 9:00</td>
<td>1 tablet oral MDMA pill / tablet</td>
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Body weight: 135 lbs

Esthetic Evolution. The hippest among us describe it as the single most exciting event in our great state of Idaho (although, that’s probably not the most difficult title to attain). Every year come June the isolated hick settlement of Twin Springs (Population: 5) gets swarmed by a thousand ravers, Burning Man veterans, e-tards, drunkards, acid freaks and other various individuals that the County Sheriffs would most certainly frown upon. Set upon the top of a grassy plateau, with rivers below and mountains above, the scenic location becomes the center for a community built fundamentally on the principle of self-expression, in true Burning Man spirit. People are given the opportunity to build their own self-contained, autonomous society with its own aesthetic and ethical standards. Nothing is forbidden. Everything is permitted.

The sets of music each night go from 7 PM to 7 AM. I knew that I would need a lot of chemical energy to get through that much music. The first night I conserved my energy. I dropped a hit of my sugar cube LSD to gauge its potency. The trip was average, but I needed a gram-full pot brownie to really get me going. I went to a sleep at a conservative 4 AM, partly to conserve my energy for the next night, and mostly because there was a lot of THC in my system and I had little choice. The second night was going to be the main event. Jedi Flipping. I’ve found few recorded cases on the mixture of LSD, Mushrooms, and Ecstasy, so I decided it was territory I needed to explore on my own accord. Besides, who wouldn’t want to be a Jedi? It’s not like I’d be the only one at the festival completely twisted on hallucinogens.

I had a pretty good inkling of what Jedi Flipping was going to do to me, and I knew it would be above and beyond anything else I’d experienced up to that point. And, at the ripe old age of 17, I was not exactly inexperienced with mind-bending drugs. I’d had around 25 mushroom trips, 5 acid trips, and 5 experiences with MDMA (but always in the form of molly before this). I’d hippy flipped once, candy flipped once, wasted a lot of time getting stoned, and experimented with a few other oddities (Salvia, Morning Glories, Hawaiian Baby Woodrose). The shit I steered clear of was alcohol (for the most part), opiates, and hard stimulants. But if it had the potential to be mind opening, I wanted to try it. Ever since first reading Huxley’s “The Doors of Perception,” in
8th grade, I wanted to chase ultimate psychedelic experience. In my area, these drugs are by no means easy to come by (although I learned the hard way it’s easy to get ripped off). I stumbled onto pot in my search, but wasn’t able to get any illegal psychedelics until the summer between Sophomore and Junior year. Junior year saw great escalation in my psychedelic drug use. First mushrooms, then acid and ecstasy as they began circulating. I liked tripping. I wanted to trip in every possible set and setting, just to see the different directions my mind would go. I’d trip with small circles of friends, I’d trip at large parties, I’d trip alone, I’d trip while seeing a gig, I’d trip while playing a gig, I’d trip at school, I’d trip in nature, I’d trip at 3D movies, I’d trip any day and any way.

But that’s more than enough about me.

The Esthetic Evolution experience is primarily a social experiment, so it’s just as important for you to get to know my friends.

First there was The Prince of Persia, or Prince for short. The nickname came from the fact that he’s half-Persian, off-white in a state completely dominated by Caucasians. Me and him go way back. Back to the days of the elementary school playground, back to junior high when we first started playing our guitars together, back to starting our first band in high school, and all the while getting into smoking dope, ‘shrooming, and rolling together. The night of my Jedi Flip would be Prince’s first time on LSD (though not for lack of trying, we’d had experience getting ripped off together too). He’d done ‘shrooms quite a few times, so I told him to go ahead and opt for two hits for optimum visceral experience, and he planned to take his ecstasy on the comedown.

Next we have J-Nug, quite possibly my favorite person in the world, and certainly the funniest motherfucker I’ve ever met. Most people tell jokes, but J-Nug lives a joke (and at everyone else’s expense). Many who meet think he’s a douchebag, which probably stems from his habit of insulting everyone around him. But largely, it’s a persona he’s taken on for his own personal amusement. Blonde-haired, blue-eyed, and wearing a superhero’s cape around the festival, he looked like the high, drunken badass he was. Even though he’d very conspicuously spoken about his love of “gettin’ faded” for years, it wasn’t until a few weeks before Esthetic that he actually began drinking or smoking, and he certainly wasn’t at a stage where he was getting into ‘shrooms, ‘cid, or X. Still, considering he was a relative newcomer to substances he could hold is own with the best of them.

Then there was Jersey. He’s from Jersey. And he’ll let you know (usually by saying “I’m from fuckin’ Jersey!”). He’s just about as nice a kid as you’ll ever meet. However, as much as we like hanging out with him sober, when you put any amount of mind-altering substance in his body and he can turn into a total babbling idiot. He becomes like a horribly well-intentioned retard you don’t have the heart to tell to shut up, projecting every goddamn thought that pops into his head. He had gotten earned some derisive nicknames in his time. One of them being “The Two-Beer Queer,” fairly indicative of Jersey’s chronic condition of total lightweightedness. But Jersey was also convinced that he wanted some LSD for the night. I wasn’t sure whether it was a good idea, but there was really only one way to find out. “What the hell,” I figured, “if you’re good for the
money I’ll give you a dose.” As J-Nug so eloquently put it, “The One-Drag Fag frying on acid? That is gonna be a fucking sight.”

And finally, there was D. D doesn’t have any dumb nicknames, so I guess he just gets to have his name shortened to one letter. He’s the one who gave us a ride up in his big ol’ Suburban, “The Red Rocket.” He was Jersey’s best friend and the group Mom, too. Always wanting to know everyone was all right. If you were on powerful drugs and you weren’t in D’s sight, then in his mind you had either died or were in the process of dying. The top priority was to ensure your safety. I’m not sure what the trip would’ve been like without him there to look out for us.

Enough background for you? Shit man, you have no patience. I’m getting to the exciting stuff.

Saturday, June 19 2010. 7:30 PM.

We all take our acid. Sugar cubes dissolve nice and quick, it’s not like blotter where I’m swirling the tabs around under my tongue for five or ten minutes. Pop a cube in my mouth and a minute later I’ll have nothing but a residual sweet taste and the satisfying knowledge that I have 100 micrograms soaking into my system.

Three hits seems like a good dose for me. I figured with a day-after tolerance I’d need to double my dose to get effects comparable to last night’s trip. And why not drop another for good measure? There’s nothing to lose. Prince has had his two hits. Jersey’s dropped his. Shit, I don’t know about that kid though. We’ll see how this goes.

We’ve been sitting around camp getting stoned all day. It’s not as interesting as it sounds (and it doesn’t sound that interesting), but it provided some much needed R&R.

A little more sitting around, and the initial effects are coming on. It starts off softly. My vision gets sharper. Everything comes at me crystal clear. It’s a feeling like I’ve spent my whole life looking at the world through one window pane, and somebody just sprayed some windex on it and wiped it down. This acid is clean, too. There’s very little body tension, just that oddly euphoric psychedelic energy that comes in sheets through my whole body. It’s not speedy by any means, just a feeling that every action is performed with great purpose. It won’t be long now until I’m launched into outer space.

We can hear the first pulses of the electronic music in the distance. J-Nug is sipping on some bizarrely appetizing mixture of Tiki Punch and Vodka.

“I hope it gets more poppin’ up there tonight,” he says, looking lazily up towards the source of the music.

“I dunno man, it was pretty poppin’ up there last night,” I tell him. In reality, it’s not like I could judge. I was tripping balls last night. Pot has a way of bringing out everything that’s weird about an acid trip (and acid has some weird places to take me). My immediate physical surroundings were not of the biggest concern to me when I was raving.

“Yeah, I know it was poppin’ last night,” J-Nug says, “I just hope it gets more poppin’ is all.”
Jersey is looking off in the opposite direction. Across a dirt road, there’s an old school bus that’s been completely spray painted over with Alice in Wonderland themed graffiti. It’s got a flat deck strapped to the top and a couple couches and chairs where people can lounge.

“I’m coming with you,” D adds, hurrying to catch up to him.

Me and J-Nug follow suit.

Prince has been sitting in the driver’s seat of the Red Rocket ever since we dropped our acid. He’s starting to look a little zoned. “You comin’ man?” I holler through the car window.

“Naw, man. I think…” he trails off, looking like he’s carefully considering something. “I think I’m just gonna sit in here.”

I shrug. “That’s cool.”

We walk across the road and climb up a ladder propped on the side of the bus. As I pop over the last rung, I see a girl on one of the couches waving a peacock’s feather in circles a few inches from her face. She’s entranced. She looks serene. She must be on LSD.

Jersey sits down by her on the couch and begins to strike up a conversation. I don’t pay attention; I’m sitting on the edge of the bus and letting my legs dangle, sitting in silence with J-Nug while he munches on a bowl of dry Frosted Flakes.

I look out over the camp. What an incredible sight. People are wandering around in lavish costumes. It’s nice to see people as fucked up, freaked out, and into drugs as I am. Some of them have it together. Others don’t. Some are curiously roaming around with eyes glazed over, while others have let their minds deteriorate to a more primal state. They’re running and jumping, screaming and yelling, acting on every single impulse.

I look up at J-Nug. “It is going to get fucking wild tonight, man.”

He doesn’t look back, but he nods in acknowledgement. He’s more focused on his Frosted Flakes. I look back over the grassy plateau. The sun is setting over the mountains, casting subtle shades of violet across the sky. I focus on the peaks and see them like a time-lapse photograph. Over the course of a few seconds I can see hundreds of trees sprout up, grow, flourish, reach their peak, and then slowly wither and die before completely disappearing. There is already a certain fractal nature to the geometry of a mountain face. This becomes greatly exaggerated while tripping. As the light of the sun shines down through the cracks of the rock face, the sensory input hits me in two discernable planes of geometric patterns. It’s sort of like the end of 2001: A Space Odyssey. Thank God for the third hit. Acid visuals are always grand, but this is nothing short of spectacular. And to think, I’m still just coming up.

At this point, J-Nug has stuck his entire face into his plastic bowl of Frosted Flakes.

I want to divert his attention towards the sunset. “Would you look at that, man?”

“That is nice,” he admits.
He looks back down at his Frosted Flakes. I can tell he’s about to stick his face in again, but then looks back at me.

“I mean, that is fuckin’ nice, man.” He doesn’t want me to doubt his sincerity.

“Dude, Prince has just been sitting in the car for like thirty minutes,” D points out.

I look over towards our camp. “Yeah. I better go check on him.”

I walk over to the Red Rocket and Prince is staring intently at the logo on the center of the steering wheel.

I open the passenger’s side door. “You all good?”

His concentration on the logo is broken. He looks away, towards me. “Yeah.”

“Your acid kicked in?”

He looks at me like I just asked if the sky was blue. “Yes.”

“Yeah, mine too,” I giggle. “You should’ve fucking seen it on top of that bus, man.”

“Yeah.” He pauses and stares into the distance, choosing his next words carefully. “I guess I just didn’t really want to be around Jersey when I was coming up. I mean, I can get a little uncomfortable when he gets the way he does, y’know? I just didn’t want to start the trip off in a bad way.”

“I got you, man, don’t worry about it. He seems to be handling the acid well so far, though.”

I feel the suspension sink down in the back of the car. J-Nug, Jersey, and D are sitting on the bumper, talking to our next-door neighbor while he smokes a cigarette.

It’s bizarre to see him up and about. The night before he and his friends from Oregon had a vial of some fairly weak acid. In something of a drunken stupor, this neighbor thought it was a good idea to drink everything they had left, a good half a vial. He claims to have no recollection of the next ten hours, but I personally watched him lie underneath the shade of our car, getting up only on occasion to pace back and forth and forcefully vomit clear liquid. It was as though he’d only taken time to put two things in his system: drugs and water, and his body was violently rejecting both. Luckily, he seems to have fully pieced his mind back together.

Prince and I get out of the car and join the party.

“What’s up guys?” I give my psychedelically inclined neighbor an obligatory nod. He nods back, cancer stick dangling from the corner of his mouth.

Jersey turns to Prince and I. “Dude, is it normal that I’m not feeling my acid yet if you guys are?”

“Well, you gotta remember that we had more than you, so we came up harder and faster.” But from my observations of the past forty minutes, Jersey had been just as bug-eyed and giggly as the rest of us. He’s fallen into a common syndrome for a newcoming tripper. “I think you’re feeling your acid, dude. You just don’t realize it.”

Jersey looks confused and annoyed at the response. “But I thought I was going to see cartoons?”

Our neighbor chuckles. “Is it his first time?”

“Yeah.”

He turns to Jersey. “It’s not like you think. It’s not like any other drug. There’s no definitive moment when it hits you. It creeps up gradually and kicks your ass before you know it. A lot of it starts with you just getting into the body high and letting your mind wander, and then you’ll stop thinking altogether. You just need accept the fact that you’re frying, because all you have to do is go with it.”

This motherfucker actually knows what he’s talking about.

Jersey still isn’t convinced, “I just want to take it to the next level.” He turns to me, “I’ve got the money, could I please get one more hit off you?”

“Shit!” I yell in frustration. I just got ten hits yesterday, and now I’m down to one.

“Look man,’ I try to level with Jersey. “I’m a greedy motherfucker, and I wasn’t exactly planning on having all my acid eaten within a day of getting it. If you want to take your trip to the next level, you should smoke.”

Hmmm… on second thought, I’ve seen Jersey smoke before. Maybe that’s not a good idea for him. I mean, pot and ‘shrooms go great together, but pot and LSD can be a very odd and dangerous combination. Especially if you’re the One-Drag Fag. I reconsider the proposition. “Well…” I trail off. “I guess it’s not like that one hit would do me that much good anyhow.”

“I am definitely glad I opted for the second hit,” Prince chimes in.

“I’ve got the money…” Jersey reminds me.

I mull it over in my brain. Jersey is looking up at me pleadingly, anxiously. I carefully consider the circumstances.

“Fuck!” I finally burst out. “Go ahead. The last hit’s in that big red water bottle in the tent.’

“THANK YOU!” Jersey practically runs back there.

“Such incredible generosity,” our neighbor says, sarcastically, as he extinguishes the butt of his cigarette on his car’s bumper.

I pretend I didn’t hear him.

D looks at me. “Yeah, man. You don’t need that hit. I mean, how many ‘shrooms are you going to take tonight anyhow?”

The neighbor looks up, with a newfound interest in our affairs.

“I’ve got a little less than an eighth.”

The neighbor raises his eyebrows.

D is shaking is head in disbelief. “Jesus Christ… 3 hits of acid, an eighth of ‘shrooms, and all that ecstasy too? Just do me a favor and please don’t die, ok?”
The neighbor lets out a low laugh. “Jedi flipping, dude?”

I look over and he flashes me one of those rare smiles you encounter to varying degrees throughout your life. The kind you get from someone who knows exactly where you’re coming from and what you’re going through. The kind of smile that goes up into the eyes, making them narrow on the face. The smile of shared experience.

“You are in for one helluva time.”

Saturday, June 19 2010. 9:30 PM

The second hit of acid wound up hitting Jersey pretty hard.

He was looking at me with his eyes half shut, speaking blissfully. “Oh man. I just feel so good it’s just like my whole body is—”

He trailed off; his train of thought got derailed. I know the feeling.

After some time his smile melted away and he began to look very solemn. His eyes opened wider and wider, until I thought they’d pop out of his skull. “My... whole body... is... FUCKING!”

The final word had a force that nearly knocked me off balance. Shit, I wouldn’t have been surprised if it had. Everything around me was warping, swirling, growing and then shrinking again. My brain had turned to rubber and was being stretched out for miles in every imaginable direction.

It took a second for what Jersey had said to set in. When it did, a laugh escaped me from the inside out. It kept going until my eyes started to water.

I yelled back behind me, “Prince, you gotta check this kid out, man!”

But it was too late. I had turned away from Jersey for two seconds, and when I turned back around he was sprinting away in the opposite direction, ripping off his shirt as he went.

“Holy shit!” I howled.

D was concerned, though. “What the hell, dude? He better not wander off and die.”

J-Nug shrugged. “So what if he does?”

“He’ll be fine. I mean, he’s just trippin’ is all,” Prince concluded. His pupils were massive. He knelt down and picked a blade of grass, inspecting it carefully, following it closely with his eyes. He held it up and aligned it with the light of the sun, before letting go to watch it float away in slow motion.

“Good God,” he announced, “I am just frying through my goddamn skull.”

“You’re not alone,” I told him.

Everyone in sight was as openly inebriated as we were. I could focus on any one person and see their trip as plain as day. Their face would go through the entire spectrum of emotion. They’d smile, but soon frown. They’d look at peace with the world, but their look would soon subside to one of shock and confusion. Their actions made little logical sense, but I always understood where they were coming from. They could spend a whole two minutes laughing at the sight of their own
hands.
A blonde-haired kid about our age approached our group, sitting on the bumper of the Red Rocket right next to us.

“Heeeey guys... howwuh you dooin?” Man, this kid sounded like he was cognitively impaired and had just downed a fifth of Jim Beam.

I laughed anxiously. “Um...” I was a little taken aback with how he had just invited himself into our group.

Suddenly he jerked his head away and jumped back as though he saw something unspeakably terrifying behind us.

“WOAH! WOAH!” he screamed at the top of his lungs, eyes popping with each exclamation.

“Holy fuck, what are you on right now man?” I had seen some strange behavior so far, but this by far was taking the cake.

“I am on... molly,” he smirked. “She is my besssssst friend. Woah, woah... WOAH! WOAH!”

“Yeah I’m down with molly, man,” I told him, trying to ignore the ear-piercing shouts he used to punctuate his sentences, “but Lucy has always been my main squeeze.”

He sank deeply into thought. Lucy?
I could see the gears turning in his head. Who’s Lucy?

“Y’know, Lucy... in the Sky... with Diamonds...” D clarified.

Finally it clicked for him. A grin crept across the width of his face. “Well...as for Lucy. I guess you could say that... she’s my friend too!” He erupted into hysterical laughs, but they soon faded back to screams.

“WOAH! WOAH! WOAH!” He ran away from the camp.

I looked at my friends. Had that just happened? I didn’t even know what to think anymore. How could so many people’s heads be this fucked? Or is my head so fucked that I don’t even know the difference, and everyone else is just acting normal?

“Fuck that kid dude. That kid was fucking annoying.” J-Nug got more and more insightful as he sent more and more vodka down the hatch.

I saw an unmistakable tall figure walking towards camp. I prodded J-Nug, “Hey dude, look, here comes Jersey. His shirt’s back on... I figure that’s a good thing.”

J-Nug looked up, unenthused. “Fuck this kid dude. This kid is fucking annoying.”

He came up to camp as though the way he sprinted off earlier was nothing out of the ordinary. “Hey guys, you guys want any hamburgers? Man! There’s this lady back there giving out hamburgers!”

He looked me square in the eyes.

“I’ve never felt this...”
None of what he had to say concerned me very much. I was more interested in the fact that he was chewing on a stick about thick and long as my goddamn forearm, holding the whole thing up purely with the strength of his jaw.

Prince grabbed it from his mouth. “Come on, man, seriously? You don’t know where this stick has been.”

Jersey snatched it right back. “It’s my cannibalistic biting stick! We decided I needed a cannibalistic biting stick!”

His anger quickly turned to remorse. He handed it back to Prince, apologetically.

“Throw it far…”

Prince laughed, “You wanna play some goddamn fetch, man?”

Jersey gave no clear answers, but certainly smiled a lot.

Prince shrugged and thrust the stick over his shoulders, winding up for a big toss.

I had no clue what was going on, but I knew I had to stop it.

I grabbed the stick before Prince could get it airborne. “Look man, I’m all for it, but this is not the time nor the place!”

Jersey shook his head at me, disappointed. “You’re no fun.”

I was shocked. No fun? And to think I gave this rat bastard my acid.

“Say, Jersey, what do you think of the ol’ LSD?”

“It… it is my favorite.”

“That’s what I thought.”

I sure showed him. What was I showing him again? And why is Jersey taking off his pants?

“Um…”

“I’m just changing into shorts dude. I wanna go dance soon.”

The music had been going for a couple hours, but we hadn’t even gone up to the stage yet. In fact, most people hadn’t. I think we were all too fried. But as nightfall approached, we knew that’s where the party would find itself. It was about time to head up to the main attraction, The Dome.

The Dome was an extremely psychedelic place to situate yourself. It was made of metal piping (kind of like scaffolding except it was in the shape of a… dome). The pipes formed various geometric shapes all around. Triangles, pentagons, hexagons… The sound system was like none I’d ever seen or heard. Every frequency cut through crystal clear. The music couldn’t just be heard, it could be felt. The bass hits rumbled me from the inside out. The mids enveloped my whole body while the highs assaulted my frontal lobe. But like any respectable display nowadays, the Dome had to hit me on all sensory levels. Behind the stage, loops of film were rear-projected onto massive screens. There were LED lights powerful enough to shine patterns on mountain faces a few miles.
away. And, most importantly, the top of the dome was rigged with powerful pyrotechnics. The bass drops were accompanied with 20-foot spurts of intense flame.

The next few hours are a blur of raving with a head full of acid. Eventually J-Nug came up and tapped me on the back. He pointed back towards camp and made gestures that unmistakably communicated his desire to roast a bowl. I walked with him and Prince.

There’s a part of me that wishes I had brought a flashlight to Esthetic. It was damn near impossible to see three feet in front of me at night. On the other hand the lack of sensory input, as always, produced stunning visual effects. As we were walking, I was treated to incredible technicolor fractals all around me.

We got back to camp. “I think I’m gonna drop my first roll,” Prince said. “It’s really getting started in there.”

“Go for it dude, I’m gonna take my boomers,” I told him. I fumbled around in the tent for my big red water bottle that I’ve always used to store drugs in. Finally I found it and twisted the cap off. I pulled out the biggest ziploc bag stuck my nose in. It smelled like my favorite thing in the world, that bizarrely dungy scent of psilocybin mushrooms.

Saturday, June 19 2010, 11:30 PM.

Most people are not big fans of the taste of and smell of mushies. Personally, I have grown to love both. Even if they smell like shit and taste like dirt, I have grown such a good association with the trips that the sensations leading up to it always excite me. I popped them in my mouth, chewing ‘em up nice and slow, savoring it. Even after I swallow, the taste lingers for some time. It’s nice. It makes my mouth feel warm, and before long the feeling has crept into my entire body. The body tingles start in my soul and seep up through the pores of my skin, bubbling over like magma from a thick reservoir deep down beneath the surface. Before long I’m completely bug-eyed, with mouth agape and an indescribable feeling that my brain has been plastered on the outermost walls of the galaxy.

I do a lot of drugs, but I do mushrooms too. They’re not drugs. They’re much bigger than drugs. I’m starting to feel them come on when we sit down to smoke a bowl.

“Will you pack this, dude?” Prince asks me. But one look up and he changes his mind. “Actually, you’re frying pretty hard. I won’t make you think about it, I’ll pack it.”

He corners the bowl, drags slow, and holds the hit deep in his lungs. He throws his head back in relaxation when he exhales, thick white smoke hanging in front of him. Prince is a man who loves his weed.

“Master Kush. This is some dank shit dude.”

He’s right. The bowl makes its rotations knocks us all out. It’s the kind of stone that goes right to your body.
“This weed is just taking me to Cloud 9,” Prince said.

Each word came out so slowly it was as though I could see each one formulate in front of Prince’s mouth and float away before the next one came. Time was slowing down like a locomotive. The sounds themselves were damp and muffled, like how a good DJ will start off a breakdown with the resonance backed off all the way, giving the track a drowned out sound like I’m hearing it underwater. But I always know he’ll slowly bring it up higher and higher, then higher again, maybe kicking the drums back in before the treble is piercing my ears and the tension is so high I can barely stand it. But when the bass drops back in (and in the dome, flames spit out overhead), I can take comfort in the fact that the party will rage on until the whole cycle repeats itself.

D and that giggling freak Jersey walk up to the car.

D yells in to us, “Get out of the car so I can lock it up. Oh, and grab all the water out of the trunk and put in the tent. I’ll be damned if you guys are gonna get dehydrated when you’re rolling.”

I step outside the car and am hit with a wave of vertigo. “Woah…shit…"

J-Nug nods in agreement. “It’s good bud, doggie.”

Yeah. Good bud, that’s for sure. Good ‘shrooms too.

Shit. Three grams and I’m getting up near a spiritual dose. I try not to smoke at spiritual doses. Half eighth and I can toke my heart out, but three grams… Am I really ready for this trip, stoned of my ass and with a mind already warped by LSD? Did I finally overestimate my own ability to keep it together?

Wait, what time is it? It’s too dark to see my watch, let me grab my phone. 12:08. Cool. What’s that mean, again? When did I take those mushrooms… am I peaking yet? Or am I gonna go further out, still? Am I ready for this?

Ready or not, here it comes. I’m feeling it all through my body. Waves of tension come through the top of my skull, down my torso, and phase through my arms and legs until they finally reach my outer extremities. Fuck, I’m in for something big.

Something’s coming for me. The whole world’s rumbling.

“Wwweee’rrreee gggooonnmmmaaa hhheeeaaadd bbbaaaccckkk tttoooy ttthhhheee dddoooommmmeeee.”

I nod. “I’ll come with.”

Why did I say that? Who am I talking to? I can’t hear my own voice, but I can see the sound project outward and reverberate. Yes, I have certainly said something.

I don’t know how long I’ve been following these people for. It’s felt like ten seconds and it’s felt like two years. Wait, where did they go? I wish I had a flashlight. Who are they again? I stop walking. Why would I even want to walk… why would I start? It’s certainly easier to stand.

 Darkness is no longer dark. These patterns can be ignored no longer.

All around me there are swirling vibrations. They have no color; they’re beyond it. They’re moving
constantly, spiraling upward like Da Vinci’s early conceptions of helicopters. They’re dependent on one another, drawing on each other’s energy for stability, forming grand double helixes like colossal strands of DNA.

But all things come to an end. Nothing ever lasts forever, right? Each end of these things is fixed onto something definite. Each half is distinct, the bottom and the top. It’s like it’s a circular vortex, spinning...

Wait a minute... I recognize these fuckers! They spun me all to hell the last time I tripped 20x Salvia. These are my thoughts. Good thoughts, bad thoughts... They can be friends or foes, and they’re not afraid to switch on a dime. Trust me, I’ve seen it happen, and it can be a very ugly thing.

But not this time. I’m in control now. How should I let these things spin me, when it’s really me who spins them? This vision is familiar to me. I remember it from the time I Hippy Flipped.

It’s the one cycle that all the others are derived from. It starts in my mind and projects upward to the highest imaginable peak. Here I find concepts, ideals, the way things ought to be. It’s the infinite truth of the yin. It is completely unbound by time, because it can apply to any and every moment. I’m in control of it; I can mold it any way I please. Everything’s perfect for me there, because it’s a construction I’ve created by and for myself. I think that, as day turns to night, this must be the place I visit in my dreams. But as much as I’d like to, I can’t stay there. I have to sink downward, past a crucial split.

From there it swings to a low valley, where everything is contained within the finite point of the present moment. Here I find the other truth: not the truth of concept, but the truth of action. It’s unbendable. I cannot change what I’ve done once I’ve done it, though it’s easy to wish I could. That’s how people get hung up here. The heart of the yang is so immediate and tangible that I can lose sight of the other side of things. On one hand, a thought without action is rendered meaningless. No-one will congratulate me for what I regulate to the realm of my own mind. On the other hand, an action without thought is rendered dangerous. Then it becomes the epicenter of miscommunication, giving rise to conflict and confrontation. Actions have a lot of weight, for better or worse.

But in the big scheme, I rise back up from this point. The cycle enters back to my body through the chest, hitting the heart as it goes. It pumps the blood and circulates the oxygen and oxygen that animates my being. Then, at some ineffable chakra between the aorta and the cerebral cortex: Ouroboros. The serpent eats its tail, and the whole thing starts again.

I’ve seen this all before. I’m comfortable with it. I guess maybe it’s time to turn my head.

Visions like this are inescapable and infinite in this darkness. But in the distance I see a source of light, a source of sound, a source of creation.

I begin walking towards it, taking note of the fantastic sights around me. Three dimensional patterns are beneath me at this point. I’m seeing cubes that seem to occupy a fourth spatial dimension. I heard of these fuckers in Accelerated Math Analysis, but not like this, not hundreds
of them looking me in the face. What’s the word for these, these shapes have a word…

“...yes, certainly...they’re tesseracts.”

I’ve arrived at my destination. Look at these shapes, look at these lights. This is a truly intricate hallucination. Or is this the part that’s real? The line is getting fuzzy.

No, no. This is the Dome. This is what I came for. But why is everyone looking at me?

Are they just looking at me in all my dosed glory? Are they looking at my raggedy, torn up jeans and button-up shirt, two sizes too big, with the pattern of an American flag sewn across? Are they looking at my pupils, the size of flying saucers? Are they looking at me because I wandered in here mumbling about tesseracts?

I need to avoid their stares. Just turn around and walk away.

But I turn around and the stage is blocking my path. Oh wait...maybe that’s what these people were looking at.

Maybe I should turn back around and explain myself.

There’s no point, really. The ability to communicate a rational thought in English left me a long time ago.

Everything has left me, really. I’m a blank slate, regressed to a completely infantile frame of mind. When I was first born, I hadn’t placed any filters on my thoughts yet. There was only one thing going to my mind: pure human experience. As I was raised, there needed to be filters placed on these thoughts, purely for the sake of survival. As a biological organism, I cannot survive if I have no larger scope on the nature things, nothing to fill the void that exists beyond the definitions of the present moment.

The most basic of these thought filters is the filter of language. This is what children pick up first. They learn that that a certain concept is intrinsically linked to a specific vocal expression, the most comprehensible and basic ideas being “Yes” and “No.”

From there we have to filter our experience further. To be able to express more complex thoughts, we need to follow the collectively agreed upon pattern. This becomes the subjects, the predicates, the rules of grammar. It becomes the language. It becomes a specific pattern in thought that we adhere too, even though it’s not the only pattern out there.

Experience needs to be filtered down if we have any hope of being a functioning member of society. If we didn’t filter it, we’d constantly be like me...a freak with all his senses overloaded. If we can’t filter our thoughts down to something expressible, we cannot communicate with other human beings. We can’t collaborate with them. We can’t survive.

Programming a sound into a synthesizer works in a very similar way. You start with a basic, initialized waveform. If you play the synth at this point, it will simply sound a pitch. From there, a producer will run it through filters, oscillators, envelopes, and modulators, which will cancel out some frequencies and thus emphasize others. This is known as subtractive synthesis. You can
start with the form of a sine wave and create a literally infinite number of unique sounds, not because you added anything to the initial waveform, but because you took things away. In this same fashion, you can encounter an infinite number of unique personalities in your life, all crafted by filtering out parts of the waveform of basic human experience.

Psychedelic drugs take off all my mind’s filters, oscillators, envelopes, and modulators. I can see my speech, my mannerisms, and everything that shapes me as a human being manifest itself into patterns coming towards me from every imaginable direction. There’s an innate humor present in a drug trip, and fundamentally it is self-deprecating. I’m laughing at myself. I’m laughing because I see how I’ve been stumbling through my life in one particular way, when there’s a million different ways I could go, and I’m laughing because I think myself a fool for missing things so fantastically different yet so apparently obvious.

At this point, I’m laughing quite a bit. Things are getting very bizarre.

I look up towards the light show. My head cocks to the left. My joy leaves me. My smile leaves me. The steady pulse of the music puts me in a trance. My whole body starts to sway backward and forward. If you were to get up, stare at one point high on the wall of the far side of the room, and proceed to draw large circles with your head, you would be making about the same motion I was.

The entirety of human experience as I have ever known is beginning to fold in on itself. Time is compressing. Everything I’ve ever perceived and ever will is pushing into itself like an accordion, until it becomes a single, comprehensible axis on a higher plane.

I have finally come to the edge, and whether I like or not I’m getting pushed over into a new dimension. I’m aware of my surroundings in the immediate physical realm, but it’s no longer of any concern to me. The world has been rendered insignificant. The universe as I have ever understood it is just one universe. One of many.

Now that universe has subsided to a gigantic, rushing, fractal pattern (more specifically, The Mandelbrot Set), in which I can perceive not only our universe, but parallel universes as well. I see every course of action that could have possibly been taken throughout the history of time. Whether or not that was the course of action that actually was taken is no longer significant, it is simply one manner in which things could have unfolded. In a sense, actions have lost all their weight. I’ve been freed completely from the prison of the present moment.

What is action? Why does it matter? I’ll spend the whole night drawing circles with my head if I damn well feel like it.

Now there’s no way anyone around me could not know I’m tripping. I see people walk by and stare at me, some give me two thumbs up, some are simply taken aback, and others seem legitimately concerned that a kid so young has gotten so screwed up.

A lady comes up to me. I figure her to be in her sixties, certainly of the older crowd that attends an event like this. She’s too old to rave, but here for the concept. She’s an old hippy. I figure her for a Burning Man veteran. Hell, she looks like she could have even lived through the Haight-Ashbury
scene. Clearly though, she knows what I’m going through.
She speaks to me. “Trpinipg?”

Every one of my senses is too warped for me to hear her correctly. I’m sure I have the same look of confusion as the WOAH-shouting candy flipper I encountered earlier that night.

“Um…”

She speaks again, louder, clearer. “Tripping?”

I respond the only way I really can: I giggle. I make a Herculean effort to say “Yes,” or even to just nod, but I can’t.

Still, she understands.

She smiles. I’ve seen this before, the same smile my neighbor gave me when he heard of my plans to take these ridiculous drugs. The smile that has behind it some incredible telepathic meaning that I wouldn’t want to disgrace by trying to put into words. It’s the smile of shared experience.

She clasps her hands over my face. It takes me by surprise, this sensation.


“Yeah, her hands are cold,” I think.

By only giving me a few words to link up, she made me create a communicable thought, something I hadn’t done in a long time. She didn’t try to talk me down. She helped me help myself out of my trip. Shit, how long was I gone? Is there any further out to go? And, most importantly, how long until I get stuck out there again?

Boy, am I tripping. Thank God I get off on this kind of thing. I knew this would happen. I came prepared. When my head has gone out to play like this, there’s only one sure-fire remedy to keep me engaged. There’s only one thing that will fix me tight onto positive vibrations and never let me let go. Rolls. Thizz. E. Love Speed. It’s all about the Ecstasy, and I brought three of the best pills money can buy around here. But time is running out. I need to get back to camp. I need to pop at least one of those magic little e-bombs in my mouth before I get catapulted back out to the astral plane.

I have to find my friends again. It doesn’t take much looking. I tap D on the shoulder. I can tell he’s relieved to see me.

“DUDE! Where the hell did you go? I thought we’d lost you. Shit, man, I thought you were dead.”

“I might have been.”

J-Nug is crunkenly waving his hands in the air. Jersey is all smiles. The acid is still going strong. Prince is already rolling. He dropped when I ate my mushrooms. It’s funny how easy it is to tell when somebody is on a roll. They seem so content, so at peace with themselves and the world. I think to myself, “There’s no way somebody could be that happy for no particular reason unless
they were rolling.”

Prince is dancing harder than I’ve ever seen him dance before. He’s had a Yellow Puma. Supposedly, they were cut with coke. But when pushers have pills, they’ll always say it’s cut with coke. It sounds much more exotic that way. The fact of the matter is there’s not a whiff of coke in those pills, but certainly some straight amphetamine. As for how much amp there is, only two people know: God and the Chemist.

Prince turns to me smiling. Now, there’s a significant difference between a roll smile and a trip smile. A trip smile is akin to the expression I get when I’ve just heard an incredibly bad pun, and softly laughing is the only way to ease the awkward tension that’s thick in the room. A roll smile is more like an elated smirk, a display of absolute understanding usually only seen by those I care about the most, to let people know that I appreciate them for who they are.

“THESE PILLS ARE FUCKING SLAPPERS!”

Prince tells me what I can already see.

“Hell yeah, dude. I need to get back to camp and drop one.”

“I’ll come with you. I’m gonna take my molly.”

We walk back to camp.

“How are the ‘shrooms treating you?” Prince asks.

Shit, I can’t think about that now. If I start trying to tell him where my head was just at, there’s a good chance I’d go back there again. There are more pressing matters at hand.

“Well, the pot sure made it come on fast.”

Prince chuckles, “Yeah.” He pops a capsule of good brown molly that came through town a few months back. We heard later that the chemist said it was pure MDA. And, the chemist is one of two people who would actually know.

It’s dark, I can’t see where my hands are going.

“What are you looking for?” Prince asks.

Hmmm…what am I looking for again?

“I’m looking for a, uh…”

I keep my drugs inside my big red water bottle, but I can’t for the life of me remember the term “water bottle.”

“Shit, I’m looking for a…”

Prince is holding a plastic water bottle. I snatch it out of his hands and point to it, and then point to it again. I’m getting in a trance again. I can’t think, I just keep pointing and pointing. Prince is taken aback, watching me and laughing. My mind is going. I can’t lose it again, this close to finding my ecstasy. Shit, I can’t believe I’m about to take more drugs. I keep pointing and Prince keeps laughing. It takes a lot of willpower, but suddenly, there’s a burst of communicative energy.
“The word! I’m just trying to think of the next word! My thizz is in one of these…. .”

Suddenly, it comes to me.

“WATER BOTTLE! Yeah, that’s what I’m looking for goddammit! A water bottle!”

It feels like a great victory to have pulled myself out of the trance. Communication, that’s what it’s all about.

Prince has a light and helps me find my bag of pills. They’re so little and adorable. I take them in my palm and shine a light on, admiring the press. Two Blue Rolexes and one Green Puma. The press is clean on them all, with finely detailed logos.

Now, I’m someone who does his research before going in on a pill. Pillreports.com, and Ecstasy-data.org are lifesavers. All evidence I had access to led me to believe the Rolexes would be very MDxx high (subjective experiences suspected MDA), and I paid top dollar for them. The Green Puma was more akin to Prince’s pill. Good amount of MDMA, good amount of amp. The Puma will be speedy, I figure I’ll save it for last, to really keep me going even after the sun has risen.

Shit, I can’t believe I’m about to take more drugs.

Sunday, June 20 2010, 12:30 AM

I can’t stand the taste of Ecstasy, but it’s necessary. I always chew up my pills, for two reasons. 1) It gives a horrible chemical taste to remind me that I’m putting horrible chemicals in my body. 2) It makes them come on faster.

Rolls on their own are ok. I’m in the minority of users in that I don’t do back flips over how fantastic the effects are. I figure I have the same aversion to ecstasy that some people have to cheesecake. It’s too light, too sweet, too rich, and too fluffy. Still, I will never how a person could dislike cheesecake.

The problem with rolling is that it will take me to the most incredible places, but give me no clues as to how I got there. It launches me upward, keeps me on top of the highest mountain for three hours, and instantaneously tears me back down. This is when it’s easy to crash completely, to lose sight of the beautiful feeling that once seemed so obvious, and come to the conclusion that the only way to get back to that space is to take more ecstasy. This is what can render the experience meaningless. I dance through the comedown. Close my eyes, get some water, shit, do what I need to do, but make sure I keep dancing hard as ever. I need to expel my own energy in order to integrate the ecstasy experience.

The full glory of a roll unveils itself when mixed it with hallucinogens. The psychedelics give me the bigger picture needed to grasp the experience as it’s happening. I don’t have to go through the trouble of comprehending a roll after a depressing comedown, you can work to understand the roll and its implications at the peak. There’s this wonderful interplay between the head and the heart when the peaks overlap, the trip’s introspective understanding mixed with the raw emotion intensity of MDMA. The interaction between the drugs is unspeakably beautiful.

I always feel a roll come on faster than a trip. For the first twenty minutes, the buzz is nearly
imperceptible. I step on the dance floor and it’s business as usual. There’s repetition in dancing. Whether we know it or not, we always get locked in to a similar groove. In ten minutes or so and something strange happens. I’m not even thinking about it, but at some point there was a moment where my inhibitions completely dissolved. My body is moving into spatial dimensions it’s never considered before. I’m feeling the music from the inside outward, and motion has become effortless.

The only thing more remarkable than what’s happening to my body is what’s happening to my mind. Insecurities have evaporated. There’s no shame in myself, anything I have to say or do. But the really heavy thing is this sense of obligation to try and bring others to my level. When I see someone, I smile. Not because I’m amused, far from it. I smile because I want people to know that I accept them. I want them to know it’s perfectly ok to be who they are. I want them to know all the things I know.

I spaced my Rolexes 30 minutes apart. I’d had my fair share of rolls before, but nothing like that. Nothing that pure. Nothing that clean. That was even better than the best molly I’d ever got in on. Somehow people have been suckered into this notion that molly is more reliable than pills. “Hey, I don’t even fuck with pills maaaaan, it’s all about the molly, maaan, you gotta go molly, you gotta go puuuuure.”

Fuck that noise. If you think what you get is pure because it’s in the form of a nondescript white powder, then I don’t even know where your head’s at. Even if it’s got that nice brown tinge, how do you really know what you’re getting? At least with pills there are online resources, places where you can get a good idea what’s going in your system before you get in on a batch.

And the Rolexes were a helluva batch. Incredibly MDA high. No wonder I got charged extra.

Something funny happened to me over that roll, something that’s never happened to me before. There’s a gap in my memory. People frequently drink to the point of blacking out, but I’ve never come close to the experience myself. This was the first time anything like that happened to me. But I wouldn’t call it a black out; I’d call it a white out.

1:00 to 4:00 AM that morning must have been an experience unlike any other. That was it, that was the Jedi Flip. The ‘shrooms and the X synced up perfectly. It was essentially a Hippy Flip superimposed on the latter half of an acid trip. There are only bits and pieces of it I can recall, but they’re permanently carved into my mind like beautiful portraits, scenes from the best movie never made.

I recall at one point I was raving up front by the stage and the mixer and the turntables. A man with a cowboy hat leaned in towards me.

“Why don’t you jump up there?” he said, pointing to a spot on the stage right in front of the speaker cabinets.

I couldn’t tell whether he was joking or serious.

“Go on,” he said, grinning. “Dance your little heart out.”
“Yeah,” I thought, “why don’t I jump up there? Who’s to make me stay down here anyway?”

I leapt up and turned around to face the crowd, pointing upward, beating my arms in frantic circles to the beat as the kick drum boomed. People appreciate any such show of energy, I think. People gathered around and threw their arms up like mine. The man in the cowboy hat was jumping up and down, screaming, cheering, eyes rolling up into his head. He was elated, I think, by the fact that his idea had been acted on. It didn’t matter who had done the acting.

It wasn’t long though before a crew member pulled me down. “We can’t let you stay up there. It’s a safety hazard, for you and our equipment.”

“Makes sense,” I said. I was, after all, on some very unpredictable substances.

He acted like he didn’t want to have pulled me down. “Do you want a cigarette?” he offered, in consolation.

“No thanks.” I told him.

“Well... You gotta light?”

I reached in my pocket and flicked my bic. I held it up to the cigarette dangling from his mouth and the flame danced and flickered in the wind. He sucked the smoke in like it was soda through a straw, his jaw slowly lowering to create suction. The cherry flared up and the end of the stick was glowing. It always amazes me how easy cigarettes light. It’s all the chemicals they treat it with to make it burn even.

He exhaled and gave me a nod as if to say “You’re alright,” before I went back on the dance floor. He had long silvery hair and spoke with a thick English accent. He must have been there with Meat Katie: a breaks DJ, a Londoner, and the headliner of the festival. I had been psyching myself up for Meat Katie’s set.

Problem is, I do not recall Meat Katie at all. He was playing at the height of my Jedi Flip. It trips me out that I can recall a small encounter with a crew member vividly, but I can’t even picture Meat Katie’s face when he was the one making me dance for hours on end. There’s a lot of things I don’t remember. I’m sure I was dancing the whole time, though.

Several months later I went to a friend’s house to smoke hookah while his parents were out of town, and the 21 year old “house sitter” was throwing a party there. I walked into the living room where there were all these young adults sitting around and playing drinking games when suddenly one screamed out, “DUDE! I HAVE A PICTURE OF YOU!” I looked over my shoulders, was this motherfucker really talking to me? I don’t even know this guy. Maybe he’s just drunk. But he leapt up, whipped out his camera, and handed it to me.

Sure enough there I was, Jedi Flipping. I was drenched in sweat. Every part of my body looked like it was caught midstream in some heinously intense motion. My eyes were closed, and every muscle on my face was tensed up in pleasure. Apparently that’s just how I look when every motion I make brings orgasmic sensations through my entire body. Apparently that’s how I act when every pore of my skin is ejaculating the pure light of God. Apparently that’s what makes me white out.
Apparently that’s the kind of thing that total strangers find picture worthy.

And to think, if I hadn’t been wearing that same oversized American flag shirt, he wouldn’t have recognized me at all.

Sunday, June 20 2010, 4:00 AM

“We’re gonna go to sleep.”

All my friends are calling it quits. I don’t blame any of them. J-Nug and D have been running solely on alcohol and cannabis, neither of which are exactly known to keep people awake. Jersey’s trip is done, and Prince is in the throes of an X crash.

My pills are wearing off too, but I knew that would happen. That’s why I came prepared. The Green Puma will do me nicely. My reservoir of natural energy has been fully tapped, but with enough amphetamines in my system I won’t notice the difference. I better chew it up now. If I sync up the come-up of one roll with the comedown of another, the transition is very smooth. At this point, the feelings of a crash must be avoided at all costs. Sometimes I can’t recover from a thing like that. I reach in my pocket watch pocket and put the e-bomb on my tongue.

There it is. There’s the bitter taste. There’s the chemistry working. I’ve bought myself three more hours in the zone and I should make them count. I’m on the tail-end of the mushroom trip, and there’s a minor but still perceptible afterglow from the LSD. But there were a few hours there where it was all overlapping. The ‘cid, the ‘shrooms, and the X all piled on top of one another to form this otherworldly trifecta of pure psychodelically indulged bliss. I guess that makes me a Jedi now.

But what in God’s name drives a person to do a thing like that? I’ve taken these three powerful allies and used them in such an indulgent, hedonistic fashion. The LSD and the Mushrooms together were the kind of experience that could drive you completely off your skull. And what was my remedy for that... taking more drugs? Maybe this isn’t even drug use any more. Maybe this is abuse. Am I doing this for personal growth anymore? Have I been using these drugs for so long as a mere escape from reality? If that’s so, then what makes me better than an alcoholic, a coke fiend, a popper or a junkie?

Maybe they’re right, those people who seem so concerned about my habits. Those people who insist I have a drug problem. Those people at parties who always tell me that what I do is “bad for my brain” while I can smell the alcohol on my breath. Those people who insist that tripping will cause some incurable mental disorder. Those people who doubt that I’m in control.

It puts me in a bad mood to see people talk like that. It’s so often that when they say it, they have such a genuine look of concern on their face that I can barely stand to look at. I can’t bear that they’re that concerned. Furthermore, I can’t bear that they’re that concerned about me. And most of all, I can’t bear that they’re that concerned about me for no good reason at all. It used to be I’d try to spit statistics at people, explain to them how scientifically safe these things are for my brain, especially in comparison to their substances of choice. But anymore I’ve given that up. I just let them feel sorry for me. If it helps them feel better about themselves, then I guess there’s
no harm done.

But when I take one look around me, at everyone still thizzin’ at 4 AM and dancing their asses off, I can see that same look of concern all around me. I see water jugs being passed around communally, everyone concerned with the level of collective hydration. I see everyone smiling, concerned to let others know that everything is all right. I see people concerned with the happiness of themselves and all around them. And when I see things like this, there’s nothing better than the underlying feeling that I’m a part of something good, some incredible positive vibration that we’re somehow all spinning around on. There’s nothing better than to think about all those people who are worried about me, and to understand they’re concerned, fundamentally, out of love. There’s nothing better than to know that there’s people who care that much. But, most of all, there’s nothing to better than to know that those people are wrong. Am I out of control? Fuck no, I’m a goddamn Jedi. That’s as in control as it gets.

By 7 AM, the mushrooms had certainly worn off. The acid had subsided hours before. My roll was coming to an end as abruptly as the music was going to. There were only ten other freaks left in the dome. One look at any of us and you’d know that we all had lost our minds at one point or another during the course of the night. How else could we think that dancing to 160 BPM psy-trance after pulling an all-nighter was a reasonable investment of energy? As the final hits of the music faded away, one girl among us rounded us all up, had us lock arms and do a circular Russian dance in one final act of celebration.

“WE MADE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT! WE MADE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT!”

I looked down at my feet as I stumbled out of the dome and onto the dirt. My body was done. It was time to crash. It felt like a Herculean effort to keep my eyes open, or to even stand up. It was hard to stop from collapsing right there on the spot. Off in the distance, somebody was watching me in my stupor, laughing at the sight. As I approached, I made the figure out more clearly. It was my neighbor.

I was drenched in sweat when I walked past him, giving him the slightest nod I could afford. He slapped me firmly on the back as I passed. He still had it. That same smile. If a picture can say as much as a thousand words, that smile can say as much as a thousand pictures. I’d seen it on the old hippie woman, pulling me out of hyperspace, I’d seen it on dozens of dedicated dancers, completely loaded on X in the wee hours, and I’d seen it on this same man the previous evening, when he learned of the insanity I planned to embark on. It was the smile of shared experience.

“What’s up, Obi-Wan?”