

'77

Personnel, JACOB TODD BROUSSARD, *vocals*; THE BOY, *drums*; THE HERMIT, *songwriter*; THE BROTHER, *saxophone*; FORCE, *ensemble*.

A-Side:

1. SPECTRAL PASTORALE
2. INVASIVE SPECIES
3. SONGWRITERS OF A FORGOTTEN BARDIC CHANT
4. THE GROVE
5. A SECULAR PRIEST

B-Side:

6. WHAT THE ROOM REELS WITH
7. DEN DWELLER
8. SONGWRITERS STUDY
9. NEW ACQUISITION

IN 1977, a 14-year-old boy started a band with his brother and five of their male companions. The union declared themselves FORCE with the boy as the drummer. The ensemble practiced in dingy dens and performed across dancehalls in the south. That same year, a hermit-painter died and was buried in an unmarked grave off of the southeastern coast of Texas. In an act of transmission, the bardic hermit gave the boys a secret prayer or hymn for perilous times. Two days after his death, Donna Summer's hit I Feel Love peaked on the Billboard Hot 100.

You have to cut a hole in the face of a kick drum to create resonance, to deepen the sound. You see, the sound of the bass will move further and reverberate because of this hole, creating a deeper sense of space. We call this sound-imaging: a formed absence then creates a presence, a presence of a spatial dimension. Particular images, memories and feelings are made apparent. An image can hold another image within it, two spaces simultaneously happening, opening onto themselves. The image is in direct contact with the archetypal realm: a realm where its symbols remain mysterious and inexhaustible in their meaning.

We learned folktales through drinking songs sung after dinner by our grandparents in a peasant's french

muddled through decades of mutation. Legends, devils, lost souls and ghost lights filled these songs and ultimately our dreams. The natural world was denaturalized through mythos, sacrificing a realism to world other worlds. It was a way for things invisible to be made visible, the background brought to the foreground, the latent made apparent. A folktale requires transmission from one form to another, via oral storytelling to song to image to written word. It is not a medium of stasis, it is malleable within whomever receives it. Its form is contingent on that very transmission.

Our brethren of youthful rambles convened with the hopes of making something bardic and beautiful. We came from towns and villages no one had heard of, from fathers with callused hands and hushed tongues, where our ambitions collided with landscapes making them dimly impossible. But even if no one was paying attention to us, our union gave us a sense of hope that we could generate and transform our surroundings if just for a chorus-length moment. A shared desire for companionship hung in the air, unspoken til it was sung, til it was covered by a covers band. What we were trying on ultimately was loss. I painted our band's name on the face of the kick drum. How one paints carries meaning, for an image

transformed a sound which transformed a space and backwards again.

In a spell of desperation and hopelessness, we were given a hymn by a wise elder (an image if you will) that we were to remember in times of peril. He made us memorize the chant, reciting it several times throughout the night in his monastic quarters until all seven of us had the harmonies etched into our subconscious. We were gifted a sacred language to articulate ourselves, to speak of fantasies of our own which we could not say amongst ourselves. Yet once this wise elder left us, the song faded from our memories. Not one of the seven could recollect its chorus, its bridge, its melody. *What was its pitch, again?*, we asked each other during one night of practice in dingy lighting.

We're still searching for that very sound through attempts of light and image. An image (a painting) is a rip in the fabric of reality and can occasion a paranormal event; it is a communion with things past. We get glimpses through books, poems, and songs. And through the dreamworld, of course, where one can think in images. Our search for the sacred chant continues.