

## *Free to Be a Cloud with You*

It should come as no surprise that my song *Computer Brains* was released the very same year as *They Live*, the movie [SIC: 1985 and 1988, respectively].

Both works were love letters to humanity, sharing the basic premise that hidden forces, aiming to destroy human beings, would be followed by a beautiful reckoning.

At that time I imagined the joke would be on *all of history*, on it's divisiveness. The fading power of a few would form a seismic punch line, usher in a major recalibration, so that we would see our lives as they are truly meant to be: *in harmony with the lives of others*. We'd be bound together, suddenly, through our differences, in a fight against the steely enemy of exclusion.

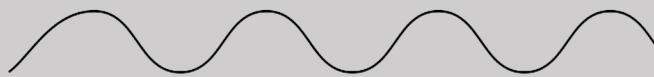
30 years later I'm not so sure. Even at the margins of the mainstream, conformity against the weak seems to be a terminal illness. I myself come from a religious family, and I still remember how surprised I felt that people with my same background weren't similarly emancipated from dogma through the weight of experience.

After all, even high school bullies were opening up at that time to embrace each other via dance music culture.

But of course music, like religion, seems to have become flattened lately too, in spite of the promise of diversity offered by our post-corporate media landscape (yeah right!) But seriously, I'm told that music continues to reinvent itself at the periphery, though I suspect the outsiders are being eaten away faster and faster by capital these days, as it were.

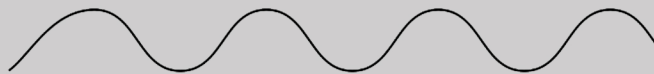
I'm thinking now that a more transgressive approach might be a return to the mainstream. Though this might lack imagination. The question is: how far afield can resistance go

before it's totally cut off from cultural relevance?



A friend of mine once went out into the woods near his home. Among the trees he discovered a wall of identical TV's. It looked, he said, like something dropped out of an alien spacecraft. The story went that one of the TVs contained a lone squirrel caught on some kind of wire or electronic manifold. "The squirrel was this fragile creature fighting at the center of a mess," he said. "It seemed to be inhabiting it's own death, in a way."

"Now before you accuse me of being deliberately obtuse, or merely anthropocentric," he cautioned, "let me remind you: this is why we live in the first place. To find freedom, even in death."



Ok, I know what you're thinking: "Aren't you, Greg X. Voltz, an aging relic from a bygone era, harkening from a time when Christian rock stars walked the earth with impunity? Isn't all this sermonizing a bit precious?"

But don't you see? To me this is the best thing of all. How else could I even speak? And also let me add one more thing: don't be too quick to cast aspersions on who you think I am. You were something else once too, and you changed, right?

We are all clouds, joining together to exchange water droplets. That's my idea of life and opinions.

Better to love in obscurity together than to fall alone into a storm. This life has been, and continues to be, a choice.

*By Greg X Voltz, lead singer of Petra, 1979-1985*