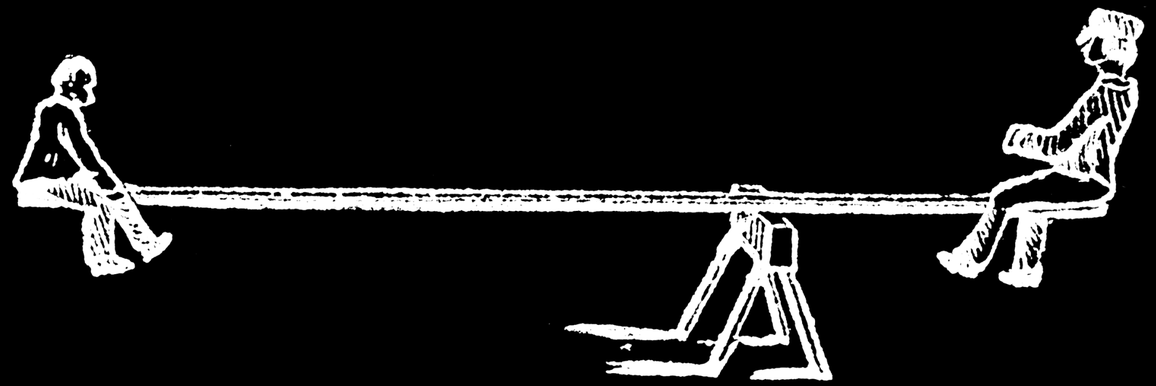


grave-merry man

5

play

Keen on flat when Sheldon-release 2 appeared, flat as a tool to tell tales, flat as a prop, flat as a conceit for theater, and flat as rue for myth. But that mise-en-scène required a change of players and plot. Glazers with glass chips step aside, video-disc jockeys step in. It was time for play. The play was "Contagion of the Night." Contagion took on technology and theology as plot and as stagecraft. It fused interactive video, internet resources, and reconsideration of "the theatre" as architecture. And it snagged some Jonathan Swift and Samuel Butler on the way.

contagion of the night

Billed

One nun's crisis of faith and one antichrist's journey of self-discovery propel this millennial fable. This multi-media camp narrative blends digitally altered Christian iconography and Marian hymns with a host of religious and apocalyptic web sites. Contagion of the Night is the last word on our piety at the altar of technology.

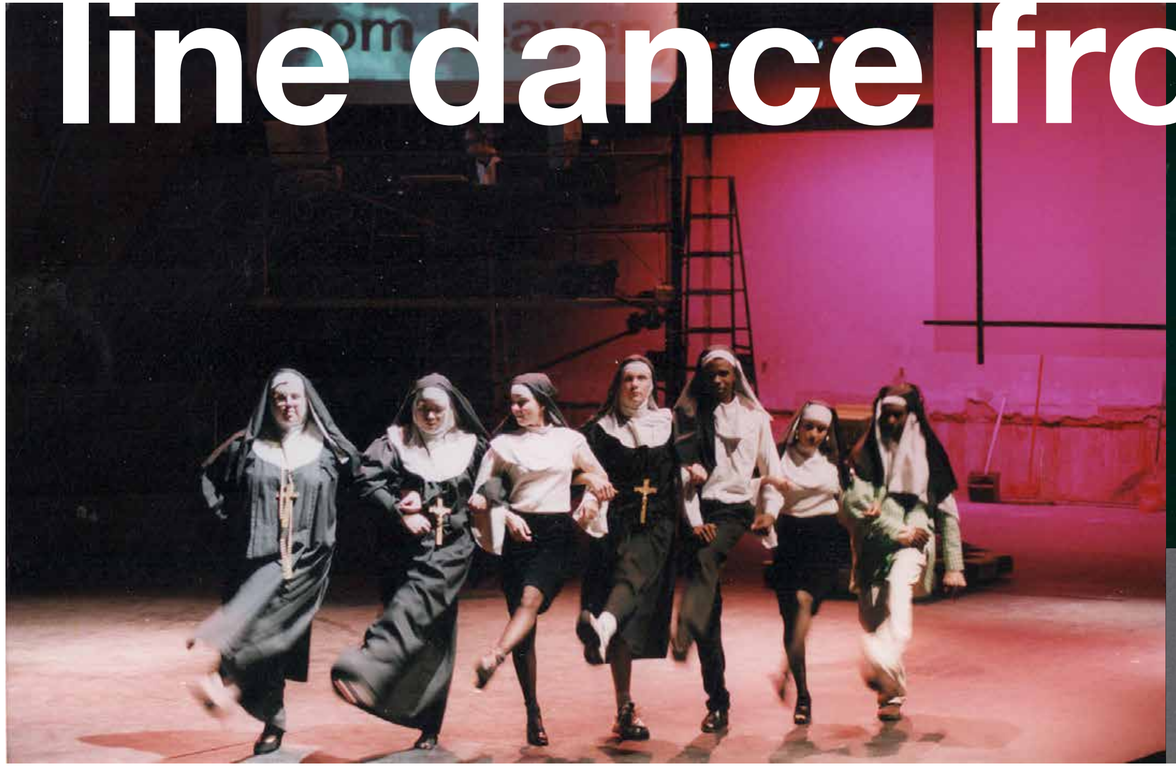
Rated

"Contagion of the Night: A Wired Apocalyptic Fable" by St. Louisan Paul Guzzardo April 24, was a farcical, at times sacrilegious, theatre-of-the-absurd delight that deepened into a campy and funny romp, pitting dichotomous favorites like good and evil, Y2K and the end of the world, materialism and organized religion. As is typical for director Ian Belton, this artistic endeavor became an event, not just a play. Billed as a "wired apocalyptic fable," the product was more than pretty packaging that would delight even Lewis Carroll and Jonathan Swift, for the pervasive pormanteau atmosphere of the performance.
The set was minimalistic, creating much of the scenery in a cyberworld of live camera feeds, pre-taped scenes and computer generated graphics. These, sometimes blasphemistic scenes filled with biblical puns, were projected on three enormous screens set above the stage on a secondary plane. This gave a tangible impression of depth to both the set and the p**lay.**

Scorned

The play was advertised as "one nun's crisis of faith and one antiChrist's journey of self-discovery." We found it to be a blatant mockery of Catholi cism and of nuns, in particular. "Contagion of the Night" is a satire about the financial woes of a convent, the Sisters of Our Lady, set against the second coming of the Anti-Christ in 2000. In it, nuns are portrayed as greedy, insane and sexually repressed. Our Blessed Mother is held up for particular derision and mockery, and Christianity is trivialized as a contest between two "cosmic jokesters," God and Satan.

line dance from heaven



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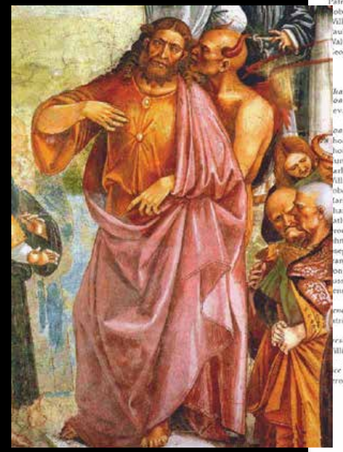

CATHOLIC LEAGUE
For Religious and Civil Rights

May 11, 1999

Vivian Blevins, Ph.D.
Chancellor
St. Louis Community College
Joseph P. Cosand Community College Center
300 South Broadway
St. Louis, MO 63102-2810

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE
MAY 17 1999

Dear Dr. Blevins:

Some of our members have called my attention to a production of the play, "Contagion of the Night," that was performed on the Forest Park campus of St. Louis Community College, April 21st through the 25th, at the Mildred E. Bastain Center for the Performing Arts.

The play portrays its various nun characters as greedy, insane, blasphemous or sexually frustrated. Particularly offensive is the derision that the person of Mary, who is venerated as the Mother of God by Catholics, and various devotions (the rosary, hymns, litanies, etc.) are held up to throughout the play. It is my understanding that it is scheduled for another performance in the Fall.

As president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, I appeal to your sense of fairness and goodwill and ask you to reconsider the decision to stage the play this Fall. Much of the current debate in the public arena regarding religion centers around the idea that public monies and institutions should not be used to promote religion. We believe that it is equally wrong for public monies and institutions to be used to denigrate religion.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response on this matter.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

cc: Henry Shannon, Ph.D.
President, St. Louis Community College
Forest Park Campus

Kathe — FYI

Pam, Please draft a response for me

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PLAY
Eden Software

big data selves an early script

contagion scripped: a software evangelist

Contagion of the Night
Scene 3: Petty Preserved

Frances
Rose, put down your needle. It is my pleasure to introduce Mr. Jose Patel of the Eden's Software Network. Mr. Patel is with us to demonstrate the latest in Eden software, and I propose a partnership between Eden Software and "The Ladies That Sew." Mr. Patel.

Patel
Thank you for allowing me to be with you today. Ladies, do you remember the old days, before the release of Eden's Obligatory Organizer Software, before the Obligatory Organizer changed your lives? Ladies, I'm here to help you remember. It wasn't all that long ago when you were lost, wanderers in a wasteland, a wilderness of weddings, baptisms, communions, funerals, and, yes, even that occasional Bar Mitzvah. Path unmarked, forever faced with how much to give, who to give to, and finally whether to give at all.

There's a bag on the table. Patel pours it on the altar cloth. Out comes dog-eared cards and yellowed bits of paper. He stirs through them.

This is what is was like, how it used to be, a typical family's records. Slips, scraps of paper, notes, who brought what, from pie to peas. Every card imaginable -- thank you, sympathy, funeral mass, birthdays, weddings, on and on and on. Seems like pre-history.

Patel yanks out a faded, torn piece of paper and reads.

Ah, oh . . didn't . . . didn't give a thing. Who didn't . . . I can't make this out. Is that an "O" or is it a "C"? I can't read it. I don't think any of you dear ladies could either, and that was the real tragedy of it. Too often we'd forget who forgot. We had an obligation not only to ourselves but to those who came after, to remember. To remember the slights, the omissions, the halfhearted gestures. A sloppy paper trail wasn't enough. Do you for a moment think that anybody other than an autistic savant could keep track of all this?

He runs his hands through the mound of paper.

And, party games aside, they don't entertain all that much. Ladies, with Eden Software, ingratitude finally met its match.

He pulls out a two CD-ROMs.

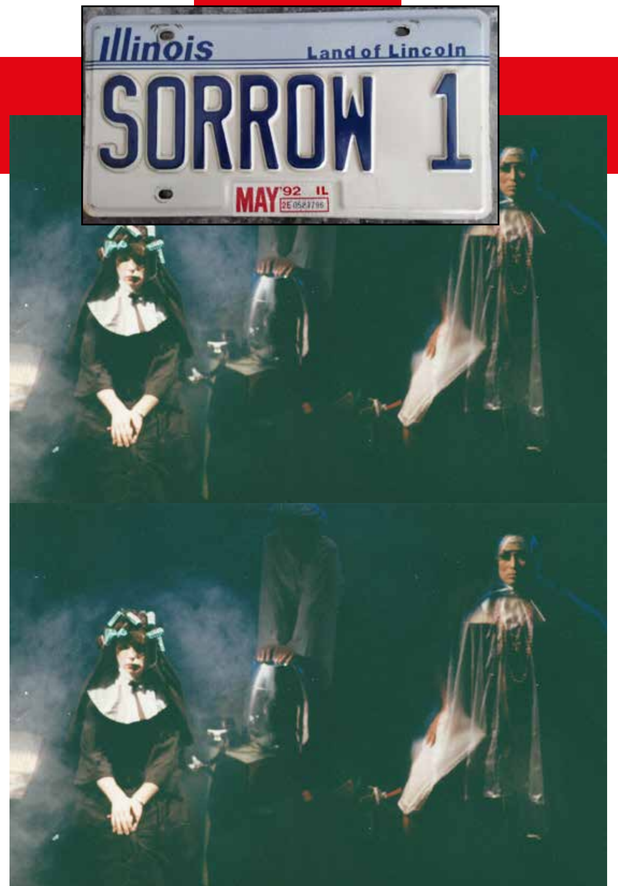
This was the program that remembered, recorded, and quantified it all. Eden's Obligatory Organizer proved that the petty can be preserved, that the sins of the mothers and fathers need not be forgotten, that generations of hurt can be stored, only to be recalled with a touch. Think Eden Software when you think of the legacy you can leave your children, and your children can leave their children, and on, and on, and on, and how all those that follow you will be forever spared from giving to the undeserving.

The Ladies applaud.

Eden has always been by your side, and it hasn't ended with the Obligatory Organizer. Now there's more!

He whips out a circuit board.

end of scene



Video Software Promotion 1

Narrators: Francis and Rose
Hello. We're the Ladies that Sew. We make altar cloths. Our cloths are stained with the blood of our Lord. Our Lord's blood was not shed by the gallon, but drop, by drop, by drop.
That's how it worked for him, and that's how it works for us. Drops of our Lord's blood, like the hurts, the abuses, and the seemingly trivial disservices, all add up to your very own crucifixion.
The solution - Eden's Crucifixion Software – a program sensitive to how you hurt.
Ladies, we know all there is to know about hurt. The Eden people know all there is to know about probability. Eden Software uses the most sophisticated algorithmic equations. They predict who will hurt you, even before they do. Now you can act first, slam the door on friendships, cut off people before they have the chance to cause you pain. Ladies, celebrate his crucifixion, but for heaven's sake avoid your own.

Video Software Promotion 2

Narrator: Jose Patel
Rapture doesn't come in a bottle. It comes in a disc. Eden Software is proud to present the latest in Eden's personal prayer software line, RAPTURE.
Rapture is what you've come to expect from the leader in sanctified software. Like Prayer Perfect, with a twenty thousand word theological thesaurus or Eden's state of the art digital audio where your prayers are actually answered, Rapture shortcuts the arduous ascetic process.
Our need to unite with the transcendental, our search for a state of ecstasy is just like theirs. The difference...time, we just don't have much. It's difficult enough juggling vocations, business chores, and a host of other obligations. Today who has time to fast for days, let alone weeks on end. And how could anyone manage to schedule years of contemplation and self-reflection. Eden's Software offers an easier way to the beatific vision. Call now. Operators are waiting.

License Renewal Mission

Sister Margaret
Sister Alfreda, what are you doing?

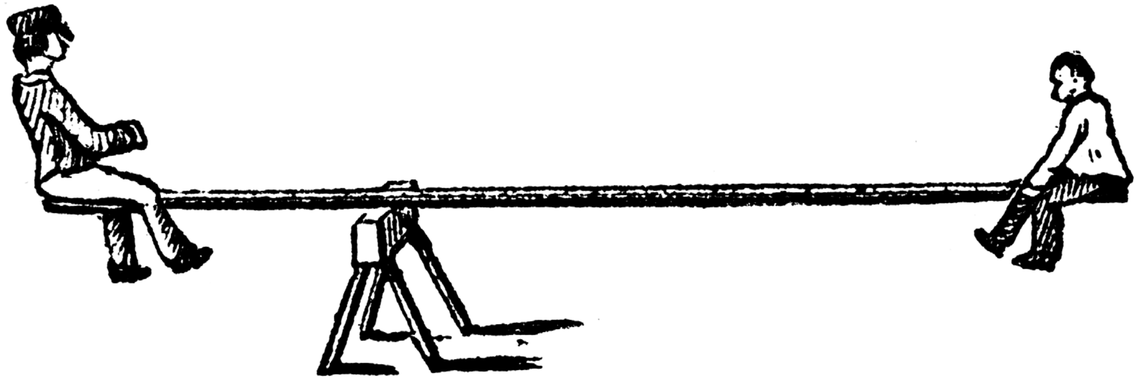
(Alfreda is opening a file folder showing multiple images of women in various stages of grief and tears. She uses a digital cut and paste program to insert and paste her face over one of the grieving widows.)

Sister Alfreda
What did you think I'm doing? It's license renewal time. I've got to get this application in, my personalized auto license renewal. You've never applied for a vanity license plate?

(Margaret shakes her head no.)

Well it's not as easy, not as easy as they make you think. You can't assume that they're going to reissue last years license without, without wanting some sort of, some sort of verification. And it's not that I'm the only person applying for a Sorrow I plate. It's a crowded field out there. Sorrow II and Sorrow III, they're not exactly dozing behind the wheel. What they wouldn't do to move up a rung on the sorrow hierarchy. Sister, I learned a long time ago, you cannot rest on your past woe.

postivist promps **nihilistic double downers**



seesaw as big data conceit

A chain of web searches propped up the *Contagion* story line, backdrops and players. Results were mixed. It was better six years later, and again a play. The play was ***Secret - The Josephine Baker FBI Files***. Secret wore a digital wrap well. But cloaked or not, both plays veered between positivist prompts and nihilistic double downers. It was a seesaw.

[redacted]

(INFORMATION)

[redacted]

FILE NUMBER

It is further to be noted that the official publication for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [illegible] WALLANDER, Committee Chairman of the Mayor's Committee on Unity, New York City, which is very critical of the findings of the Committee which findings clear BILLINGSLEY and the Stork [illegible]

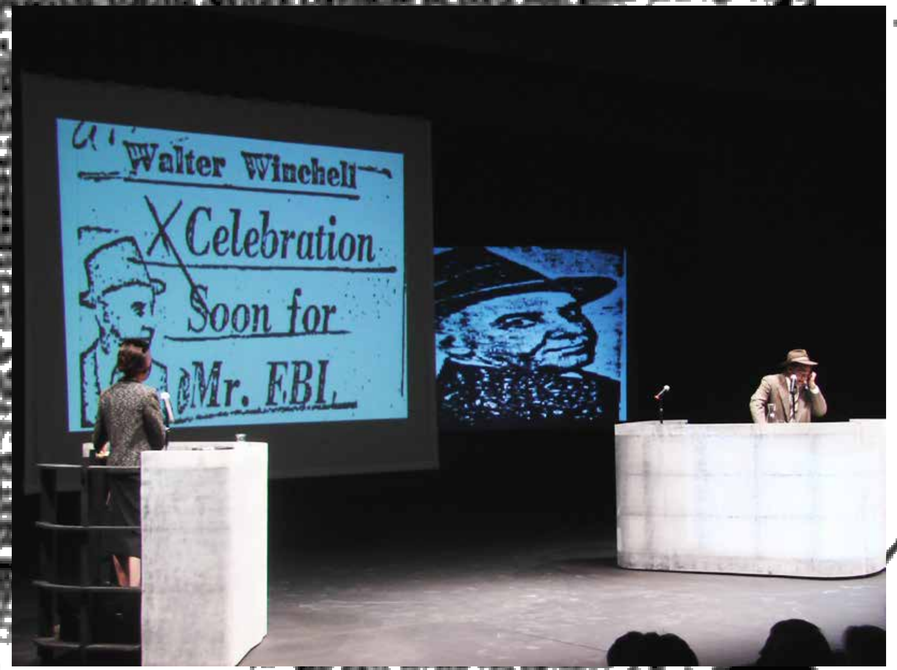
JOSEPHINE BAKER

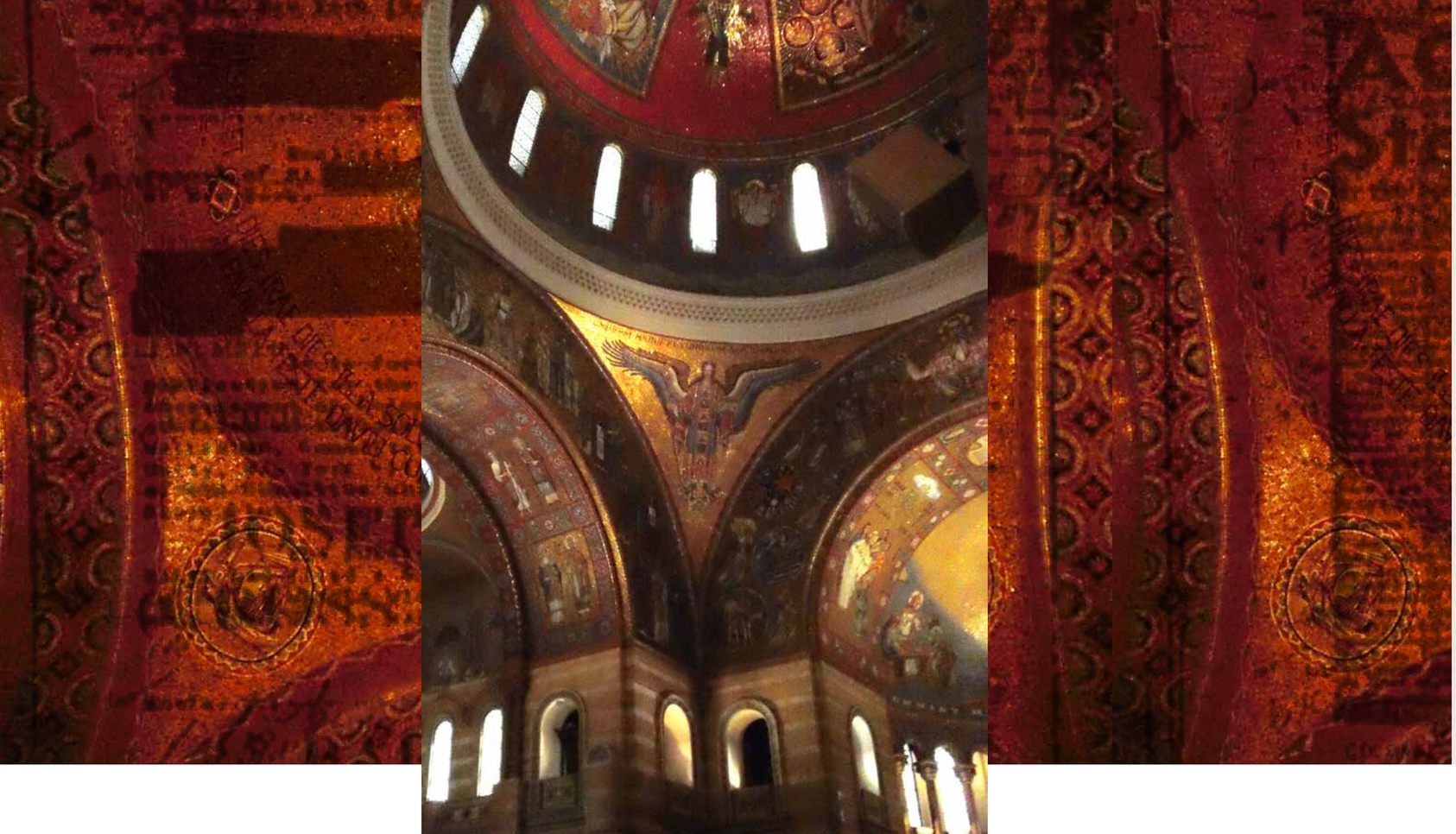
The publication further indicates that JOSEPHINE BAKER had filed a $500,000 libel suit against Broadway [illegible]

(CROSS REFERENCES)

PART 2 OF 2

ACLU Urges Public Stork Club Hearing





a cross over at a basillica

Before Contagion rebooted a Jesus myth, Father McNamee published his Cathedral monograph. *The Architecture and Mosaics of the Saint Louis Cathedral* was McNamee's big church atlas. It's a guide book. The Jesuit used the Cathedral's mosaics to map the Christian creed. He had it all there, right to the end chapel. McNamee wrote that in 1929 Paul Heuduck, the father, inscribed the Dies Irae on a small gold mosaic dome. The dome is on the brink, the entry into the All Souls Chapel. It's a flat threshold. Fr. McNamee said the Chapel's flat ceiling "contrasts sharply with the domical and vaulted ceilings that prevail everywhere else in the Cathedral." It's laid low, flat. Dies Irae translates Days of Wrath. Heuduck cut the wrath and the rest of that Latin verse into the dome. *The Contagion of the Night* disc and video jockeys grabbed the Dies Irae. They remixed it. And then they used it, and other credo bits, to mourn a descent into flat.