

Channeling Bill Hicks

by Chris Weige

"I left in love, laughter, and truth, and wherever truth, love and laughter abide, I am there in spirit."

• Bill Hicks•

Bill Hicks came to America elbowing clouds, buffering soft mad insanity with music and gut laughs. Bill Hicks came to America crooning odes to the sweetened angel of genius, surfing black belted through eternity's ancient lakes and merry-go-rounds. It was followed in heaven with applause. He resided as a preacher, as a poet, as a ravaged wolf sighing in the wilderness. He called on tomorrow to report yesterday's demise, and request advice. After all, what does one do with six gleaming eyeballs? When you've seen the ocean's clitoris swell for us, how do you polish that and dance around your very own lips?

You become a warrior of the stars. You coat your words with sugarcane, lest they sting and disrupt entire belief systems in one blow. You search the truth through the madness of the world, your own madness, the madness of your fathers and mothers, by God the madness of every playground!

Bill Hicks courageously wandered the sins of our forefather's while simultaneously, even gently, mothering the all-divine. He did what most human beings refuse: Bill Hicks lived. He looked up, and then he looked within. He sought the darkest movie of himself; he chased after it. Large truth-bombs became boomerangs in his path. He slipped in the back door of eternity and valiantly spit back.

They called him a comedian. Some even assembled words which honored him as the greatest ever. In truth, after all, he was an agent of evolution, a poet, a priest, a philosopher. He had no doubt glimpsed the neon veins of the universe across his palm, right out in front of him practically begging to be eaten; begging to be printed, applauded, and decorated. So Bill adorned his lament with words patterned to evoke laughter, arranged just so perfectly so that the song would bypass all fear of truth, wisdom and spirit in its listeners. The words were alive, breathing. They were born boneless and cackling. They sprang from pain, loneliness, disappointment, anger. But mostly love.

Bill Hicks spoke candidly as if he were alone in the forest. He uttered secrets and questions we all punish and trap inside for lifetimes. The creation of an aria is a journey to behold, and Hicks took to the sky kicking the insane machine with chaotic blow after blow. Every truth became a feast, a flower, and Bill Hicks summoned the heart of every creed and troubled deed. Though labeled a cynic, Hicks had ultimately found himself the servant of hope, an illuminator of the unannounced evolution of an idea, which is unity, which is love, which is truth peeking around every corner.

A poet understands the sleeping dream. He roams the hallways while everyone else is abed and gone. He gets on his knees for vistas through the cracks of doors leading to forgotten rooms, still lit inside by candlelight. Windows become portals to consciousness. Whether the poet introduces himself as professor, mechanic, or comedian is beside the point. The point is the mystery and divination of love and a world of one collective unconscious, a world suffering for existence and prescient full moons.

The poet's vast fragments and divisions of the self begin to dance somewhere around 2 a.m., and then the words come crying out and intertwining like smoke rings. Bill Hicks inhaled and didn't let it go until he hit the desert. He scattered it with explosions and punch lines and reports of long dead illusions. And we applauded.

Two times the perimeter is the whole, which is fundamentally infinite. Bill understood that he was destined to be in the placebo group, forever burdened by a consciousness steadily enlightened. Having come to terms with that, as well as the weight of responsibility which accompanied such a leap, Bill became the preacher challenging every syllable uttered by the God. He gave himself to the thought of timelessness, and the thought within that very thought, succumbing to rhythm. The man dedicated and ultimately gave his life for the truth of it, for the art of it, for the astral plane and this dream of it.

Bill Hicks was not just another ranting, panting, black-clad comic. Bill Hicks was the fiercest believer in the potential of humanity that the medium had ever seen. He was the shaman watching over us, tickling our ribs with little reminders of our holiness, our inner wealth, our infinite visions of love, our brilliance and compassion. So he threw on a cape pretending to be Elvis. Instead, he became Superman and shoved the ugly truth in our faces. He held a mirror up to the snake and magically convinced us of its pathetic insanity. Then urged us to love it.

Bill Hicks cared enough to make us laugh until it hurt. The thing is, no matter how dangerous or discomforting the subjects, they were awakened, soulful, beautiful. They were manifestations of a deep and abiding love, and painstaking, profound disappointment.

Bill Hicks imagined that God had invented love to fundamentally stick to everything, and we had all merely forgotten.

The poet never forgets.

In the iris of the storm he realizes he can't run anymore. He sees that he can't dine with the rest of the kings. He's the bell ringer. The scout. The singing bard standing atop the bones of a tree, crying, "It isn't real! Things are not as they seem! All we see is not all that we should!" He challenges the Romans to find the truth upon the path of righteousness. He urges them to give their hearts a long time to heal, to nurture one another, to breathe the first and last sigh of the day. This is a free race to the stars, he grumbles. You can do no wrong. You are the perfect and holy

children of God.

Question your own image, it's lilt, it's ugliness. "Understand that we are all one consciousness experiencing itself subjectively," he pants.

Bill knew what it meant to see the red fish in flight; he knew that the mice are blind to Van Gogh's ear. He ventured to listen with some sense that all has been answered if one looks to find it inside. Sensing the order of the universe, he took upon himself the duty of playing aloud the noon song, the right wrong. He took to a ranch with his friends and bent the day to speak. There, under the long-armed trees, air-tight rhymes and reconstructed stars, the ease of his ear came only with wind. And it applauded.

The poet leaves his diary open in the window, with a note: You can find the rest of the clues when you can find the door.

"What are you to do with no boundary?," he whispered, the sky coming down in shards. Bill Hicks took a right at the call-box and headed for the vacant lot into the darkest, most ominous alley in the heart of downtown to tell one man who desperately needed wings that he could find them if he just believed.

"What good will come of these wings if, by the time I attain them, I find my muscles aching and my face collapsing?" asked the lonely alley man.

Bill took a drag and exhaled smoke in the man's face. "This is not about the body, Mister."

The poet dares you to discover, to jump to the sky and devour the key. The poet searches references for clues.

"Vary the story in your dreams," he says. "It's not a cloud; it's the ocean. Don'tcha see? This is a test, man. This is only a test. All you have to do is stay away from the red room. They can't hear you in there."

Bill Hicks laughed when he thought no one was listening. He stepped atop the bones of the hallowed tree and dimmed the light just enough to lend the eye a doubt of sure footing. Then we stumbled, but only because we feared the unknown. Then we lost our horror to the silliness and simplicity of giggles. We submerged vividly with a chance to breathe again. We opened our palms and found a Rosetta Stone. We wanted a better life, not a better way to pretend.

The poet mimes that we are all part of history. We are our own proof that we have the beauty within to show others that hope does indeed exist.

Bill Hicks came to America to tell a story he knew we might not answer. He left his worries at a quiet residence, raised his voice and brought insight, brought the note that said every heart is a doorway and every soul is a bread-crumble along the path. Bill Hicks came to America to show us the detours.

"If you open your eyes you can see the light that surrounds us all."

He had the nerve and the faith enough to lay before all of us his soul, his thinking brain, his devilish thoughts. This was the true mettle of his integrity and absolute devotion

to truth. Where the clowns tired of the trapeze Bill held on tighter and saw with an even keener eye that the smiles weren't real.

Bill Hicks came to America with no time but ever, with nothing less than an echo, a prayer ending with a fateful, peppered shout: "AWAKEN!" He trembled and scolded for a second's worth of soil down infinity's metal throat, up from which came fields of apparent enemies removing ball masks which gave way to boomerangs of spit-shined halos. Bill Hicks never flinched.

The poet reminds us that nothing is impossible but impossibility itself. We must become the petal of every flower, the lobe of every ear, the nervousness of every lip, the color of every face, the sole of every foot, the flames and the soot, the berry and the mushroom, the strength of the thought, which is love, the way of the very next soul weeping to clarify and praise the trial itself, chosen unto itself for tickets to trains of expanded awareness. We must memorize pulses. We must be the barest thirst of the desert, the cockroach's lament, the flat tire and the holy, holy high.

Bill Hicks came to America to jar the fairest beauty of the pothole and the quake. All twinkles and hurricanes, by God, he tweaked to release, before his widest eyes, the true gut-of-the-soul passion of handshakes becoming hugs. He took the fewest seconds to smell the trail, and then he was gone.

The poet snorts the pollen of an orchid blooming from a rusted tin barrel. He scrapes resin from its belly and smokes it on his brother's shoulders.

"The laws of all deemed improbable are false." To rear love is to wake with it, breathe it, secrete it, to put it asleep in cradles of dreams. To rear love is to thank the snake who contradicted it.

Bill Hicks played from his heart. He saw from far distances that the body is easiest. He was clear morning fog hanging off the edge of a spoon, a hard-on over warm-blooded breasts of one love looking best in morning, in pillow hair aquariums. He responded to history by scoffing at its failures. He responded to history by denouncing its education. He responded!

"Tell me your vision isn't warped," he said. "Tell me your vision isn't multiplied and vaporized."

The poet spits into your mouth so you can taste him.

Bill Hicks came to America to tell us of the space program joke, taxes and death jokes, big dick theory jokes, eternal birth jokes and extraterrestrial hieroglyphics he gleaned on the Sphinx's grandfather face on Mars. Bill Hicks came to America to

get lost in caverns with hungry bats who can't read.

His comedy was not a weapon, but a window daring the removal of the word coincidence from all dictionaries for there was no such, none such, never one to none thing in this life. Even as God made him thin and low he remained transfixed by stars and the desire to make even one person think for a change. Small smoke-stained comedy clubs in invisible America were his lecture halls, his temples. He blew them all away.

He saw hot holes in Stonehenge. He napped in Easter Island eyes for the life of it. He packed an index and a stopwatch to get to the bottom of the good book lollipop and throw a curve to deprogram the masses.

"Our palms are maps, our eyes portals to the soul, our fingernails hundred dollar bills," the poet proclaimed. "Kiss your dog and you'll find your cure."

At a glance, at a glance, it all makes sense. Trapped eyelash debris clears the third eye. All joy awakens! No puzzle. No mystery. Only love and lies and apples filled with razor-blades.

"I be born of the bow sign. Shall I philosophize? Blind you with seven photographs of the moon? Strip bare the showdowns on sand dunes for oil?"

Bill Hicks took only thirty-two years to sanctify nights and lifetimes of timeless centuries with funny lines and air-guitar breezes. The harmony of that groove proved outright that truth is enlightenment.

The poet restores the right to be divine.

Bill Hicks was the anti-hero struggling to maintain integrity and peace in a civilization which coveted the end. His words were the show, the miracles, the suffering light. Disembodied now, they still yearn to be heard, comprehended, and fertilized. The message claws its way into the hearts of the hunted. Each and every syllable, gesture, and shadow supplicates the Sacred Cow to sway all of us that mad destiny shall be our greatest delight.

The poet will not be programmed. The poet will not be the nephew of Sam.

The poet stows away long and slow on a rocket ride into the well of humanity. He fantasizes in empty, wind-blown pastures. Along the purple horizon he finds the edge of the world and, even in the house of money, never takes his eyes off the stars leaning in to bow for whispers. Under spotlights the ode is remarkably perfect, guided, free to pupils. The injury of passion turns the sacrifice into luxury.

"And I came to you in the middle of the night and you did by me and embraced sleeplessness. This is the private assembly."

Bill Hicks came to America to chew the blues and fire the alarms.

"I am the door," he says. "I am the electric glove."

The poet can hardly breathe. The poet is simply dreamily irate.

The bliss shakes the hips of the sea. The vegetables have gone away to buy themselves heydays and fast cars. The thinking man's goodbye becomes a shrouded drip of sound. To the universe a vision. To the universe a rant along the pier where unknown poets are lined up to trip.

Bill Hicks fell asleep in the garden and dreamt.

Bill Hicks came to America to tax the church and arm the homeless with orchids. He fought the storm to save himself for a new dream.

The poet's life has become one insane hum mixing with the sea, one ripe pipe from hand to lip to the actualization of the self. Into the lungs, magic rings flee the raw, mediocre raping of history. The shoulder shrug is too easy.

Upon the inheritance of towering illuminations the stool becomes a satellite, the microphone stand a bass upright, the election a gold rush, the newscast a hypnotized TV turn-on. In a quixotic dive the band is a maniac, a mad professor. The sitar is the cobra's sly eye backed by pianos weeping over highway cars and road-kill, and the wires and the wine and the death of mankind cocks the sea of new souls to attention, to the rise of breath to fall anew.

The poet becomes the comedian and the preacher becomes the cowboy and the philosopher becomes the rock star and the snake-charmer becomes the clown and the altered state becomes a visionary climax in a simple walk found waiting in the woods.

For tongues which had been unjustly removed, he spoke.

For frogs slowly boiling without complaint, he spoke.

For unions of seclusion, he spoke.

For an eternity he will speak.

Bill Hicks came to America to scream. He was the free man chasing the thief, the sage at the end of a saga waiting to land. He bared his soul and all of our fears and contradictions for anyone who would listen. He knew very well that there is no death, that we are all holy and brilliant and luminous, but that some of us didn't remember that yet.

But, at the same time, he didn't want to die.

During the two weeks prior to the poet's death he didn't speak, even though he understood with no uncertainty that one can't step in the same river even once, that death was just a word man created to cushion the blow of the ultimate, ecstatic remembrance. Perhaps he felt cheated; by America, by God, by love, by comedy,

by the media, by even himself. Perhaps he felt no one was listening. Perhaps he felt invisible.

Whether Bill had trapped the energy of that solitary moment in his hands to polish it or burn it is beside the point. The point is love. The point is, when Bill Hicks took that evolutionary leap he became the heart of the tree, the black cat purring an engine above you, the nap of the wolf, the one true cigarette, the dream that felt a bit too real, the tear that became an ocean and spawned a thought, the ink writing this.

The preacher had come to tell the priest that he had found his way.

What does flying mean to a penguin?

What does light mean to a blind man?

What does comedy mean to a poet?

It means everythingÖ

It is said that in the sky you can read your life and follow each and every step along the ride. It is said that by divine right we all chose a path which would lead us to this very moment, which is already gone and begun again. Now I'm writing this and you're reading it. The implications of this moment, and the split second before and after that, and so on, are vast and miraculous and heavy. It's jazz. It's the nape of a lover's neck. It's rock n' roll. It's the spirit of a stray dog. It's the beginning, it's the end, and it's the truth.

Be not of anger. Be of love. That's the way Bill wants it.

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Bill Hicks

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