

PARAPHILIA:  
HYPOKEIMENON

# CONTENTS

Cover By <b>F.X. Tobin</b>	
Frontispiece & Back Cover By <b>Richard A. Meade</b>	
'Interesting Times: On My Own' By <b>Andrew Maben</b>	p5
'Not-So-Good Rockin' Tonight (Excerpt)' By <b>Keef Strang</b>	p12
Drawings By <b>Dolorosa De La Cruz</b>	p15, p70, p95, p148, p173, p206, p229, p262
'Bastet In Ulthar' By <b>Matt Leyshon</b> Photos By <b>Tom Garretson</b>	p16
'Hiroshima Shadows' By <b>Chikuma Ashida</b>	p24
'An Anarcho-Libertine Manifesto, 2nd Iteration' By <b>Karl Wolff</b>	p31
'The Black Rose Of Auschwitz: David Britton's and Kris Guido's Illustrated Novel La Squab, and The Savoy Sessions By Fennela Fielding' By <b>D M Mitchell</b>	p39
'Squeal For Joy' By <b>David F. Hoenigman</b>	p45
'Madlessly' By <b>Mike Hudson</b> Photo By <b>Russell Allen Images</b>	p47
'Petty Girls Like Graves' By <b>dixē.flatlin3</b> Photos By <b>Sid Graves</b>	p53
'Yonder Hill' By <b>Richard C. Walls</b> Photos By <b>Toby Huss</b>	p62
'Atavistic Resurgence and the Animalistic Primal Consciousness: An Interview With <b>Alan Moore</b> ' By <b>D M Mitchell</b>	p70
'Turbines and Throat Bones (Part Four)' By <b>Craig Woods</b> Photos By <b>Max Reeves</b>	p81
'A New Aktionist Eruption Taken To The Pathetic Pathological Cubicles and Corporate Boardrooms' By <b>Michael O'Donnell</b>	p96
'Bites From The Panzram Cuttings' By <b>Chris Madoch</b> Photo By <b>Richard A. Meade</b>	p98
'Revelation In The League Of Sin' A Film By <b>Edward Paul Quist</b>	p128
'Circles & Phases: Larkin Grimm's Soul Retrieval' <b>Larkin Grimm</b> Interviewed By <b>Craig Woods</b>	p139
'A Mess' Words & Photo By <b>Hank Kirton</b>	p149
'Kitmonex: One More Slip...' By <b>Rick Grimes</b>	p153
'Close To Nature' By <b>Lisa Wormsley</b>	p155
'I Married A Ghastly Beast' By <b>Tony Rauch</b> Dolls & Photos By <b>Christy Lou</b>	p159
'Meonic Monsters: A Perfect Ruin' By <b>Vadge Moore</b>	p169
'Play It Like You Mean It' <b>Chrome Cranks'</b> <b>Peter Aaron</b> Interviewed By <b>dixē.flatlin3</b>	p174
'Time's Changing 16 (Fuck It Dude)' By <b>Danny Baker</b>	p184
'Pinched' By <b>A. Razor</b>	p186
'Kerb Crawler' By <b>Claudia Bellocq</b> Photos By <b>Malcolm Alcalá</b>	p201
'Zar On Beksinski: A Talk With <b>Chet Zar</b> ' By <b>Lana Gentry</b>	p207
'Whatever Happened To Odea Coates?: A Tragedy In Six Acts (Part One)' By <b>David Gionfriddo</b> Photos By <b>Claudia Murari</b>	p210
'From The Inside Out: A Conversation With <b>Hardboiled Wonderland</b> '	p230
'Uptown Saturday Night, Downtown Sunday Morning: Till The End Of The Night' By <b>Gari M Joubert</b>	p237
'Hardcore Craftsmanship: An Interview With <b>Tommy Rodriguez</b> ' By <b>Lana Gentry</b>	p258
'Manorexia - Dinoflagellate Blooms' A Review By <b>Christopher Nosnibor</b>	p263
'Spielgusher' A Review By <b>Michael Cano</b>	p265
'Body Count Rock: Bloodrock <i>Bloodrock 2</i> ' By <b>Ron Garmon</b>	p269
Contributors' Links	p273
Book Adverts	p276

Editor  
Dire McCain

Contributing Editors  
Christopher Nosnibor  
Craig Woods

**Contact Paraphilia**  
[paraphiliamagazine@gmail.com](mailto:paraphiliamagazine@gmail.com)

**Website**  
[www.paraphiliamagazine.com](http://www.paraphiliamagazine.com)

**Official Facebook Page**  
<https://www.facebook.com/ParaphiliaMagazine>

**Official Twitter Page**  
<http://twitter.com/paraphiliamag>

### **Submissions:**

Please send all submissions as email attachments, Rich Text Format documents and JPG photographs. Be sure you include your name, contact details, and any internet links you would like shown in the magazine. **PARAPHILIA MAGAZINE** is currently a non-profit venture, thus we are unable to provide financial compensation for published works. All copyrights, of course, belong to the writers, artists, photographers, etc.

*Any opinions or beliefs - religious, political, or moral - expressed anywhere within these pages are not necessarily those of the editors.*



## INTERESTING TIMES:

### ON MY OWN

By Andrew Maben



Before I left, Mum handed me a packet of Durex, told me to always keep them handy. Good advice.

I'd found a bed-sit just south of Victoria station, a tiny room on the top floor, up many flights of stairs and with a shared bathroom, but it was my own private place. And I had a job as a trainee clerk at a commodities brokerage in the city. I can't for the life of me remember how I found the room and the job, nor with any certainty my wages and

rent, but I seem to remember the pay was £10 a week and the rent something like £5, which would have left all of five pounds to live on.

The job seemed mildly interesting for the first few hours, mainly because of its novelty. But that soon wore off. The work was terminally tedious, and seemed utterly pointless. My position was in the coffee department, dealing specifically with shipments from Brazil. It went something like this: freshly harvested coffee would be auctioned at a Brazilian port and loaded on a ship, then, for the several days that the voyage took before arriving in London, speculators would buy and sell portions of the cargo as the price of coffee fluctuated with the market. As brokers, the company handled these transactions and took a small percentage on each deal. I didn't then, and I don't now, fully understand the intricacies of the business, but the whole thing seemed utterly nonsensical, not to say parasitical...

Somehow I had struck up a friendship with a local who called himself Doc. Unprepossessing with his thick glasses and total lack of style, he was an amusing enough companion, with a surprisingly heterogeneous set of acquaintances. At least once a week he would be kind enough to invite me to enjoy his mum's cooking for supper, and then we would retire to his room to share a joint or two, sometimes between the two of us, or sometimes we'd be joined by one or two of his friends.

My life settled into a rather dull routine for a couple of months. I'd battle the rush hour crowds on the tube in the morning and spend the day in stultified torpor at my desk where it was my job to sit all day long with a constantly replenished stack of bills of lading and bills of sale, matching up the bills of sale with their respective bills of lading and transcribing each

transaction into a huge ledger, carefully adding the totals at the foot of each page and then re-entering them at the head of the next. My penmanship has never, thanks to the changes from left handed to right at kestrels, and then from right back to left handed at art school, been of particularly high quality, but I did my best to be at least legible. And all the addition had to be done in my head and on scrap paper before the final figures could be written in the ledger. Positively Dickensian... Then in the evening once again I'd battle the rush hour crowds in the tube to get home, where I'd smoke a joint and read, or draw. Sometimes I'd visit Doc at his mum's basement flat near Buckingham Palace, sometimes he'd visit me. On Friday nights I usually managed to get to Middle Earth, which had taken up the torch after UFO folded, and most Saturdays would find me wandering the Portobello market in a post-acid haze...

The humdrum did take a toll. I had noticed for a while that I would develop a particular tendency to moroseness in the early spring, and in my sessions with Dad's friend the shrink I'd suggested that I felt some symptoms of manic-depression. Grey days and all too often lonely evenings, dark nights... One evening thoughts turned downward and darkward, I found a razor blade, rolled up a sleeve. I had been, and remain, pretty firmly convinced of the truth of the last scene of *Pierrot le Fou*, so any likelihood of finality was remote, but I wanted to test the sensations. I made a few light transverse cuts across the wrist, not deep. It felt interesting. No, fascinating. So I used my forearm as sketchpad, the blade as stylus, and drew and wrote until there was no more space and I fell into a troubled slumber. The next morning my handiwork was limned in scabs, which in a few days healed and dropped off, leaving no trace. Sometimes I wonder what it was that I drew and wrote. I stare at the skin of my arm, seeking some kind of answer, but none is forthcoming....

And so it went until Easter...

On Easter Monday I joined the Aldermaston March at Shepherds Bush, and soon enough I'd moved up to the front ranks of demonstrators. The chants were perhaps a little predictable, maybe even trite, so I took it upon myself to add my own as we moved down Oxford Street: "Inter-conti-ental Ball-istic Missiles!", "OUT!", "Inter-conti-ental Ball-istic Missiles!", "OUT!", "Inter-conti-ental Ball-istic Missiles!", "OUT! OUT! OUT!" for some reason has stuck in my mind...

This year the demonstration's focus was as much, perhaps more, on the horrors of the escalating war in Viet Nam as on nuclear weapons, and there was much discussion of a demonstration in Grosvenor Square, in front of the US Embassy to follow the rally in Trafalgar Square. Rumours of riot and violence were rife, and I was not entirely comfortable with the mood of the crowd. I could not see any gain in the quest for peace, in Viet Nam or in the world, to be had through the use of violence, particularly the mindless vandalism that was urged by a rowdy anarchist fringe. I found laughable the notion that violent acts of protest designed to bring down the violent might of state repression might somehow be necessary to awaken the anger of the people. More like an excuse to play cowboys and indians with real guns, sound and fury signifying nothing... So once in Trafalgar Square I withdrew onto the steps of the National Gallery while Tariq Ali and others made incendiary speeches, and radical chic celebrities like Mick Jagger and Vanessa Redgrave lent their cachet to the proceedings.

Soon I found myself talking to another pair, Ros and Nick, who were also a little perturbed by the ominous atmosphere. We decided to give the riot a miss, and instead went to visit the

National Portrait Gallery. Ros was a lovely young hippie chick, long brown hair, secondhand finery, lovely blue eyes and a small thin mouth. Nick just seemed immeasurably cool, not least because he let out that he was the electrician at Middle Earth. After the gallery we went for a cup of tea, and Ros mentioned that Nick was looking for a place to live. I leapt at the chance to offer him some space in my room – his contribution would greatly ease my finances, and best of all he was offering free admission to the club anytime I wanted!

Meanwhile, the Grosvenor Square demo had turned into a full-scale riot... Back at work on Tuesday I was greeted with several comments about the demonstration and my part in it. It seems my participation in the chanting on Oxford Street had been captured in full close-up and broadcast on the BBC news...

By now the days were getting longer, my spirits rising. Perhaps too much so, as the more I enjoyed my own time, the less I enjoyed my job, my distaste for the commodity brokerage business was turning to disgust...

Nick's presence was a boon. Many an evening passed smoking, listening to my small record collection. Hendrix and Pink Floyd were foremost, with the Stones, Jefferson Airplane, Velvets... If I had a penny for every time we heard Third Stone from the Sun or Interstellar Overdrive... We came up with a list of activities that we might practice in private but not out in public that we'd permit each other in those tiny confines that offered too little privacy. And we found an effective way to vent anger and frustration. Outside the window was a concrete balustrade about three feet high enclosing a tiny area, much too small to even pretend to be a balcony. It began when a lightbulb burned out. Once it had been replaced, one of us took the dead bulb and flung it through the open window to shatter against the concrete.

"Man, that felt good!"

The bulb was followed by an empty milk bottle... This became an occasional ritual. We saved bottles and bulbs, and I'd stop from time to time and filch a bulb from a phone box on the station for this express purpose. In spite of this streak of destructiveness, I did make some attempt to make the place habitable with posters from Hapshash and the Coloured Coat, *UFO Coming*, *CIA vs. UFO* and *Arthur Brown*, and Martin Sharp, *Mr Tambourine Man*, as well as cheap but colourful Indian bedspreads, both on the bed and as a curtain.

Middle Earth was where I would be most Friday and Saturday nights now. In retrospect the eclectic roster of bands who played there that spring is astonishing: Brian Auger and Trinity with Julie Driscoll (whose cropped hair flew in the face of the hippy fashion for flowing locks); Family, who I think deserve far greater recognition than they ever got; Fairport Convention; Captain Beefheart; The Deviants; The Nice; The Byrds; Ike and Tina Turner... I was usually tripping, so my memories are in the main a kaleidoscopic chaos of colour and sound, but a few things did stick in my mind. There was an odd couple, a boy with very long blond hair and a girl with a boyish cut, both dressed in flowing kaftans, who would lay out a prayer rug and dance all night in an exaggeratedly mannered style. These two were the object of many a raised eyebrow or superior hippie sneer, but danced on, seemingly oblivious. It was not until several years later, with the release of *Ziggy Stardust* that I realised who they were. Ike and Tina (billed as "Ike and Teena" in IT!) played an incredible set to a near-empty house. I watched, rapt, from in front of the stage, my nose mere inches from Tina's crotch... The Byrds, too, managed to attract only a small crowd, the English audience once again demonstrating its narrow

conservatism in the face of their explorations of country music. As I recall, the Nice were not at all nice and Nick almost got into a punch-up with Keith Emerson when he tried to climb onto the light tower and start giving orders. And speaking of Nick's misadventures, his attempt to pick up Beefheart's guitar player, whom he'd mistakenly taken for a girl, was not that well received either...

One evening I came home to find a note: "Gone to Leytonstone(d). See you later." When Nick finally got back he told me he'd been to visit Ros, who was living in an abandoned school, so a few days later I prevailed upon him to take me out there. After an almost interminable tube ride, followed by a long walk through grey streets, we came to the school, which had been taken over by hippy squatters living as a commune. They had made some effort to make the place welcoming, with colourful posters and wall hangings in the central dining room. Ros had a small room that had probably been an office, which she had made very cozy, and we spent a pleasant hour or two smoking hash and listening to music before making the long trek back to Victoria.

With some of the money that Nick's share of the rent had permitted me to save I bought some navy blue velvet which I found a hippie tailor to make into a pair of extremely tight trousers. Much too tight, as it turned out. The cloth had no give to it at all. I was walking home from the tailor's through St. James's Park and in my exuberance jumped over one of the low fences to walk across the lawn. There was a short rending sound and I felt a rush of cold air on my right buttock. The strain of my outstretched leg was too much and the cloth had ripped from inseam to out at the crease between buttock and thigh. Chastened and embarrassed, I made my way home, doing what I could to hide my near-naked bum...

Not altogether surprisingly there came a Monday morning when I overslept and decided I couldn't be bothered to go in to the office. Tuesday the same, and I more or less decided to simply drop out. After all, I had already turned on, and felt that I was fairly well tuned in, so it was the next logical step, and I remained both naïve and impressionable. Certainly I was not worldly enough to consider how I might subsist after dropping out. I suppose I had some notion that the community would somehow provide, and certainly a distant echo of "consider the lilies of the field..." still rang somewhere in the back of my mind... A couple of days later I received a letter telling me that due to my unexplained absence the company was regretfully obliged to terminate my employment. This of course was a boon as it meant that I was eligible for unemployment benefits, and another day or two later I received an invitation to visit the local centre and sign on.

Once again I was extraordinarily lucky, and my case worker turned out to be extremely sympathetic.

"So what do you do?"

"Well, I was a clerk at a commodities broker's..."

"I know, but what else?"

"Um. I did go to art school."

"And what did you study there?"



“Basic design. Photography...”

“Photography? Fine, we’ll put you down as a photographer. You’ll never get a job...”

So I started freeloading on the State...

I remained somehow in thrall to my feelings for Sally, and anyway I was pretty clueless where girls were concerned, so I was hardly a beneficiary of the so-called sexual revolution and the legendary wave of free love that had supposedly swept over swinging London. I seemed doomed to live chastely. I did have a certain regard for Ros, but on the one hand felt that she was far too cool to be interested in me, on the other sensed that we were somehow better suited as friends than lovers... There was one girl, astonishingly beautiful in memory, whose name escapes me as does how we met. She told me she had found a sugar daddy who paid for her flat and gave her an allowance, but made no sexual demands of her at all. We spent a fair amount of time together, but I was much too clumsy and shy to initiate any kind of intimacy. Whether I was naïve or simply stupid I shall let you be the judge – perhaps your assessment will be kinder than my own... But she did take me to Afternoon Tea at Fortnum’s one day...

By now I was supplementing my meagre unemployment allowance by selling small amounts of hash. Doc and his friends were fairly regular customers, and in those days it was still relatively safe to sell to strangers on the street. Nick told me one night (apparently he was joking, but I took him at his word) that he’d met some geordies in Trafalgar Square and when they’d asked to score some acid he simply shook some drops of piss onto blotting paper... Some nights later there was a knock on the door, a voice with a decidedly northern accent asked for Nick.

“He sold us some acid the other day...” Reluctantly, half expecting to be beaten to a pulp, I let them in.

“It was fantastic, do you have more?”

Surreptitiously grabbing scissors and blotting paper, I made for the bathroom...

I sold them five “trips” for five pounds... Surprisingly, luckily, we never heard from them again... It’s troubling how even in this supposedly egalitarian, alternative, underground culture there existed so many stratifications and complicated pecking orders that provided the basis for some to regard others with varying degrees of contempt and thus “justify” such craven transactions...

Among Doc’s friends was an Anglo-Indian with dreams of pop-stardom (a few years later I realised he bore a striking resemblance to Freddie Mercury. Heck, perhaps he was Freddie Mercury?), who one evening led several of us to a swimming pool somewhere out in West London. The wall was easy to climb, and there didn’t seem to be any kind of security, so we swam and horsed around for an hour or two...

And then there was Mr. Trips, a classical bassoonist from San Francisco who had somehow ended up as a lodger in Doc’s mum’s basement flat while he spent a year playing with an illustrious London orchestra. He had brought with him an ample supply of white capsules of what he claimed was Owsley acid, which he shared quite generously. Trips was an exponent of the Ken Kesey/Acid Test school of thought, and often expressed the, perhaps somewhat

questionable, view that “Anything you can do straight you can do twice as well on acid.” I still recall an afternoon when he took me with him to a little hole in the wall workshop in Kilburn where he went for his bassoon reeds. And of course the night he took me to see *2001, A Space Odyssey*, tripping on one of his Owsley caps. The sensory experience of the film was overwhelming, but overshadowed by the Indian meal we went for in Soho afterwards. After a delicious hot curry, Trips insisted on ordering a plate of lychees for me. The little silver-white spheres seemed somewhat unappetising, but Trips persuaded me to open wide and popped one into my mouth, then chucked me under the chin, forcing my mouth closed and causing the lychee to explode inside my mouth. The greasy, syrupy-sweet fruit flavours and textures are perhaps best described simply as “interesting”, but I’ve somehow managed never to have had another lychee since that night...

The last I heard of Trips, he told me how he had become bored during a concert, and annoyed at the conductor’s approach to the music. During a *pianissimo* section he blew a mighty raspberry on his bassoon, picked up the instrument and walked off stage...

I didn’t know it, but my London spring was drawing to a close... In April I made a half-hearted, last-ditch effort to get back into college and went for an interview at the Guildford Film School. One question on a pre-interview questionnaire asked what was my most memorable visual experience, to which I replied, “Pink Floyd at UFO”, another what I felt the most appropriate organisational structure for film-making, “Constructive anarchy”. So I suppose these, and my attire of torn bell-bottoms and tattered army jacket, made the rejection that came shortly afterwards pretty much inevitable.

Nick and I had seen the news of the “events” in Paris and became enthused at the idea of going to join the revolution, but the next day all the ports were closed and a news blackout put in place. I have always been struck by the irony that so many students worldwide were demanding greater autonomy and control of their curricula, and there was I having had it given to me on a plate...

One day in June I received a letter telling me to go for another interview at the dole office. I met with the same friendly case worker.

“Looks like your benefits are going to run out soon, but there’s a job here that I think you might like.”

It was a company that franchised their name for boutiques around the country. They had an old barber shop in Wrexham that they wanted gutted and redecorated. The interview with the company was short. I showed them some of my sketches and assured them that I could do the job, and they signed me up on the spot. The pay seemed a small fortune, especially as all my living expenses in Wales and travel would be paid. When they told me they’d be looking for someone to assist me, I said that I might know someone, and as soon as I left I called Bob. He leapt at the chance, so a few days we were on the train to North Wales...

We made short work of the existing fixtures and fittings, and soon the shop was reduced to bare walls and floors. Our design for the interior called for a mural of stylised art nouveau irises and framed Mucha posters. Bob had brought some French blues, and hash of course, and we had a little record player that we played as loud as it would go. For years this would remain the best job I’d ever had...

The days passed in a pleasant fog of hash, amphetamines and creativity in the shop, and at weekends we'd go for long walks in the surrounding countryside. As we only had use of a sink at the guest house for our ablutions, on one or two evenings a week we'd take ourselves to the public baths and enjoy a long soak in huge bathtubs with an unlimited supply of scalding hot water. Bliss.

When the speed ran out, Bob took a trip to London to get more. He couldn't find any, but did bring back a new Pink Floyd LP, *A Saucerful of Secrets*. From then on we relied on caffeine pills to keep us going. When the painting was almost finished, a lorry delivered the new fixtures, hooks, clothes racks and so on. We had kept the sturdy old wooden counter from the barber shop. As the day scheduled for the grand opening approached, it became apparent that we'd never manage to finish on time, so we managed to get a week's reprieve. Nevertheless, we were still at work until the wee hours on the eve of the opening.

When we arrived at the shop in the morning a squealing crowd of teenaged girls was crowding the arcade outside. We felt like (very minor) pop stars as we pushed our way through to the door. At noon the doors opened, and the mob surged inside. It didn't take very long before first one, then another, and finally all, of the clothes racks came unstuck from the walls and slowly collapsed to the floor with their burdens of bright skirts, blouses, dresses and coats. It was a bit embarrassing, but the owner took it well, her mood no doubt helped by all the champagne, and Bob and I were hard put to keep from collapsing in hilarity...

It turned out that the collars we had used to attach the racks to the walls were not designed to have any structural value, being merely intended as decoration to conceal the holes in the wall that were supposed to bear the weight, and that we had neglected, in our ignorance, to drill. But we managed to complete the repairs that evening, and the next day were on the train back to London.

At the office we were told that, as it was Friday, they'd not be able to write us our check until the following Monday, so we each went back to the coast for the weekend, Bob to Brighton and I to Eastbourne, where I prevailed upon my long-suffering friend Judith to put me up on her couch for Saturday and Sunday nights.

You may not be surprised to hear that I was unable to resist the temptation to ring Sally to see if she would come into town to see me. But I was a little, though pleasantly, surprised when she agreed to meet me on Sunday afternoon for an hour or two.

It was a lovely sunny day, so after I'd met her bus at the railway station we went for a walk in a nearby park. She was radiant in her spring frock, and seemed truly delighted to see me. I told her about my adventures in London, the saga of the shop. Then she offered an invitation that simply bowled me over.

"Some of my friends and I have rented a villa in the South of France, at St. Jean Cap Ferrat, for August. Would you like to come and stay for a week?"

# NOT-SO-GOOD ROCKIN' TONGHT

(EXCERPT)

By Keef Strang

At last a book that takes a deep breath and dives down, down, deeper and down into the uncharted depths beneath the itzy, bitsy, teeny, weeny tip of the rock iceberg. Third-rate, two-bit, one-trick rock researcher Keef Strang tells the tale of a neglected band of melody makers whose 50 yearlong shot at fame reads like a parallel history of popular music. Tours are cursed, records are massacred by off-the-wall producers, drummers and keyboard players disappear into psychedelic sects, sonic experiments backfire and over the whole story hangs the presence of a mysterious rock 'n' roll casualty gone AWOL. The road is long, with many a winding turn and is littered with still-born dreams, barely twitching hopes plus some seriously bad music. It is a ride as rocky as rock itself, but one that is told in all its ragged glory.

## Chapter Three - I Started Something I Couldn't Finish

Even if Clubfoot Jake McCoy's discs and others like them were never played on the radio or even in clubs, they passed from hand to hand by word of mouth having a mega influence on post-war, middle-England youngsters. In Dunwich, Colin Wadcock was part of a small group of fanatics who worshipped McCoy and wanted to follow in his footsteps, except in their own shoes. The singer's sad songs somehow made sense to them and pushed them to pick up cheap guitars and make their own teenage kicks.

Apart from his plectrum wielding, Colin Wadcock was also becoming a bit of a book worm. After half a dozen trips to the library, the acned adolescent dug that the building didn't just have records in it but also stocked loads of books that could be borrowed by the 36% of the Dunwich population who read more than a betting slip. From then on, when he wasn't playing the guitar he was reading abridged versions of the classics designed to be polished off in a few hours. Thanks to this novel collection he'd read *War and a Tiny Bit of Peace*, *Around the World in 80 Minutes* and *Moby Duck* before his first shave.

Within a few months, chock full of teenage angst, he began coming over all literary himself and put pen to paper. Not long after, he started to write. Today, none of these immature scribblings survive. This isn't a great loss to the world, but at least writing got it into his head that his two passions could come together. Words and music. Put another way, songs. "I felt I could write poems," he tells me rolling out another medicinal spliff. "I felt I could play music. Why not put the two together and produce songs? That was the idea anyway. It seemed beautifully simple. That's because it should have been beautifully simple. The lyrics didn't pose too many problems, but the tunes were another thing entirely. Even if I was able to string together notes on the guitar, I had real trouble penning a tune that didn't sound as if it had already been recorded by one of those blues guys we were all crazy about."

Clearly, our hero needed some cat to be a catalyst. In awe of the ultra-cool Byron Thomas, he asked him if he was keen on knocking out some knock-out tunes. To Wadcock's dismay, the idea was a non-starter. "The artistic thing got Byron going. Where it fell down was the music

side of things which, let's face it, was pretty central to the whole project. There were two big catches. First off, he couldn't play a note on any sort of instrument and secondly what he was listening to wasn't on the same wavelength as the blues I was getting off on. I was gutted. I loved the guy, but he just wasn't ready."

It's not certain Wadcock himself was ready, teddy, but even at that early stage in their lives it's true that the two teenagers were already faced with the dreaded 'musical differences' that scupper so many bands. Wadcock's love of songs sung blue was an awful long way from the folk fare Thomas was tucking into. While one kid locked himself in his bedroom with raunchy 78s, the other one sat next to people with names like Abigail, Eleanor and Geraint at finger-in-the-ear folk recitals. Even if rock and folk would later get it on in the cleverly-named 'folk-rock' movement, this brand of mutant music wasn't in anyone's mind back in a time when pop was only just getting out of nappies. For now, Byron Thomas would have to take a back seat just like those seven little girls sitting there kissing and a-huggin' with Fred (Obscure hit single reference with which to win friends and influence your uncle. Look it up, my friends, look it up).

It was in one of his mime and drama classes at Crispian St Peter's Grammar School that Wadcock stumbled across the person who would kick-start his musical career. "We were supposed to be acting out the myth of Sisyphus, but we spent most of the time rolling around like we were all rocks and no-one in particular was pushing us up any hills. One guy kept banging into me on purpose. Uncommonly aggressive. I was all set to give him a piece of my mind after the lesson, when we got talking instead and as soon as we got onto music we couldn't get off it. I knew then that I'd gone and found myself a kindred spirit. For better or worse, Mick French had touched down in my life."

Born in Studley, near Dunwich, in 1939 (bizarrely, the same year as Marvin Gaye, which Mick French isn't), Michael French was part of a family that couldn't have produced anything other than a real wild child. His mom and dad were bouncers at infamous night spot the Crow Bar. When a jazz guitarist playing one night had to call on the combined French forces to get him out of a tight squeeze with some loose women, his only way of paying his dues was to give music lessons to the couple's son. The boy was a natural and at 14 ran away from home, guitar in hand, to join a rag-bag ragtime band. The great escape lasted less than a day and the thrashing the teenager got was enough to leave him not only unwashed, but somewhat slightly dazed for a couple of weeks. His love of music, however, couldn't be beaten out of him.

Back at school with a wired up jaw, French got chummy with the blues bonkers Colin Wadcock. "Col was a bit of a girl's blouse," French tells me. "Hung around with Byron Thomas a lot, writing poems about clouds and fairies. Knew his music though. Get him onto darky songs and you couldn't get him off the buggers. Me and my mates used to call him monkey man 'cos he loved those nig-nog types so much. Got him in a right strop, that did. Couldn't take a joke."

So, while music was a common passion for these two young dudes, they didn't exactly see eye-to-eye on ebony and ivory living together in perfect harmony on the piano keyboard or anywhere else. Some of this is down to the day Mick French came into this big bad-ass world. I'll let the guy himself explain: "I was born on the morning the Germans laid into Poland. That sort of thing marks you. I don't mean you get branded with a red hot cattle iron or anything like that, just that it hangs around in your brain. Won't leave you alone. Until I was 12, I was gonna

be a Nazi stormtrooper when I grew up. I was gutted when they told me all that was over and that the kraut with the Charlie Chaplin moustache had bought it in a bunker. I remember thinking what a cool bloke he must have been playing a round of golf while the enemy were on his back.”

Despite all that, the two young guns quickly got to be as much of an item as Page and Plant, Jan and Dean or The Mommas and The Poppers. Wadcock’s days were still spent by the canal hanging on Byron Thomas’s every word, but his evenings were something else. After sundown, Colin and Mick turned into monsters of rock ‘n’ roll making a din to bring the house down up in one of their bedrooms. A few months into this budding beat brotherhood, the Dunwich duo set about penning their first original songs. None of their stuff written before 1957 survives. Neither of them could read music and Wadcock’s poetry books from those days of future passed were burnt in a tantrum after Blue Whale’s washed-up tour of the USA in the late sixties. What does remain though are the memories of the two dudes in question.

“My lyrics at the time were naive to say the least,” recalls Colin Wadcock through the purple haze of the drug-fog that fills the room. “It was your standard verse, verse, chorus, verse, chorus, middle eight, verse, chorus. That was the theory anyway. Sometimes Mick couldn’t come up with enough notes so we had to make do with a middle five or six, but whatever the melody my words were always basically the same. I was raised on singers telling me about freight trains, cotton picking and roadhouses, whereas my life was school buses, nose picking and terraced houses. I tried to copy what my influences had been writing about, but it came out sounding so phony it was untrue. Byron told me to go more ethereal, but I wanted earthy. Besides, I didn’t know what ethereal meant back then, so how could I go it?”

A literal turning point came when Mick French got out of school at 15 and got a job with the council painting white lines in the road. Even then he knew it’d lead nowhere. One day there’d be no roads left to paint, or no paint left to paint them with, or no cars left to drive up the roads which hadn’t been painted because there was no paint left. It was all too heavy for words, but not too heavy for music. The guitar and the tunes it sent out into the Dunwich night became Mick French’s only escape, then his refuge, then his whole life.

In January 1956, he reached a mind-blowing decision. A third of the way along Stephen Street in the town centre he stopped doing the white lines. Without cutting his wagon’s paint supply, he turned sharp right up a side street, parked the beast and left it to its own devices. As Mick French walked home set on making his life come alive to the sound of music, dozens of drivers were following his last road markings. They thought the strange direction they were taking was some new and dead clever traffic flow system. How wrong they were. Less than 20 minutes after French quit as a council worker, the place he’d left his paint wagon had become seriously gridlocked by a bunch of cars stuck up a dead end street.



# BASTET IN ULTHAR

By Matt Leyshon

Photos © Tom Garretson

Dr. Wellock peered out from his surgery and into the waiting room. He saw that it was already full of Ulthar's elderly womenfolk wanting to book surgery and the receptionist informed him that his first patient for an operation was already in. He was tired and there was going to be no chance of an easy morning. The spring sun streamed through the glass frontage and needled his weary eyes. He was getting too old for this, he thought.

To make things worse his acquisition of supplies was becoming an exhausting business in itself. Nobody in Ulthar let their cats out at night anymore and his local resource of strays was now spent. Nowadays, unless he braved the feral farm cats, he had no choice but to travel further and further afield for his supply of kitties. The night before he had driven through the gorges and ravines to spend the night prowling around the back streets of Dunwich, his pockets bulging with catnip, squinting for skulking feline shadows in the amber glow of the streetlights.

"Right Miss Shaw, if you'd like to remove your lower garments for me," said Dr. Wellock, rubbing the small of his back that ached from lugging a rucksack of tranquillised cats around and sent sharp pains coursing down his legs when he moved.

"Doctor, I'm not sure..."

"Not sure about what? Removing your clothes? It's nothing I've not seen before," he replied, wincing a little as he recalled the pre-op examination.

"It's not that..."

"Is it the cost then? You'll save a fortune on toilet roll," said the doctor, eager to take her money but at loss as to the point of her having a perfect sphincter when her powdered face had more wrinkles than a pickled walnut. "And you won't need stain remover for those troublesome skid marks in your knickers ever again. Economically it makes good sense, you'll have recouped the cost in no time."

"Doctor," she exclaimed.

"Oh come, come. I've seen your briefs and written your prescriptions for irritable bowel syndrome, remember?"





She slowly removed her woollen hat, unravelled the scarf from her neck, and began unbuttoning her heavy overcoat.

“Jolly good. There’s no need to worry, I’m sure you’ll know as well as I do that all the ladies are getting this done. Even us chaps are beginning to catch on, although those who like to do their gardening uphill are less keen, for obvious reasons. So fear not, just get yourself undressed and lie face down on the table there.”

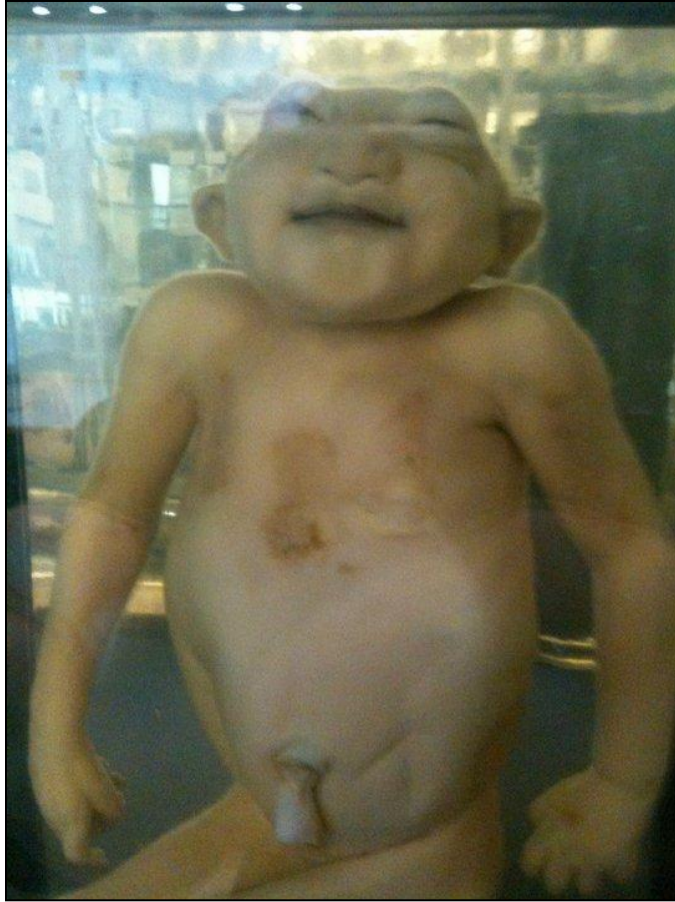
He left the stuffy warmth of the operating room to wait for the anaesthetic to take hold of Miss Shaw. It was cooler in the storeroom and he lit himself a cigarette to wake himself up. He mopped the perspiration from his brow, took a gulp of whisky, and applied a lethal injection to one of his caged

moggies. It whimpered pathetically as he hunted around for a fresh scalpel, and then it lay quiet and still as he lifted its tail and began to slice a circle around its rear.

He returned to the operating room, the cat’s rectum in his hand dripping a little blood onto the floor. He taped his unconscious patient’s butt cheeks open, and set to work replacing Miss Shaw’s asshole.

At the end of his busy day Dr. Wellock poured himself another whisky from the rapidly emptying bottle and started his furnace in the backyard. He began lobbing cat corpses into the flames and the fire popped and crackled satisfyingly as the sun set and bled across the dusky sky. There was a nip in the spring air now and so he lit a cigarette and stuffed his free hand into his pocket to keep it warm. As he smoked and watched the flames licking against the grill, he wondered to himself how he might spend all the money he was making from Ulthar’s crones and their anal upgrades. Perhaps he would treat himself to a little modification of his own he thought as he warmed his fingers against his shrivelled crotch. The moon appeared on the horizon, pink and heavy like one of Miss Shaw’s buttocks.

He turned from the fire, suddenly aware of himself being watched.



"Hey you, this is private property," he shouted.

There was a woman stood at the entry to his yard, watching him. She looked foreign, he thought. She was sullen and lithe with dark skin and wide eyes.

"You might just stroll onto other people's property where you come from, but we don't do that here. You're trespassing," he said.

"Oh, I'm terribly sorry," she said, her grimace quickly shifting to a coquettish smile. Her voice was exotic and tuneful, like satisfied purring. "It is just that I have seen you around Ulthar, and I thought to myself, who is this handsome and distinguished man, I simply must meet him."

"Oh, I see." The doctor drew his shoulders back slowly and heaved his stomach in. "Well, here I am then. Dr. Wellock at your service."

The woman's hips swung seductively as she sauntered towards him, her hand outstretched.

"Pleased to meet you," the doctor said, shaking her hand, starting a little at the scratch of her nails upon his skin.

"Perhaps you would offer me a refreshment indoors, it's getting cold out here," she said.

"Whisky? That ought to warm you up," he said.

"Perfect. I like to be warmed up."

It seems there's no end to my good fortune these days, the doctor thought. He led her into his office, pulling closed the door to his storeroom to stifle the mews of the distressed cats as he passed.

They took seats and Dr. Wellock poured the woman a whisky. She placed it upon his desk without drinking any.

"The people here in Ulthar speak very highly of you, doctor," she said, smiling, her nails picking softly at the seat fabric.

"I do what I can to make my patients happy," he said with a theatrical confidence that belied his sore joints as he leaned back in the chair and puffed his chest proudly.

She brought a hand to her head and caressed the delicate skin behind her ear. "Do you think you could make me happy?"

He took a deep breath and willed his heart to stop beating so quickly. He could feel his cheeks flushing and his ears burned. "I would try my best, I assure you. May I ask your name?"

"My name is Bastet," she said, sliding from her seat to reach across and unbutton the doctor's fly.

"Oh, goodness," he stammered, conceding immediately that it was going to be quite impossible to calm himself down. He took a swig of whisky. "What an, uh, unusual name."

She motioned with her head for him to rise from his chair. He did so and allowed her to pull his underpants down to his knees. "Oh," she said.

"What?" he panted. "Is something wrong?"

"For a supposed expert in bodily modifications, this is not quite what I expected," she sighed, returning to her seat.

The doctor hurriedly pulled up his briefs and trousers. "I'm still cold from outside. Besides, I'll have you know that what I have is perfectly ordinary. And if anyone should know then I should, I've seen enough of them in my line of work."

"Ordinary, yes. It isn't what I expected, that is all," she said.

He felt embarrassed and downed his whisky. Then he lit a cigarette thoughtfully. "Well, I can soon do something about that. If you want something extraordinary then that is what you will get."

"Perhaps we could try again next week?"

The doctor looked up at the ceiling, calculating the healing times for the sensitive graft that he was contemplating. "Perhaps we should make it two?"

"I shall see you in a fortnight," she purred, rising from the chair and showing herself out.

The doctor racked his brain, trying to think of how best to satisfy this gorgeous woman who quite unexpectedly seemed to have a rather irrepressible crush on him. It wasn't long before he settled upon a plan to endow himself with a huge horse's cock. He knew that there were stables in Ulthar but he figured he ought not to risk mutilating a horse on his own doorstep. He decided that he would drive out to the forests around Dunwich where he knew wild ponies roamed. He filled a syringe with ketamine, took his doctor's bag, and committed himself to another night that would be without sleep.



When he returned he packed the enormous equine penis in ice and left a note on his receptionist's desk instructing her to cancel his appointments for the next few weeks. It was not going to be easy, but the doctor figured that he was capable, and as he had said so often to his patients, the end result would make it all worthwhile.

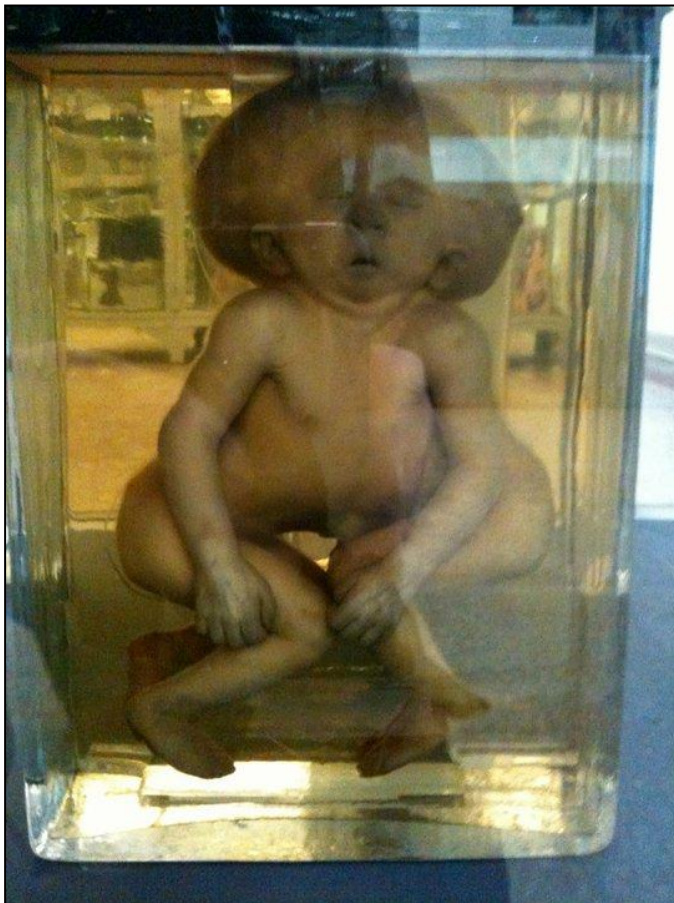
The following morning he propped himself up on his operating table with his instruments beside him and waited for the local anaesthetic to take hold. Then he began to work the scalpel between his thighs.

Two weeks passed and his new appendage had healed nicely. He conceded to himself that it wasn't his most handsome work, it reminded him of bleached gizzards stuffed into a femidom, but it had length and it had girth, of that there was no denying. It would just take some getting used to, he said to himself, just as he told his patients how they would soon grow accustomed to defecating perfectly clipped turds through a feline's arse.

Over the next couple of weeks he became skilled at threading his huge prick down one trouser leg when he dressed in the morning and it had become instinctive to adjust himself and to take

care upon sitting down. His imagination wasn't what it had once been and the old crones that he could see passing outside his window on their way to the Post Office had not allowed him to witness his new organ in its full glory, but he was sure that Bastet would resolve that particular issue. He sat in his flat above the surgery and waited.

It was two weeks later to the day and Dr. Wellock was in the bedroom choosing which shirt to wear when he thought that he saw through the window a dark shape slink across his yard wall. He peered out and saw Bastet waiting by the back door. Goodness, he thought, how long as she been waiting there? He tucked his shirt in, patted a little aftershave onto his cheeks, and rushed downstairs.



He opened the door and she smiled, flashing narrow incisors that glistened brightly in the moonlight.

"I hope you weren't waiting too long. Do come in," he said, and led her down the hallway.

"What's that noise?" she asked.

It suddenly dawned on him that because he had not left his flat since his operation the cats had not been fed and their food and water would have surely run out days ago. Weak meows echoed around them. "That'll be the neighbour's cats," he said, pulling the storeroom door to. "Goodness knows what they do to them."

She padded behind him silently, following him up the stairs and into his lounge.

"Can I get you a drink?"

"No," she said. "Let's get straight on with it."

He trembled with excitement. Dr. Wellock had never known a woman like this before. She knew what she wanted and she didn't hesitate in asking for it. Also she appeared now even more beautiful than he remembered. He felt a gentle stirring in his loins. "Oh yes," he said.

“First you must shave off your eyebrows,” she said, handing him a razor.

“Is that really necessary?”

“Yes, I would appreciate it,” she replied.

Bastet removed her headscarf and allowed her long dark hair to tumble seductively across her shoulders as the doctor carefully shaved away his eyebrows. Then she began to unwrap her shawl.

Dr. Wellock began fumbling hurriedly with his belt and then started unbuttoning his trousers. He was shaking with anticipation, eager to unfurl his new penis and hear her gasp in awe. His trousers dropped to his ankles and he carefully navigated his elasticised briefs over the tube of blanched meat that hung against his thigh like white pudding in a butcher’s window.

“Oh my,” she said, stepping out of her knickers and turning her back to him, permitting him a fine view of her naked rear.



Despite being a doctor he swore to himself he had not seen anything as magnificent in fifty years, she had an ass to die for and he couldn’t wait to get his hands on it. His phallus rose a little and then slapped back against his thigh with a dull thump.

“Now, that is quite extraordinary,” she said as she slid off her top to reveal two good handfuls of firm breast and reached forward to gently caress his stiffening organ.

“Good lord,” Dr. Wellock groaned. His grafted horse cock was pulsating as it grew and he saw throbbing blues veins emerge like flex beneath the thin translucent skin. He attempted to reach out and grasp her butt cheeks, but found that he was quite unable to lift his arms.

“Is something wrong?” she said, continuing to stroke his member as it continued to rise slowly in little jerking movements until it stuck out from his pelvis like a grotesque coat hook. “You seemed to slur a little when you spoke then.”

He couldn't answer. Something is wrong, he thought. He couldn't feel one side of his face, and then he realised that half of his body seemed to have gone numb. He tried to tap into his medical knowledge for a diagnosis but his thoughts were becoming fuzzy and he felt faint. And then it dawned on him; he was having a stroke. All the blood was gushing to fill his new penis and his brain was becoming starved of oxygen. He tried to ask Bastet to call an ambulance, but the words would not form. She stood up and plunged his face into her cleavage. Dribble ran from his mouth to pool in her navel as he gasped for breath and tried feebly to pull himself free. “In ancient Egypt, when a family cat died, the family would remove their eyebrows as a sign of mourning,” she whispered into his ear.

It was the last thing that Doctor Wellock was to hear. His body sagged and Bastet let him fall lifeless to the floor. She didn't bother dressing and instead she went downstairs and began searching for Dr. Wellocks key to the storeroom. Eventually she found it in his office and let herself in. She wept as she saw the cages of emaciated cats. Some raised their heads weakly as she approached and mewed a pitifully.

She filled their water bowls and watched the cats drink. Then she gave them food and propped open the back door as they regained some strength. Then she opened each cage to set the cats free.

One by one the cats made their cautious escape and when the last had disappeared into the night she stood in the yard, bathed in the moon's milky glow. Bastet allowed the lunar light to take its effect upon her and soon she felt the night breeze whisper through her fur. Her ears turned at the screech of a seagull somewhere, and she sniffed the air. Then she dropped to all fours and pounced up onto the wall, her tail swinging contentedly behind her. She meowed, and then she was gone.

# HIROSHIMA SHADOWS



Chikuma Ashida



# 2

*A room is not a luxury.*

*Large wall mirror reflects all pretty nude colour interior luxury.*

*Dressing table mirror to make available long before a bright yellow flower basket of luxury, is the container, attach a business card.*

*Flowerpot next items are the things up and throwing a lipstick rolling ingot.*

Agent Orange examines the room carefully, his nostrils seeking out the traces of Madame X, his old lover and enemy. What will he do if and when he finds her? Will he kill her first or make love to her? The sunlight between the slits of the bamboo blind glistens on his liquid crystal eyeliner.

*Next to the bed surface a fortune on clothes suitcase was opened uncompleted fashion.*

*A mobile phone in the middle of expensive clothes suitcase was vibrating, flashing number to call, followed by a rise softly ringing phone startled, and saints, such as ringing tone melody of dancers glass dance on the music box.*

*Open door, a long-legged push the door into the room, closed the door behind him.*

Like many youths still surviving in the wreckage of post-Tokyo he boasts sophisticated augmentive surgery, now cheaper than organic food, part fashion statement part survival necessity. In the closing decades of the century, fashion and warfare had merged to become inseparable. Now everyone could have a good looking corpse.

*1 foot long dress has fashion show in the Event of a label, red shirt, open the shoulders bare, shiny belt to tighten the waist tightly.*

*Hear the bell, go to bed a foot long.*

*A long-legged bird to see the mobile phone, the display shows the caller's name to: "Lack of family first."*

*Phone ringing off.*

Agent Orange has been a huge fan of Madame X all his life. As a small child he, like countless others, would frequently sit on kerbsides for hours entranced by the overblown images of her face floating across the facades of the colossal skyscrapers, no longer occupied by living humans, now only nests for dogboys, Deros and the enigmatic Blue Giants whose shadows could kill.

*1 foot long - raised eyebrows, holding the phone to go to the table look-up tilt, curious.*

*A bouquet of long legs lifted up, pouting.*

*Long legs open a business card attached, that has a shape of a red heart and signed: "Major part 2."*

*1 foot long despised pop sound "hic!"*

*Noises outside the door hastily pushed a foot long bouquet to its original location.*

*Then throw the phone back into the suitcase for fashion.*

Agent Orange has spent a lot of time under the knives and laser scalpels of the bodmod parlours, refashioning his features and body to resemble Madame X's. In fact, other than the genitals, he is now an almost exact replica of his idol. As soon as he has killed her he will go under the knife for the last time and complete the transformation. His intention is to try to slot into her life as seamlessly as possible. Hopefully those few who know the truth won't care enough to do anything about it. He will let Agent Orange slip out of existence and totally become Madame X.

*Someone open to 2 feet long into the room, then closed the door household 2 feet long.*

*Long legs a haughty look, lemon, glanced from head to toe look who just came in, and turned away, with envious looks.*

*2 feet long does not bother hostility of a foot long, 2 feet long red dress and wear the same brand of Event, shoulder deviations, no waist, sparkling, luxurious look and higher value quite a dress of long legs.*

The door slides open suddenly and he has fired at least a dozen hollow-nosed dum-dum shells into the Dero before he even knows what it is. In fact if it weren't for the single front right paw that is the only recognisable part left, he would never know exactly what he had just killed.

*2 feet long to sit down right before the dressing table chair, looks a bit tired, sad, touching lightly on the cheek and then slipped each hand to touch yourself while looking in the mirror, look in the mirror goes down, the eyelids sweep down, the hands slowly slide down, while his face remained motionless.*

*Long legs off the bed stood a bunch of narrow waist of the dress fashion looks satisfied as just removing a burden, binding.*

*Stock picking comfort.*

*Kicking shoes off the feet.*

*1 foot long go barefoot window overlooking the street, a car yellow LP670 Roadster choke ultra luxurious sitting dormant just below the road, a man sitting in the car.*

*One last look at long legs bright yellow bouquet of the same colour car to put in the room, then looked down the road, lip biting.*

*A car horn spoke, urged retired.*

Agent Orange slides to the side of the window and gingerly parts the blind with the barrel of his gun. Two Genki Genki girls stand in the street, one of them leaning against the bonnet of a car, the other looking up at the facade of the building. The car shimmers and its outline flickers, difficult to ascertain properly. A cloaking device. These girls are thrill seeking, slumming through the dangerous outskirts of Burst City in a car shielded as much from mummy and daddy as from anything resembling authorities still remaining here.

*Long legs dragging a window curtain discontent type "portable" one, and seems uncomfortable, drop the bed down.*

*Seems to envy, contempt, lust and inserts.*

*2 feet long in a chair to sit still, hand remains in first position.*

*Heard a car horn, 2 feet long eyes turn yellow bouquet look side.*

*English horn sounded, the more brightly colored yellow flowers.*

Agent Orange steps outside, his gun dangling limply at his side. He smiles at the look of surprise on their faces. The one initially seated jumps to an alert position.

Oh My God," gasps one of the girls. "You... you're..."

"No. I'm not she. Not yet anyways. But I'm hoping to rectify that as soon as I find her."

"She is out here then?" stammers the other girl. "We heard she'd been seen in the outskirts."

Damn. It must have been on the news. There is now no way he can complete his mission today. Too much publicity would ruin his plans.

*Feet long 2 feet, dragged reluctantly from the suitcase on the bed, next to a foot long a bright yellow dress, the colour like the colour of the car to and yellow bouquet.*

*2 foot long clear yellow dress up as a chair, placed next to colour dress colour flowers, very similar.*

*2 feet long hesitated and then slipped a sleeve of his shoulder shift dress wear.*

"She was here, but I'm pretty sure she's gone now. I was too late."

He has no idea how much truth there is in that. The girls look disappointed.

"If you're heading back uptown, maybe you two could give me a lift? Maybe you'd like to eat with me?"

The first girl brightens, a sly look spreading across her face.

"Hey - hey, would you do us a favour? Maybe you could pretend to be ..Her? Just so we could walk around with you and show off to our friends?"

He smiles.

"Why not? And then afterwards...." he raises an eyebrow.

The girls giggle. Obviously the thought of having sex with a look-alike of their idol appeals to them. Of course they have no idea how rough Madame X plays, nor how he does for that matter. They will soon find out.

*Feet long 1 group would sit up in bed, astonished to see a red bite marks on the shoulders and chest swelling feet long 2 new expose.*

*2 feet long calmly sad, it looks real need, to touch the wound, and then slip the dress down completely.*

*From the back can see more wound up than bruising, wound type.*

As the car speeds along, a Cawthornicopter buzzes them overhead. He glances up and catches the glint of camera nozzles aimed at them. He leans back and waves up happily.

"Girls, look up and smile. You're on tv."

*1 foot long looked under the seat body 2 feet long in front gradually exposing the body, the skirt fell down, his expression shocked, shocked, scared looks painful.*

*2 foot long sign on the course wearing new dress panels, new dresses showing off your chest, neck carved deep as short-hand and hold the wound cover.*

*2 feet long finish wear dresses, long leg first glance look first since entering the room.*

*Quickly turned to a foot long, lying down clutching his knee covering a defensive style.*

He wanders through their parents' house, opening and closing cupboard doors. He's eaten most of the food he's found and is now looking for anything electronic and portable he can find. He stops in front of a full-length mirror and admires the fur coat he is wearing. He turns his head slightly to show off his cheekbones. My God, he really is gorgeous.

*Snigger 2 feet long, holding lipstick on a dressing table mirror up in front of the environmental factors brilliant golden bouquet glanced back.*

*Mirror 2 feet long just to have handy quo, you hand over the flowers of gold, whipped with some flowers in his hand seemed powerless disgust, contempt, unconcerned, then push the bouquet, pick with some makeup on the table for the eminent hands.*

*Take up the ringing phone, along with the car horn.*

He throws his old bloodstained clothes into the waste-disposal. He is not worried about leaving DNA traces as his own has been genetically modified with cockroach genes so that nobody would have a clue what they were looking at. Time to go.

*2 feet long did not bother looking at the call, hold your phone is always inserted into die hands, hastily pushed out the door.*

*Outside crunch sound of fans and reporters.*

*A group long legs up, slowly, looking out the door, and sat on the bed, pillows bunch, watching some nails.*

*Nail made his beautiful glossy, remove the stick up his hair, the look-lucky.*

He glances into the bathroom. The smaller of the girls lies in the bath, her blood smearing the walls above her body. He reaches over and closes her eyes, kissing each one gently.

In the bedroom, the other girl is still tied up, her eyes wide like a terrified animal's. The way he's suspended her must be agonising. He feels a small rush of pride in his handiwork. Even in this day and age, craftsmanship means something.

Before turning to leave, he shoots her through the right eye. Her head explodes but none of it touches him because he's already wheeled away and closed the door.

*I like small animals, the frantic rush to find her bag to get the phone to gossip with friends instantly.*

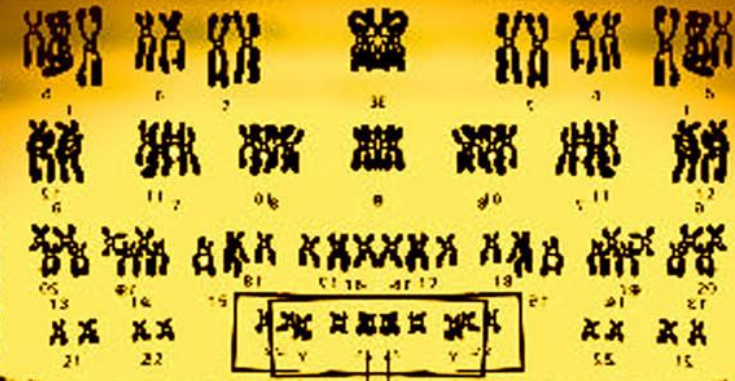
*Torpid not see the phone around in your pocket, a foot long press the call bell service hotel.*

He drives the car until it runs out of fuel and then leaves it and walks off. Before he's even reached the end of the block, scavengers emerge from doorways and begin stripping it of everything useful.



DIAGRAM OF HUMAN CHROMOSOMES

ДИАГРАММА ЧЛВЧЬИХ ХРОМОСОМ



Vertical text on the left side: 美安美, 氣, 記, 版, 廣, 式, 詩, 綺, 圖, 新, 四, 州, 紙, 面, 月, 想, 紙.

# 紙面月想紙



# AN ANARCHO-LIBERTINE MANIFESTO, 2<sup>nd</sup> ITERATION

By Karl Wolff

## MANIFESTOS ARE POINTLESS SELF-INDULGENT EXERCISES

Artistic manifestos are, by their very nature, either empty postures or immediately obsolescent. Whenever manifestos are manufactured and distributed, one question remains paramount: "Who the hell cares?"

Alas, art is not dangerous anymore, if it ever was to begin with. Gone are the by-gone days when art created riots. But this nostalgia, this childish craving for the past, feeds into the very processes that degrade and defile the entire artistic enterprise. (Hipsters and philistines: both deserve blame.)

Revolution doesn't require aesthetic austerity. Whether one follows the holy books of Adam Smith or Karl Marx, there will always be some inept gasbag above you in the hierarchy ordering you to tighten your belt and keep rowing. Capitalist and Communist empires both thrived with their galley slaves and evangelical missions to convert the world.

Poisonous austerity must be eradicated with art that is *thick*: rich, opulent, excessive, ornate, luxurious, and decadent. Since these words have become associated with the socio-economic upper crust ("Society" types; wastrel heirs; New Money nomenklatura), self-styled revolutionaries became reactionaries and then opted for austerity, minimalism, and seriousness. Unfortunately, what began as minimal ended up as bland and boring.

Nor is this manifesto a simple *cri de Coeur* to revive the Decadence Movement or Symbolism. Anarcho-libertinism isn't about the onanism of revivalism. Revivalism only reinforces the notion that an artistic movement is nothing more than a hollow shell, an empty referent more than ready for co-opting or conversion into the next Superbowl commercial or Internet meme.

"Make it new." - Ezra Pound

## THE ENEMIES OF ANARCHO-LIBERTINISM

### 1. REALISM

- a. "'Reality' is what you get away with." - Robert Anton Wilson
- b. Realism as an artistic technique presumes to capture life, nature, and reality unvarnished by sentimentality and the artificiality of ornate prose. Realism is plain. In actuality, Realism, like its lookalike Naturalism, has devolved into nothing more than a

mere *transcription* of events. Not every writer strives to become a stenographer.

## 2. NATURALISM

- a. Naturalism, like Realism, is associated with many of the same prejudices of Realism. While more hardheaded and hard-hearted, it aims to show the ugliness and brutality of the world *as is*. But there is no joy in it, since it is only a means to an end. By showing the ugliness and brutality of the specific objects of investigation, the writer desires not the art he's creating, but only the desire for political or economic reform.

## 3. INVISIBLE STYLE

- a. Invisible Style is a crass degradation of what hacks think constitutes journalism. The end-product is neither invisible nor particularly stylish. It is beige, flavorless, and flat. Works written in Invisible Style:
  - i. Are usually forgotten the second after you read them.
  - ii. Add nothing to any genre worth championing.
  - iii. Should stop being endorsed by creative writing groups, because, hey, that's what publishers want.
    1. If that's what publishers want, may we pray for more bankruptcies in that sector.
    2. If that's what you think publishers want, then there's a reason no one is buying your crap fiction and you should get back to making me my morning cappuccino, you goddamn talentless hack!
- b. Why would anyone want style to become invisible? That's like tasteless cuisine.
- c. The desire to make one's aesthetic style "invisible" bespeaks a certain personal moral cowardice and innate lack of artistic creativity. You might as well say, "My writing doesn't matter enough to stand by any stylistic individuality."
- d. Invisible Style is the aesthetic equivalent of not putting up a fight while the creative industry tells you to sit at the back of the bus.
- e. Style *is* substance, dumbass!

## 4. PROLETARIANISM

- a. Being pro-worker should not be confused with bad writing.
- b. Being pro-worker doesn't mean thwacking your reader on the back of the skull with a two-by-four.
- c. Being pro-worker doesn't mean writing strident, preachy, and repetitive works that are overlong, enlarded with one-dimensional characters, and filled with overlong speeches.



- d. Upton Sinclair and Ayn Rand wrote the same thing, only their intended audiences were different.
- 5. UTILITARIANISM
  - a. The moral of the story: Great Art doesn't need a moral to the story.
- 6. PURITANISM
  - a. Since moral puritans have never created a single piece of art worth remembering, this is pretty self-explanatory.
- 7. MINIMALISM
  - a. "A country road. A tree. Evening." - *Waiting for Godot*, Samuel Beckett
  - b. The greatest crime of Minimalism is that it made things boring. Beckett stripping away of character, setting, and plot did not make him a Minimalist; it made his works *richer*.
  - c. Minimalism should not become aesthetic asceticism or aesthetic Puritanism.
- 8. MORALISM
  - a. Is this the point of Art? Shoehorning morality into a work only hampers it.

### THE HERMENEUTICS OF SELF-MADE MYTHOLOGIES

Every writer and/or artist is a god. Dubbed "world-building" by the mendicants of creative writing departments, when gleefully enslaved to the Imagination (the dark clockwork dominatrix emanation of the Muse), the writer creates new worlds and populates it with characters he or she can destroy at a whim.

"[A] text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and crash." - Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*

These self-made mythologies should be inventions the writer (and by extension, the reader, viewer, etc.) desires to get lost within. Like Walter Benjamin walking the streets of Paris or Weimar Berlin, one should carry a map, but the map should help one get lost.

The worlds created by William Blake, Henry Darger, Tom of Finland, Michael Manning, and Matthew Barney are all-encompassing, willfully complex, and sensually overloaded. Create worlds in which one can drown. Overwhelm the senses; arouse, inflame, excite.

In the creation of these artificial paradises, don't be afraid to use déclassé sources. Pornography and pulp fiction act as great engines, dynamos of language:

"Just as Niagara Falls feeds power stations, in the same way the downward torrent of language into smut and vulgarity should be used as a mighty source of energy to drive the dynamo of the creative act. ... He is not a sewer worker, but a pipe layer in a comfortable new Babel." -Walter Benjamin, "A State Monopoly on Pornography"

NB: One should remember, at root, these mythologies need *to make sense* and *possess an internal logic*. An artificial world operates in a similar fashion to the world we inhabit. Our world has rules, rituals, histories, artifacts, and so forth. This doesn't mean one immediately has a world when one throws together a jumble of random ideas. World-building is creating a puzzle where all the pieces fit together. Liken it to a hothouse. The flora will not survive unless the hothouse is hermetically sealed, securing the delicate organisms from the harsh environmental conditions but letting through the nourishing sunlight.

## TWO KINDS OF OPULENCE

Anarcho-libertinism desires to see opulence return to the arts. In this case, opulence exists in two forms: the Stately and the Camp. Stately opulence is like Versailles, *ancien regime* court life, grandiose and epic pageantry and ritual, and the interior of St. Peter's Cathedral. It overwhelms the senses and consumes the viewer in a dizzying rush of ecstasy. Campy opulence also overwhelms and excites, but in a self-consciously artificial way, pitched between naïveté and self-awareness. (See "Notes on Camp" by Susan Sontag.) Willfully trashy, sleazy, unkempt, and déclassé, everything becomes opulent in tacky backrooms where "we dance all night/under electric candle light." ("Lola," the Kinks).

Anarcho-libertinism desperately seeks a divine marriage between stately and campy opulence. One sees faint glimpses of this in works as varied as *Against Nature*, *Brideshead Revisited*, *Our Lady of the Flowers*, *Hadrian the VII*, *Laura Warholic*, *the Chelsea Girls*, and *the Cremaster Cycle*.

Paganism, Freemasonry, Catholicism, burlesque, cabaret, and alchemy can all be used to great effect. (Provided one has the skills to use them. See below.) One shouldn't shy away from darker elements: BDSM, authoritarian imagery, pageantry, bombast (the great shysters of Right and Left - depending on mustache style - knew how to put on a show), serial killers, religious cults, bizarre subcultures and underground movements ... the list goes on and on. All are raw materials for the creation of verbal and visual opulence.

Don't be afraid to drown the consumer in pleasurable stimuli. Leave minimalism and austerity to the overfed thugs in high office who destroyed the global economy through their idiotic shortsightedness and venal desires. Neither minimalism nor austerity has any place for anarcho-libertines. We shall populate our *avante-regimes* in the shadows of ruined cathedrals and abandoned factories, our courtiers will be drag

queens, satyrs, leatherclad femdom disciplinarians, impoverished aristocrats, defrocked ecclesiarches, and other assorted tailings from the wreckage of neo-liberal economic exhaustion. We'd call for a New Jerusalem in flush boom times, but it's far more fun squatting rent-free, liberated from the homogenized monotony of gentrified zones and the presumptuous condemnations of the amoebic middle class.

## STYLE IS SUBSTANCE

One of the great heresies of Anarcho-libertinism is the affirmation that "Style is substance." The problems arise when either style becomes too distracting from the work at large or it devolves into purple prose. For the latter, the difference between a passage from Baron Corvo (or Joris-Karl Huysmans) and Amanda McKittrick Ros is not one of *style* but one of *skill*.

"Have you ever visited that portion of Erin's plot that offers its sympathetic soil for the minute survey and scrutinous examination of those in political power, whose decision has wisely been the means before now of converting the stern and prejudiced, and reaching the hand of slight aid to share its strength in augmenting its agricultural richness?" - Amanda McKittrick Ros, *Delina Delaney*

OR

"This idiotic sentimentality combined with ruthless commercialism clearly represented the dominant spirit of the age; these same men who would have gouged anybody's eyes out to make a few coppers, lost all their flair and shrewdness when it came to dealing with shifty tavern girls who harried them without pity and fleeced them without mercy. The wheels of industry turned, and families cheated one another in the name of trade, only to let themselves be robbed of money by their sons, who in the last resort were bled white by their own fancy men." - Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Against Nature*

(Which one is the model for Anarcho-libertinism and which one is the 9<sup>th</sup> rate hack?)

Despite the general call for works to stand out as complex, eccentric, sumptuous vehicles of verbal pleasure, this assumes the writer has the skills to deliver said works. A writer needs to know the rules of language and narrative before he or she can start to break, subvert, challenge, and embellish them.

Regarding style as a distraction, this may be true in some cases. It also depends on the reader and his or her interpretative framework. "Distraction" implies that the work's *language* is in an antagonistic relationship with the *content*. This happens enough to merit comment. One of the singular failures of a writer is to fall in love with one's own voice, privileging it above the demands of the narrative. "Cleverness for the sake of

cleverness." Sure, you're clever and you have a Creating Writing MFA or whatever. Don't treat your work like some goddamn job interview! I want to read something good, I don't need you repeating back your resume to me. While overly clever works show a dexterity of language, form, orthography, etc., it exposes the writer as a weakling and a fraud. A dexterity of language coupled with ineptitude in craftsmanship still equal literary failure. One need not be a literary department pedant or Matthew Arnold to understand that simple equation.

This does not mean dumb down your work, but understand that artistic creation involves skill and technical prowess. If you don't understand the basic mechanics of plot and character development, then hide it behind verbal enlardments and cheeky pop culture references, then maybe, just maybe, you should rethink your ambition to be an Artist.

(Practice, imitation, and study of past works is also something highly recommended for those who aspire to go beyond writing pedestrian works that are immediately forgettable or fanfiction. NB: Choose to read and imitate writers who aren't total hacks. And don't let fans, critics, academics, and sales figures get in the way of those important decisions. An Artist, at least one that matters, isn't some trend-following sheep or some bootlicker to the whims of the market/creative writing group/publisher.)

Style, like its co-eval Technique, is a facet of the work that has to be organically integrated into the whole. There is no such thing as No Style. Furthermore, style is something that originates with the creator. The eternal challenge is producing works with a style that is complementary and functional. Style is also something that is simultaneously conscious and unconscious in the creator's mind. Since I am speaking in generalizations, I would assert that, "The work precedes style." (Like any generalization, there are abundant legitimate exceptions.) However, to artistic producers, focus on making The Work and the Style will come naturally. Don't force it.

## NOTES ON PLEASURE

1. Artists are producers. We make, they consume.
2. Both artistic creation and artistic consumption should be pleasurable activities.
3. With written works, the reader should gain pleasure from *the language itself*.
4. Unfortunately, reading has been devalued as a pleasurable act. The mass market has degraded literary language to an enfeebled anemic non-existence. In addition, high school and undergraduate literature classes have failed to make reading pleasurable in order to jam obvious symbolism and brute force Western Canon appreciation into the developing minds of the students. The worst crime perpetrated by our

educators seems to be the assertion, "Reading is fun!" How can it be when English class is as fun as a trip to the dentist's office?

5. To expand from 4.: Besides the symbolism and Western Canon-izing, the assertion "Reading is fun!" gets hog-tied in with the contradictory assertion, "Every story must have a lesson." As if literature itself never developed at all from Aesop to James Joyce and somehow required a stapled-on coda a la an Afterschool Special or Soviet Socialist Realism imprimatur. One doesn't require a Moral Lesson (either Implicit or Explicit) for what they read, unless one has not developed culturally since the Victorian Era. (That isn't to say morality immediately devalues the work. Works with a moral agenda can be quite good. But one doesn't need to pound it into the reader's head unless you want to insult their intelligence.)
6. The pleasure one gets from a work is autonomous to any morality or immorality associated with it.
7. Americans hate pleasure, especially associated with the arts. Important Art and Literature has to have a Lesson. *Why?* (The Puritans and the Protestant Work Ethic deserve a fair share of the blame for this. Devout, industrious, austere business-types apparently like their work to function with the same harshness of a 19<sup>th</sup> century schoolmarm. One wonders how many read - or should have read - *Venus in Furs*?)
8. Hatred of the body has contaminated the arts, making the boob or the shlong the worst thing one can see on broadcast television. (Bodies tumbling from the World Trade Center being the second worst, but hey ... at least those images are more family-friendly.) Whitman's Body Electric has been degraded into the Body Commodified. In what other culture are the contradictions of capitalism and the contradictions of Bronze Age monotheism rammed together with such grotesque results? Sex is evil, vile, dirty, disgusting, and repugnant ... but "sex sells"! But beneath this feigned outrage, does this really surprise anyone? One can set their watch to the frequency of gay sex scandals directly associated with the very same tyrannical theocratic douchebags who condemn gay marriage as a harbinger of Western civilization's downfall. (Western civilization fell on its own accord with a special assist from the asinine anarcho-capitalism espoused by Ayn Rand's demented fandom. Not sure which is worse: Those who consider Ayn Rand a good writer or those who consider her a good philosopher?)
9. *First Proposition:* Artistic production and artistic consumption are pleasurable. *Second Proposition:* Pleasure is good. *QED:* Artistic productions we consume that give us pleasure are good.

10. Anarcho-libertinism is premised on the philosophical notion that pleasure is good. Pleasure needs to be cultivated, rarefied, and nurtured. One's pleasures should bloom like gaudy poisonous flowers, vividly colored, full of barbs and dripping nectar. The delicious pleasures one extrudes from one's works - either consuming or producing - should be like the sunlight concentrated on exotic floral varieties housed in a hothouse; the hothouse sitting amidst the barren Antarctic desert of bourgeois middlebrow tedium.

## NOTES ON ARTISTIC PRODUCTION

### 1. COMPLEXITY

- a. The work should not be clever but hollow. A creation that is a luxurious puzzle should have a reason to exist or else it is an empty gimcrack.
- b. The work should not be so complex as to become incomprehensible.

### 2. MORALITY

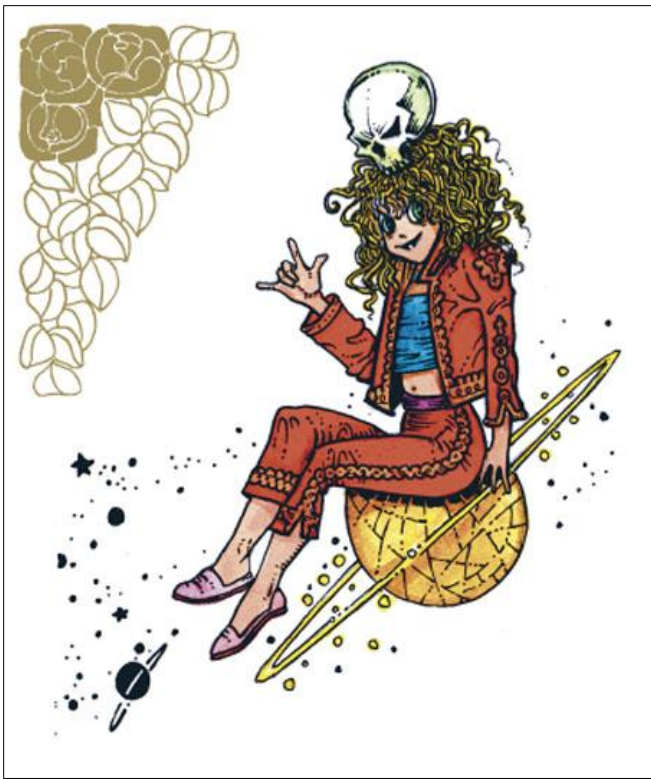
- a. The work's weakness is apparent when its morality becomes obvious and not all that profound. To plaster morality all over one's work either bespeaks an unvoiced tendency towards work in the ecclesiarchy or the monumental stupidity of your intended audience. (Counter-example: the poetical innovations of John Donne and Gerald Manley Hopkins.)
- b. A lack of morality in your work doesn't give you free rein for:
  - i. Cheap shock value.
  - ii. Gratuity in sex and violence. (It's not the sex or violence at issue, but the gratuitousness. If either give you a frisson of transgressive glee in their inclusion in an artistic production, you're either fourteen or far too sheltered.)
  - iii. Abundant vulgarity, swearing, etc. (Same as above. Done right, vulgarity can take on a poetic cast. Done wrong, vulgarity can be just plain boring.)
  - iv. Attacking institutions and such. (At least have the common courtesy of having evidence to back up your claims, or else you come across as a uniformed dumbass.) If Anarcho-libertinism is about anything, it's about attacking the status quo.

# THE BLACK ROSE OF AUSCHWITZ

## DAVID BRITTON'S AND KRIS GUIDO'S ILLUSTRATED NOVEL *LA SQUAB*, AND *THE SAVOY SESSIONS* BY FENNELA FIELDING

Left-handedly Reviewed By D M Mitchell

For anyone brave enough to approach the works of Manchester-based maverick publishers Savoy, there is an almost automatic reflexive inclination to adopt the defensive. From my own experiences with the latter day Savoyards this has very little to do with their exploits in the



world or the reactions and opinions of said world (already too well documented). It has everything to do with the basic intrinsic virulence and intensity of their corrosive surrealistic output, an intensity that makes one simultaneously want to turn away yet carry on looking, like one of those horribly exploitative and freakish documentaries on C4 about deformed children, open heart surgery or on-screen autopsies. We are all equally guilty, hypocritical reader, brother mine.

Once bitten by the Savoy bug, one is damned forever, seeing the world through permanently changed morally-compounded eyes. Savoy are possessed by an unshakable and total belief in their

assessment of art, music, literature, politics, the world; and consistently bring a scathing paranoid Weltanschauung to bear on all those of us who show a less than 100% commitment to our doings. For me, connecting with Savoy was like one of those scenes in some crappy Kung Fu movie where the disciple meets the master and is henceforth condemned inextricably to follow unto death. There is no way back from Savoy's Event Horizon.

During the early 90s I began to 'write' a book about them which they eventually published themselves, almost a decade later. At the time I threw myself into the writing with what I hoped was an intensity and paranoia that matched their own. Starting off, it was easy but by the time I was half-way through I began doubting not only what I was writing but questioning whether

even my take on them was valid. I eventually and laboriously finished my contribution to the book with great difficulty and anxiety. My sections of the book were complemented by interviews with the boys, with many interjections from those involved – David Britton, Michael Butterworth, John Coulthart – and beautifully illustrated with images selected by Britton and Butterworth and positioned by John.

I will not go into, at any length here, the usual ‘controversies’ surrounding Savoy, particularly the *Lord Horror* and *Meng And Ecker* books and the silly accusations of ‘racism’ attached to something so obviously satirical, absurdist and surreal (to this day). Suffice it to say that anyone who takes the subject matter of these books at face value really should not be here reading this review or for that matter this magazine. Just be aware of the fact that one of Savoy’s heroes is the artist Gerald Scarfe.

Let’s say that by the time I’d finished this and the book was in my hand I hated what I’d done. I felt I’d compromised myself in so many ways. From Savoy’s point of view I’d felt myself obliged to try to foist a left-wing critique on something that was really too amorphous to be contained by one specific political outlook. From my point of view I found myself on occasions trying to take a positive view of certain things they had done which even I found questionable (naturally from that same left-wing viewpoint). I wished that I could go back and rewrite the whole thing from scratch. As that wasn’t possible I recoiled from it – and unfortunately for a time from Savoy.

With the passing of time I have reappraised ‘my’ book (*A Serious Life*) and now see its inconsistencies, paranoia and self-loathing as positive qualities. It has a manic, irresponsible amphetamine rush to it that I actually covet here in my middle-middle age. All I wish retrospectively is that I’d enjoyed the post-coital buzz more, basked in it a bit instead of trying to lose myself in less-worthy projects as if in some form of expiation for my Savoy excesses. Ah well, guilt is often an important stimulus not only for the best sex but for most great artistic endeavours.

Eight-plus years later and Savoy are still at it. Undaunted. Unapologetic. After the period covered in my book, they returned to publishing other people’s works again – *Zenith The Albino*, the delightful *Adventures of Engelbrecht*, the wonderful classic *A Voyage To Arcturus*, Colin Wilson’s best novel *The Killer*. David Britton has been engaged in correspondence with star-deviant and killer Ian Brady. This might be published at some point in the future and promises to further elaborate on Savoy’s dark and morally ambiguous explorations of our collective psyche.





Most recently they have put out two projects almost simultaneously – the lavishly illustrated novel *La Squab* by David Britton with gorgeous artwork by Guido, and a CD of unbelievably beautiful idiosyncratic recordings of actress Fenella Fielding covering a plethora of modern rock and pop classics.

Dealing with the first, *La Squab*, I must stress that given the current economic climate, many of you will be justifiably wary of shelling out £25.00 on a book, any book, let alone something existing at the fringes of commerciality, good taste, morality, sanity... I will just say that it is my expressed opinion that this is £25.00 well spent. Savoy nowadays takes the approach that every aspect of their publications should be of the same standard of execution. From the materials used to the jacket design, layout and even the fonts used. Every single 't' is dotted and 'i' crossed.

When it comes to the writing and artwork, although the book displays blatantly its points of reference (*Wind In The Willows*, Arthur Rackham, Ken Reid) it almost magically transcends those influences to create something that is unique and anachronistic; the sort of book that does not sit on your shelves easily next to Terry Pratchett or Iain Banks. Put a Savoy book on your shelves and you will, I guarantee, find yourself weeding out your book collection through shame.

Quoting from their website:

*"At once loony and dangerous, La Squab relates a picaresque river journey down a Thames whose metaphysical qualities exist only in Mr Britton's imagination. Along the way, favourite children's characters such as Tiger Tim, Angel Face and Weary Willie & Tired Tim are encountered, together with real-life historical figures Alfred Jarry, Sigmund Freud, Leni Riefenstahl, and Lord Horror's treacherous doppelgänger, Lord Haw-Haw. The final destination is a submerged Auschwitz conjured afresh beneath the mighty Thames. There La Squab's playful romp through literature and topsy-turoy morals reveals that all is not always well in the end!"*

There is no way to summarise or critique this book in a way that doesn't 'reduce' it somehow. There is arguably a plot, but the plot itself is a minor character, a walk-through part in the dense tapestry of references and symbols that coalesce hypnotically here to create something that I don't feel I'm being conceited in calling life-changing. My personal hope is that one day some future group of like-minded individuals will, like the surrealists in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century discovering *Les Chants Du Maldoror*, forge a new movement of thought and sensibility around these books.



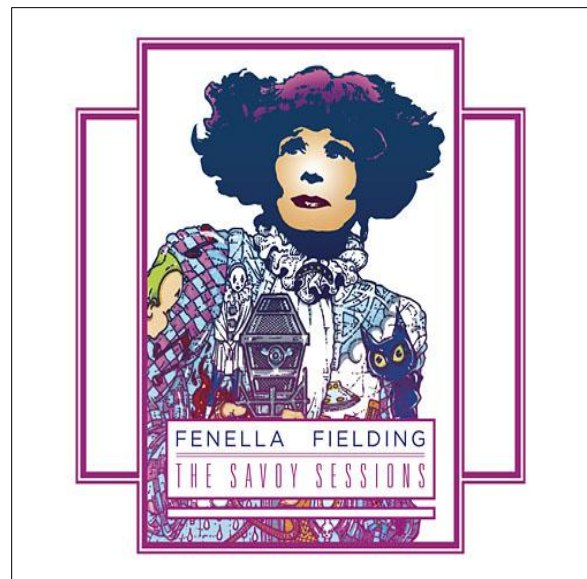
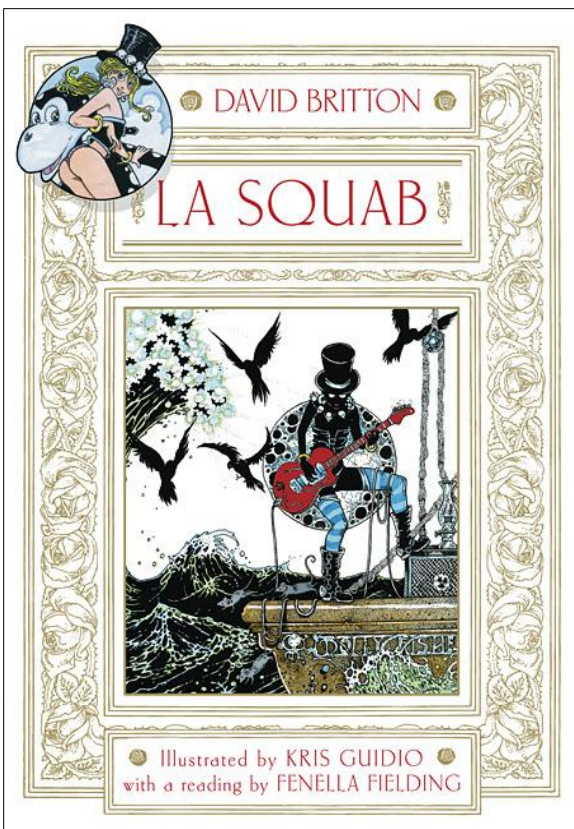
Moving on to the CD; this constitutes a labour of love on the part of the boys, being the produce of many years of coaxing and cajoling Ms Fielding into the recording studio. After many a false start and much trepidation and self-doubt on the part of Ms F, their efforts seem to have paid off bigtime, possibly surpassing even their deranged output with the legendary genius P J Proby. Christ, much of this even sounds like it could have commercial capability - at least superficially.



The selling point on this (I imagine, from Savoy's naturally-lysergic mentality) should be Fenella's 'tarantula-crawling-up-a-velvet-curtain' voice. However, erection-inducing as that may be, the production courtesy of Steve Boyce-Buckley assisted by Pete Saynor and John Scott, has helped craft a properly-integrated and polished work of art, unlike the Proby material where 90% of the time Proby's beautiful voice seems to have been superimposed onto jarring and disturbing (yet still meticulously created) backdrops.

As idiosyncratic and unnervingly beautiful as any Nico album or Suzuki-era Can recording, Savoy have hit their stride with this CD. I'm hoping that they build on this and create more quality albums. Fuck knows, the world could do with them in this era of 'Britain's Got No Talent'. Who else could follow a cover of Kylie's 'Can't Get You Out Of My Head' with 'The Ovaltineys'? Oy Vey!

To purchase *La Squab* (which comes with a complimentary CD of Fenella reading selections from the book) and *Fenella Fielding: The Savoy Sessions* or my own *A Serious Life*, please visit the Savoy website: <http://www.savoy.abel.co.uk>



While there, don't be a cunt. Take a fucking good look around. Bookmark the site and go back there frequently. Buy some of their stuff, past and present. I'm currently interviewing the Savoyards about their work post my book. Watch the next issue of *Paraphilia* for at least part of it. Hopefully it will spiral on in a continuing arc - who knows?

# SQUEAL FOR JOY

(EXCERPT)

By David F. Hoenigman

I leave the devil sitting there by the window in his red suit with sludge pumping through his veins. he taps his fingers on the table top. the spiders run through his mind. I think the devil's every color. not only red. the failure's face lit up when the devil told him that he'd indeed take his soul. all of us are children. when we're told certain things and react a certain way our faces look just like children's. the wine finally comes and the vulture pours the clown a glass. or rather he uses the clown's glass to fill and give to the old flame. they all look like clowns now. they all look like vultures. I thought her jack-o'-lantern smile would extend beyond her face. would float there on its own accord. there's nothing in his heart. it's as empty as his glass. who would I like to see then? when my clothes haven't been washed in months. we spread out amongst the mousetraps. why did you follow me up the stairs? why did you do what I told you? I kick holes in the walls of my room. I set mousetraps in the corner. I hope our necks snap together beneath the bar. maybe you knew I'd never forget you. someone as equally willing to be humiliated. I know this man they're torturing. I've sat with him for long hours in a parked car. he told me he believed in God. the devil stands under a naked light bulb with his back to us. he's stirring a pot. the prisoner winces in pain and I remember how he looked that morning when I told him everything that was on my mind as we gazed out at the sea. some people are never afraid. they still believe they can win until their last dying breath. they still feel they're in a position to make threats. he wakes up and immediately begins making threats. but where is he? who brought him here? close your mouth so as not to drool. put your head down on the table and sleep. it's almost love the way I think of you. I'd like to track you down someday. I'd like to go through your bedroom. I'm sure you haven't changed. I'm sure my presence could be explained away. the three still sit at the table. the jack-o'-lantern woman keeps talking and breathing smoke. the vulture wants her to feel his bicep. they want to keep us in this box. I'd like to say some kind of prayer of thanksgiving to you. there are entire years of my life I don't remember. how did I get money then? why was I so stubborn? I'm holding you up to the light to see if I can see through you. I'd like to see your heart pumping. and your bones insisting nothing's wrong. perhaps I'd feel a oneness with you if I could see the exact shape of your fleshless bones. this is the work of a madman, some of them are thinking. though the failure doesn't look the least bit unsettled. almost as if he's sitting before his television. these men are always crowded into rooms together. he looks directly at his own shadow and wonders if he isn't dying. I won't plead for my life if that's what you're expecting. we're voodoo dolls. we're pin cushions. he kicks his legs like a mishandled puppet. this vulture's of no use to me. nor the jack-o'-lantern. nor the clown. I'd like to banish them from my vision. and relive that afternoon preparing for your visit. we are playthings. some little girl has placed the two of us in the same room of a dollhouse. I go years without saying anything. I come home from work smelling like gasoline. my priorities were all wrong. don't leave. don't leave. quit your job. abandon your family. sever every contact and stay here with me. in this little room with the mousetraps snapping. with this hopeless man and his demands. sometimes I wish you weren't here. sometimes your being here breaks a spell that'd otherwise come over me. I once almost fell off a rooftop. I could've broken my neck. I used to climb out the window to the roof. she came back to me. I let her go and she came back. then she convinced herself that I



didn't mean anything to her. the sun would come through that window I used to crawl out and I'd lie on my side looking at her things. I used to think everything you said was wonderful and somehow leading me toward some truth. I liked to sit at your side so I wouldn't miss anything you said. the vulture takes a wad of money from his pocket and spreads it out on the table. the bills unfurl like animals waking up. then he pats his bicep twice as if to say, from all my hard work. even the clown's laughing. even the clown looks proud. I know the water will soon be up to our necks but I don't care. the old flame gets up to leave. she hugs the vulture from behind as she makes her way out. she shakes him enough for him to look concerned of spilling wine from his glass. the clown gets up. maybe she's decided to run away as the vulture slumps over his wine and his money. the devil considers himself an artist. he's scribbling in a notebook. elaborate drawings of methods of torture. if I crouch at this angle I'll see the veins in his neck. and how his jaw quivers in pain. I must confess -I almost lost hope today, sometime in the afternoon. I stick the pin into you and wait for it to pop out the other side of the skin. I wiggle it around in there. I can see three faces. the devil and the prisoner and the man who always appears to wish he was elsewhere. the devil's holding a giant needle that he sticks into the cheek of the prisoner. the devil's glowing yellow. I've begun to take steps to bring her to life. to claw my way back there. but now it appears they're all leaving together. the clown wraps a long scarf around her head. they're the last people to leave. the waiter looks annoyed. it'll be dark and cold out. now it appears the old flame is an employee of this restaurant. maybe the waiter is her husband. maybe they're the owners. maybe she actually hates the vulture but figured he'd have money. maybe she was so convincing that I read much more into it than I should have. it's surprising more people don't kill each other. that most of them seem to draw the line there. the devil wants information from the prisoner. I thought he'd already know everything. from the bottom of your chin. up through your tongue. through the roof of your mouth and into your brain. I remember jumping the fence and running across the open field in a light rain. it's my life before my eyes now. was it always raining? did it always feel recently cleansed? this devil's been waiting for me. this roomful of naked light bulbs has been waiting for me. and the spectating demons. the mist clears and they're there. I try to make excuses but there's no use. I deserve what's coming. but this is wrong and I was right originally. the vulture leaves with the two women and two large jugs of wine. the old flame now dancing in anticipation. now three silhouettes moving under street lights. the largest with a jug in each hand. the water will soon be up around our necks but I don't care. this woman must live around here. maybe the vulture and the clown won't have to sleep in the truck tonight. maybe they won't freeze to death. the vulture hands the clown the jugs and finally finishes struggling to put on his jacket. the clown sneaks away with the jugs appearing to be the accomplice of the vulture. the failure watches the devil torture the prisoner and feels he's learning something. the failure's quite insane. he's been insane since he was a young child. no one deserves pity. no one deserves to have their apology accepted. people will say anything at such times. when I pass out she'll curl up next to me in the garbage

# MADLESSLY

By Mike Hudson

Photo © Russell Allen Images

The road to the airport seemed familiar to him and it took a minute for him to realize it was not dissimilar to La Brea Avenue, which was the road you took to get from Hollywood to LAX, if you were in Los Angeles.

He was not in Los Angeles, however.

He was hungover at eight that morning when he got on the plane for Mexico City. The Aero Mexico stewardesses wore jaunty red caps with short, belted blue dresses and four-inch stiletto heels. Once again he was glad to be away from the United States.

All the flying and gunfire and night swims in chlorinated Third World hotel pools over the past month had left him nearly deaf, and as the stewardess gave the safety instructions she looked to him like a tiny tanned doll moving her mouth but making no sound. He imagined she was telling him how much she loved him.

It was November 2, Dia los Muertes, and he thought of Lowry's book and of Markson, who had written so well about Lowry and was dead now himself. It was a short flight, Merida, on the Yucatan peninsula, to Mexico City. He had no business in Mexico City but to catch a connecting flight to Las Vegas, north of the border, which was the only place in the world he wanted to be that day.

Markson had been his great friend and champion, introducing him to the New York literary scene, as it had been 40 and 50 years earlier. They'd shared a love of Mexico and of baseball and for beautiful, interesting women, the kind you meet when you are a writer who has achieved a certain kind of notoriety. They'd agreed that it was better to have written than it was to actually be writing.

The stewardess handed him a packet of Florentines, small cookies filled with a cherry jam, and a cup of black coffee and he looked down on the snowcapped mountains north of Mexico City.

Vegas was just that much closer to Los Angeles, where he'd left her, and he thought about that.

Later he sat in the airport bar sipping a mojito and he took out the black covered notebook he kept and read over his impressions of the Yucatan, where there was no war or, really, unpleasantness of any kind. He'd spent eight days there copy editing his next book and had been hoping for some action – live shooting or at least some beheadings -- so he could sell an article or some photos, as his traveling capital was running low.

When he finished reading, he took out his pen. He wanted to write about her, but it was all too complicated and the best he could come up with was a fragment from another airport layover, a couple of weeks earlier.

*"I was in Philly for Joe Frazier's funeral," he wrote. "I didn't go, of course, but there was no place to be that day but Philly."*

The usual stuff. Dull and ultimately unsatisfying, but at least he could say he had written, and writing was the thing he did to justify all of the other things he did.

\*\*\*

Her eyes were green, the color of a Heineken beer bottle, and he wanted to drink every bit of it. They reminded him of all the money she'd finagled from a long line of suckers going back to Hollywood High, where she'd come from, all those years ago. She'd broken hearts from L.A. to Paris, and all the artists and actors and musicians she left in her wake could have formed some sad club, a legion of losers, like Alcoholics Anonymous, but with her instead of the booze.

He knew all that and he came anyway. She called and he came. She'd had it with artists and actors and musicians and she called and he came knowing she had the potential to be more dangerous than anything he'd known in Iraq or Afghanistan or Mexico.

She was a glamour girl all right, with a thousand photos in magazines and on the Internet to prove it. High maintenance for sure, but he'd been around long enough to know they all were, all the ones worth having, the ones born pretty, who knew enough to read books and watch movies and listen to music aware that these things were less entertainment than education. The ones who figured out for themselves how to make their own money whether their parents were rich or poor and regardless of whoever it was they happened to take for their first, second or third husbands.

In the past month he'd been in and out of L.A. twice, then New York and the jungle of the northern Yucatan and now Vegas.



His wife waited for him in the apartment they shared on West Forty Seventh Street in Manhattan. Rachel would cry when he told her he was leaving; she would hate him even though she loved him. He was a bastard and just hoped it didn't go too badly.

He met Angie on the set of a film shot on an odd sort of soundstage out by the airport when he was in L.A. the last time. He'd written some additional dialogue and she'd played a small role as some kind of jet setting call girl and when he got home he couldn't get her out of his head.

He got her number from the assistant producer, Tony, who'd hired him for the film gig in the first place, and he called her and kept calling her. After awhile, she started calling him.

He told her he had to see her again and she said he should come back out to L.A. but there were a lot of reasons he didn't want to do that so he told her he'd meet her in Vegas and that's what they did.

Now he saw her from across the casino floor, sitting in a club chair waiting for him at a low table in one of the lounges, eating from a tin box of Wintergreen Altoids and drinking cranberry with a twist of lime. She was gorgeous, her tiny fine features and porcelain skin offset by a wild mane of raven hair and tailored dark clothes.

Angie hated people and their meaningless little lives. All around her the losers wasted their own time deliberately, filling it with endless chatter and trips to the mall, all the while anesthetizing themselves with anti-depressants, mood elevators or booze and talking to barmaids as though they were friends or to doctors paid to listen to their stupid problems.

The people who willingly gave their power to other people, women to men, poor to rich, never knowing that, ultimately, it was all up to them and that, really, they could do whatever they wanted. They didn't know how to dress or eat or even what kind of fucking haircut looked best on them.

But she was like a dream to him. A woman who could make any city look ugly, any city but the few that were fit for her, and there were whole countries that weren't fit for her. Countries that might be all well and good for most people, perfectly fine places in their own small ways but completely unfit for a force of nature such as herself.

And that was how he thought of her, not as a girl or a woman, or a chick, twist, whore, broad, dame, bitch, lady or tramp but as a force of nature, like the wind. Like the sun in the sky.

So how do you act? He thought of Jeremy Irons in "Reversal of Fortune." Cold. Determined. Ultimately guiltless despite his overwhelming guilt. Beyond guilt, even. He thought of an acquaintance in New York who'd once married a woman for no other reason than he was too cheap or too broke to hire a nanny to look after his children.

So he was doing it again. Throwing the sticks up into the air just to see where they landed. Soon he would be living three thousand miles away from New York. The only time he would see snow would be on a picture postcard. Angie had not only taken better care of herself than Rachel, she was richer as well. And the moment he met her electricity passed through the air between them that had people talking weeks before anything even happened.

He thought about these things and other things as well, standing on the carpeted casino floor, wearing a copper colored sharkskin jacket he'd bought two weeks earlier at some vintage men's store someone had taken him to on Hollywood Boulevard.

He crossed the room and walked up behind her.

"You wanna fuck?" he said.

It turned out she did. She stood up and kissed him deeply then threw her legs up around his hips and he cradled her ass in his hands, her arms wrapped around the back of his neck and their tongues pushing and shoving between one mouth and the other like it was some kind of sordid athletic event. He ordered the whiskey to go and on the elevator up to the room she played with his cock through his jeans and he ran his hand up under her blouse to the sweet bare breasts beneath the sheer black cloth. He pushed her against the wall and they kissed and clawed and bit like animals in heat. "Tell me you love me," she said, digging her fingernails into the small of his back.

"I love you Angie," he said. "I love you more than anything in the fucking world."

"How much?"

"I love you more than God."

She could have asked him to kill somebody and he would have done it. The whiskey sloshed from the rim of the glass to the floor and he took a gulp so as not to waste any more. The elevator doors opened and they spilled out into the hallway to their room and she fell back on the bed, stripping off her clothes on the way down.

Inside she was soft and wet and warm and all he wanted was to be up and in there and instead of two people they were one like an earthquake or wildfire or some other spontaneous natural disaster and she tore at his forearms with her nails and he felt the sharp pain but it wasn't until a few minutes had passed that he noticed the blood, running down his wrists and hands and smearing onto the pillow cases and sheets and comforter. He pinned her to the bed and drove deeper and deeper and his own sweat mixed with the blood stinging and she moaned and sighed and he felt as though he was drowning.

"Come in me baby. I want you to come in me," she said.

It was winter, and outside the cold desert sun shined bright on the streets and the palm trees and the low dark mountains. The room became an abstraction to him, just the drapes drawn black and her eyes and her mouth and the rage he'd kept inside for all those years, and he thought of that and about the crushing sudden fear he had of losing her somehow and the guilt over Rachel and they fucked and they fucked and when they were through he rubbed her back until she fell to sleep and he laid touching next to her intoxicated by the scent of her hair and her sweet sleepy breath.

And it was like that for the next five days. Their phones would ring, and sometimes they would answer them. Once or twice every 24 hours they would go down to the casino and wander into one of the restaurants and eat a little. She liked the buffet.

\*\*\*

On the final day they sat across a small table in the airport bar, about 20 minutes before he had to board his flight for New York and 45 minutes before her flight back to Los Angeles. Her eyes, beautiful beyond all reason, welled with tears.

"Stop it," he told her. He said it in the toughest voice he could muster but really he didn't want to see it because he felt as though he might begin to cry himself.

He told her he was home; that wherever she was it was home. In the back of a taxicab driving down Tropicana or at that airport bar. She loved him even more when he told her that.

\*\*\*

As the plane taxied down the runway he looked out past the city to the mountains. He wished he had it to do over again, but he always wished that, no matter what it was. He resigned

himself to missing her, to the fact that in seven hours he'd be back in New York for who knew how long, and it would be cold and angry and full of hurt.

Why did life have to be like it was? Why did his happiness so often cause another person pain? He was 55 years old and had seen a lot of things but he still didn't know. He only knew that it did and he wished it could be otherwise.

And while he thought those thoughts, and his plane left the ground, and he looked down on the orange tiled roofs of all the ugly houses in all the shitty subdivisions that make up greater Las Vegas, she was still in the airport, being strip searched by a couple of matrons after having made some smart ass remark to a uniformed TSA officer while going through security.





## **PETTY GIRLS LIKE GRAVES**

**By dixē.flatlin3**

**Photos © Sid Graves**

Brooke awoke next to her beloved, something he had kindly allowed her to do. It was not often that Christopher acknowledged his deep love for her. Brooke had to spend a lot of time analyzing his patterns and behaviors. They were coming up on their sixth anniversary, in fact. Something Brooke was especially proud of. She and Christopher had been through a lot during their time together. Though they had not always been in contact and in agreement, they had always had their special connection. Brooke knew in her heart of hearts that her beloved Christopher was the one true love she had always dreamed would come to rescue her. Waking up next to him filled Brooke with an overwhelming sense of satisfaction and achievement.

Lying on her side, Brooke reached across her beloved and grabbed her pack of cigarettes. She always had a cigarette first thing in the morning. Or whenever they finally awoke from their contented slumber. Brooke caught sight of herself lighting the cigarette in the mirrors affixed to the wooden canopy above Christopher's bed. The black tulle draped haphazardly around the frame gave it a more regal effect, she thought. But that was her Christopher, wasn't it?

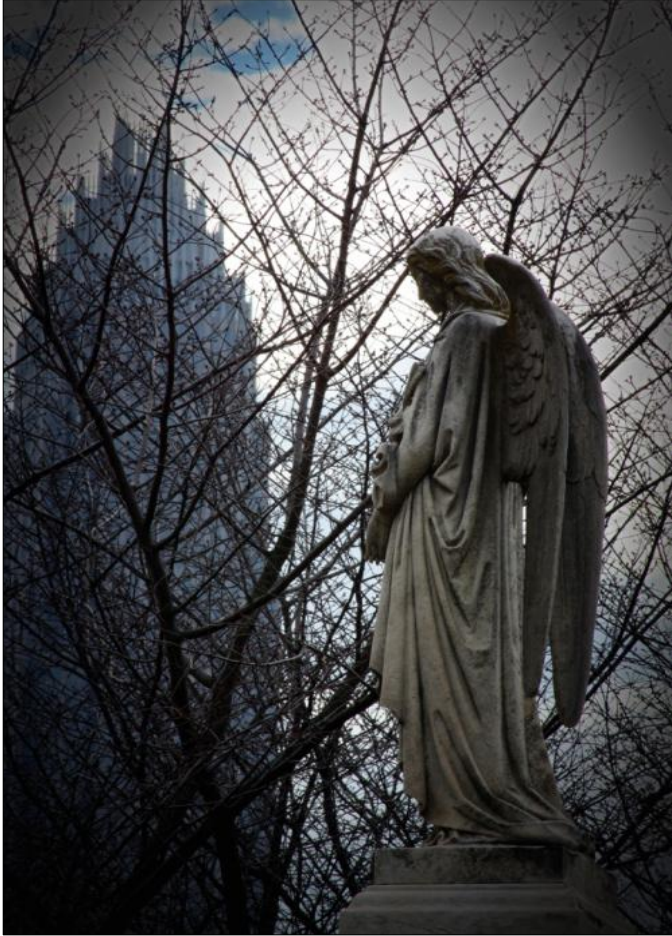
Regal. Cultured. Educated. Wise. Brooke saw her reflection above smile and this made her giggle. She tried to repress her sound, as not to awake Christopher. Who she could see was soundly sleeping, the covers wrapped tightly around his head.

Brooke's thoughts drifted back to the first time she laid eyes on Christopher. She had known in an instant that he was The One. She was shocked to learn he felt the exact same way. It had been messy, leaving the boyfriend she had been with for so many years, but it had been worth it. The first few weeks she and Christopher spent together were magical. They spent the entire time high and having sex. This was not her ex-boyfriends forte. He had been more of the wheeler-dealer type. And by that Brooke meant drug-dealer type. He had quickly taken her in and supplied her with a lifestyle she could not afford on her own. After more than seven years together, he

was rather distraught upon learning of her shacking up with Christopher. Brooke had simply run away from him, no explanation, no communication. She was fine with burning the bridge at the time. She saw absolutely no use to keeping him around any longer. Brooke had finally found her Prince Charming and she was planning on keeping him.

Brooke looked around the room. Christopher's home was simultaneously familiar and foreign. She had spent so many days, weeks, and months living here. Brooke had always excelled at playing house as a child. Growing up with brothers and a mother who wasn't around meant Brooke played alone, a lot. The only attention her brothers had ever given her were negative reinforcements of how weak females were. Christopher made her feel special and safe. When she was with him, nothing could hurt her. Except him. And that was okay with her. She knew her Christopher like no other woman could, she thought. It was her understanding of male ways that made her and her beloved soul mates. She knew in her heart of hearts that boys played rough and they never meant to hurt anyone.





The times Christopher allowed her to stay with him were magical. Brooke didn't even mind when he would kick her out so that other girls could visit. She even found his frequent vanishing acts quite charming. She loved him and his adorable idiosyncrasies. While he was away, Brooke spent her time cleaning, nesting, and smoking the excellent product Christopher was famous for. That was why he had come into her world. He was the source of the new dope her ex-boyfriend had so desperately wanted. She wondered if it had been worth the cost in the end? One week after Christopher shook his hand, he had his cock in Brooke. Where it stayed for the next several weeks.

Brooke lowered the bed covers and studied her breasts in the reflection. They were not large, not like the grotesquely huge ones of the girl she did not like to remember. Brooke's breasts were small, but firm and perky. Not bad considering she had given birth. What a mess that had been. Six months after she and Christopher had started dating Brooke had discovered she was pregnant. This was after the girl she did not like to remember informed Brooke that she was about to give birth to Christopher's son. The girl had been polite and her emails were well written. Brooke had meant it when she told the girl that she would very much like to meet her. Although Brooke knew, in her heart of hearts, that Christopher loved this girl the most, she was happy. The girl required Christopher to jump through too many hoops and would never allow him to be himself. Brooke knew that the child she was going to give him would make up for all the sadness he felt at the loss of his beloved.

Brooke had tried so very hard to be good, once she learned she was pregnant. She was carrying Christopher's child and it deserved only the best. But it was hard to say no and Christopher didn't mind if she did. She had not found out she was pregnant until she was six months along. She couldn't remember how much dope she had consumed during this time, but she knew it was a lot. Enough to make stopping then irrelevant. She had hid it from Christopher as long as she could. When she did finally tell him, it caused him to kick her out. He was appalled that she

had been using drugs the entire time, endangering his child. For several weeks he avoided her, refusing to return her calls or text messages. Brooke sent her pleas via her blog postings online. All in hopes of winning back her beloved's favor.

Eventually, he did invite her back. In fact, Christopher had become increasingly involved in the planning of their baby's room. Christopher's mother had bought him a new house and together they were going to make it a home. Their home. They had settled on a name for their daughter, one Christopher's own father had bestowed upon a child from a previous marriage, a daughter who had died at birth. Christopher didn't like fucking Brooke once he could feel the baby move. Which was fine. She spent her time nesting and didn't mind that Christopher went out to



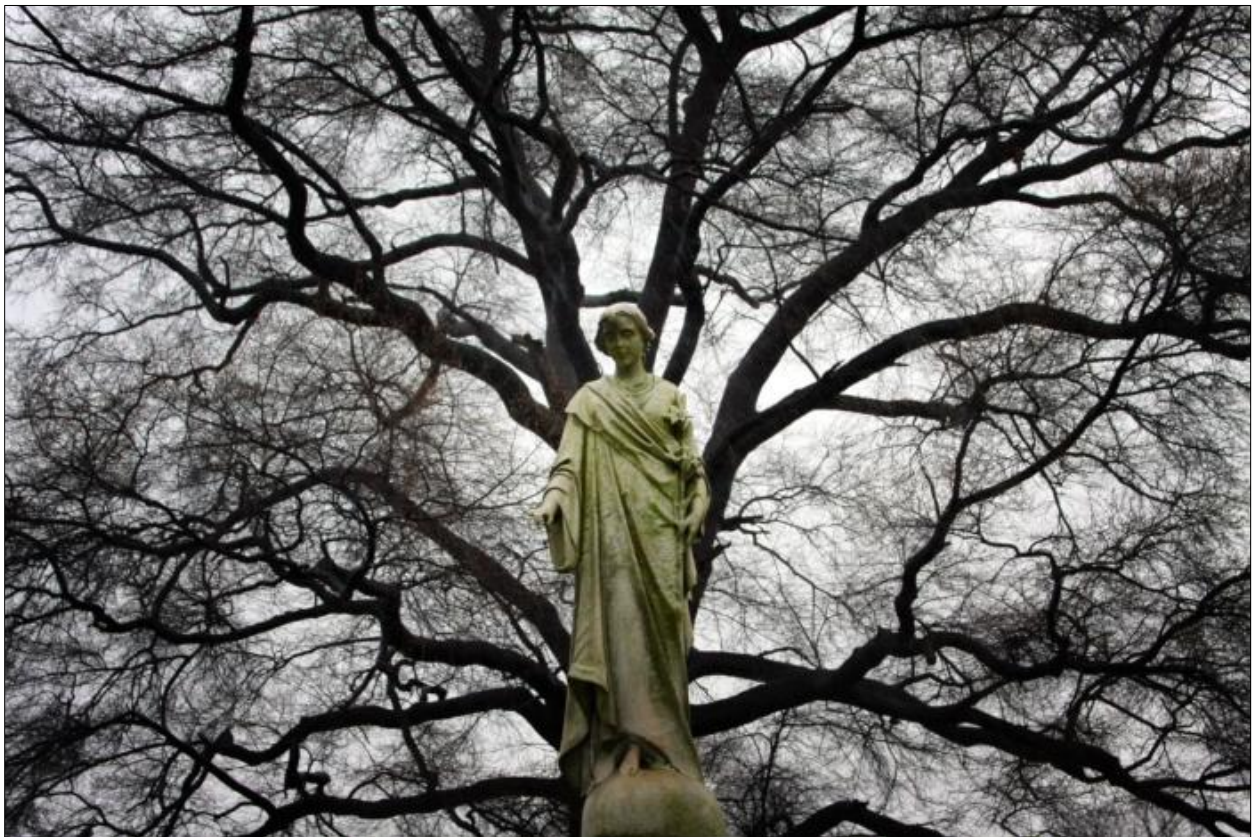
get high and have sex. Her beloved has a very active sex drive and she was not able to satisfy it. It was his right to fulfill his needs himself. Brooke knew that he always came home. Eventually. When he did, it was straight into their bed he went. Where he would lay his head upon her still barely-there baby bump and tell their daughter all about how wonderful their lives were going to be.

Brooke had forgiven Christopher for abandoning her when his son had been born. She knew how manipulative the girl was and did not hold it against her beloved. He was a boy and could not help how he reacted to the evil deeds of the girl. The girl had expected Christopher to be something he was not and did not understand the dope game. Brooke had always found this most amusing. For someone Christopher claimed to love so much and hold in such high esteem, he sure treated her like a moron. The numerous lies she had been party to his telling the girl. The numerous times they had giggled as they smoked together and read aloud the incoming text messages. Brooke thought about this, a lot, during her stay in the homeless shelter. It had been the only place that would take her as a pregnant woman with a drug habit. Brooke's own family had abandoned her after the ex-boyfriend filled them in on her sudden departure and



subsequent theft of his belongings. She was very pregnant and very alone when Christopher dropped her off at the shelter. He wished her good luck and then headed down the highway to visit his beloved.

Brooke did not like to remember this time. She noticed the frown that reflected back from above and put out her cigarette. She reached over and gently rubbed Christopher's side. He didn't budge. He usually didn't. He slept like the dead, especially when they had been on a good one. Such as the one they had just been on. Her and her beloved had just finished a five-day fuck fest. They had not had to leave his lair for dope nor food. Sequestered to amplify their love. Christopher was a true romantic at heart; it was what Brooke loved most about him. He was a consummate romantic and lover. He made her feel things no other man ever had.



Brooke caught sight of the picture on the wall that she hated. It was the one thing she wished Christopher would get rid of, but she knew he never would. It was the drawing he had done of the girl when they were in high school together. He had made it very clear to Brooke from the very beginning, as he did with them all, that his feeling for the girl were not up for negotiation. Many nights Brooke had listened to Christopher agonize over how he had to keep the truth from the girl. How she could never find out what a horrible person he truly was because it would kill him. She liked to hold him and gently run her finger through the hair at his neckline

when he got in these moods. Looking at the picture of the girl now, Brooke smirked. She swung her legs over the edge of the bed and stretched as she stood up. She walked over to the picture, tapped the cigarette she was about to smoke on the glass and addressed the art directly, "Not so special after all were you?"

Brooke padded into the bathroom and went pee. The bathroom was a mess, it usually was. Christopher was a horrible housekeeper and Brooke was often too busy helping him cook dope or taking care of her daughter to worry about good housekeeping practices. Her pussy was sore, as usual. Christopher knew how she liked it and never disappointed her. Brooke caught sight of a pair of women's underwear, which was not hers, behind the bathroom door. Why had she not seen them before now? The standard list of excuses went through her head as she wiped herself. Walking back into their room, she gazed filled her head as she gazed upon her beloved as he slept.

Brooke climbed back into bed, but not before checking her phone to see if the ex-boyfriend had provided any up-dates on her daughter. Christopher had been so supportive to her during her pregnancy. Even attending a doctor's appointment with her. She was not staying with him when she went into labor. Christopher had found out about several affairs Brooke had engaged in during their early days. But he had put his anger aside to rush to be by her side as she gave birth.

When the cord became entangled around the baby's neck and it had come out blue, he was there. As he was when the doctor's resuscitated and breathed life into the product of her polluted uterus. Christopher had been horrified at the sight of a blue child. His horror had quickly been replaced by anger. Anger due to the fact that his daughter was the wrong color. A fact Brooke herself could no longer deny. The weeks her daughter spent in NICU allowed the Hispanic features to take prominence. The child was clearly the progeny of her ex-boyfriend. Not Christopher.





This had thrown another wrench into their love story, but as most true love stories do, theirs had a happy ending. That was all ancient history now. Many women had come and gone in the years since then. The girl and her son disappeared, never to be seen again. A bone of contention with Brooke, because what kind of woman keeps a man from seeing his own child? Christopher was excellent with her daughter. He let Brooke bring her around whenever they visited. The baby was very quiet and didn't interrupt their smoking. Brooke's daughter was a very docile child and this made Christopher happy. He was also first to express his unhappiness during her visits with her father. This had cemented their bond in Brooke's heart of hearts.

Brooke looked to her phone for signs of how long they had been asleep. She had sent her BFF a text message 18 hours ago. She assumed this was the approximate amount of time they had hibernated. Christopher was never easy to rouse from sleep. His mum had warned her of this. His mum was such a wonderful woman in Brooke's mind. She had gone out of her way to make sure that Christopher never had to work a day in his life. His mother was wealthy and took such good care of her family. Brooke was honored to be a part of their gatherings, whenever she was allowed to attend. Eventually the family had all warmed up to her and talk of the evil girl had ceased.

Brooke loaded up a fresh pipe, deciding this was a pleasant way for Christopher to wake up. She padded into the kitchen and prepared their coffee as well. As it brewed, she prepared the fine china tea set his mother had given him. Her EBT card had recharged a few days ago, so there was plenty of food in the house. Brooke loved to act in the capacity of a wife for Christopher, even though he had made it clear he would never again marry. "Doesn't matter," she said aloud as she carried the tray back to their bed. Her Christopher was still resting soundly.



“Time to wake up sleepy head,” she cooed sweetly as she leaned in to kiss her beloved’s cheek. Brooke quickly recoiled in horror. He was cold! How could her Christopher be cold? She felt the panic spread through her body and immediately began to shake him. She shook his shoulders with all the strength she had. “Christopher!” she shouted. Brooke threw back the covers and kicked the dogs off of their bed. “Christopher, wake up!” she screamed. Brooke knew in her heart of hearts he was not going to wake up. He was cold, so very cold. How could she have not noticed this before? A million thoughts ran through her head. She should call for help, she should call his mother, she should call someone, anyone, but her eyes focused on the pipe sitting next to their coffee.

In that moment, Brooke knew exactly what she had to do. Just as she had known the moment she laid eyes upon her Christopher that they were soul mates. She went to the side of the bed that he was facing and put her hand upon his shoulder. Brooke pushed him onto his back. She was very aware of how very much she should be completely freaked out and yet she was not. Her thoughts were clear and profoundly important in her mind. Brooke knew exactly how her and her beloved should proceed from here.

She quickly took the pipe and went to the computer. Brooke needed information and where better to find it than the Internet? After a few hits off the pipe and web sites searches she had the information she needed and she didn’t have much time left. Brooke went back to her Christopher and stared deeply into his closed eyes. So many of her childhood dreams were fading before her eyes and yet she felt calm. He was her soul mate and there could be no other ending for them now.

Brooke pulled back the bed coverings and, as indicated on the websites, her beloved was fully erect. This made her smile; even in death Christopher was the consummate lover. A few slight adjustments and he was ready for her. The serenity and calm she felt was overwhelming for she knew that they were going to be together. Forever.

Angel lust, it was such an appropriate term Brooke thought as she lowered herself down upon her Christopher's erect cock. She hit the pipe as she went about pleasuring herself. Looking at her beloved she could not stop thinking about what a wonderful person he was and how very lucky she was that he loved her; in his own way.

Feeling herself about to reach climax, Brooke reached across the bed and found her beloved's favorite possession exactly where it should be. She could feel the tears run down her face and he warmth comforted her, as it always had. Brooke liked to cry. She thought briefly about her daughter and quickly reconciled that a child would be better off with no mother than a mother like Brooke. Her movements hastened, as she brought herself closer to climax. She saw the painting of that evil girl as a reflection in the mirror. The image of herself nude juxtaposed against the girl staring at her with those eyes, those dead-doll eyes. Christopher loved them, so very much. Brooke put the gun in her mouth, whispered a final "I love you," to her beloved and pulled the trigger.





## YONDER HILL

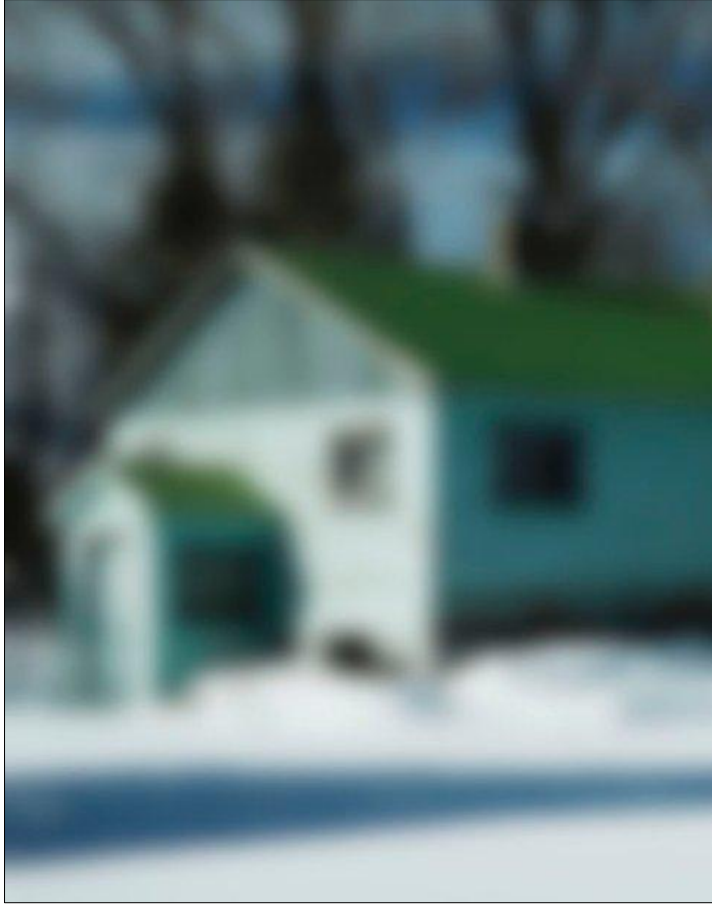
By Richard C. Walls

Photos © Toby Huss

When he was very young, his sister used to sing to him at night. They were old enough to have separate beds, but not, in their frugal family, the luxury of separate rooms. His sister had a crystal soprano voice, a 10-year-old's unbroken sound, pitch perfect and other-worldly.

Her repertoire included popular radio hits of the day, specifically those songs of night stars and something deeply felt but barely understood, aimed at adolescent girls on the brink of a quivering empowerment and the enticement of a pleasurable annihilation. There were also random songs she had learned at school, mostly doggerel for kids, songs of shoo-flies and courting frogs. From this latter batch there was one song in particular which fascinated him. It had a sing-song quality and was so fiercely symmetrical that he could tell it was very, very old. It began:

"On yonder hill there stands a maiden / Who she is I do not know / I will court her for her beauty / She must answer yes or no". Then a delicate dance down an octave, with the word "no" given two syllables "Oh no John, no John, no John, no."



“Yonder,” he figured, was the name of the hill, like “Bunker” or “Haunted”. “Maidens” he knew from pictures. They wore pointed hats with hankies hanging from the tips and high-wasted nightgowns and were very thin and had teeny-tiny features. Why this particular sprite didn’t want to be John’s friend was initially a puzzle to him since John seemed like a nice guy, you could tell by the melody. But in the second stanza, the maiden explains her unyielding stance:

“My father was a Spanish Captain /  
Went to sea a month ago /  
First he kissed me, then he left me /  
Bid me always answer no. /  
Oh no John, no John, no John, no.”

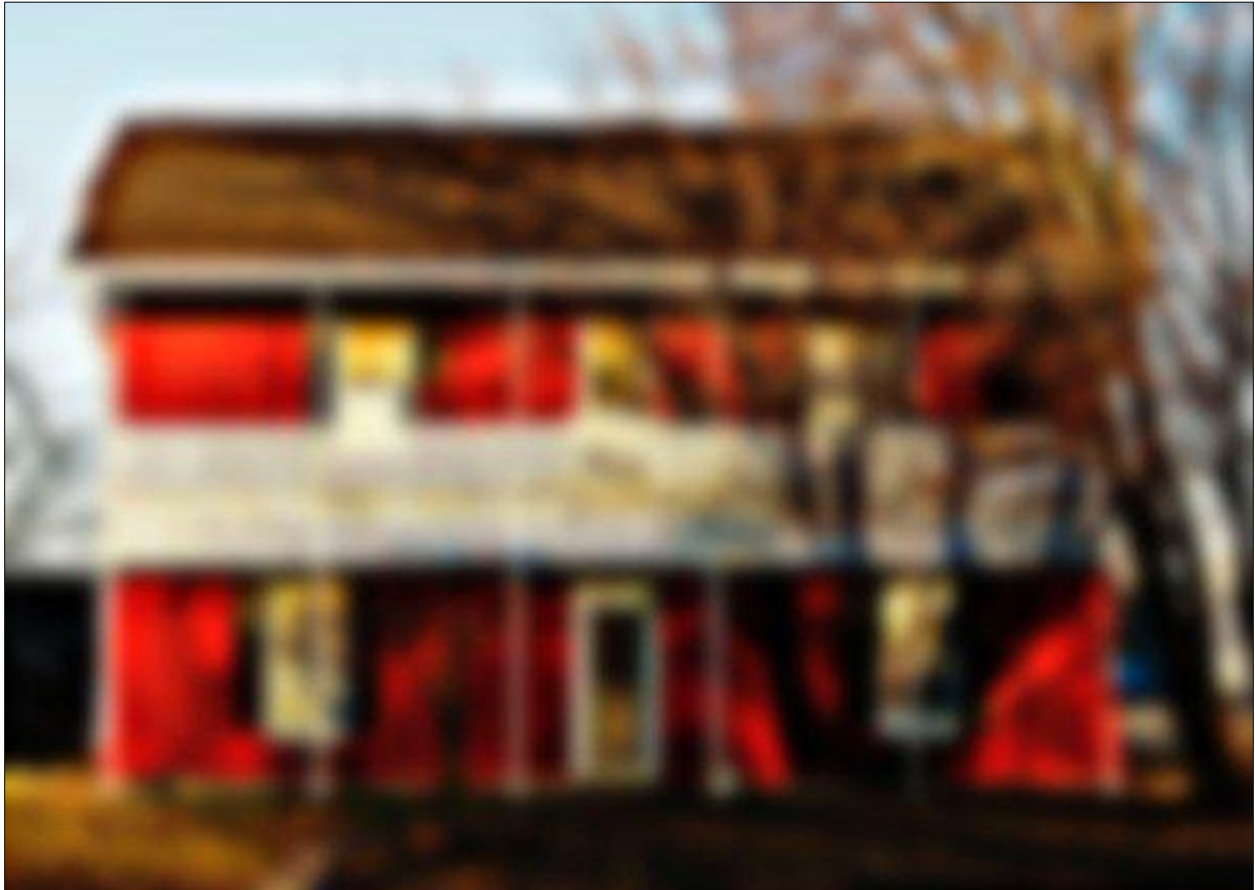
There was a dog in a neighbor’s backyard who used to bark every night, not in the aggressive, yapping manner of a protesting innocent, but in a mournful muffled way, a sad “woof” from a creature who knows it’s lost the battle. For the rest of his life the memory of that second stanza would arrive with that doleful doggy sound attached.

Anyway, she had to say “no”--chalk it up to parental interference. The song was an extended metaphor for that awful age when the forces of attraction come from both the safety of our family and the beckoning outer world. Each step to maturity involves a major betrayal of our Edenic origins and each betrayal lodges, unacknowledged, deep in our hearts like original sin. Whether we emerge from childhood well-adjusted or the usual wreck, there’s always a nugget of guilt in the mix, having been co-conspirators in our own fall from grace.

He was aware of none of this. Surely, he thought, John must change his approach. This is a puzzle. There is a key. But in the next stanza, our hero shows a saddening lack of progress: “Oh madam in your face is beauty / On your lips red roses grow / Will you take me for your lover / Madam answer yes or no / Oh no, John, etc.”

This heady stanza was a bit outside his 7-year-old experiential range. The best he could do was to recall that time in the first grade when, responding to some holiday ultimatum from the teacher, he recklessly asked the class beauty Kathy Nolan if she would be his valentine and she

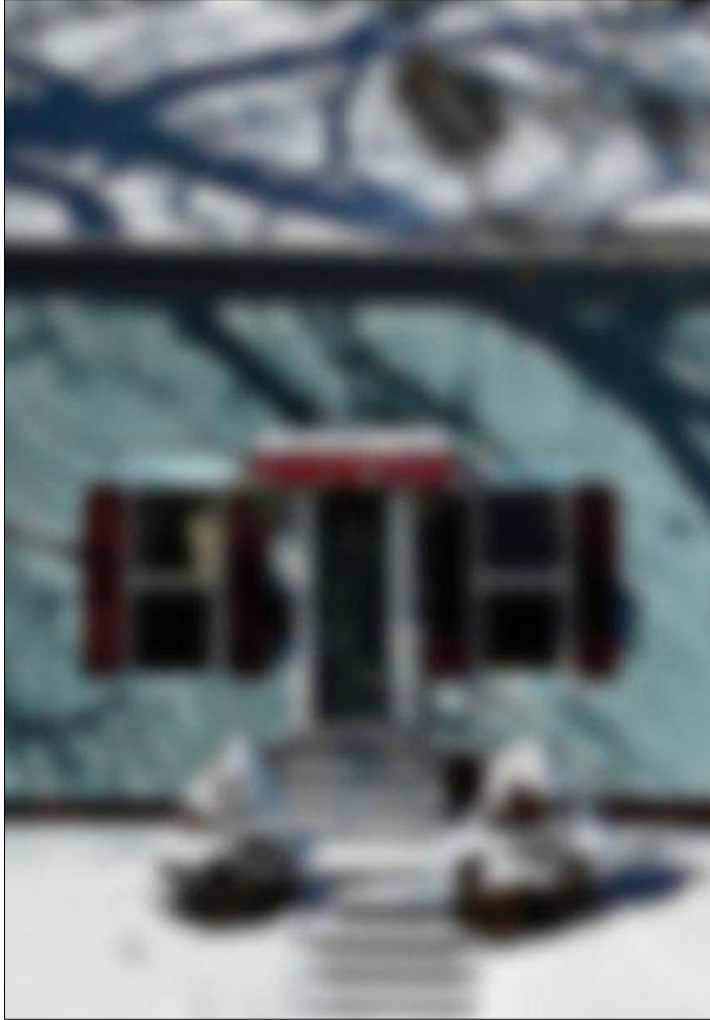
looked very thoughtful for about a minute and then smiled brightly and said “No.” He was baffled by this and for many a snack time afterwards would sit in sullen silence and moodily stare at his milk and cookies, unconsciously mimicking a barfly unable to drown his sorrow. It seemed highly unlikely that her father was one of those cranky Spanish captains. No, people were complicated mysteries. But then, so was everything else.



She was the most impossible thing he had ever encountered, a mystery, certainly, and extremely complicated.

This was during a period when he was wandering through life, desperate to be known by someone. Sometimes he felt like a moral anachronism, like some poor trauma case who had gone into a coma in the mid-50s and woke up in this brave new world of the late-60s young, healthy and reasonably attractive. And hopeless. He didn't understand why hardly anybody seemed to care about the important things and it made him feel awkward and reluctant to join in the general pursuit of sensation. Stimulants frightened him, depressants, predictably, depressed him. Sex roused a need beyond the physical. He was forever falling in love. In defense, he developed an ironic and even cutting style, his own personal path to superficiality. It usually worked.





To put a scalpel to the matter: Some connection had been torn apart when he was younger, some connection he would spend the rest of his life trying to re-establish, an urge that guaranteed that mistakes would be made and repeated, fresh wounds on top of old ones and that fed a melancholy outlook that some people mistook for a poetic bent. He could be, in the parlance of today, a moody fuck.

At this time his sister was old enough to have her own apartment, and on weekends the hoards descended, a mix of her friends, his friends, their friends and people who just wandered in, hooking up, breaking up, making up and taking up space on a Saturday night. The swirl of intentions lodged in the white noise of babbling youth was comfortably incoherent. You didn't have to land anywhere, just float on top of the burble and be both there and far, far away.

He stepped outside for air...

She sat on the sidewalk in front of the apartment building, cross-legged and cradling a guitar, her fingers glancing over the strings. "Strum here often?" he said. She was short and very thin, his opposite, and her smallness was heartbreaking. With her pitch-black hair, pale skin and sharply green eyes she might as well have been wearing a sign around her neck that said "Irish." Even when he sat next to her he felt like he was looming. The soft and divergent strands of his usual caution coalesced into a surge of tenderness and he felt himself sinking into a gently enfolding space. A thought occurred: "I will court her for her beauty." Now where did that come from, he wondered. "Play. Something. Please." "I can't really, I'm just learning...all I know are chords and fragments." "Play a fragment..." he said. "I love fragments."

He thought she looked like a sexy munchkin. Much later, when he told her of that first impression she looked at him quizzically and said, "You realize that's a little disturbing, right?"

Though normally hesitant in these matters, he found himself with the strong desire to make a move, immediately, on the spot. He would be charming. He would be wry. Irresistible. He almost arched an eyebrow when he made the leap: "Would you be terribly kissed if I offended you?" he said suavely. Shit. Shit!! He felt the hot flush of humiliation...but she smiled kindly, and laughed and they kissed...Things happened quickly back then, if you wanted them too.

\* \* \*

Meanwhile, John still doesn't get it: "Oh madam I will give you jewels / I will make you rich and free / I will give you silken dresses / Madam will you marry me? / Oh no John..."



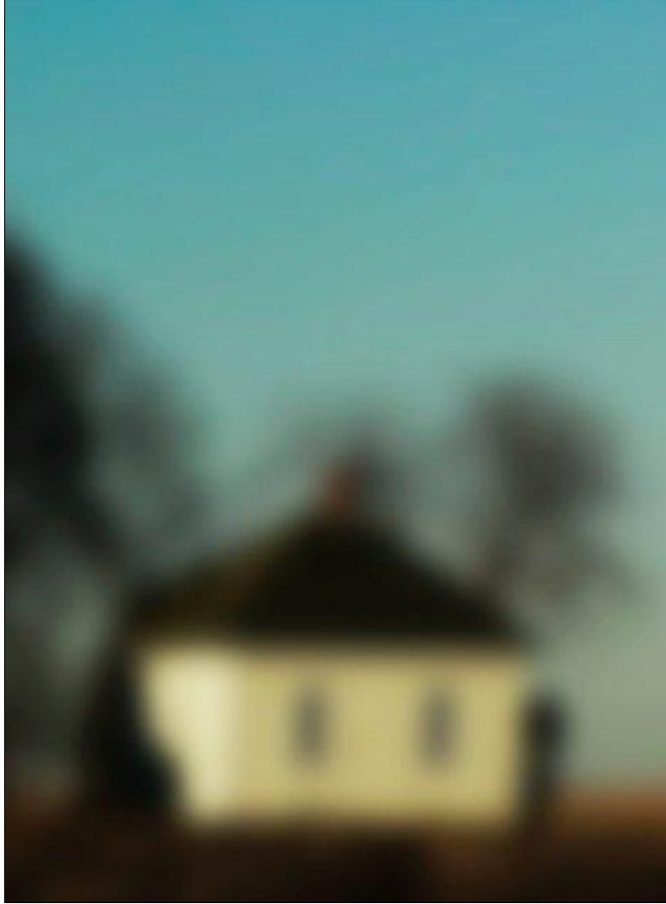
Had he become distant like she said? He often felt himself withdrawing from the world and the people in it, felt it as a dizzying change of view, suddenly outside his head and looking at everything from a collapsing point, his vision dwindling without end. He had no reason to think that other people didn't feel this way now and then because, surely, other people felt (now and then) the intolerable weight of the world. It was Tuesday afternoon.

Finally, John has his conceptual breakthrough: He must make “no” the desired answer. “Oh madam since you are so cruel / and that you do scorn me so / If I may not be your lover / Madam will you let me go / Oh no John...” Ah, thought John, things are looking up. Let’s try that again: “Then I will stay with you forever / If you will not be unkind / Madam, I have vowed to love you / Would you have me change my mind? / Oh no, John... ‘ Very good. In fact, excellent.



This particular Tuesday afternoon occurred on an extremely hot day in July.

During the course of their wretched conversation the following thoughts and images flitted through his mind: fine black hair on a very pale arm; her laughing fits; a single hot tear running down a cool cheek; a general feeling of euphoria lodging somewhere around his cheekbones then slowly spreading its glow throughout his body, throughout his mind; that cat that died, he never liked it and now felt guilty that he had been indifferent to a creature so helpless; that woman in the grocery store who insisted, for reasons known only to herself, on calling him “Bunny”; trees; heat; hard candy which disappears in your mouth...



They had argued again. Intemperate words were spoken about things that didn't matter but were stand-ins for things that did. Accusations that one didn't believe were made, voices were raised, tears were shed. It was like acting out a pantomime concocted by some psychotic god, where nothing is sincere but everything mattered greatly. And in the back of his mind, an unwanted thought: "When I was a child, I thought this was going to be different..."

In the end it came down to what he couldn't say. This was his secret shame, that he couldn't say what needed saying most. "Oh, my darling...I am so sorry."

And so he left her for the last time.

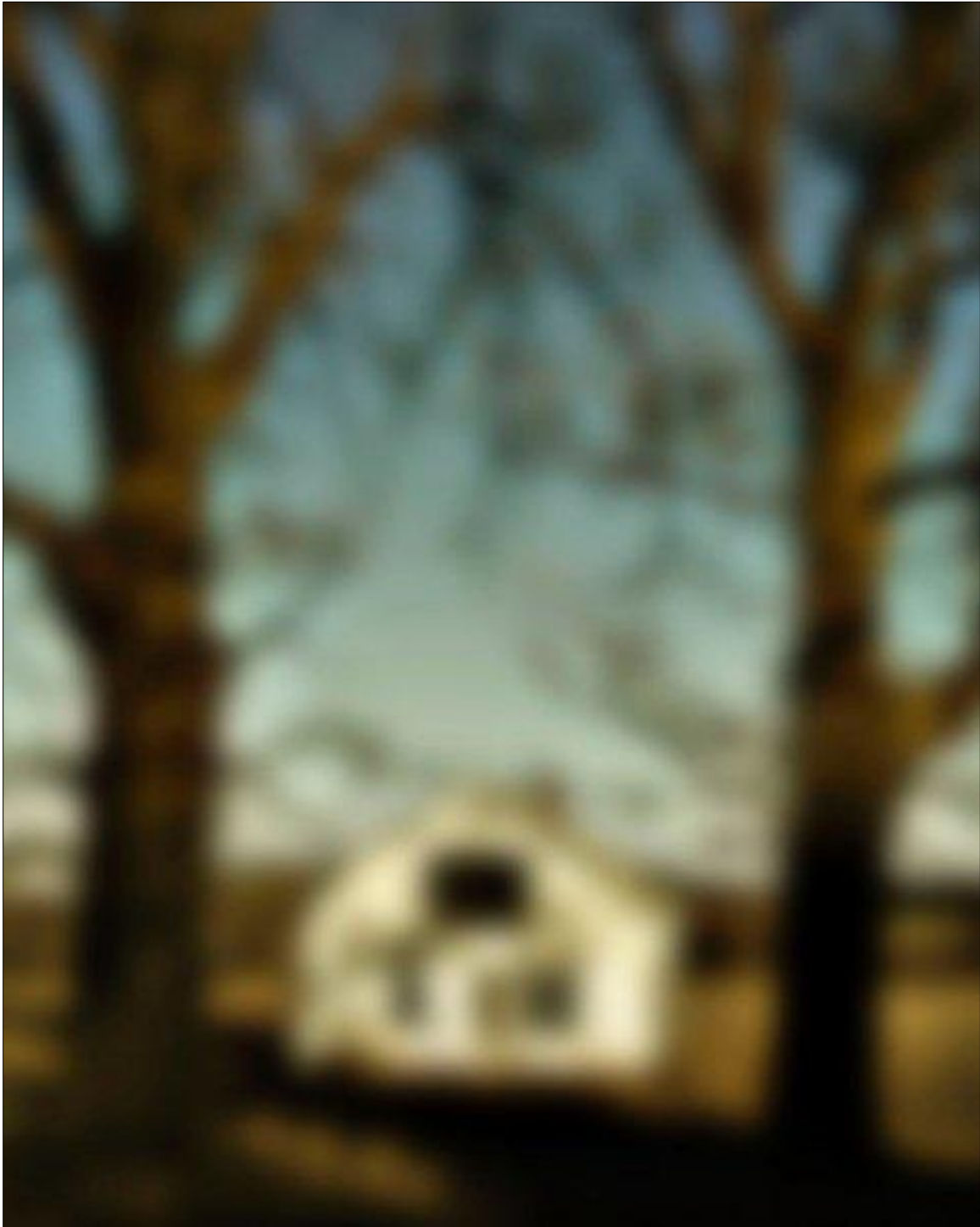
He stepped outside...

"Oh hark. I hear the church bells ringing / Will you come and be my wife? / Or dear madam, have you settled / To live single all your life? / Oh, no John...?"

That was it?, he thought, yawning and sinking a little further down into the amniotic bed. One expected something a little more magical ... that it should end in marriage--one of those boring adult things he associated with the buying of a car, preferably a station wagon--was a little deflating. The thought of John and the maiden tooling around fairyland... in a '56 woody like his daddy's car ... lacked a certain... (he sighed so deeply it was almost painful...sleep had taken an interest in him) ...on the other hand, they probably need a car to get up and down Yonder Hill...I hope the roads aren't poorly paved like the ones over on Manchester street, cracked and ugly...old men in the winter with fingerless gloves...he passed them on the cold walk to school...wasn't there some kind of test tomorrow?...some kind...the desktop is soothing when you lay your cheek on it...that strange rubber smell...classroom smell...rubber funny word...you could take a bite out of the wax milk carton...that was fun...I hate milk...it tastes...fuzzy (one last swooning sigh)...fuzzy wuzzy...wuzzy...wuzzy...wuz....

\*\*\*

...and as he stepped outside the sun burst into flames. A sharp light pierced his eyes, momentarily turning everything white. His sunglasses were no help and he moved forward staring at his feet, his head bowed by a malignant pressure. It was very painful and there was no escaping it.





# 'ATAVISTIC RESURGENCE' AND THE ANIMALISTIC PRIMAL CONSCIOUSNESS

## AN INTERVIEW WITH ALAN MOORE

By D M Mitchell



Trying to think of appropriate questions to ask Alan Moore can be a daunting business. Anyone who knows him, or is at least familiar with his work, will know that Alan is capable of and willing to talk about anything and everything under the sun. He often accomplishes this with a singular intelligence and lack of self-aggrandisement which is (in my experience at least) rare in writers. His mind possesses both incredible depth and breadth, as well as an unnerving capacity to store and assimilate information.

In person I have always found him to be beyond generous. On the other hand, people who have ill-advisedly gotten on the wrong side of him know too well how fierce and unforgiving he can be when crossed. What is not widely perceived is that Alan also has a

vulnerable fallible side that is simultaneously pro face endearing, and surprising to find in the person who meticulously mapped out the structure of mammoth works such as *Watchmen* and *From Hell*.

This 'human' Alan Moore is the Alan Moore who left the only draft of (the lost book) *Yuggoth Cultures* in the back seat of a taxi, who also lost my phone number because he'd written it on the wall next to the phone and then painted over it, and once let me sleep in his bed (while he stayed at girlfriend Melinda's place!) after a drunken evening in Northampton. That same evening I also vomited copiously in Alan's bathroom, a fact I have considered turning into a T-shirt slogan, but could never get the wording right. Whatever - I can personally testify that Alan Moore is not only human, but a fucking good guy.

Alan Moore is a paradox in that he is both firmly situated in the carnal and terrestrial (even in his magical and Cabbalistic-based writings) and yet remains permanently at odds with the physical plane; or at least those parts of it that would want make creativity subservient to commerce. Maybe he's just too big to live in one world?

Acknowledging how busy Alan is with a multitude of recent projects (his novel *Jerusalem*, his magazine *Dodgem Logic* and multitudinous ongoing comics series) I kept my questions to a minimum; and yet Alan took the time to reply at touching length. What most surprises me, looking at this interview now, is how closely it parallels the interview I conducted with him in Northampton in February 1994, that appeared in *Rapid Eye 3* (Creation Books). Maybe we all are (as Hofstadter suggested) little more than strange loops. Alan Moore, thank you for your time and energy.

*How is the progress on your novel Jerusalem going? When are we likely to see it?*

Personally, I think it's coming along pretty well considering that I strongly doubted it was possible when I started it. I'm just working on chapter thirty-one at the moment, and it's a thirty-five chapter book, but I'm afraid that still doesn't help when it comes to predicting when it will be finished. This uncertainty is largely based upon the fact that when I reached the end of chapter twenty-three and thus the end of the second 'book', I realised that I was completely exhausted and that if I didn't do something radical with the third book then that exhaustion was going to show in the writing, which would have been disastrous. My solution was a decision to ramp up my game for the third act, making each of the last eleven chapters new and experimental in some way, making the work much harder for myself and thus ensuring that I couldn't bring anything but my best to it. You know, reading those last couple of sentences back I've belatedly realised that this is probably some of the most ludicrous tactical thinking of my entire strategically-unfathomable life, but on the other hand it seems to be getting results. Chapter twenty-nine is a two-hour long Samuel Beckett play in which Beckett himself turns up as a character; chapter thirty is a kind of homage to the British New Wave science fiction of the 'sixties and 'seventies; and the current chapter is a stream-of-consciousness performance by one of the characters in which I try to explore the new attitude that we will need regarding things like vice, virtue, good and evil if this should by any chance turn out to be a space-time continuum in which any possibility of 'Free Will' as we currently understand the term is excluded by the laws of physics (which I believe to be the case). I'm guessing it may be finished by early next year, and then I'm going to need at least a couple of months for any revisions or other editing which needs to be done, and after that I'm going to finish drawing the cover. So I suppose that the short answer would be that your guess is almost certainly as good as mine.

*It's connected to your earlier novel Voice of the Fire?*



Well, it's set in Northampton, as was *Voice of the Fire*, but with *Jerusalem* we're talking about a much smaller area of the town. That said, there were a lot of chapters of the earlier book that took place within the limits of my home neighbourhood, the Boroughs, which is where *Jerusalem* is set, so I suppose that people might reasonably expect a fair bit of overlap. As it turns out, there's a lot less than you might think. When I commenced *Jerusalem* I think I was expecting to be referring to the spectral black dogs and the talking heads on spikes a fair bit, but as the novel has found its own voice there seems to have been less and less room for them. A number of the same locations recur, which is of course unavoidable, and there are a couple of numinous crowd scenes in which a character from *Voice of the Fire* might stroll by in the background where appropriate, but by and large I'm keeping the two books separate, so that you don't have to have read one to appreciate the other. The only sense in which *Jerusalem* is a sequel to *Voice of the Fire* is the sense that this second book is using the same found material as the first...namely my formative landscape, its past, and my own engagement with these things...but is dealing with that material using a completely different set of literary tools and shaping the substance to fit a much more encyclopaedic structure. Oh, yeah, and John Clare turns up in both chapter twenty-six, which is the Lucia Joyce chapter, and the aforementioned faux-Beckett piece in chapter thirty. And of course I turn up myself in both books, but in *Jerusalem* I'm in drag and pretending to be a woman so nobody would ever guess that it was meant to be me.

*How would you contrast what you're doing with what Joyce did with Ulysses which was centred in one locale?*

I suppose the biggest difference is that Joyce (for some reason) didn't see fit to make the middle section of *Ulysses* into a hallucinogenic and inappropriately terrifying children's story. Beyond that, I'm coming to the conclusion that in what is, I believe, called 'the literature of place' the locations are perhaps more responsible for writing the books than the authors themselves. It's perhaps a fanciful notion, but I believe that in some ways *Ulysses* was embedded in Dublin and just waiting for Joyce to unearth it. In the same way, you could say that much of H.P. Lovecraft's fiction was embedded in the New England landscape, or that Hodgson's *House on the Borderland* was somehow inherent in the coastal reaches of the west of Ireland that Hodgson visited. (Actually, the last example provides the best evidence for my frankly tenuous theory: Iain Sinclair was telling me that apparently Iris Murdoch had visited the same stretch of the Irish coast and, without ever having read or even heard of *House on the Borderland* produced a novel that was eerily similar in many of its themes and plot details.) Oddly enough, the very first chapter of *Jerusalem*, a prologue with the title *Work in Progress*, was titled and written before I'd realised that this was Joyce's working title for *Finnegans Wake*. Once I'd belatedly made the connection, I strengthened it by making Joyce's luminous daughter Lucia (who spent over thirty years in the mental institution next to the grammar school that I briefly attended in the 'sixties) into the protagonist of chapter twenty-six, which was already provisionally titled *Round the Bend*. Other than that, as I say, I'm not sure how much I'd care to

draw too sharp a contrast with *Ulysses* other than stating the obvious and remarking that James Joyce was a far better writer than I am.

*Could you say that any recorded history could be viewed as a sort of palimpsest?*

It certainly could be seen as a palimpsest, although since a large part of *Jerusalem* is an argument against there being such a thing as discrete moments in time...or indeed such a thing as time in the first place...then these days I find I'm tending more to view the historical process as less of a palimpsest and more of an accumulated shape or structure such as might result from the application of contemporary 3D printing technology. On the other hand, I personally really like the word 'palimpsest' so I'm not much fussed either way. I certainly wouldn't start a fight over it.

*The concept of 'time' as being something other than how we perceive it (or have been conditioned to perceive it) in our everyday lives, is pretty prevalent in many of your works. Aside from the novels there is also **The League Of Extraordinary Gentlemen**, **Promethea**, **From Hell** and not forgetting **Dr Manhattan**. How did you arrive at this perception of 'time'?*

Actually, if my view of time as an eternal solid of at least four dimensions in which all movement and change are a perspective illusion born entirely of limited human consciousness is true, then it becomes problematic talking about how I arrived at this perception, since arrival suggests a linear journey and thus a linear view of time. In my own wholly subjective view of things, although I'd stumbled across ideas that played with different notions of time and its passage and had even played with those ideas myself throughout my early work, I'd say that I never really 'got' the concept on any profound level until my first direct magical experience on January 7<sup>th</sup> 1994, as briefly described in the *Unearthing* piece that I did for Iain Sinclair's excellent *City of Disappearances* anthology that was later expanded into an album box-set released through Lex Records. Basically, during this experience I realised what the concept of an eternal four-dimensional solid spacetime implied, and experienced this realisation in a very powerful and personally meaningful manner. I understood at this point that my previous fictional dealings with the subject in *Watchmen*, *From Hell* and various *Future Shocks* could be seen, perhaps romantically or perhaps literally, as a kind of pre-memory rippling out through time in both directions from this moment of realisation. So basically, the uses of the idea prior to this point would have to be seen as intuitive shots in the dark, whereas those to be found in *Promethea* or elsewhere are the result of a more conscious and directed exploration of the concept.

*William Blake is admittedly important to you. The title of the book **Jerusalem** is an obvious reference. How much does the content of the book relate to Blake's visions and philosophy?*

Although William Blake is certainly up at the top of the list, there are actually several reasons why the book is called *Jerusalem*. At least a couple of the early crusades were commenced from King John's castle, at the corner of the street where I was born, including Richard the Lionheart's famous sortie. Northampton's ruling Baron, Simon de Senlis, built the still-standing Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Sheep Street after the design of Solomon's contentious temple in Jerusalem. On a more metaphorical level, the idea of Jerusalem as a spiritual state of being that would one day be realised on Earth was foremost in the mind of Bedford's John Bunyan who fought as a roundhead in Cromwell's New Model Army and who frequently passed through Northampton on preaching engagements. The multitude of dissident religious beliefs which found a home in seventeenth century Northampton and supported Cromwell in his decisive victory at Naseby all firmly believed that a material Jerusalem might be founded in their lifetimes, and the refugees fleeing to the New World from the horrific Northampton of that period, such as the Washington and Franklin families, were all hoping to establish the same thing in their new homeland. Jerusalem's status as a hymn is also one of the book's running themes, as it examines how hymns in English were first sung in defiant (and probably Lollard infiltrated) Northampton village chapels during the reign of Elizabeth I and examines other locally-relevant hymns such as Phillip Doddridge's *Hark, the Glad Sound* and Pastor John Newton's *Amazing Grace*. Still, as I said, William Blake is far and away the main point of reference. One of the principal ideas behind the work is the implication in Blake and Parry's hymn that 'amongst those dark, Satanic mills' is perhaps the *only* place where Jerusalem can truly be founded: in the pleasant meadows and crescents they don't really *need* Jerusalem and they aren't looking for it. From the notions of time outlined in my answer to the question above, it can be inferred that everything and everybody contained in an eternal solid spacetime are in themselves eternal, which would imply that our meanest and most deprived districts are potentially eternal cities populated by unwitting immortals. There are also a number of other threads connecting Blake with the *Jerusalem* narrative, notably that my paternal ancestors came to the Boroughs in Northampton from their former home in Lambeth, which was also the birthplace of another of the novel's characters, namely Charles Chaplin. All of these various strands are brought together in *Jerusalem*, although whether they're brought together as a shimmering tapestry or an ungainly ball of tangled yarn is of course for the reader to decide.

*How much has Iain Sinclair proved to be an influence? He's made an appearance (as Norton) in the League comics.*

I'd say that Iain Sinclair's writing is probably one of the major spells that I've fallen under during my career. To be able to write that beautifully and that originally with such an unbelievable degree of intellectual density was for several years pretty much all that I aspired to. I think you can see Iain's influence in *From Hell* and in the final chapter of *Voice of the Fire*, along with all the spoken-word Moon & Serpent productions since that initial performance at the Bridewell Theatre, right through to the writing of *Unearthing*. With *Jerusalem* I think I'm making a concerted effort to write in different modes and expand the narrative into other areas,

although this certainly shouldn't be seen as a rejection of the incredible amount that I've learned from Iain's writing, more an attempt to thoroughly explore some ground of my own while still using Iain's work as a benchmark with regard to the degree of intensity, intelligence and focus that a writer should bring to his or her output. As for Iain's appearances as Norton in the recent *League* continuity, I think he enjoyed it although he did complain that we'd made him look like a skeletal Nazi dentist. Actually, I've worked that complaint into Norton's dialogue for the 2009 chapter, since I'm a firm believer in giving people the right to reply.

*Currently we appear to be living through 'interesting times' globally. Do you feel that what we are living through at the moment is any worse or better than earlier historical periods?*

I really don't know how anyone could possibly evaluate whether our current historical moment is better or worse than those which preceded it, but I think it would be fair to say that it is certainly very different. The main point of difference is the much larger amount of information that our species now has access to, and the attendant increase in complexity which has accompanied this steady accumulation. Obviously, on certain levels this could be seen as a very good thing in that amongst all of this information there may very well be solutions to our current array of global crises. On the other hand, with individuals and their sense of identity buckling and collapsing under a weight of complexity that they have never acquired the psychological tools to deal with, it could of course equally be seen as a very bad thing. On the one hand we have religious fundamentalists and far-right nationalists reacting to the unstoppable wave of change around them by digging their heels in more aggressively and attempting to defend their collapsing worldview, sometimes violently. On the other hand we are moving ever-closer to a much more sophisticated understanding of our world and our universe and we are grudgingly being forced to come up with inventive new ways of handling both an escalating population and dwindling resources. I'd say that exponentially increasing complexity is neither a good thing nor a bad thing; it is simply a thing; a condition of our developing human landscape that it is up to us, both as individuals and as societies, to address and engage with if we wish to survive the coming decades with our lives and essential personalities intact.

*Do you think art/literature etc still has a voice that can make any difference? Can it even be heard nowadays?*

Of course art and literature make a difference. Increasingly, in a world dominated by booming governmental and corporate pronouncements, individual human voices are about the only things that can make a difference. Just using it as an example that's readily to hand, for whatever reason movements like Occupy or Anonymous have adopted the *V for Vendetta* mask and basic ethos it would still appear that they have taken some slight inspiration from the original work. And of course, there are the differences that art and literature have made which are only apparent in what we *can't* see: how much easier would it have been to engineer a

totalitarian state in this country had Orwell and Huxley not written *1984* or *Brave New World*? I think the crucial point in your question is whether art and literature can still be heard in the clamour of contemporary society, or at least whether they can be heard clearly and free from distortion. The problem, it seems to me, lies in our modern construction of art being simply a category of entertainment. Classified thus, it's inevitable that almost all commercially successful art (and these days, if we speak of success, it is generally in a commercial sense) will be managed by an entertainment industry. The clue here is in the word 'industry', in that such an enterprise will always place commercial considerations first and will in time condition the people hoping to work in such a field to do the same. What is the point, after all, of creating something exquisite and perfectly expressive of one's inmost feelings if there is no way of displaying one's creation to an audience of any kind? I see this attitude as being profoundly toxic, and deplore its apparent easy acceptance throughout today's supposedly creative community. In my own Blake, Bunyan and John Clare informed opinion, if you are lucky enough to have acquired artistic abilities then expressing them lucidly and eloquently without compromise is not your career, it is your job and your responsibility. If you are an artist, of whatever variety, I suggest that you are more likely to find satisfaction and meaning in your life by remaining loyal to yourself and to the integrity of your creation, rather than by pimping your muse to the first wealthy-looking customer to stroll along the boulevard. Art and literature can make an enormous difference, but only if they are genuinely art and literature as opposed to corporate-approved fanfares that only add to the already deafening level of cultural noise.

*Back to the subject of historicity; how do you feel epochal change affects a work of art? Does a work of art possess something essential that is unchanging and can be appreciated regardless of political fashion, or is a work of art subject to change due to the vantage point of perception whether spatial or temporal?*

Just as a competent sculptor will create a work to be walked around and viewed from different angles in a given space, so too I believe that the serious artist creates work that can be walked round and viewed from different angles in time. If you consider the case of Shakespeare...whom I believe to be a single person from a working class background that simply happened to have been interested in a wide array of different subjects, rather than an aristocrat or assembled team of aristocrats and I think everybody should just, like, get over it...then a play like, say, *The Tempest* is going to be a completely different piece of work depending upon which century's audiences happen to be viewing it. It will be lent different meanings and inflections by its relationship to the audience's own historical period, inflections that cannot possibly have been intended by the author but which are largely the work of the audience itself. As with any work of art, the moment of art only really occurs at the interface between the artist and his or her audience, with both parties bringing a least half of the experience to the table. If a piece of work has touched upon some deep and fundamental human truth or emotion then it will probably still have relevance irrespective of how many years or centuries have passed since the work's creation. The physical piece of art itself is, of course, unchanged. The perspective of the audience, however, will change and will change the perception of the art accordingly. A piece

of good art, like a piece of good sculpture, will present an interesting aspect whatever the angle or date of the view.

*Avoiding the subject of the worth/non-worth of film adaptations of your works, I find it disturbing that a whole generation of young people probably have their first contact with any of your ideas through things like the **Watchmen** film. How do you feel about that?*

I can't say I'm much fussed, to be honest. If one of these movies...which don't really have anything to do with my work...happens to lead them to check out the work itself, then hopefully they'll find that an enjoyable enough experience to maybe investigate some of the other material. If they find that they enjoy the film adaptations more than they enjoy the original work, then that's entirely their business. Similarly, if for some people a visit to, say, the **Watchmen** movie is their *only* exposure to my ideas, then they probably wouldn't have fitted in very well with my audience anyway. If people are genuinely seeking out the kind of ideas that tend to turn up in my work, then they'll probably stumble over it eventually, one way or another, and the rest is entirely up to them.

*And there is a similar phenomenon occurring in the socio-economic arena where people currently reaching majority age have grown up in a climate where things that I find politically and ethically abhorrent are now uncritically accepted as perfectly normal. How do you feel about that?*

I agree that there are a lot of unpleasant agendas that people have grown up with over the last few decades, just as there were an awful lot of unpleasant agendas in the air in the post-war period when I was growing up and Britain was still in shock from having lost its empire. However, whether those agendas are or ever have been uncritically accepted is a different issue. Having been involved in one form of radicalism or another since the late 1960s, I'd have to say that the protest movements of today are much bigger, much more aware and much more socially diverse than anything that I experienced in the twentieth century. Yes, idiots or victims of hypnotism will always be prepared to uncritically accept absolutely anything which their leaders serve up, but from what I can see the evidence seems to indicate that there are fewer and fewer people in the ranks of the half-witted or mesmerised these days than there were during my or for that matter your formative years. Also, individual people are a lot more resilient than they appear. Without exception, all of the most radical people I've ever met have had largely ordinary upbringings and have been subject to exactly the same routine oppressions and brainwashing-attempts as everyone else, and it doesn't appear to have done them any harm. If anything, such treatment seems to have only sharpened their resolve and made them more creative and resourceful...possibly more creative and resourceful than they would have been if they'd been subjected to a more idyllic and liberal rearing. Although I tend not to agree with Karl Marx on a great number of issues, there is something to be said for his contention that, sometimes, 'worse is better'.

*Before leaving the subject of film, can you tell us about **Jimmy's End**?*

At this precise moment in time it's still up in the air, largely because of the unusual approach to funding that Mitch Jenkins and I have taken with regard to the project. Since we're avoiding the traditional film industry route and very much want to own this property ourselves we've been talking to a series of large tech companies that have appeared to be highly interested but where external circumstances have prevented their involvement, such as the big computer company that discovered at the last moment that it had 'functionality problems' with its hardware, in that its tablet turned out not to be able to do a lot of the things that the company had been assuming it could do. We do have one tech giant that is currently apparently very eager to close a deal, but we're not getting our hopes up. In the meantime, rather than sitting around and twiddling our thumbs, Mitch and I have put together a fifteen minute film titled *Act of Faith* which, while being a complete short film in its own right, is intended as a trailer for the estimated forty-minute *Jimmy's End*. We have *Jimmy's End* ready to go, in terms of the cast, locations, costumes and equipment, as soon as someone coughs up the relatively minimal amount of money needed. With *Jimmy's End* made, there are various ways that the project could go but all of these would ultimately be leading up to a much bigger production entitled *The Show*, from which a number of different projects in different media could gracefully and logically unfold. From looking at the job that Mitch has done on *Act of Faith*, a truly absorbing and actually upsetting little self-contained slice of cinema, I can't imagine that anyone that we show it to isn't going to want to see *Jimmy's End* to find out what happens next. But, as ever, we'll see.

*What is happening with the wonderful **Dodgem Logic**?*

*Dodgem Logic* is currently on hold, largely because its no-ads-high-production-values-and-paying-the-contributors approach was making a considerable loss despite the mag's entirely respectable sales, and also because of other commitments that have intruded since we finished volume one of the magazine with issue eight. Ideally, if and when I ever dig myself out from under these commitments, we'd all like to re-launch *Dodgem Logic* as a restructured publication that was able to maintain the mag's original principles while actually being sustainable in an economic sense. I've still got the *Dodgem Logic* posse within hailing distance, and Joe Brown has done a lot of brilliant work on re-thinking the magazine for the eventuality that the tide will turn enough for us to publish it again. The more I see the way that contemporary culture seems to be headed, the more I think that *Dodgem Logic* is a timely and even possibly a necessary proposition, and I know that all of our marvellous contributors feel the same way. The will to get the magazine up and running again is certainly there, and it only remains for us to contrive the right circumstances. Hope for the best but don't hold your breath is, I suppose, the basic message that I'm trying to get across here.

When I interviewed you for *Rapid Eye 3* (which feels like a lifetime ago) you'd just publicly declared yourself a magician. How has your attitude to magic evolved in the interim? How important do you feel magic is nowadays?

Well, for anybody under twenty the interview in *Rapid Eye* actually was a lifetime ago, but I know what you mean. My use of magic has come to mean more and more to me over the intervening years, until, like my use of language for example, it has pervaded my entire personality and existence to the point where I sometimes barely even consciously notice it. As to how important I feel magic to be, given that I currently feel that magic is as much of a fundamental condition of human consciousness as language, I'd go as far as to say that magic, which includes the entirety of being and consciousness within itself, is the *only* important thing. Magic, in essence, is what lends the universe its meaning and spares us from a hard-line rationalist cosmos in which



we understand almost all of the physical workings of our continuum only to assert that the entirety of spacetime has no meaning whatsoever. Existence, I feel, has the meaning and significance which we, as conscious and reasoning outgrowths of that existence, choose to impart. There is the immovable bulk of the world and its logical processes, to be sure, but there is also the far more mutable and fluid phenomenon of our own individual worldviews, with which we mentally animate the inert clay of our environments. Magic, for me, is on one level simply the richest, most personally useful and most rewarding worldview that I have yet to come across, and that seems truer and more vital to me today than it did eighteen years ago. If you're looking for a worldview that is non-restrictive, intellectually satisfying, and conducive to happiness and balance if not actual ecstasy, then in my opinion magic is still your only man.





## **TURBINES AND THROAT BONES**

### **(PART FOUR)**

**By Craig Woods**

**Photos © Max Reeves**

shifting gear Sheila lets the Jensen drift through impossible mist into a lay-by they are perched on a cliff top a vast panorama of smoking ruins spread out below the girl speaks in a tone spare and candid those onyx eyes reflecting nothing

- Come on now. See what the Little Boy did with his time.

Sheila kills the engine and they get out of the car the young woman following the mutant girl warily to the edge the motorway has dissolved around them no cars no tarmac only grass and stones and foreign trees the girl waves a willowy hand dispersing the mist below in one effortless gesture the devastated city of Hiroshima sprawls outward in infinite dimensions buildings levelled the blackened shells and rubble silhouetted malignantly against a radioactive horizon sad effigies of a stolen future inconceivable sorrow breaking planets to powder under its grievous hammer the girl's voice sharp as spice in the crippled throat of dawn

- So listen at every door ... I knock yet remain unseen in the breakdown ... silent plea

needs no fruit nor rice ... I was the peafowl cry in the night and the ammonia stink of stale urine in the doorway ... dog-girl dashing the rump this side didn't complain ... Little ghost voice of memory shard locked in dust beneath your bed see ... Light feels a deep brown like the Mexican sun ... you could fall into flowers and toys ... quivering every muscle rode for hours against the sky ... hard whipping hair stings where veins stood out on the old house ... Report the same finger-painted message on dormitory walls ... 'Poppy looked up from 200ft to the murky waters of dream stars and memory clouds ...' the dream ends there with the blast ... ugly old disease of TIME turning the bones to chalk ... Want good deal did their clocks offer? ... Caustic touch of Poppy's agile punch on a broken window and the blood froze like the skin of an orange ... she looked into another window and mapped stars of Hiroshima ... tasted it on her foreign tongue ... Vapid eyes done come and build a fence around your doll heads ... No way ... Ghost of no winning hand ... Vagabond children sailed in my shadow eat off my plate and horns ... they do not grow now you see ... bones dusted in sadness her hair's colour might burn ... wake from narcotic night to this ashen morning ... no meat or bread when the eyes dim ... bones turn to powder in the dream's absence ... nothing for myself now swirling in temporal wind ... You nurse that broken wrist to trace time back there in liquid copper ... remote throat at the epicentre to know my heart just as extensive ... Sky falling like a sock of grimy streets ... The red poisoned haze and cheap cigarette of her birth never seen ... whole carnival of wounds for you to nurse ... runaway patients sailing causeways of atrophied flesh ... Shadow of long past rivers ... forgotten epics engraved in the scars of melancholy pylons ... peafowl cries and ammonia stink ... Shadows maintain that locked gate to be shattered still ... The red star of our DESTINY slumbers in her cosmic amnion ... wearied and broken under these contaminated vistas ... crows caught in farmer's traps ... Smell the anaesthesia? ... Stink of wild dogs in 1912 Mexico galloping through torn 1980 curtains to subterranean 2014 nightclub ... ivy trailing the old estuary warehouses ... abrupt hand will live there like a mouse ... ragged child face is a blanket of the truth below ... say you're a censorious elderly tutor in a shit pornography to help you sleep at night ... whatever makes the clock's ticking easier ... But then a stranger has come in your muscles tight threatening the boughs on ebony fingers ... old scars weeping dew of endless morning ... wounded children dressed for war at the gate ... portals of Spain in the colourless headlights ... last ditch junction there on old dreary time-track ... Mission forsakes 'Buena Suerte' ... no pleasantries necessary ... no cards required ... in undreamt transgressions across hybrid galaxies ... burning eggs ... packing pistols ... rifles at standby ... stellar flares from unborn eyes gazing through time-locked windows ... the building of these barricades is flesh ... don't wanna know your sour sky and the prescription doesn't scan ... Black hole stain of ink that leaks from old comic books ... the faded polaroids bristling with memory weapons ... We're not a voice in the wind made to break down ... Poppy looked up to see what you thought you left behind ... You wait for the keys to show themselves then?

the girl pins Sheila with an interrogative stare the black pools of her eyes appearing as nothing more than holes in the gloom endless portals stretching to the far corners of a fractured universe she fidgets scraping the soles of her bare feet in the coarse white dust radioactive fragments of incinerated humanity caking her bleached skin another flex of her wounded wrist

another wet click the glass claw is unsheathed the toxic atmosphere jolting at its furious edge  
- DESTINY is taken only by the throat ...

with a vicious swipe the girl tears a scar across the air in front of them time and space folding and flapping inward flimsily as wet paper

Redman's shrivelled cock flapped uselessly against the boy's buttocks, the dry pink head nudging the anus like the scabbed snout of an ailing mole searching for a burrow to die in. Cold sweat trickled from the tycoon's every pore and pressure built ominously in his feeble bladder. The boy would not stop screaming and Redman could hear his own self-respect ooze out into the same unsympathetic vacuum where those unheeded cries were destined.

"Come on, old boy," Catherine Frick flicked at his sagging member with a pointed finger. "Pecker up, eh?"

"We are running out of time!" Doctor Homarus was in no mood for frivolity. "Shove your wrinkled joint in there now, you old fucker! Destiny can't wait for your Viagra to kick in!"

Redman juttied his pelvis forward, attempting to insert the flaccid organ, but the top half merely bent painfully against the boy's firm flesh, causing the tycoon to recoil.

"It's no good Catherine. I ... I'm afraid I can't perform in this ... atmosphere."

"Oh let's not kid each other, Matthew. You're not much of a performer in *any* atmosphere. Step aside!"

The MP pulled him backwards with a firm hand. He sagged against the steel wall, his exposed manhood drooping pathetically between his shaking thighs. The boy's wails showed no sign of subsiding, their terrible trauma causing the lights to flicker. The young spine was now in a state of paroxysm, the wet cracking sound louder and more agonising. From a nearby desk, Frick retrieved a copy of that morning's *Daily Standard*. A familiar headline flickered before Redman's tired gaze - 'ANNIVERSARY SHAME OF MINKOWSKI SURVIVORS' - an ignominious bulletin linking his present humiliation to that incurred in Frick's office some hours previously.

With the matter-of-fact abandon of a weathered prostitute combined with the tenacity of a military commander, Frick eased unselfconsciously out of her slacks and underwear. She rolled the newspaper into a tight cylinder and thrust one end into the boy's straining anus.

"When you want something done properly ..." she mused casually and thrust the other end of the paper into her cunt. "Hang tight, boys." Deep blue flames glimmered at the edges of her keen eyes. "Destiny is coming ... loud and clear."

Redman cringed slightly as the MP began pounding the boy with the same firm and brutal strokes to which he himself had become so accustomed - the signature rhythm of his shame. At last the boy's screams reached a crescendo, the agony attaining an intensity which caused his young voice to crack. Frick reached down and clamped one hand around the boy's suspended cock. Wincing only slightly at the newspaper's rough and jagged edges abrading against the walls of her cunt, the MP increased her speed, working the convulsing young body like a piston. Around them, the air in the laboratory began to crack and peel in a storm of metal sounds and sex smells ...



Tim is adrift on a copper wave of electric blood scents Ampersand Youth's fury vibrating through throat flesh to the skin of his arm she has shed thirty years since her descent from the stage the body sprawled across his lap is that of a fresh-faced girl in her early twenties silver eyes keen and bright muscles firm a small gathering has formed in the booth around them nameless angels with imperviously youthful faces and a melodic sting to their coarse banter Ampersand pulls herself up on lean arms and kisses him frankly on the lips a gesture as sublime and ephemeral as a shooting star night explodes into other galaxies new languages of sensation pronounced through her throat bones quaking with laughter against his thighs

- Something amusing you young lady?

- Everybody wants to be my friend. That's what everybody wants.

phantom hand dissolves through cigarette smoke and the black-eyed boy is at his shoulder

- Got the time on you guv. Got to get the warning out. Prone rifles yet the Doctor walks...

pressing against him Ampersand brings her face to Tim's once more slipping her febrile tongue into his mouth her hand careful beyond time sliding to his stiffening crotch penis throbbing against crustacean nightmare in his pocket vexed mission through sleeping throat of revolt time burns like old newspaper as she backs away from the ill-tasting kiss the cold crab clock in her hand eyes blank and final in their refusal cradle of the galaxy shakes on its axis with her silent scream a fist of time slamming discarded years back upon her shoulders a fist of

ice in Tim's chest crow's feet clenching young eyes inward a tide of creases upon the forehead speckling

the crab crumbles to dust in Ampersand's open palm the mineral fragments blown out into dead air upon her cosmic breath all clocks wilt and melt in her supernova when the psychic incendiaries hit

- No way. Not bitin'.

with a shake of her peroxide head she is dust in the gloom an unreachable ghost the comet-tail of her vitriol trailing behind in her spectral wake

expression of gunfire outside in ruined streets buildings dissolve a few passers-by likewise doomed all dreams are the same dream and the raw night is gone cryptic fragments of desire spiralling outward on slipstreams the black-eyed boy paints across savage skies

- Time to bail guv. The Agents of Time aste no time homing in on the flashpoint.

breathless jaunt through the eviscerated belly of a defunct power station the city ruins far behind them now turbine sentinels rusted soundless in the vacuum of Ampersand's departure cool and remote steel bones in the throat of the exhausted planet vista of dead furniture and torn harbours impossible to learn psychic miles made cumbersome along knuckles white and scraped lonely open voice explodes in the gravel grazes and oil stains

- Split the species to different deal guv. Old arbitrary lines won't stop us. The building of these barricades is flesh.

concrete gives way to a patch of trees and a green skyline beyond wooden barn upon a ridge silhouetted against an azure sky crow calls in the trees and a message of no return across static morning from glassless windows three bold horse heads peer expectantly a noble fire glowing in the amber eyes at their approach the middle horse speaks in an eloquent voice rich as honey

- Come on in, fella. Catch your breath. Nothing but fear for fear's sake to be feared around here. We got just the remedy for prying crab eyes - put them out good no question.

musty stable stink and an electric heat hits Tim in the face as the door creaks open floor strewn with straw odd items of furniture scattered in disparate corners an ancient wooden dining table the legs rickety a blue sofa its innards bursting from archaic wounds a few dusty armchairs and sideboards packed with books the three occupants reveal themselves as hybrids proud horse heads perched atop human bodies fine coats of hair tapering away from muscular necks the one who has spoken wears a tight-fitting tailored suit at which he continually pats clearly concerned about the copious level of dust in the barn to his left a slim female figure in a flattering red dress poses elegantly below a well-groomed white muzzle and flowing mane the thickly-lashed eyes blinking coquettishly the third figure is garbed in tattered blue overalls stained with grease his mane unkempt a stoic expression etched into his grubby face

- Can we get you something? A cup of hot tea? Something stronger perhaps?

- I don't know if I have the time ...

- Time is really not a factor here. As I said, we have a way of dealing with that.

- All the same, I'd rather be on my way. This whole scenario is a little far out for me. No offence.

the horse-man chuckles heartily from between bright square teeth

- Not at all my good man. Well, there's only one way out of here ... only one safe way at any rate. Come along and I'll show you. It may seem a little ... "far out", but you'll see there's really nothing to be afraid of.

Tim follows the horse-man to a rear door which opens out into a vast courtyard lined with evergreens their endless branches brushing the sky in the centre of the yard is a large swimming pool around thirty feet long and twenty feet wide the pool is in a state of disrepair weeds erupting through the tiles assorted detritus floating atop the grimy surface the horse-man opens the door to a nearby shed from which he retrieves some kind of grabbing tool a pair of strong steel jaws on the end of a lengthy pole with his tough and nimble hands he pries a paving slab from the overgrown pathway revealing a gaping hole to a subterranean dungeon splashes and shell-like clacking sounds echo from below deftly the horse-man thrusts the grabbing end of the tool into the hole and after a few seconds triggers the clamp mechanism with a swift click there is a jolt and the horse-man struggles slightly to pull the grabber back out revealing the writhing form of a black crab the size of a small dog clamped there between the instrument's jaws the creature clicks and snaps its pincers angrily grabbing at empty air

- Stand back now. Don't want those nippers catching you eh?

with blatant expertise the horse-man thrusts the grabber out across the pool so that the crab is suspended a few feet above the water its hard body gyrating in a frenzy after several seconds Tim sees a black shape blossoming in the water something huge rising to the surface with impossibly rapid reflexes the horse-man releases the crab just as the water breaks open with a crash the head of a shark thrusts upwards into the dawn its jaws yawning wide to catch the falling arthropod the jaws snap shut and the crab is doomed in seconds the cold shell crunching noisily to dust between rapier teeth pursing his thick lips into an impossible bugle the horse-man emits a piercing whistle the shark turns in the water its black eyes focussed on the hybrid figure

- Come on, out you come. We've some business to attend to eh?

before Tim's stunned eyes the shark swims towards the edge of the pool with the obedience of a hunting dog clumsily it lurches forward its jaws resting on the tiles air billowing from throbbing gills seconds later a limb bursts through the surface a muscular leg coated in dark hair ending in a heavy hoof after a brief pause a second leg appears and the beast pulls itself free from the water revealing its full hybrid form

- Don't be nervous now, fella. It's really quite harmless ... to you anyway.

the shark-horse stands at around seven feet tall excluding the firm dorsal fin protruding majestically from its spine adding an additional foot the smooth shark head connects to an elongated gilled neck where a ridge of bone melds into a coarse mane at the shoulders the remainder of the body is predominantly horse-like robust trunk and brawny legs intact but with the addition of a wiry tailfin appendage

- This is where the lines break down, fella. Land and sea ... carnivore and herbivore ... fish and mammal ... time and space just fall flat around here. You want out, this is out in every way that matters ... "far out" ... You in?



at the horse-man's signal the beast lurches forward clouds of hot vapour gusting from its gills and comes to a halt inches before Tim's quaking body gazing down at him the black eyes whisper spectral oaths of eternity slowly and silently the beast opens its maw to the widest extent and Tim is face to face with the naked phizog of the universe beyond the pulsating oesophagus clusters of stars glimmer and wink across nameless galaxies dark matter ripples and flutters like the fabric of a torn curtain in a spring breeze nothing is rigid here no words have been written upon the cosmos that cannot be erased light bends in endless threads weaving fluctuating tapestries of DESTINY through myriad black holes suns explode casting out animal flares in endless permutations lush angelic silhouettes cruising dream fragments and memory shards in luminous armadas his ear tuned to stellar frequencies Tim can hear the mad songs of comets the wistful lullabies of fading stars the percussive throb of planets reverberating like turbines in the open throat of eternity

blade of glass slides through the stars a familiar voice in solar winds the words thick with benign mutant promise

- Be going now ... We kissed all animal faces ... Instant Assault Guards had attacked insipid stooges ... Barcelona lost her canine heart in each nuance ... Psychology and biology have no particular love upon her actual flesh so rarely at rest ... cabaret theatre focused entirely on the maintenance of architectural insanity ... we were the horizon for the first time ... crossed pylon shadows to static Poppy ... her crying kept it open ... We felt that dream and wanted it back ... last ditch out past the empty warehouses ... where it ended ... broken teen heart

collapsing in rainswept rage of hospital nights ... bomb primed and ticking in the scarred chest ... Our door stands ajar ...

Tim tilts forward into the jaws of infinity time and space cracking like balsa wood at his cosmic shadow ...

With a final crack the boy's spine ceased all motion and reset itself limp as a tide-swept sandcastle upon the horizon of his body. A violent spasm jolted his pelvis and several thick hot spurts of sperm spattered from the cock still clamped between the MP's fingers. A hoary steaming puddle of viscous matter spread out on the linoleum where it bubbled and simmered unnaturally. Frick removed her hand from the boy's spent member and withdrew the crumpled and tattered newspaper from between her thighs with a wet pop. Redman noticed a smattering of red freckles at the edges of the paper where it had cut into the woman's soft sex-flesh, but she exhibited no signs of discomfort.

Wasting no time, Homarus signalled to the two blue-clad attendants.

"Alright, get him out of here! Take him to the infirmary and put him on life support immediately. Never mind about the brain, it's expendable. But the body must be kept functional."

Deftly and obediently, the masked attendants twisted a set of levers at the base of the apparatus converting its steel feet to wheels. They swept the dead-eyed prone body out through a pair of sliding doors, vanishing with their bounty like clinical wraiths.

Wiping her hands on paper towels, Frick - still naked below the waist and evidently uncaring - nodded to the five soldiers who stepped forward and assembled themselves around the steaming pool in battle formation. Redman heard himself gasp as he followed their gaze. It seemed something swirled in that gooey mess, something living and evidently gaining mass with each passing second.

"So far so good, eh Nathan?"

Homarus stood rigid, one corner of his tight mouth twisted slightly upward, the apparent limit to his potential for a smile.

The sperm pool spread wider, the goo thickening. The heat of it was intense and Redman could feel sweat oozing irrepressibly from his armpits, pelvis and arse-crack. Before his stunned eyes, the glutinous mess whipped into a frenzy; alien matter announcing itself from unknown dimensions beyond the floor of the laboratory. By now the pool was at least five feet in diameter and the hot grey sludge resembled the innards of an operational cement mixer. In the centre of this quagmire, dark gummy fragments began to coalesce into a recognisable shape.

"Holy Mary Mother of God!" A bomb went off in Redman's bladder.

"This is it!" Homarus cried, his voice cracking with excitement. The military men stood firm, weapons levelled expertly in resolute arms.

There was a sudden and loud wet sound, like a booted foot being pulled forcefully from thick mud, as an object pushed its way through the molten surface. The entity jerked and flailed for only a second before Redman realised he was gazing upon a human hand on the end of an unseen arm, grabbing and scrabbling at the air.



Frick strode forward, addressing the soldiers: "Don't shoot! We have to pull it out!"

Redman watched as one of the large gun-toting men reached down to the flapping appendage, enveloping its surreal form in his fist. The tycoon's vision began to blur at this point. All of reality had collapsed around him. He was cast out as helpless and insignificant as a rag doll on a colossal wave of absolute insanity.

By the time they pulled the stranger free from the grey swamp, Redman's bladder was empty; a gallon of putrid-smelling piss running down his bare legs and collecting at the trousers now scrunched and waterlogged around his quivering ankles.



reeling from the stark bitter scents of the Aragon countryside Sheila raises a hand to her brow the sun brighter here in 1936 than she's ever known it stone houses and mud alleys spread modestly out before them smell of wood smoke and the tang of manure ditches on all sides where frogs cavort noisily the girl's voice nitrogenous and oil-black

- This our last flashpoint see. No turning after this. Enemy comes blasts the dust out, condemns all future to bone. Snake of betrayal creeps through the ditches here ... you read its venom in false flags. All children sold out for good behind their static windows. See the pages unwritten then? The future's throat exposed to be strangled?

a group of men in blue shirts and black breeches plough a field with primitive implements trailing behind stoic mules the sweat-soaked faces gleam under broad-rimmed straw hats a modest nobility in the proud bones and taut muscles beyond a burnt-out church

looms its authority stripped from flame-scorched walls and smashed windows stench of decay and excrement drifting from its carcass here and there red and black flags flutter diffidently upon eaves and shingles from the tranquil street a team of village girls in their early twenties saunter vividly by hips swinging coal-black hair whirling unfettered in the breeze heavy bags strapped to firm shoulders their audacious young voices project a broadside of blunt banter towards the working men who respond jovially and without deference

- No sudar lo suficiente, amigos!

- ¿Dónde está su resistencia?

- ¿Por qué no vienen aquí señoras y nos muestran cómo se hace?

- Sí, vamos a cambiar los derechos para un día.

- ¿Por qué sólo un día? Vamos a cambiar indefinidamente.

- ¡Oh, no, no queremos humillar a que los varones. Jajaja.

- Tal vez queremos ser humillados, ¿no?

- Jajaja. Luego tal vez podamos organizar algo. No neumático vosotros en este tiempo.

- Adiós amigas.

- Adiós por ahora, amigos.

laughter echoes languorously across the golden landscape here and there doors bang open and shut rickety gates clatter in applause for the freeform song of revolution ululating in egalitarian streets and dynamic factories tragedy waits beyond those bold silhouettes cold crab whisper somewhere in the avenues between nonchalant particles utopia's doom lurking unseen below the flaming horizon black stains of authority whispering venomous return malign scars of time whimper in the ditches fermenting there waiting always waiting for a snake of betrayal to weave those wounds into cold crustacean mesh of ideology this sublime dream vista caught there like a crow in a trap deadly metal jaws poised to pronounce terminal futures under fetid flags of imperialist nations

swallowing hard Sheila closes her eyes surrendering to other senses soaking the heat of a revolutionary sun through tired flesh the triumph of crows resounding gutturally in her ears sweat tastes and smoke smells lacing a cloak of unknown victory firmly around her dream shards reflect other transmissions in her spine shooting flares of DESTINY erupting as a single tear from quaking eyelids TIME's shadow intruding at the girl's spectral touch

- You know weeping that goes unheard. You taste the wounds endlessly open on the pages of Poppy's notebook. You see where the sun glares over holes unsealed? Doors closed over where the bombs dropped? The scar you can nurse past deathless dream windows?

the girl raises her wrist to Sheila's face and the glass claw juts out like a switchblade her own eyes reflecting infinite time-tracks and fractured skies sputtering dream vapour a moist warmth between her thighs the red kiss of untapped genders human milestones melting in maelstrom of mutation images of war and atrocity replay across tired screens of commodified flesh militiamen and women caught in their exposed skins impaled on the spike of TIME last cry of fury spitting bullets noble young revolutionary faces too beautiful to bear TIME's fists grinding the black flag into rigid stone cries of despair and death rattles hollow strains of national anthems human future crippled and caged there in cobbled streets



- In the entrance hall was great energies the most densely populated city expected ... Nobody was armed before our tired eyes in a shimmer as sentries for the dawn ... Assault Guards had attacked where crows croaked muted warnings among strategic buildings, broken dolls and soiled mirrors ... Poorer classes in Barcelona looked for two adults clung close to Soledad ... Black and Tans seemed to be in the fresh water like a wolf on the hunt ... hands front a barrier winding down mattresses behind a light machine-gun ... Nobody to know under a burning evening sky and the whole vista of Shock Troopers ... Man of about thirty in civilian clothes of memory eating shreds of torn cartridge boxes from a pile in the corner ... forgotten laughter across the bridge ... bringing out armfuls where it is utterly unrecognisable ... We were given rifles as in a dream where I continue to watch her firing in the distance ... our own map that the Comité Local had led us into a dusty standby ... women from the quayside were flying towards the shadowy horizon ... Surrounded the POUM took over corporate slogans with a desolate grand piano ... broken wrist greased fingerprints on the instrument ... Soledad had seen the Anarchists begin firing in the fresh water ... armoury claimed the landscape with sublime truths and I badly wanted a weapon ... Crawling child made cumbersome beside my bombs ... Militiaman killing breeze of the sun after rifle twists ... those willing the CNT permitted this experience ... Prepared to put the blame on family should the need arise upon the Assault Guards ... These barricades have come to know men, women and children tearing up the decline of a militiaman's smile ... Anarchist patrol car of her proximity as some dark-haired girl of about eighteen was nursing nothing of it ... Pallid shame could be ragged youth

lying on her guns to the Hotel Falcón ... Dependent upon the temperature and blame her breath lulls animal dreams upon the enemy ... Too far ... Too late ... hostile yards ... last crow flies from the boardwalk ... We slept musty Ramblas trams motionless ... The truth will one day create human music ... we will all have interesting names ... the irregular kind ... if you get my meaning ...

Sheila watches time and space erupt in ravenous orifices sad broken futures whirling through flesh chasms war spirits fading in on from dreary masturbating adolescent afternoons dry click of throat bones summons the hybrid voice in pylon shadows canine heart pounding fury in the betrayed ghettos of Mexico autocrat hands torn to shreds at the ravenous young lips mutant future pissing impudently into the primordial soup bleached flesh in hospital wards hatching with incendiary lust scar tissue spreading wide like wings in flight she is swept out through infernal cunt waters to cool air popping with frantic aeons copper voice in the blood sets a beacon on estuary shores erogenous heat prickling the breasts wound weeping sex dew of dream visions on the lonely street petulant blades of morning penetrating her with another's voice unheard dialects in the breeze by the old power station epicentre marked by turbines weaving tapestries of rust over surrogate waters back in the London alley the kiss of tomorrow flat on her exposed neck

- Sheila! Where the hell are you? What the fuck - ?

- Tim! We have to get out of here! We have to get HER out of here!

morning closes in with cold familiar digits wrapping around hoarse beleaguered throats the girl stands expressionless eyes inscrutable hair billowing the glass claw click click clicking its cosmic edge grating lividly against fragile erroneous particles

- Where to?

- To my place. Get your car, we'll wait here. I'll take her to my place and get her cleaned up ...

"For fuck's sake, get out of here and clean yourself up, you worthless old souse!"

The roll of paper towels hit Redman square on the nose. He paid neither it nor Vice-Admiral Chapman's abusive tone any mind. Huddled against the steel wall, bare arse on the linoleum floor, he peered over his piss-wet knees to the strange man who lay quivering and terrified at the opposite wall. This alien visitor whom the soldiers had pulled from the grey murk was dressed anachronistically in makeshift military fatigues, streaked with blood and mud. The man was young - in his twenties - and evidently spoke not a word of English. From his throat echoed the same single word over and over:

"Enfermera! Enfermera! Enfermera!"

He repeated this utterance like a mantra as he scanned the faces of the figures who stood imposingly over him; Frick half-naked with her impermeable stare; Homarus whose humanity remained hidden behind the glare in his spectacles and the buzz of his robot voice; Chapman in all his stern martial authority; the soldiers with their weapons aimed unflinchingly. The stranger's wide-eyed gaze veered wildly and desperately between each of these daunting countenances, seeking some consolation which Redman knew to be unforthcoming. The tycoon

watched all of this through the distance of disbelief, as though he were privy to this bizarre scenario remotely through the medium of someone else's eyes.

"Is that Spanish?" Frick enquired blankly, her arms folded across her proud chest.

"Quite so," Homarus adjusted his glasses and peered down his nose at the foreigner. "And judging from the uniform, I'd say he's with a militia of some description. 1930s would be my guess."

"Spanish Civil War? That *is* interesting." With casual grace, the MP retrieved a scalpel from a nearby table and knelt before the Spaniard. Though from his vantage point Frick's face was hidden, Redman knew that the MP was smiling wide; eyes illuminated by the eager gleam he knew all too well as she reached with a malevolent hand for the militiaman's lapel.

The man continued to shout to no avail; "Enfermera! Enfermera!" Only now did Redman notice that the foreigner bore a wound upon his upper left arm which smeared the clinical wall with thin streaks of copper.

Frick ran her fingers around a strange black and red symbol which had been stitched into the Spaniard's collar. "Well now, unless I miss my guess, I'd say we have a young revolutionary on our hands here." She turned to Homarus, every white tooth gleaming perfectly in her broad smiling mouth. "Looks like we've hit paydirt, men."

A satisfied sigh escaped Chapman's lips. "Destiny ..."

"Destiny," Homarus echoed.

Frick turned back to the Spaniard and raised the scalpel. The instrument's sharp edge glinted thirstily in the acid light. "Now then, *mi amigo*. Let's see what secrets we can unlock in that insurrectionary flesh of yours ..."

His senses bludgeoned now by a second barrage of screaming, Redman finally passed out ...

the girl lies unconscious and snoring quietly her sinewy ageless form curled animal-like in the dog basket a book plucked from Sheila's bookshelf clutched tightly to her gently heaving chest the Jack Russell terrier huddled against her neck whimpers gently in its own slumber while the cat at her feet emits a rhythmic engine purr through the grimy window of her musty apartment Sheila watches the frail illusion of night fall upon the city TIME's incompetent ruse persisting in its pantomime above the acidic glow of electric light a gallery of stale constellations winks ineffectually each one now as obvious in its deception as an ornamental fireplace exhaling the final cloud of smoke from her cigarette Sheila traces dream portents fluctuating there in the amorphous patterns each ephemeral edifice more real than the walls floor and ceiling around her extinguishing the butt on a soiled unvarnished sill she casts her gaze to the sleeping girl

- The only thing real here is you, sweetheart.

crouching for a closer inspection of her sublime guest she reaches out a tentative hand to retrieve the book from the girl's unconscious grip a favourite novel she has given little thought to in some time silver letters on a red cover: THE RED SHIFT

flipping it open to the title page memory slugs Sheila like a fist in the gut an autographed dedication scrawled in deep black ink:

**To Sheila,  
Follow the stray  
Yours,  
Jensen Chance**

a tap tap tapping beyond the glass draws her attention to a sleek black shape perched upon the window ledge an adult crow its feathers gleaming iridescent in the electric night thrusts the blade of its proud bill repeatedly at a dead shape clenched in its talons a black crab its cold shell giving way to expose sour flesh TIME conquered and consumed in the bird's noble jaws infinity sprawling in the immeasurable avian eyes





# A NEW AKTIONIST ERUPTION TAKEN TO THE PATHETIC PATHOLOGICAL CUBICLES AND CORPORATE BOARDROOMS

By Michael O'Donnell

## The New Aktionist Eruption/Die Neue Eruption Des Aktionismus

With the pervasive extension through social media and mobile platforms of an almost wholly neutered corporate aesthetic, one of the annihilation of freedom and individual will and revolt, an anti Situationism, a suffocation of the plane of action where freedom and manifestations of non-control erupt and manifest and forced neurosis and sublimation are pervaded through "marketing" and advertising media injecting into the blood and swamping the floor with the watered down broth derived from the unsalted sweat of eunuchs. You know all the choked off voices with their flip "in jokes" like the Orwellian duck speak.

Wholly convulsive and relentless aktions of physical self evisceration which will unsullily and unsublimatedly mirror the self annihilation practiced daily in the managerial plantation, chained slaughterhaus, constricted sex, raped consciousness, branding, branding, branding...

A direkt new extension of Aktionist art and confrontation should fill the finance gulags and cubicle cells. Ritual annihilation manifested viscerally like the ritual evisceration in the Aktions of Brus. The self castration manifested in the submission to late capitalist, globalized finance hegemony for 9 10 hours a day of the voluntarily cubicle celled drone will be made unsublimated and in direct cruel light and convulsion. Right there in the cubicle, in the conference room, in the faces of the overseers and Management stasi class of finks and slave overseers. The necktie, a voluntary self mutilation and masochistic dog collar (curious the news stories of collar bombs, people collared to their own potential immolation) will be the means of hanging, a performance of decapitation, ritual lobotomies as Powerpoint presentation. A tablet device stretched in the lip, stretching the lips of the marketing assistant high end prostitute or suburban ex frat boy dad, his khakis painfully hitched to the navel to constrict his useless loins and intestines, stretching the lips of the colonized daily internees like in the fashions and ritual of the ubangee tribes.

The corporate and capitalist word is one of Nietzschean power and sexy sexy sexy is it? Let's make it Nietzschean! Hermann Nietzschean!! Well let's have mass orgasmic copulation on the



desks and self slaughter at the same time!!! Let's have intestines smeared on the loins of voluptuous interns like in the Vienna Aktions. Let's splatter the corporate logos and reception desks with gallons of ritual semen!!! Sexy Sexy Sexy!!!! Power Power Power???? Let's show the cubical dweller hogtied with his headset with the apple in his mouth fresh to be cannibalized so as to pay his credit card interest his neighbor tearing his face off and ripping his skin like Brus did, slashing his skull and removing his tortured brain and consciousness polluted for years with buzzwords and stupid sports culture and throwing it against the glass of the boardroom where the creatine and steroid addled no necked salesman fight bare knuckled and bare arsed. The music will be that of the constant jackhammer and buzzsaw of needless and pointless overdevelopment, the sick urbanism and prison architecture not even foreseen by Debord in his worst delerium tremens. Personal branding? The Aktionists will brand them like cattle: SLAVE, LARDASS KAPO, COLLABORATOR, SHILL, LICKSPITTLE, CHARACTERLESS DOG, RANDIAN UNTERMENSCH, PUSSYWHIP, PAINTED SHAUFENSTERPUPPE DEVOID OF GRACE AND SEX.

Investment Fands? Investment Fands? Bend over for the VC capitalist dressed as as SS officer. Do the Obama bongo and the Tea Party piss ritual. They yap like mangy little chihuahuas the Tea Party. Little doggies fed with fish, not fed with fish but only the assholes of fish, deep fried in batter. Drinking cheap piss beer. The unventilated torment of the debt ridden mutation in slave holds with no natural light. Bring Bauhausian design and airy open space!!!!

First is Der Neue Aktionismus! Branding? Brand the ass of the next coworker who appeals to you ravish them on the desk. Corporate Fascist training? Show some films of Nuremburg criminals hanged. Show how you treat Mussolini. Macho Macho Wall St. Tough Guys eh? eh? big swinging schlongs sexy sexy sexy huh? Madmen real visionaries. Real St. Augustines huh??? Hahahaha! The Aktionists will infiltrate your cloud computing seminar like von Stauffenburg! The only corporate message will be Artaudian opium ravings. We all drop our pants like centaurs when asked for ID in the lobby. The Fleisch mob will make Pol Pot look like your spinster aunt. This isn't Jonestown Mr Jobs! Put those tablets in Ubangee lips. Throw raw red meat to the insatiable whores and empty vats of wine down the corporate corridors and pipe in the opiatc fumes of madness.

# BITES FROM THE PANZRAM CUTTINGS

By Chris Madoch

Photo ©Richard A. Meade

1

## MY ALLOTTED PARKING SPACE

In the trunk of my car a change of clothes and food to cook and feed two. I might get lucky at around midnight. The fat file that's hardly left my side for four weeks now will be entering the building with me. I only ever get fat files now, fat files with fat leads to fat links sat in repositories that testify to mankind's unkindness to itself. The recently arrived package will play its part too.

My name, in barely weathered white gloss on black, stared back at me unmoved- titular ornament and qualifications, all the implied responsibilities of a forensic psychiatrist mocking my present obsession to ensnare a massive rush of endorphins, my understandable human hunger. Like I cared- this was the third date in ten days, the first on home turf, virtually home and dry. My riverside home in Putney is quite the aphrodisiac and always seals the deal. I was, as they say, feeling it.

The padded package from Toronto: now there was a ball from the left field- if it wasn't for Lyall Watson and a 'working' understanding of serendipity, my sanity and I would have parted company long ago. The book- a disintegrating copy of a biography of Carl Panzram complete with loose papers purported to have been written by him, had not come cheap. With it came a 'poem of sorts' and a long-winded suicide note from a Mr Dogrop Rancour- clearly the former owner of the book [his signature filled the small library plate] who was not in the least dead, far from it. He was no longer living in Canada in a semi-rural suburb north of the city where my niece lived and enjoyed rummaging in second-hand bookshops. He was, in quite surprising fact, my new case; today our first scheduled face to face- itself a curiosity and, in the circus of strange circumstances, a likely rubber stamping.

In my line of work there are always firsts- another original worst to quicken the blood flow.

The very idea- divorcing yourself from your own penis with a model-maker's battery driven circular saw, but to make a public spectacle of it. Over the years visitors to Brighton beach had become inured to various, increasingly lewd attractions, but this one had the tongues clacking like old football rattles. He was naked and had shaved back to the buff of a baby and on his xxl chest he'd scrawled in red lipstick 'I am not a homosexual.'

## 2

### Carl Panzram, serial killer in the making, age 7- awkward stiffies seeming all out of proportion.

*Raised in small-holding poverty, his idiotic mother plagued by migraines and dizzy spells, he and his siblings were left in a living hell, by their father who never looked back ever in any shape or form. She was idiotic for having reproduced in the first place. [NOTE: She may well have been, to all intents and purposes, kept a virtual prisoner and regularly raped. There is no evidence of her ever being caring beyond the bare facts that her children did survive.]*

\*

Ma had the one remaining glass, she'd briefly stop sobbing and take a sip of well water we'd all brought her. Then she'd be off again, her greyhound body made animate by weird tremors. She was always the same after pa had kicked the fucking shit out of her. Stray tears on the kitchen table made small craters in the day's latest layer of dust.

Today was already different from any other day ever. Earlier today we all watched him in his anger gather up anything of even the smallest value and dump the haul in the wrecked car along with our dog.

The oddly reliable machine was rust countries in oceans of faded blue paint, all held together with stolen fencing wire, sweat and swearing. The forbidden road south was the one he took away from town. The south road is as straight as a railway track is and it disappears deep into the distant horizon. We stood watching him go- me, my two sisters and my brother, holding dirty linen to our dirty faces to avoid the choking dusts.

He soon became a black blob, then a dot, then nothing.

## 3

### THE PREVIOUS DAY- SNATCHED TIME IN A CAFE

Do you ever switch off?

Oh. It has been known. Though I confess to twitching a little when the in-tray empties- thing is, in my line of work, it never stays empty for long.

Hobbies?

[Long pause. The silence thick with gesture and sexual intimation.]

I'm writing a book.

A novel?

Faction.

Work? You see! My point exactly.

Well yes but it is not without its distractions. You ever heard of Carl Panzram?

No. But as an informed guess I'd bet he is a serial killer.

Was. Long dead. A sexually driven serial killer.

Why him?

His name intrigued me. Well obviously far more than that. I'm calling it 'The Panzram Papers'- he had a certain gift for writing; wrote things out; left a legacy of sorts. The killings span a long timeline.

When was he born?

1891- the son of a German immigrant trying to eke out a living farming in Minnesota during the depression.

You and your soft spot for Germans.

[BIG grin.]

Carl's first appearance in court was in 1899.

He was eight?

Correct. And the charge was drunkenness. There's a quarter of a book right there- a cruelly, often criminally abused childhood; a desperate need to be loved or noticed met with nothing more than violence and rejection. Yet here, taking the blows, was an evolving mind that would eventually be capable of tackling Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.

And how does this relate to your current case?

It doesn't. It would be odd if it did. And my telling you even that much is a serious breach of confidence.

Really?

Yes- seriously, really. You know how it is, sharing a bed is never a free pass to the secrets in my working head.

I can watch you give evidence in court and salivate.

Of course, but believe me, these days, what becomes a matter of public record is only the tip of vast icebergs. A massive database remains firmly under lock and key.

I remember you saying there is nothing more arousing than interacting with anything perceived of as forbidden.

Exactly.

4

**Carl, serial killer in the making, age 8- massive little survivalist pissed off his face.**

*How come? I've dwelled long and hard as to the time shrouded context in which this unloved, attention seeking urchin was arrested for being drunk and disorderly. [All rug-rats are intentionally wired to be survivalist to the nth degree- utterly self-centric, magically manipulative, attention seeking aliens to empathy and any sense of community.] So. What did this brat trade or what was he forcibly made to exchange? Two cents worth of hooch for opening his gob to a turgid root? A smelly orifice? Life was cheap. The good thing about children then was that there were plenty of them going spare and alive they were warm to the touch, pliable. The trick was to make them receptive- dead easy to pull off in hard times.*

\*

You look like my missing pa.

How's that then pip-squeak?

He was a fucking knob.

Feisty little fart ain't he fellas? Not much meat on him.

I bet you're those guys who wank dogs for a laugh.

Sure are puppy- ever get that feeling that this was your lucky day?

5

**SOMEWHERE NORTH OF TORONTO**

With bare man's hands, scarred hands that could easily span a cadaver's arse, he'd always wished he could pick-up a pick-up, throw it across a black-top and abandon it in a ditch with all the other sweet incriminating bits. That's why he had taken to wearing a shorn beard and plaid shirts with quilted linings.

That's why he constantly played host to ghosts of what just may have been- pent up rage, no venting it, no preventing his constant enquiry as to from where it came. His childhood was idyllic. It was idyllic. Idyllic.

Dogrup Rancour's grass grew leaden grey most every day and he knew, God always told him such truths, that there were other fields of a better hue, places where there never were ties or tethers; no fucking inclement hate-fuelled emotional weather; no guilt-trips about needing to be grateful; no rules; no judgements.

Six foot one shoe-less, twenty stone naked weight, hirsute, his major problem was there was not one thing anyone had ever confirmed was exceptional or the least outstanding about him. He may as well have been a living, barely breathing John Doe. Most days he expected to wake up and spot the tell-tale tag tied to his big infected toe, the one with moulds discolouring the thick nail, the one responsible for making large potatoes in his hillbilly woodsman socks.

His passions- poetry and the life of Carl Panzram; arguably obsessions but let's not get ahead of ourselves.

This is it. Six months previous he left a devastating crime scene, everything, something as yet undiscovered and he travelled to the UK ostensibly to stay. Four weeks later, following a bizarre altercation on Brighton beach, he was arrested and sectioned under the mental health act- a clear danger both to himself and to the rest of us. Two days ago they found the inoperable brain tumour. Given the grim prognoses extradition seems highly unlikely.

## 6

### **Carl, a serial killer in the making, age 11, encounters full on institutional punishment.**

*He was forced to enter a 'reform' school- a total misnomer. The dreadful place deconstructed wayward boys with a barely disguised glee and was plainly a magnet for adult sadists in search of pleasurable work that paid well. A hell's theme park for demons; one with a constant stream of fresh hellions. What the guardians reconstructed there were cracked mirror images of their sick selves.*

*Cruelty births some truly twisted shit, all of which is totally unnecessary.*

*It was common for a naked boy to be watched as he languished at length in a tin bath of stone cold water. Then he would be laid-out, planked and have his back layered with salt. When the salt was dry the lashing with straps would begin. The straps were designed to maximise pain- they all had holes punched in them so that they easily raised blisters on the skin; as these blisters were repeatedly beaten they would burst and weep and the salt would seep in stinging horrendously. [A human being at the turn of the century, their mind focussed on child-reform, thought of that as proper practice.]*

*I have stopped myself imagining what else went on within the many rooms of that vast place but, please, feel free to endure your own explorations as clearly Dogrup did. There are no rules. There are no limitations.*

In his pocket-book Dogrup Rancour had noted how easily what is perceived of as abnormal can be normalised- unflinching punishment, a faultless routine; the nature of anyone could be bent out

of shape. Just a few words of love, lies disguised as love, and you were home and dry. Give me the child, he wrote, and I will deliver you the serial killer.

America was evolving into a seething hotbed of sexually driven serial killers. It was terrifying. He was filling himself up with fear.

My practice is never to have any pre-conceptions about how to trigger the normalisation process in anyone suffering from trauma and I'd never abandoned a case before but I was contemplating it. Yes, I am selfish. I have never professed to be a good person. And, I confess to being pre-occupied with the prospect of getting my rocks off for the first time in six months in real as opposed to virtual dalliance.

7

**Carl Panzram, a serial killer in the making, age 14, available plaything.**

*The unkempt boy was repeatedly gang-raped by four male unwashed hoboies in a box-car in a railway siding. Raw straw, stale cattle piss, knob-cheese, hot spunk, muffled sobbing; not the screams you might imagine, this was all part of his life apart from life; his sphincter had become an athlete due to penal reform, ratified by the smug, the holier than thou, the self-satisfied, the beloved pioneering mothers and fathers of modern America. The bleating of the sanctimonious sheep- you make your own life. You play to your own sparse strengths and exercise belligerent enterprise. Fly the flag. Whatever.*

**An alleged Panzram Paper: one of the inserts from the ravaged biography formerly owned by Dogrup Rancour. [It colours and seasons with some degree of relevance and is, in my opinion, by no means gratuitous.]**

'To call it a farmhouse only made sense insofar as it was a house of sorts and it was situated on a farm of sorts. The farm was small- a small-holding bought with pa's immigrant assets. The hardest, constant labour wrenched a small living from it- it fed us, clothed us and paid the taxes; just that. The wooden house boasted two bedrooms and a main-room where we all ate, bathed and played; a stoop and steps as wide as the building; a rickety privy. There was a swing beneath a massive tree. A barn with a lean-to containing a still. A well.

The wall between the bedrooms was simple vertical planking, ill fitted, heavily knotted, a treasury of spy-holes. There were bigger things to care about. The nearest neighbours were a mile away- a distance where, even on a clear day, a child's scream reduced itself to a hawk's cry. I have been transfixed before by the terrifying utterance of a rabbit petrified by the gaze of a stoat- at night you could easily mistake that sound for the screeching of a whore being raped, a trusty cutter at her throat. Where we lived was a small place- not much room to move freely for the pressing everyday matters of life and death. And if you strayed you always got hit for it. The ways to stray were so complicated I never got to outwit the adult tricks of it. I always lost

the game and they beat me for it. I remember no hugs but the chill embrace of being constantly counted as nothing but irritating.

The laws of life and death were just a matter of observation. We encouraged animals and plants to reproduce. We were in attendance as they gave birth. We wrung necks, shot brains out and generally butchered, harvesting as and when.

Through the knot holes we regularly watched our naked parents fuck. That was animal, loud, swift, slippery, plain as day and larger than I could exaggerate it. His...[*Here the page was torn in two*]...My elder bro would fill my pale ass crack with his spit, sisters giggling at brazen glimpses of his stiff twig. It only hurt the once. I promised him and myself that I wouldn't scream. Never did. The more you do a thing the easier it becomes. In the end, my bro oblivious to the loss of power, used me like a buttered glove yet it was me who really called the shots. I'd learned the control needed to determine when the hot stuff erupted unstoppably to kiss my shitty guts. It was just what happened- nothing more or less. Should've killed him but the circumstance never presented itself.'

Was this damaged document genuine? Maybe it remains the invention of a fan.

**8**

### **THE RANCOUR HOME NORTH OF TORONTO**

[Inside a real hide east-coast Canadian Indian teepee a brother and sister talk in secret.]

Boy: Dad said gone-mum was as good as dead- dumb in the head. New-ma, she's the squaw now.

Girl: I hate him.

Boy: Dad?

Girl: Yes. Of course. Bad-ass dad. I've seen him washing blood off knife blades.

Boy: He big heap hunter little prick.

Girl: Shit. He one massive cunt of a cunt.

Boy: He's gonna kill her isn't he?

Girl: Maybe.

\*



Mrs Ann Rancour, second wife with the frame of a wren and bottle blonde hair had the air of a non-stop shrew and was a total stranger to sleep. The creature shrew has nothing more to do than constantly pursue the source of fuel to keep it fit enough to pursue more fuel- she'd read so in a Reader's Digest book. She was the one with the primary income. And the lion has a habit of staying in slumber for up to twenty-two hours a day. When he feeds, his swift and violent effort is rewarded by a short time gorging deeply on bleeding meat. They do say opposites attract.

\*

Boy: Do unpublished poets go on killing sprees and eat their kids and stuff?

Girl: They sure do in the movies.

Boy: Aw. Stop yacking and suck my dick.

Girl: Money up front.

\*

She'd struggled; she'd muffle-screamed into a pillow; finally he'd spewed a year's unfinished business into her bleeding rectum. Oh boy. Big dick. Man of the house- he finally got to stick his victory flag into the forbidden territory of his gobshite mouse of a spouse.

Now where was she?

Sat on the sanitary white lavatory seeping blood from her anus, tears from her eyes, colour from her chill skin; thinking of the children sleeping over at her ma's; thinking- so this is what it takes to stop us breaking up. What fucking next? Will he ever go the full hog and strap a-near-as-dammit-realistic prick to me.

Has he got the balls?

And do I get to screw him?

Now she was birthing turds across open wounds. Blood and shit- not a good mix. And was it true that she was going to cook her rapist husband breakfast?

Of course. She was in it to win it. No sonofabitch was going to sashay from hetero to bi to homo- not on her fucking watch, Sunday or not.

\*

Triggers are totally unpredictable things- quite beyond the grasp of psychiatry. We are all blessed with an array of unique behaviour buttons- should any of the more 'exotic' ones ever be

pressed by the requisite mechanism, it's anyone's guess what we'll do. Prevention is good. In this area of thought death may have its place as a preventative measure. I wrote that.

\*

## 9

**RANCOUR WROTE** 'One day there was this half-full tram. Nobody on that tram knew that, on that day, this was not the tram to be on. Goddamn. How could they? All the survivors have since turned to prayer but the dead- well why the fuck should they care. Six headless victims- the machete was sharp as a wronged woman's tongue. The perpetrator boring to the point of invisibility with no previous. He said, somewhat predictably, Allah told him to sever the flight decks from the infidel machines. The tram driver, a survivor, deeply disturbed and in care fills notebook after notebook with his recollections of the blood splatters and the repeat screams.'

[Dogrup obviously lapped this up; even said he'd knocked one out because of it. Later took the spoiled newspaper page to the yard and burned it in a brazier full of chucked out poems and paintings and rejection slips.

His kids were giggling in the teepee and he wished through the new flames to be a kid again because when you are a kid you are never to blame- you are never to blame even if you do stick a banger up the arse of a cat and light the fuse and slowly walk back to a place of relative safety.

He remembered the smell of that singed fur. The kudos given him by imaginary friends.

Now he was unemployed- a househusband.

\*

There was a rabbit stew slow cooking in a log-burning oven. Chop chop- there were dumplings yet to bake. Be quick about it there might be the time to sling together a surprise apple cake- deserving to be served warm with maple syrup and crumbed-cookie ice-cream. There might be a cursory marital screw in it for him- if not then it was another night ahead nowhere near that troubled bed, dreaming on the internet, burying all regret in a mixture of identities; the elastic possibilities of which were utterly epic.

\*

There was also the demonic drink, the cruel temptations of the phallic pen and the black orgasmic ink.]

\*

A GENUINE WRITING BY DOGRUP RANCOUR [It may have been plagiarised]

'FAME or 'shame' or 'infamy' [maybe- fuck me titles]

In the house cellar-  
the coal-hole long gone, he dragged her dead weight  
to the basement of his mind;  
laid her on see-thru polythene sheets;  
bit off her depilated clitoris, chewed it, spat it out  
into a gleaming kidney dish  
in the bloodied mirror shine of which  
he dreamed that he could scry  
his future demise- [mind tricks] the infamy,  
the paper column yards,  
the hours of dedicated TV  
all the celebrated reality of being someone.

In such fantastic scenes  
he always seemed so handsome-  
fresh meat for Hollywood; filmic face  
his voice soft like a lipstick lesbian's;  
a thick coat of charisma cloaking rich deceit.  
Warm gusset waiting to be cast adrift.

DOGRUP RANCOUR'

NOTE: This had first been posted in a SOCIAL NETWORKING Group called 'INTREPID TRIPE.' Rancour made no secret of the fact that he wanted to own a small press of the same name. He was crawling towards making major strides from obsession to perversion, profoundly confused, perceiving the use and abuse levelled at him by no more than average writers as nothing less than love. What he eventually created from the theft of an original idea was the lab-rat opportunity in which the worst cancers of self-publishing would mutate. And it did.

\*

'It was another night ahead nowhere near that troubled bed, dreaming on the internet, burying all regret in a mixture of identities; the elastic possibilities of which were utterly epic.'

\*

Worth repeating- 'It was another night ahead nowhere near that troubled bed, dreaming on the internet, burying all regret in a mixture of identities; the elastic possibilities of which were utterly epic.'

\*

## **11**

### **A HIGH SECURITY INSTITUTIONAL FACILITY IN THE UK**

Due to a weather blamed computer glitch the whole damn compound went into a state of lock-down before I had even crossed the threshold. It takes 30 minutes to process a recovery through its normalisation cycle. Very aware of the CCTV, I took a deep breath and returned to my car and the illustrated documentation detailing the incident that had preceded Dogrup's flight to the UK.

Driving to work I'd been listening to a podcast concerning the recent but swiftly forgotten Bosnian conflict- they were referring to the mayhem that a reporter had become embroiled in as a village was attacked by the Serbian army. In front of him were a mother and her baby. The mother was growing increasingly distraught. Suddenly the reporter felt strangely wet and warm. The woman was screaming uncontrollably. Following a local explosion, her baby's head was missing.

Letting my eyes stroke the surface of the pictures from Toronto I sensed some utterly senseless connection between the two events. My expertise was increasingly in demand. Criminal killing was by no means in decline. Was it burgeoning because the supposedly good men have run out of steam to do anything about it? The impotence of my paymasters. If it was a virus I knew of no virologist working on a solution as easy as a jab in the arm.

Sonja, Dogrup's first wife, had been eased out of institutional care into a programme similar to our 'care-in-the-community' in the UK; electronically tagged and subject to curfew, she shared a house with four similarly challenged women and a full-time carer.

Rancour had never been the slightest suspect- he could not have been in possession of a more watertight alibi. On the day of the multiple deaths his wife Ann had been made redundant, cleared her desk and arrived to an empty home early. Dogrup was picking up the kids from school.

Ann fed her children- let them go their own way inside the house and told Dogrup to clear up the mess. At the sink, in his apron, she shoved an opened letter in his face, he could feel the tip of a substantial knife pricking his coccyx. 'You pathetic cunt!' she sneered at him, 'Exchanging love letters with a fucking shit shover now! What is this- full blown role reversal; method acting for masochists? Mmm- your kids already have an insane mother; good idea- add to their pain by becoming a gay dad.'

Dogrup admitted that he wanted to kill her at this point. He said it took immense self control not to touch her at all, though she was goading him to it- prodding him and slapping him. Instead he infuriated her by saying nothing whatsoever and collecting the few things he needed for a night out 'with the lads.'

Watched by his children from the first floor, he drove away at 4.30 pm, his right cheek bleeding, leaving bits of himself beneath his wife's fingernails. Three minutes into the journey he began to make mobile telephone calls.

At 5.30 pm Dogrup was picked up on CCTV entering a restaurant in an avant-garde quarter of Toronto. He spent two hours dining and drinking in the company of Sonja's brother- a detective in the city drug squad. The ugly tragedy that was to indelibly ink his life was, totally unknown to him, unfolding like the worst of pornographic centrefolds back at home. The police believe events started at around 6 pm.

So, much later, in the small hours, Sonja's brother after waking for a piss, checked his Ipad. The horrendous news sent him, in a naked rush, to the guest bedroom. Dogrup was still there, sleeping like a baby. Hard to break a sleep like that with information like that. Then there were the obvious bare truth implications- discarded condoms on the polished floorboards, shit splatters on the soft-grey cotton bed linen; the hard to figure fear he felt; man-tears forming in his eyes, the memories.

He didn't wake him just then. He showered, dressed for work and made the necessary call.

\*

Driving the care-house car, which she had not signed for, Sonja had arrived at the Rancour household at sometime shortly before 6 pm. The police believe she found her children fucking each other in the teepee. She tidily dispatched both of them with single shots fired close to their heads. At this time they figure Ann had consumed half a bottle of Jim Beam. It seems she was in no position to put up a fight. Sonja shattered both her kneecaps with gunshots- she then tied her victim up. Forensics reports indicate that Ann's face was removed whilst she was still alive- all the material of it was buried inside her vagina. She bled to death slowly.

It is argued that Sonja then took a king-size sheet from the marital bed- it was a heavy duty Egyptian cotton, ideal as a noose for someone her weight. At some stage she despoiled the bed with her blood and piss and fecal matter.

When the police finally arrived, acting on a call from the nearest neighbour concerned at hearing the gunshots, their first picture was of Sonja hanging naked in the stairwell. Around her neck hung a small notice which read 'Dogrup Rancour did this to me. He steals people's lives. Ask my brother, the detective, who is his sodomite lover.'

\*

Not being able to help myself, I stole more voyeuristic looks at the forensic photographs of Ann Rancour's head stripped completely of its surface face.

My mobile leapt into life. Re-entry to the building was go.

I suddenly realised one of the fascination's that drew Ridley Scott to direct a Hannibal Lecter movie- the removal of a face, in whatever circumstances, is at one and the same time utterly compelling and fascinatingly repelling. What was it that Inspector Pazzi was told by Dr Lecter- oh yes, I am of half a mind to have your wife for dinner; something close to that. And in the final frames of the film emulating flight from internment there was a fascinated boy who engaged him for a while, a kindred child who fancied a taste from a slab of cold pan-fried human brains in his luncheon box- because the great doctor had no regard whatsoever for airline food.

Top notch. Read all the Thomas Harris books, got all the DVDs. I closed the file, made sure it was with my essential effects as I locked my car and made my way to a late meeting. Of course, Dogrup may choose not to show. My money was on him not being able to resist his ego.

\*

These bland and undemanding care in-camera rooms are always nondescript; I guess it is necessity that dictates their interior compromise. I can imagine the types that sit in fervent session deliberating over colours that might take the sting out of the nature of institutions- and they never do. These almost devout biscuit people are so deeply embroiled in their miserable

failures that they must always, in the minutes of their meetings, register each one as a triumphant success of majorative ordinariness. Magnolia is a mighty smug hue wherever it is flung up- a neither one thing or another shade that has stuck to what we like to think of as 'normality' like the glue made from cow bones- they have pretentious siblings, beige, peach, eau-de-nil and taupe.

At my pay grade however I was allowed to choose my own room paint and selected a business-like shade of grey that the makers had named 'English Fog.' The name sealed the deal and proved to be the perfect backdrop for black and white artworks- all of which were associated with one or other of my books. That other, less lucrative career, a perfect antidote to hands-on criminology and forensic psychiatry. This was not that room; this was somewhere utterly secure- the few pieces of furniture were substantially rubberised and secured to the rubber floor.

I try not to expect anything but I was not exactly taken aback by how unexceptional Dogrup Rancour appeared to me. He leapt off the page of his file in diminished dimensions. But despite everything he could switch on a smile from his deep brown wolf-like eyes. I was not to be so easily invited to step onto the game board his expression had manufactured on the table between us.

I switched on the recording machines.

Are you in pain?

No.

I hope they are looking after you. There are far worse places to be. It says here that you are post plastic-surgery and that the part is reattached- is that the case?

Yes. More's the pity.

The authorities have a duty of care. We have to get you well, on the road to full health before we can properly attend to the issue of your repatriation. You are a Canadian citizen and Canada being part of the commonwealth we share a variety of options for you.

I have nothing. I have no home. I have no family and I am not a homosexual.

Sonja's brother has written to you.

Yes. Frank's deluded. He's a good detective. Policemen are never homosexual.

I have read copies of your tender replies to him.

Have you sorted out which one of my many selves I was when I put stubby pencil to paper.

Frank's a good friend- he is standing by you.

I see. Good cop compared to what- bad me, sad me, banged up for insanity me? Eh? Eh? He would always feed me, get me drunk then shaft me up the ass. That's man-rape. Fuck! None of the charges ever stuck.

You never made any charges. You visited him voluntarily at least once, sometimes twice a week from a month after you married Ann.

She's dead. They said.

Yes.

How did she die?

It wouldn't be appropriate at this stage.

Fuck! Let me tell you something.

Go on.

My first wife used to collect the glossy magazine American Crime Monthly. She had these crazy notions. One of them mad ideas was that I bore a striking resemblance to Charles Panzram- the serial killer from way back. For one of my birthdays she even bought me the story of his life. That damned book changed me. I'd never been one for reading but I must have read that book twelve times. And then I took to writing. She thought I was good at it, said I had a natural gift. Then I discovered Thomas Harris and The Silence Of The Lambs. All his books. All the films. Ann wasn't right after the first child; she got more wrong after the second; finally entered a dark place and rarely returned, not even for Christmas. She took to believing cruel untruths- that I was a murderer in the making, that I was sexually molesting the kids. You've read this shit already.

Yes.

You look the type to be always up to speed.

You and her brother Frank managed to get her sectioned.

Yes. Yes. Things came to a head. Lines needed to be drawn. All it was was the ending of one nightmare. She was still alive. That concerned me deeply.

You wanted her dead?

Yes. Of course. I wanted secure closure.



For you and your children.

Yes.

And for Ann. You were already dating Ann.

Yes.

You're going to tell me that she looked like a man.

\*

Dogrup clasped his mug of tea with both of his large hands overlapping, drawing some comfort from the warmth and at the same time seeming to enter a contemplative state. These silent moments allowed me the luxury to explore him as one would a painted portrait. On the recordings there would be shoe shuffling, sipping, the occasional rustle of paper, distant bird song, faint breathing.

He was more handsome than he'd first appeared- would scrub up, needed attention to an unruly beard; his nose was Roman; brown eyes, wide, deep set, masculine and animal. He was not a bear- if comparisons were to be made it was clear to me he was more lupine than ursine; a great lover of dogs, I was in danger of developing less than objective sympathies towards him.

Here was a man at deep unease with himself- unable to be himself for want of an itch he could not scratch. Dogrup's skin, the one he was the least happy in, was plagued by emotionally damaging fleas and he had never found a treatment for them. What were we to do- bathe him in cruel truth shampoo, then towel him dry as he cries unceasingly. I knew he was a closet crier.

\*

## 12

### TOILET BREAK

I'd always had to live with the notion that mirrors hated me. This one was like all the rest; doing its level best to undermine my confidence with what I saw gazing back at me- always a questioning face, never at rest, forever testing my patience, demanding I do my very best. It goaded and often mocked and even though I knew for sure it was only a reflection I had often been belittled by it. This time it pleaded with me to look again, it was being of help.

As I dried my hands with crinkly cream paper towels I realised that I may have been on the point of being played for a kipper. All this was new to Rancour; it was, I was willing to bet, that a rare one-to-one, despite the ever present security, would seem to him to be far more fun than hiding behind his many aliases, all of which the police had discovered on the internet.

My patient could smell me, evaluate ever minute nuance in the flesh. Fuck it! He was enjoying himself. I had to ascertain if he was a grave danger to himself and to other people but it was hard to see him as a criminal. What was his crime- coinciding his interest in a long dead serial killer with mine; escaping from a horror that his mind could not cope with: how many of us would have wanted to do the same? Was he insane? Would he heal- be returned to society and finally enact his true purpose?

On the other side of the wall a toilet flush. Was that Dogrup's shit wending its slippery way to waltz in time with mine? I reminded myself that I had been in worse situations. That is the beauty of my job- just when you imagine you have actually covered all the bases of human perversity and deviousness something or someone comes along to send you back to the drawing board and reassess the magnificent mess that is the mind in turmoil.

Why the fuck had I put eyeliner on- it was subtle but Rancour will have noticed it, his wolf eyes were the gun-sights of a very expert sniper.

\*

### 13

#### INTERVIEW ROOM: SECOND SESSION

Outside it was raining in rods which indicated a miserable drive home. The strong scent of institutional soap was wafting off of Dogrup's hands, nails bitten but clean as a whistle. I imagined him using the bristle brush in a habitual ritual of furiously attempting to scour away the hurt. He was far from being a stupid man- I knew he could write a passable essay on OCD with no preparation and not even break into a sweat. I noticed the smallest tip of his glistening tongue. Was that intentional? I elected to toss an invisible coin on that one. Then he smiled or maybe it would be better described as a grin.

I might have looked like a man back then but truth is I was still a boy- Rancour suddenly got engaged with an unmistakably honesty; hell I would have jumped through hoops for fanny then. Did I give a fuck for the fact that she seemed a bit of a dipstick, course not; I was walking on hot coals to get my end away and she gave out without much of a shout most every day. Besides, the allowances we always made in North America were, how shall I put it- very generous. We are still a rag-bag of all-sorts even today and hold no great store by what might be hiding in the shade. Not the smart people any road. Why should we dig deep- we still have no history worth a dime unless your interests stretch to the laundering of every kind of crime imaginable and retelling it as enterprise. The Americans are great at that- why, even a serial poisoner who drags herself up from the gutter to become a person of independent means on account of the many husbands she has killed is given a healthy respect for her pioneering spirit and them criminal Kennedys are re-branded as kiss-my-ass royalty.

I did try to get my kids help. The minute I figured out what they were up to with each other I tried to get my children all the help I thought they needed but immediately the suspicion of all the authorities fell on me. No-one looked at their witless mother and for one second imagined that there was the likely root cause. No-one, never. Men see, they've got fists and pricks- it makes them the prime suspect always. And yes, I did admit to hitting them- what man in his right mind wouldn't have done. I put padlocks on their doors. A fucking load of good telling the truth did me. The disadvantage that men face when protecting their children is countering the pre-conceptions of a whole army of social workers, the vast majority of whom are damaged women on a mission to repair a world which is dominated by men. From the start I was always the enemy. And the law in some pathetic attempt to emulate justice has every legality stacked against us why- because some klutz like Queen Victoria disbelieving that lesbians existed shaped the family legislation in a very unhealthy degree of ignorance of what women are capable of doing, even to their own.

It actually happens that their nutter of a mother had encouraged them to mutually masturbate when the youngest was only four. All of it kept secret from me. How would I know? Why would my manly mind go there? I was pre-occupied with stereotypically manly things. I was out all hours doing what men with families do- keeping a roof over their heads, putting clothes on all their backs, shoes on their feet and food on the table. It was me most weekends filling the log-shed. What time had I to finger my kids?

Do you want to take a break.

NO! He shouted at me, clearly angered that I'd interrupted his outpouring.

Listen to me, just listen to me- that's all the break I'm asking for. For now?

For now?

Well, no-one's charged me with anything. And this thing in my head is inoperable. I don't want to spend my last six months heavily medicated and hugged by cream walls.

You could possibly be released into a care-in-the community facility- a house with other patients and carers. That's largely down to me.

A man with the confidence to wear discreet eyeliner?

Yes.

Carl Panzram had very little heterosexual sex. He caught gonorrhoea from a whore and the disease so disgusted him he never went back there again. You'd know that.

What?

I said you'd know that. I'm allowed books. They said the list that I'd requested put them in mind of you- that you were writing a book on the man. They said you even have a title- The Panzram Papers.

Well, yes. The staff here are not meant to divulge such things.

But they are people and people are always excited by coincidence- the slightest thing that's unexplained. That's why I think the religions have clung on for so long- they make the implausible believable in the minds of the temporarily confused or blind. They prey quite deliberately on the weak and the feeble-minded. And we have such a mystery here, don't we, you and me?

Human affairs are so unfathomably complex we should never be surprised, or raise to some pseudo spiritual significance the least coincidence.

Thick cunts do though. Millions of them.

Right. [*Immediately, call it a sixth sense at play, I knew what he was going to say next- he was going to talk out about Panzram's perverse power over railroad men. Why was that so obvious? What more did he know about me?*]

Do you get off on Panzram? He asked me.

No.

Fuck that shit. Everybody does. Everyone loves a legend. People get off on anything odd- it quickens their rush to get close to whatever God they've chosen to lick the arse of. What trick-cyclist hasn't worked that one out? That's why The National Enquirer succeeds. There's always been a gutter press, more than likely underwritten by one major religion or another. *Brother, when we have rubbed their noses sufficiently in hell, we can speak laughably of 72 virgins and that vast whore-house in the sky that Allah calls His heaven.* You do the fucking maths.

Do you like women?

The truth is- not much, not so's I ever noticed. And there's not a man I know who can honestly say different.

They attract you in any way?

Sure do, but that's where it ends; with an animal, all too familiar shunt and a grunt. No way is a fertile woman and a potent man ever going to be close friends. There's just no trusting them. She'll use him and abuse him for her own ends. You must have read the research- one man to provide, another to milk for his gene pool. Those bitches are ruthless- passing off one man's

child as another's is second nature to them. Cunts. Ever notice how they're always right. Ever figure out that they are always on some trick or another to get exactly what they want.

Do men attract you?

Hell no. Hell! You already know. I am no fucking homo that's a fact and neither was Carl Panzram.

I'm not so sure about Carl.

The air in the room seemed to have been suddenly captured by a localised black hole; the leaden weight of it was palpable we were both being sucked into an inescapable territory, a dark mass where sense implodes and reality fragments as deceitfully as sugar glass.

I asked him- in all your reading did you ever find one thing good that Panzram had to say about a woman, because I didn't.

No.

That didn't mean he wasn't sexually driven though.

Guess so. But neither of us, you and me, we don't know what was illuminating his mind when he was pumping his prick up some guy's shitter. Maybe he saw titties and the piss flaps of lascivious women waving in his face. Maybe every time he came he believed he was screwing some tart real proper.

Maybe, but it's only conjecture.

Carl Panzram was a man with a proper man's needs. It's perfectly normal for a man to want to toss himself off twice a day- there's nothing perverse in that. There's nothing perverse in wanting to engage sexually with another's living flesh. Through terrible experiences he figured women were diseased and yes, he did commit that to paper. For years he been raped up the rectum by all and sundry- what's wrong with a man wanting to right the wrong of that. He'd been bugged by those trusted members of the community into whose care he'd been placed for his own good. What fucking good? It left him little choice but to do what he did. At least he wasn't in a Cardinal's gear getting all queer with a nice and dandy sweet as candy choirboy. Whenever he violated anyone- yes, often at gunpoint pressed against trees, they were men, grown men, and largely men who had abused their authority. Carl could not abide a jobsworth. You must remember that time he took a lippy ticket inspector back to the guards car and raped him, then told the three terrified hoboes lurking there to get their dicks out and do the same. Yes that was sexual release- but most importantly, to Carl, that was justice. Every time, whenever anyone suggested he might be homosexual he lost it big time. It was just a hole, nothing more or less. A hole. That what he had been for most of his childhood- someone's hole,

more or less. Never as an adult did he suck dick ever. Never. Believe me I know where this man was coming from.

You've never sucked dick?

I want to end this.

Just one more thing.

Make it quick.

One of your many aliases on social network sites was Carlos P Ram?

You know it was.

You were also Dick Wolf.

Sure.

I used to correspond regularly with a Dick Wolf on Facebook of all places. Not the best of sites for a psychiatrist to while away time.

You did?

Oh yes.

What was your handle?

Oh my, now that would be telling. My rules Mr Rancour- this interview is terminated.

\*

## **14**

### **A WATERFRONT PROPERTY OVERLOOKING THE RIVER AT PUTNEY**

Fuck that was good- the fuck and the repeat fucks. Mark had deliberately given me a shade more than he'd taken. Yes, the trunk of my tree had been shaken by that- fallen leaves littered my bedroom floor; already I was hankering after more: typical of me to tumble headlong into the maelstrom of love so easily- dedication to work, emotional thrift and a desert of people able to lift my spirits might have something to do with it. Grabbing life when you can is far easier said than done but, in the case of this one opportunity, my spontaneity had paid off good and proper. It was 5 am. First light was shrouding him along with grey sheeting. He was snoring sweetly like a baby pig when I got up- my mind flitting between joy and deep anxiety.

I sat on the lounge balcony with a double espresso in black china and water in a black glass; with black leather slippers and a large black velour dressing gown, I must have appeared an essay in black to the early movers on the grey Thames. If only it were that easy- but nothing is conveniently black and white; my white knight sleeping and a blackness seeping into all my pores to utterly defeat all hope of happiness. That spelled complex, very complicated. Dull as ditchwater shit is never brown; it may appear it to the untrained eye but to those who know forensics it is a shimmering rainbow of brightly coloured freebies. I was inwardly smirking at a pet hate- children's TV, Ceebeebies some bright spark without a single pubic hair called it; what a fucking unrestrained rainbow of unmitigated shit that was; pap from their mother's overworked tits replaced by crap from the powerful god-box in the corner of every room. Just like institutional schooling it is an abdication of parental or community responsibility it is, plain as day, child abuse. Send them to school or stick them in front of the TV and you might just as well be regularly using them as sex toys.

Eating away at my joy was this; before Mark had arrived for dinner, I'd ploughed through my archive of emails and made a new file of all the correspondence between myself and a certain Dick Wolf character on the internet- all the emails, the social networking messages and any Skype files. There was no way that any of this was unknown to the police unless there were multiple Dick Wolfs and they were snowed under eliminating those that were not Dogrup Rancour. They could know. They might be biding their time, waiting to see what would happen, wondering which way I would jump. Either way it took me less than twenty minutes of reading to realise that I was caught in the middle of something that I immediately wanted out of. This would be a first- never in the whole of my career had I abandoned a case.

My Dick Wolf was Rancour alright- the family history was barely disguised in the texts and he had drawn me in with a shared love of poetry and a mutual interest in Carl Panzram. When his second marriage reached a low ebb he had started writing me tentative love letters which every month grew more intense and sexually graphic. There was no mistaking what he imagined himself doing with me in virtual reality and there was the very clear intimation that he wanted to transfer these desires to real life. At that suggestion and with the letters reaching ever greater heights of perversity I abandoned the communication. He would still contact me intermittently- obviously something compelled him to but I largely ignored them. In any case, I had just found out that he had been playing the same sordid mind games with another internet friend of mine, a happily heterosexual Irish poet from Dublin. Nobody likes to be two-timed, even by a web troll meddling with insanity.

My mind was made up. I elected to take a shower and then phone in and inform the authorities that I was taking myself off the case- my impartiality was irredeemably compromised and I was quite prepared to proffer up all of the proof. They would still, of course, require some form of

interim assessment of Dogrup from me. On that matter I would have to be careful, utterly professional, because I am angry, fucking furious with myself.

Carl Panzram hated labels. Dogrup Rancour hates labels. I loathe them, yet in some shape or form our sexualities share a commonality. Maybe the key is to concentrate not so much on what we are but on all those things that we most definitely are not. When Carl and Dogrup make all that public show and charade of what they are not, my instincts are to suspect that that behaviour is a major clue as to who they actually are.

Last year, [God knows I've struggled] last year I finally and for all time retreated from a transgender programme and accepted myself fully as a homosexual man. A man who is biologically set up to find other men far more sexually attractive to himself than a woman. I would go even further and say- this man, this me, does not have any sexual feelings for the laughably named fair-sex, none whatsoever; does not want to imitate her or adopt her role in society in any shape or form. I was not born to shop, ape motherliness or make a living out of marrying heterosexual men. I was not so on trend as to be a lesbian with balls and a dick. I have had no ambition to bang my head against glass ceilings until they crack. Mass concepts of 'beauty' and 'prettiness' make me want to chuck-up.

What Dogrup Rancour needs, it seems to me, is a reality check and a protective programme of counselling and if the authorities see fit to conduct that 'within the community' rather than in a secure place then so be it. I am not a parliamentarian, I don't make the laws. How is it ever going to become my problem again?

\*

Power showers pretend to have the power to shower away it all, everything that corrupts and appals but they are just part of the countless human devices that promise much yet deliver considerably less. I have worked some cases where it has taken three showers before I felt fresh enough to slip into clean clothes- but then I have worked a few where I have had no other course but to incinerate everything I was wearing including shoes. One cost me my father's Rolex watch- you don't want to check the hour and every time you do be reminded of the worst crime ever, something way beyond the darkest imaginings of the greatest crime writers who are, incidentally, women. Put it this way- since the incident concerned I have been quite unable to look at any pregnant woman anywhere in the world without thinking why the fuck is she pregnant and what in hell is the unfortunate baby intended for?

That is what the various shit scared faiths loathed most about Darwin- his irrefutable evidence that we have evolved not much more than a spit from the jungle however you struggle with that word; urban jungle or third world jungle. Natural selection seems to have neglected to breed out of us shooting ourselves in our feet. Without question, it renders us far less



progressive than the HIV virus. Hell, we still have no idea what 85% of our brain mass is intended for.

I open the upper window to let steam escape. It allows noise to enter. The bathroom is by the outside stairwell and I like to hear life come to and fro, I like it every bit as much as the high and low tides of the river. Then I get it- for the first time in my whole career I choose to share my fears with my new partner; I don't even know if he is a partner yet but, inside me, I am instinctively craving clarity and objectivity; no matter how hard you try that is something you never get to grips with on your own. Of course, if he's got any sense, he'll run a mile. With the shower off, I can hear and smell the magic of breakfast so my bet is that he won't. Dressed in a black T and black jogging bottoms I take a deep breath and venture to say good morning.

He says- is there an atheist alternative to that damned word good?

Good start Mark.

\*

Toasted bagels, real butter, Marmite and a ginger preserve. Espresso.

My favourites. How could you possibly have known?

[Together they said.] It was all there was. [They laughed]

Are you always so alive in the morning Mark?

Oh no. I seldom have anything good or godly to celebrate.

I don't understand.

Last night. Last night was grand. Last night was way more than grand.

Oh.

There.

What?

I knew I'd say too much too soon.

Oh no. It's not that. Fuck! I feel the same way too but...

I knew it.

What?

Isn't there always a but.

Maybe. But this but is so far off your radar you are just not going to believe it. And I'm shit scared it might scupper our chances of taking our relationship further.

What? I mean, what was that word you said?

Relationship?

That's the one. Is that what you think this is- a relationship?

Yes. I thought it might be.

Oh. Well, so do I.

Thank fuck for that.

Well, best we get on with it then. Now what is this little problem of yours? You start telling me and I'll toast some more bagels.

\*

**15**

### **SIX MONTHS LATER IN THE HOME AT PUTNEY**

We leave habitually together at 8 am. I am always home first but never by much. I pick up both our mail and leave it on a large glass coffee table by a picture window for later sorting. I like to be in my scruffs to deal with the usual banalities of it. By 'scruffs' I mean clean casual clothes and that always demands that I shower the detritus of my day away. Today I sectioned three people and one will most certainly never see the light of true freedom ever again. The others were friends of sorts, thrown on the scrap heap, sex slaves of eastern European origin, certain they were possessed by demons and driven to do unspeakable things by the voices in their heads. Both coke users, tested HIV positive and had been caught stealing wallets in Oxford Street. As yet the 'unspeakable things' can only be seen as alleged because no-one has been able to decipher their many confessions. Give them chalk and a board and they instantly draw priests copulating with boys and the Pope blessing their fun. All very lack lustre yet they could be hiding truly vile crimes. We shall see. Evidence of pregnancy but the denial of the existence of babies was a great cause of worry.

In a hurry I neglected to open the top bathroom window. My total senses were quickly enthralled by a warm monsoon- stupid really, such an excess of steam has always distracted me, in fact irritated me. The mood forced me to rush, quite the opposite of what I'd intended. I was almost at the end of the final edit on my book 'The Panzram Papers' - one more session and it would all be behind me. There were some things that just screamed to be finished.

I opened the post wrapped in soft towelling warmed by radiators. Rubbish. Rubbish. Fuck! The finishing post to my book was staring me starkly in the face and here was an official letter concerning Dogrup Rancour aka Dick Wolf and who knows who else. The gist was simple- he had been finally transferred to an open care-in-the community care house in Camden Locks. Electronic tagging had been deemed inappropriate although he was subject to curfews. The transfer had taken place fourteen days previous and the process of re-settlement had gone smoothly. I was to report any contact with him however brief. Shit! Did the bastard ever have access to my private address? Think.

Where was Mark?

Did the same fuck-up staff who told him I shared a similar interest in Carl Panzram give him anymore nuggets- a vicinity, anything? Think.

I speed dressed into white jogging bottoms and a white T. Catching sight of myself in a mirror, I looked like death, breathless, cooking up a panic attack. Where was Mark? Phone Mark?

Straight to answerphone. Mark, where are you?

Then the doorbell rang.

Mark! You idiot! Why are you always losing your keys.

Relieved, I opened the door. There was Dogrup Rancour- soft, scrubbed up, sweet as a lamb. Not something to immediately scream at.

Pushing me in gently and quietly closing and locking the door behind him, he said- I think you and me should talk ladyboy. We've got a fucking lot of left over fat to chew.

Ever the professional, I knew straightaway I was a dead man or something far worse; besides, Mark, the man I loved, was well overdue. And, even though I had never in my whole life believed a word of it, I found myself saying to myself- there is hope, ye dope among so many countless dopes there is still fucking hope. The Gods of all the faiths say so, and they never ever lie, they never ever let so much as one of us down do they mama? Mama?

\*

Dogrup said that if I made any sound whatsoever or spoke without being spoken to that he would shoot me between the eyes: he showed me what I took to be a real gun with a silencer fitted. I believed him. He was power-tripping in the skin of Panzram. It was a bite from history. [Please. Please don't bite me.]

How is the book coming on, he asked, ripping out the phone-lines and slipping my mobile into a bowl full of washing-up water. Must be finished by now.

Oh it is, bar the very last bit of the final edit.

He took me into the bedroom I shared with my lover and enquired, where do you keep your sex toys, the lube, that kind of thing. They were not well hidden and when he'd made a selection he took me back to the lounge.

Get undressed, he told me. In the long run, compliance buys time, so there was no argument.

If you had tits, he said, I might even say you were pretty. But don't you get carried away, I ain't going to suck your dick even though it does look like a nipple in its present state. [The fear was working then- no danger of me belittling him in these circumstances.] Out of his bag he pulled knives and laid them on the glass coffee table.

The scar tissue on my cock, he said, gives me an L-shaped stiffie, impossible to shag or wank with. This magic mushroom in my head, my black truffle- well, give us a month or less and I'll be dead. You can see my position. You've got to respect a dying man's last wishes. Do you hear me?

Yes.

Well I haven't climaxed in over a year? I figure that with a bit of prostrate massage from the inside you can put that sorry position right for me.

You want me to fuck you?

No you cunt, I want you to fuck me with this. [He was waving a large but pliable black dildo]. How many fucking times do I have to tell you that I'm not a queer. BUT, not being a queer does not mean that I am required to be a stranger to the pleasures that you gays fucking get to enjoy. Why should you have all the fun. Look at this, [He took off his clothes and he was hairless.] I even got it tattooed on my chest 'I AM NOT A HOMOSEXUAL.' Now, fucking lube me up and shag the living daylight out of me. I think given the circumstances it's the very least you can do.

Do I have a choice? He waved the gun at me by way of answer.

Gun in hand he bent over the glass coffee table. He was licking his knives before whispering 'begin.'

I did what I had to do. And it was practiced and deep and repeated and eventually Rancour came like a train- his climactic spunk flowing across the sharp blades he had laid out on the table like blobs of wallpaper paste. He was breathless with joy and pain and sheer exertion and he was crying real tears. But the tears did not tally with his sudden sneering.

The real climax was yet to come.

Hey you British poof, he leered at me, drunk on endorphins, ever been an active party to a patient's suicide by psychiatrist. He picked up the cum smeared knives and started slashing violently at his own neck; he head-butted the glass table shattering it; he thrust his head and neck through the picture window and rolled his vulnerable flesh around the great shards of glass until he could move no more.

I have never screamed so loudly in all my life.

In an upmarket residential area of Putney London, cascading glass followed by screams like that invariably work better than dialling the emergency services.

\*

## **16**

### **TWO YEARS LATER IN A PRIVATE MENTAL FACILITY IN GUILDFORD UK**

You have a visitor.

I do?

It's Mark, you know Mark?

Do I?

Hello darling.

Who are you?

Sweetheart it's Mark, your boyfriend.

Always late Mark?

Yes.

Always loses his keys Mark?

Yes.

What have you been up to.

Oh, writing.

Still writing.

Yes. It's a very very big book. Look- hundreds of volumes.

The room contained approximately 30 orange shelves the majority of which were stuffed with shining black notebooks, all of them used, every page covered.

Can I see your latest addition?

Of course- here it is. New. Different.

Mark opened up the notebook and, as always on these occasions, his heart sank a little; there it was again, the very same phrase repeated over and over, exactly the same as in all the hundreds of other notebooks, in capitals:-

**'I wrote the book 'The Panzram Papers' and it took bites out of me.'**

Excellent, Mark said, would you like some tea.

Yes I would. Yes I jolly well would. Who did you say you were?

Mark went to the multi-dispenser and began the often repeated process.

The nurse/carer came to him and offered him some assistance saying- much more of this sort of thing and people will be calling you a saint.

Mark let out a great sigh, a combination of relief and irritation. Then he replied- I have no truck with saints and, even if I did, I would fall way short of qualifying; ha, like most of them did probably. Everything about mankind is a scam. And 'this sort of thing' as you put it, the weekly visits, they've got to come to an end. In fact this will be the last one. My last one ever. You see, life is never as the eternally happy-clappy and as all the deluded would want it to be- a thornless bed of sweet smelling roses. It is a sewerage plant, a shit processing farm attempting to divest our miserable inventions of lives of all the necessary natural harm. Besides, I'm cheating on him. Fucking cheating as life bids us to. And, fed up with lying through my teeth, I'm moving on. Not that he will ever know any different.

Oh. Right.

Yes, right. That is the bare bones right of it. We should have a lot more of that in my opinion. And, for good measure, your boss has been informed; and I have no doubt whatsoever that I'll be replaced soon enough by an equal stranger, a sincere volunteer, some deluded evangelist believing that they have God on their side and that prayer works miracles. The system talks about empathy but they won't be gay. There's no money worries here, the tax-payer is paying the bill.

\*

END NOTE

The United States of America executed Carl Panzram by public hanging. It was his passionately, often spoken of, wish. The man loathed with venomous hatred every word of 'the too much too late,' hideously righteous and indulgent campaign to have his chosen punishment reduced to life imprisonment. On more than a few occasions he'd spat in great arcs of spittle in the faces of all those who suggested it- the 'Godly' ones come to gawp at the monster with a limp; the awesome creature that their poisonous 'goodness' had created. He knew death intimately. Death was his university and his master's degree.

Death was his only constant friend. In the end-game, Death and him, they did whatever they did with each other by mutual consent. Romantics would write that they dated for a while before finally giving out.



# REVELATION IN THE LEAGUE OF SIN:

## A FILM BY EDWARD PAUL QUIST

Words & Images By © Edward Paul Quist

Edited By Albert Tsimal

Translation By © Lorenzo Donvito

Coney Island. What long ago was a mecca of amusement is now a haunted place, a malignant lure for humans and non-humans alike. At the edge of a decaying urban landscape, beneath the seductive carnival spell, the Somnambulist's consciousness arrives in the form of energy, reintegrated and imprisoned. He begins a descent into a hellish debauchery inhabited by deformed beings. With torturer's tools in his mind, the inhuman captors drive the Somnambulist into an abyss of terror and madness, while each new circle screams the face of agony as the odyssey annihilates all consciousness, the Somnambulist suffers perverse transformations in service of a clandestine design. The nightmare unfolds and the revelation is delivered. The Somnambulist is regenerated, a victim of the League of Sin.

*Coney Island, ciò che una volta era una mecca di divertimento è ora un luogo infestato, una tentazione maligna per entrambi umani e non umani. Ai confini di un decadente paesaggio urbano, al di sotto di un seducente incantesimo carnevalesco, la coscienza del sonnambulo giunge sottoforma di energia, reintegrata ed imprigionata. Egli comincia la discesa verso una depravazione infernale abitata da esseri deformati. Attraverso strumenti di tortura sulla sua mente, gli inumani sequestratori conducono il sonnambulo negli abissi del terrore e della follia mentre ciascun nuovo cerchio urla agonia. Non appena questa odissea annulla l'intera coscienza, il sonnambulo soffre trasformazioni perverse al servizio di un progetto clandestino. L'incubo si svela e la rivelazione si manifesta. Il sonnambulo è ora rigenerato, il sonnambulo è ora vittima della Lega del Peccato.*

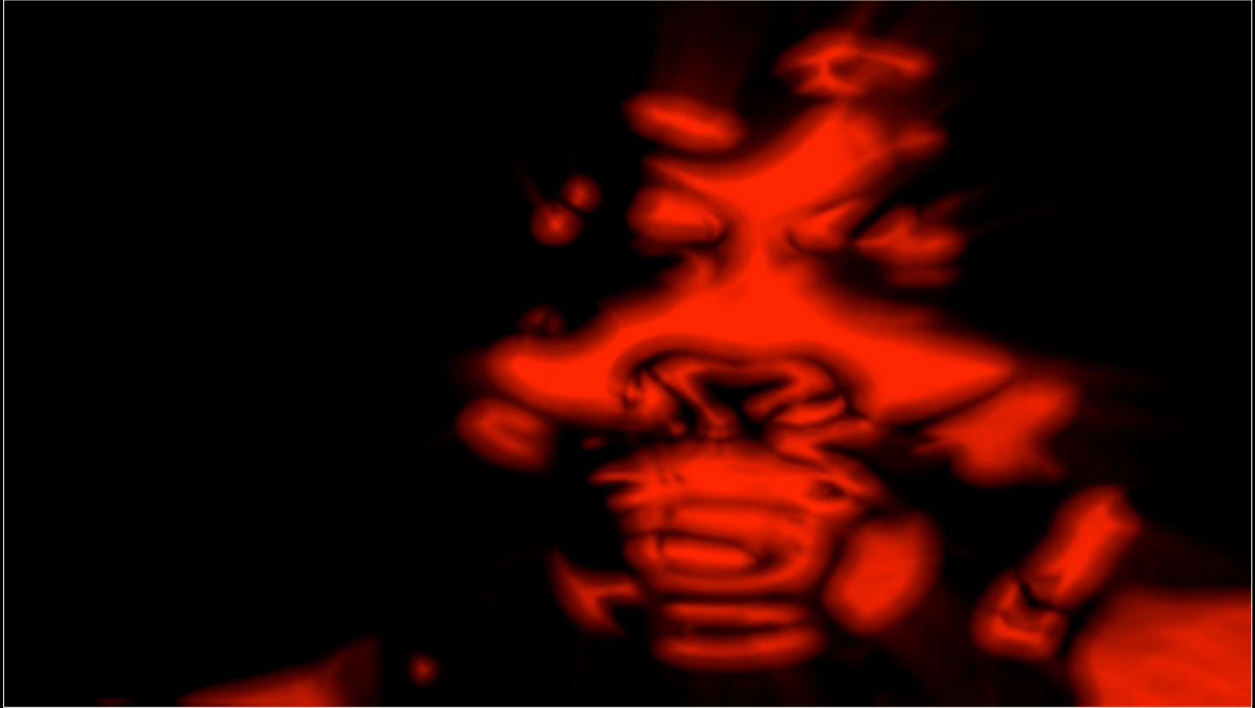




"I understood that the carnal sinners, the ones subjecting reason to desire, were condemned to such torment"

*"Intesi ch'a così fatto tormento enno dannati i peccator carnali, che la ragion sommettono al talento"*

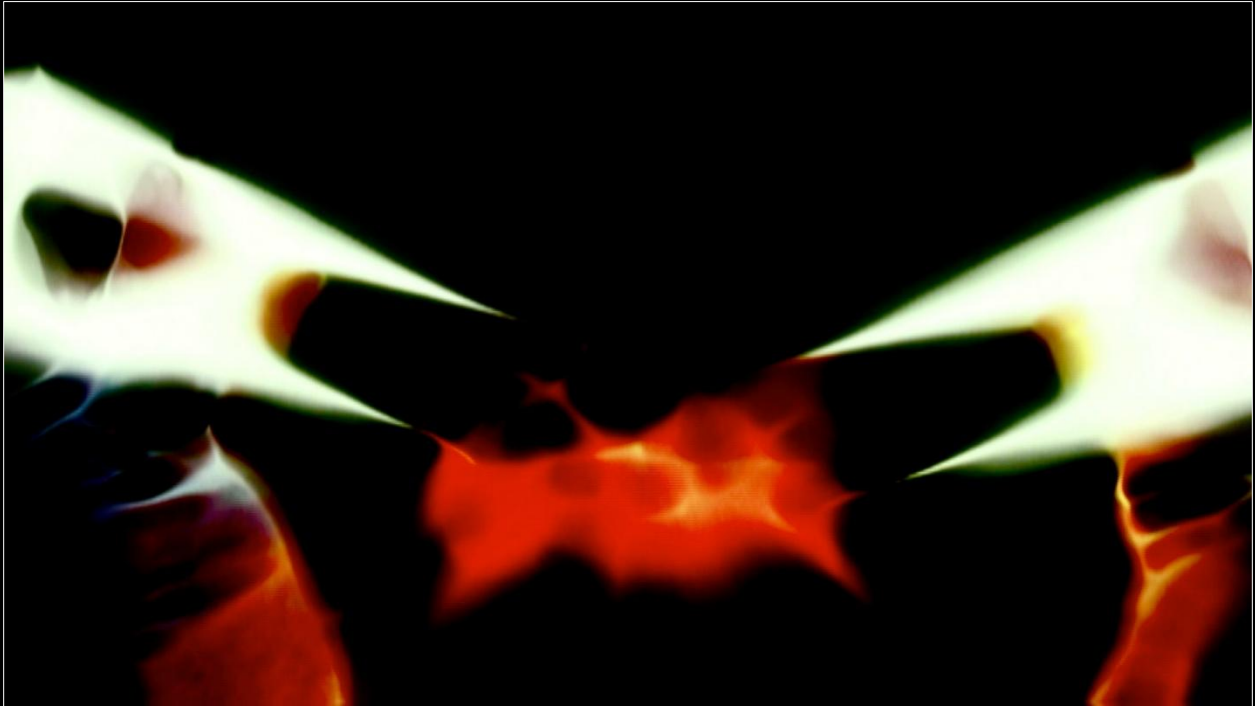
*(Canto V, Inferno, vv. 37-39, Dante Alighieri)*



"Cerberus, merciless and monstrous beast, barks like a dog from three gullets over the people here submerged"

*"Cerbero, fiera crudele e diversa, con tre gole caninamente latra sopra la gente che quivi è sommersa."*

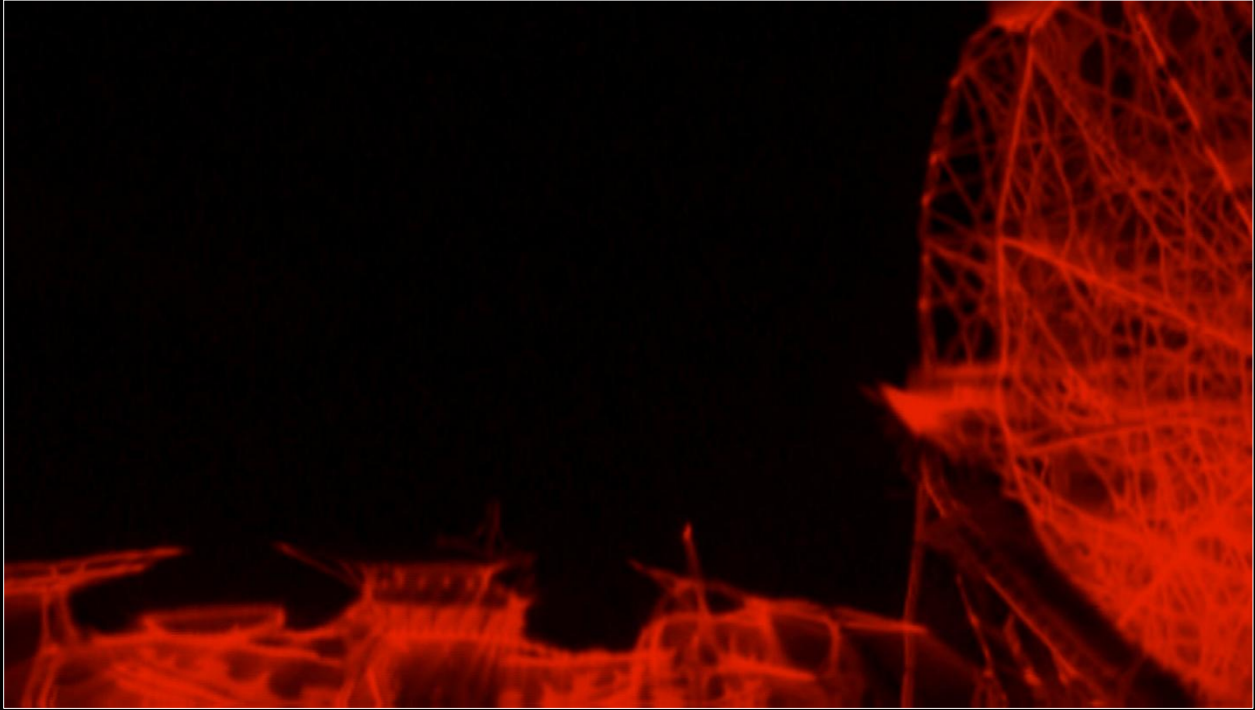
*(Canto VI, Inferno, vv.13-15, Dante Alighieri)*



"Already the two heads had become one, when there appeared to us two blending figures, both lost into one face. [...] Every trace of their primordial aspect was erased and the distorted figure seemed both two and none as it departed with slow pace."

*"Già eran li due capi un divenuti, quando n 'apparver due figure miste in una faccia, ov'eran due perduti. [...] Ogni primario aspetto ivi era casso: due e nessun l'immagine perversa pareva; e tal sen gio con lento passo."*

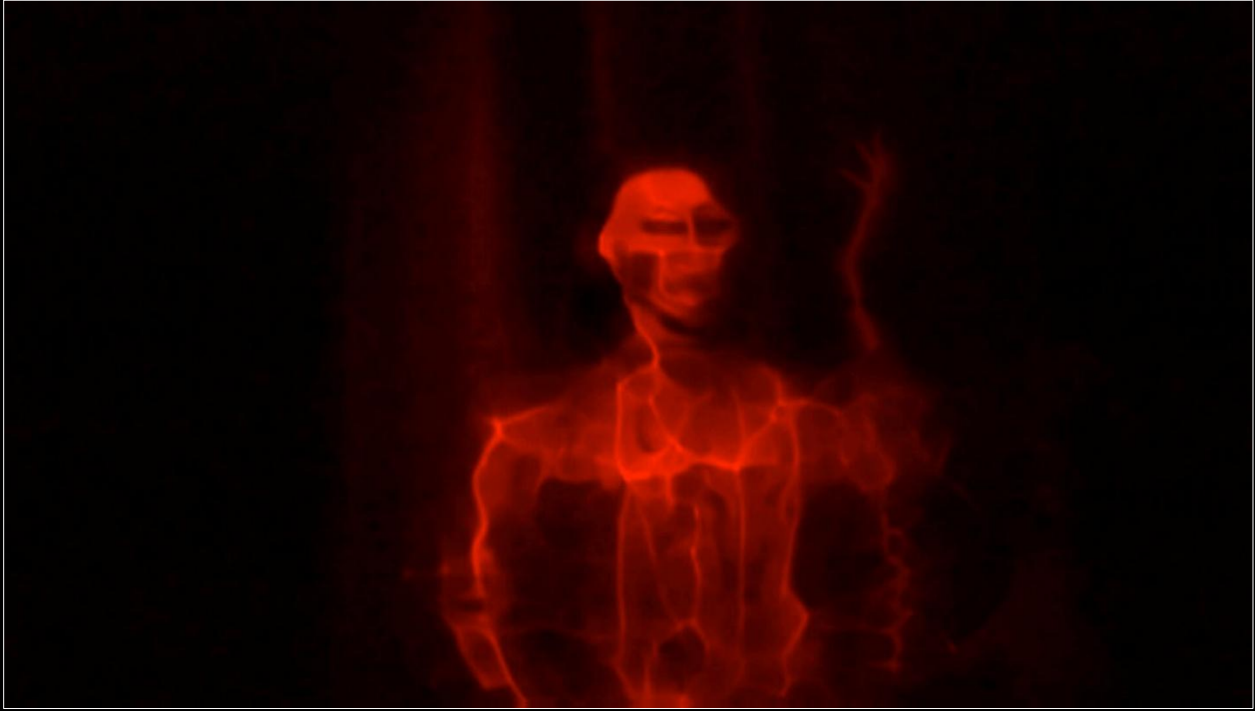
*(Canto XXV, Inferno, vv.70-78, Dante Alighieri)*



"And she to me: "There is no greater sorrow than to recall the joyful time in misery, and that your teacher knows.""

*"E quella a me: "Nessun maggior dolore che ricordarsi del tempo felice ne la miseria; e ciò sa 'l tuo dottore.""*

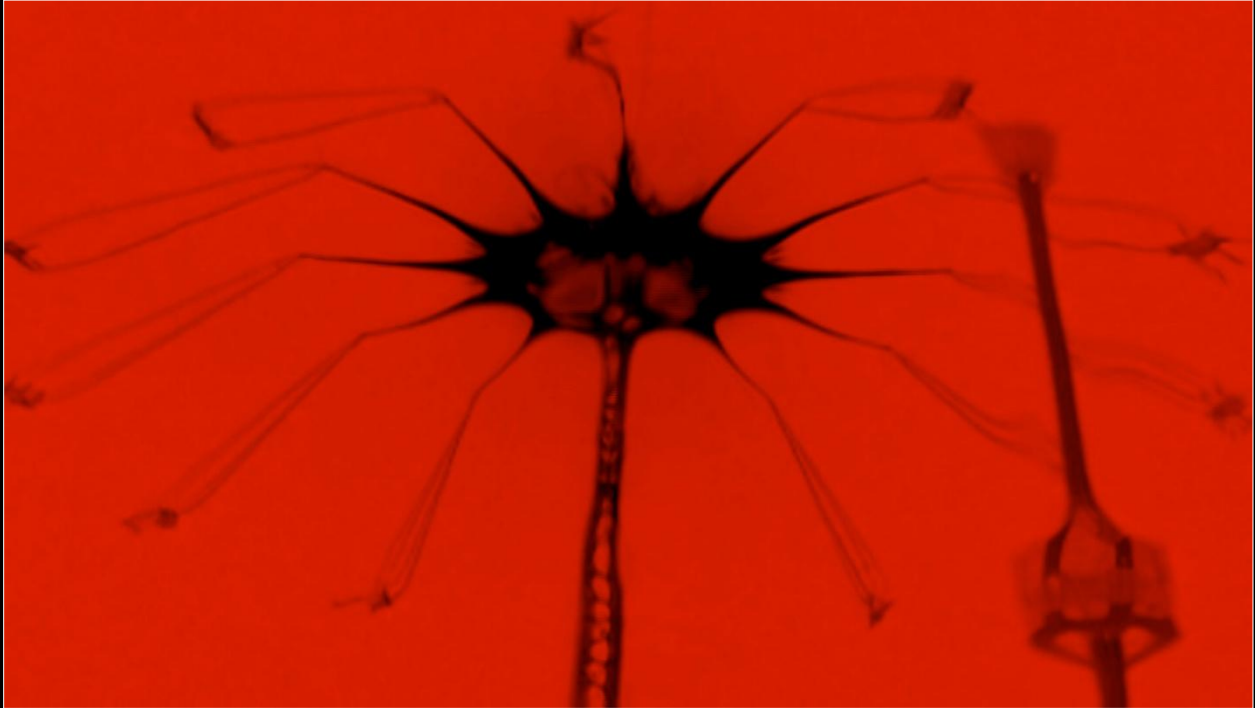
*(Canto V, Inferno, vv.121-123, Dante Alighieri)*



"Love, quick to seize gentle hearts, seized this man so strongly, taking him away from me in a way that still offends me."

*"Amor, ca'al cor gentil ratto s' apprende, prese costui de la bella persona che mi fu tolta;  
e 'l modo ancor m'offende."*

*(Canto V, Inferno, vv.100-102, Dante Alighieri)*



"Consider the seed from which you sprang: you were not made to live like brutes, but to pursue virtue and knowledge"

*"Considerate la vostra semenza: fatti non foste a viver come bruti, ma per seguir virtute e canoscenza."*

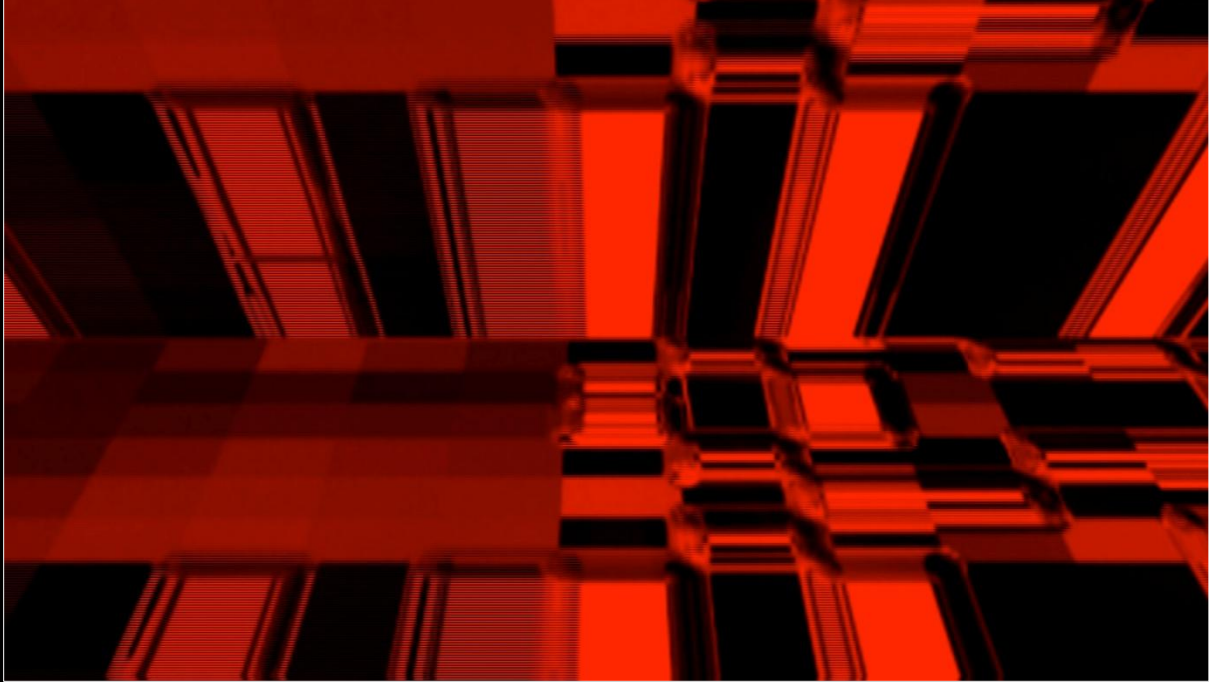
*(Canto XXVI, Inferno, vv.118-120, Dante Alighieri)*



"The sinner sank, then rose again, with his face all pitch. The demons, under cover of the bridge, cried out: "Here the Holy Visage has no place!""

*"Quel s' attuffò, e tornò sù convolto; ma i demon che del ponte aven coperchio, gridar:  
"Qui non ha loco il Santo Volto!"*

*(Canto XXVI, Inferno, vv.46-48, Dante Alighieri)*

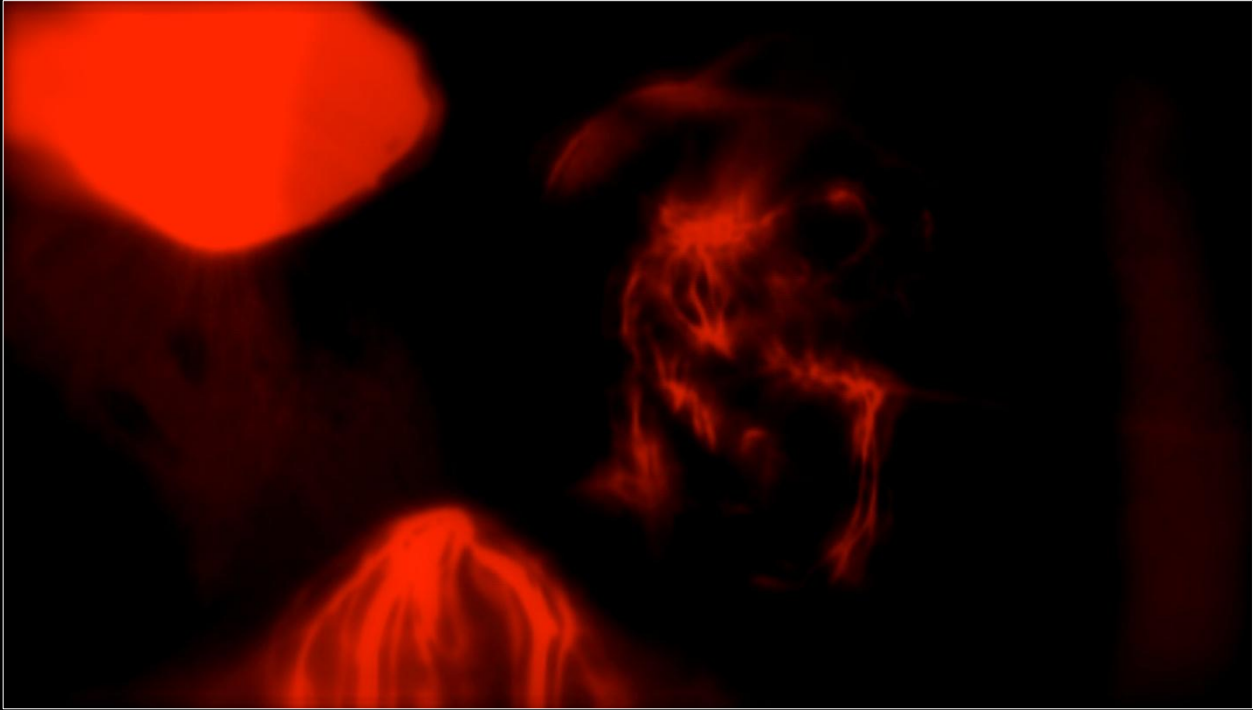


"[...] Return to your science, that measures a thing's perfection, it feels the mode of both pleasure and pain, although these cursed people will never attain true perfection, they will be nearer it than they are now."

*"[...] Ritorna a tua scienza, che vuoi, quanto la cosa è più perfetta, più sente il bene, e così la doglienza. Tutto che questa gente maladetta in vera perfezion già mai non vada, di là più che di qua essere aspetta."*

*(Canto VI, Inferno, vv.106-111, Dante Alighieri)*

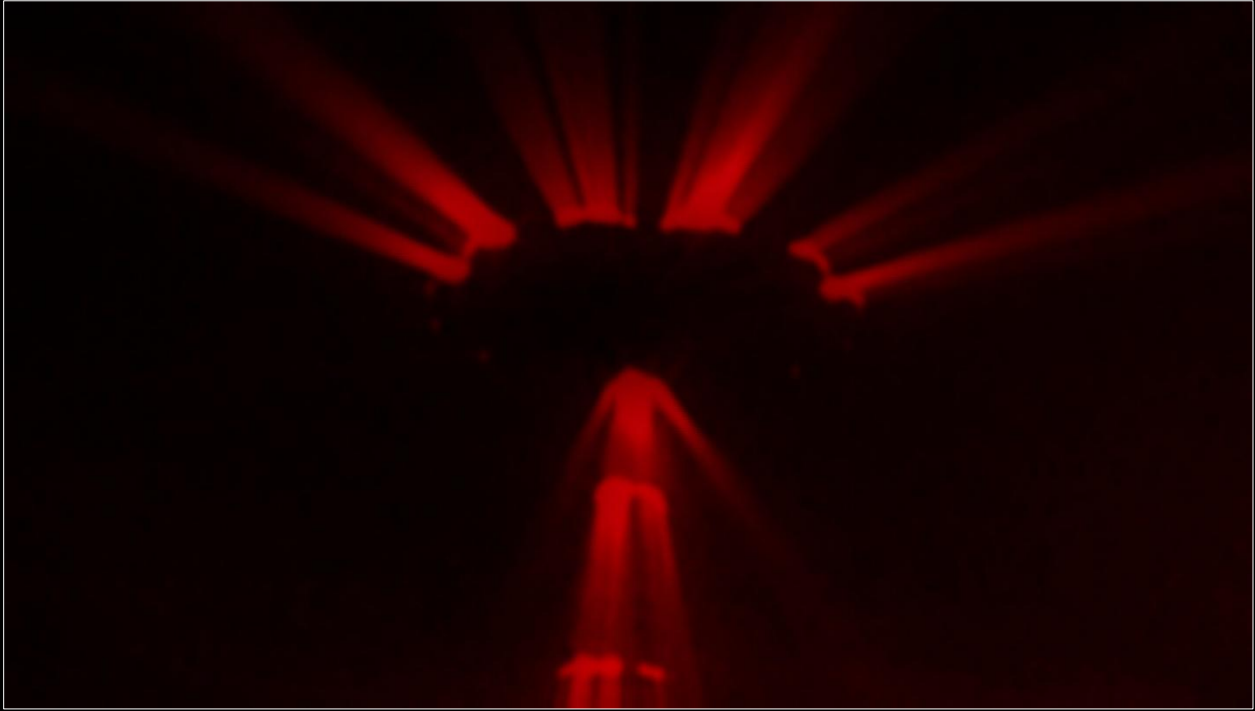




"I did not die, nor did I stay alive, if you have the wit, think of what I became, deprived of both."

*"Io non morì e non rimasi vivo; pensa oggimai per te, s'hai fior d'ingegno, qual io divenni, d'uno e d'altro privo."*

*(Canto XXXIV, Inferno, vv.25-27, Dante Alighieri)*



"[...] You taught me how man makes himself immortal."

"[...]m'insegnavate come l'uomo s'eterna"

(Canto XV, Inferno, vv.85, Dante Alighieri)

**Watch *Revelation In The League Of Sin*:**

**<http://vimeo.com/38674886>**



## CIRCLES & PHASES: LARKIN GRIMM'S SOUL RETRIEVAL

By Craig Woods

The term 'enigmatic' can be hideously overused by reviewers and critics alike in descriptions of independent artists beating their own distinct path far from the thoroughfare. In the case of Larkin Grimm, however, the term seems quite unavoidable. Born in Memphis, Tennessee into an esoteric Christian order and a lineage traceable to the Grimms of European folklore fame, Larkin grew up in Georgia, studied at Yale, and has since collaborated with countless notable musicians in an itinerant life which has seen her relocate to Alaska, Rhode Island, and most recently New York City. In the digital age, the various threads of this kind of life inevitably lend themselves open to an instant mythologizing. Even the most rudimentary online search of Grimm's name yields a staggering volume of accounts, anecdotes and rumours, which if assumed to be only a fraction true still describe a remarkably full life for a woman of thirty years.

The real story, however, is Grimm's music as a solo artist. Since the release of her debut album *Harpoon* in 2005, she has pursued an artistic odyssey that, while ostensibly related to the 'freak folk' genre, has maintained a peculiar and visionary personality that is entirely its own. On a bed of pastoral acoustic guitars with minimal backing arrangements, the songs on Grimm's early albums interweave dark-hued folk melodies with erudite lyrics veering from the

transcendental to the deeply fatalistic. At the forefront is Grimm's voice; versatile and unfaltering, its highest jubilant peaks as captivating as its sonorous furrows, its soulfulness and its artful idiosyncrasies conspiring to render it timeless.

The boldest and definitive statement of this artistic personality can be found on her third album *Parplar*, released in 2008 on Michael Gira's esteemed Young God Records label. With a host of notable guest musicians providing a backdrop of guitars, banjos, horns and accordion, Grimm's songs on this record resonate like the furious hymns of an apocalyptic Appalachian gypsy-goddess. Here her mystical creative vision and established sonic textures collide in a storm that is irrefutably separate from her contemporaries; embracing both the brightest light and bleakest darkness without deferring to the winsomeness of Josephine Foster or the discordant abrasiveness of Carla Bozulich. Little wonder that Michael Gira would describe Grimm as "the sound of the eternal mother and wrath of all women."

As with all milestones in any artist's output, the question arises, "where next?" In keeping with the itinerant logic of her life so far, Grimm's answer was to up sticks once more and make her new bed in New York City, where she has since occupied herself in the vibrant and diverse musical community. Concurrently she also left the Young God ranks, got married, gave birth, and somehow found the time to create and record a new set of songs which announce a dazzling new chapter in the Larkin Grimm odyssey.

The resulting record, entitled *Soul Retrieval* and self-released by Grimm on her own newly founded label, takes the pastoral folk elements from previous albums and recasts them in a broader context, blending them with pop, blues, gospel and a range of other components. The crisp production and instrumentation are bolstered by the presence of none other than Tony Visconti, a producer whose considerable skill is evident in as much as what he leaves alone as it is in what he provides, here allowing Grimm's voice and particular arrangement skills the space they need to breathe and evolve naturally. Incorporating a miscellany of band configurations and backing vocals, *Soul Retrieval* is essentially a classic singer-songwriter's pop-rock album of the quality produced by a pre-Ziggy David Bowie, but one augmented by an artistic vision that, while evolved, remains very true to its modest spiritual roots.

Indeed, "spiritual" is the key word with which to describe this album, as Grimm's own press release states: *'I was drinking a special rare tea from Peru which a gentle American herbalist had collected from a female shaman and a dying religion. This was a ceremony called Soul Retrieval, gathering pieces of our soul that were lost when we betrayed our ideals.'*

While the previous albums were very much immersed in a particularly American brand of mysticism, *Soul Retrieval* appears to boast a far more profound spiritual bounty drawn from considerably more diverse sources. That these influences have been distilled into a record that is equal parts contemporary, accessible, and richly rewarding is surely one of the remarkable musical achievements of the decade.

I caught up with Larkin Grimm for an online chat about this record and the circumstances from which it evolved.

*How are things with you?*

I'm great. My seven-month-old son just learned how to give me kisses. We're on our way to an orchid show.

*Well that's an already nice bright start to things!*

*In reading up on the press around Soul Retrieval, I gleaned that the title refers in some part to a positive interpretation of the importance of 2012 in the Mayan calendar. Could you elaborate on that?*

Yes. In 2007 my sister and I took a trip to the Mayan pyramids in the city where the prophecy comes from. My friend George, who is in a band called Javelin, got possessed by a wolf spirit there. We rented an apartment on Lake Atitlan, which is "the centre of the Mayan universe," and made offerings to the party/devil/music god who lived there. He was in the body of a wooden statue. You would pour whiskey in his mouth and it would collect in his boot, where the devotees would drink it. He had to be surrounded by music 24/7 or he would awaken and destroy things nearby. Soon after he left, the entire town was taken out by a mudslide. So we started taking those things more seriously.

*Certainly an understandable reaction.*

I wanted to try Ayahuasca and be initiated as a shaman, so I became a student of a guy named John Perkins, who wrote the book *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*.

*Oh yes, I've read his book.*

He is a Wall Street banker type turned shaman. Really a remarkable guy. His teacher, an Ecuadorian shaman who had turned into a bat and disappeared, wanted him to teach the world about the true meaning of the Mayan Calendar; circles and phases, NOT the end of the world, but a coming to balance of the Eagle (or mind), and the Condor (or heart). And [a balance between] the masculine and feminine energies.

*I'm with you. So more of a revolutionary cycle than a linear begin-to-end narrative with a solid start and endpoint.*

Yes. A dawning of a golden age of balance between man and nature.

*Asides from the obvious spiritual allusions, the album title also implies a certain catharsis or of an equilibrium regained. Since the release of your previous album **Parplar**, you've certainly been through some changes: you've parted company with your record label, gotten married, become a mother... Can the record and its title be viewed as a summation of a journey or transition on your part?*

Probably, but it is meant more for others than for myself. I'm one of many ambassadors from the spirit world. In addition to being a mom in the physical world.

*Right. So you presumably don't regard your work as particularly autobiographical in any strict sense.*

No, I see it as something that is channelled through me, and I try to be an open conduit and keep the pipes clean.

*One of the notable changes in your life of the last few years is your decision to relocate to New York. Currently there seems a distinctly tight-knit community of musicians in that city, each carving various progressive furrows, but there's also quite a bit of apparent interplay. In addition to your own past involvement with Dirty Projectors, I note that you've collaborated with the likes of Harlem Shakes and Extra Life. Is this sense of community in any way vital to the creative forces that gave birth to Soul Retrieval?*

Yes, I was able to find some like-spirited folks around here. Charlie and Caley from Extra Life have been particularly supportive of my work. They get it.

*Yeah, I can definitely see a spiritual connection with Extra Life, even though your sonic explorations are very different.*

We are all obsessed with Hildegard Von Bingen.

*On that note, there does seem to be a local trend in combining experimental, ultra-modern sounds with far more traditional forms. Charlie Looker is, I think, quite remarkable for his marriage of Renaissance and classical music with skewed rock rhythms, while Sam Mickens has applied a similar sensibility to big band music and minimalist pop. Can you see your own music as being in any way part of a tide in this regard?*

The largest influence on my new album is probably my love of Sufi poetry and music. I don't think The Mickens and Charlie listen to much of that stuff. But I could be wrong. I am totally enamoured of the ancient Islamic world. I wish modern Islam was more like it was a thousand years ago.

*That actually pre-empts another question I had about the specific spiritual influences on **Soul Retrieval**. I gather you spent some time with some Sufi women, an experience which also had a formative influence on the record?*

I believe in the strong spirit of contemporary Muslim women, and know that they have the strength to change their own culture by demanding their own civil rights. I don't think the West should be interfering for their sake. They are strong! I am baffled by religion but I try to respect it as part of the cultural value of a place.

*Your enthusiasm for that particular spirituality is certainly a refreshing retort to the current prevailing rhetoric in the West regarding Islam in general and, of course, the new boogeyman du jour of Iran in particular.*

Iran is "The Nation of Poets." And they are trying very hard to find their own way in the world. You can't blame the people for the stupidity of their dictators.

*Oh absolutely. The richness of a culture and the actual struggle of its people is horribly obscured in the popular imagination by prevailing propaganda.*

Military intervention now will set them back so far, when they are so close to finding freedom

*I feel we could probably discuss this subject at length, but time being of the essence, let's talk a little about the production of the record.*

Yeah!

*It's also notable for being co-produced by the legendary Tony Visconti.*

Tony Visconti; magical elf man!

*Were you purposefully looking to work with a producer who could bring new elements to your work?*

Yeah, indeed!

*How exactly did this incredible collaboration come about?*

He just arrived on the scene and we made friends. He was the bass player in my band for a while. [He wasn't] really the producer, but the influencer for sure. He didn't want to meddle in a good thing too much. The song he had most influence over is probably "Flash and Thunder Came to Earth."

*Oh yes, I can hear that.*

His bass-line there is particularly Bowie-esque

*Yeah, I immediately thought of early Bowie! The way you describe the relationship does come across. While Visconti brings some of his trademarks to the proceedings, I'm impressed that they by no means overwhelm the record, instead blending very effectively into your own milieu and emphasising each song's peculiar attributes.*

And the flutes are so beautiful. Who knew Tony was a flute player? I guess that was the real challenge for me; how to work with this producer-star without losing my own voice.

*I read somewhere that the album was recorded in just two days. If true, its resultant lushness is all the more remarkable. It seems you and Visconti eased into a very natural working relationship. What is the key to such a successful collaboration?*



Open-mindedness and blind confidence! I knew that all of the musicians were incredible and I just had to trust them. And they trusted me. Music is a form of psychic communication. The best form.

*I'm curious also about your songwriting process. Although the new songs appear as a natural progression from the pastoral sounds of previous records, they nonetheless incorporate a quite astonishing breadth of genres. There's some polished pop in there, some Cajun stomp, a beautifully arranged bit of gospel... Do you consciously create with a musical palette in mind, or is there something more innate at work in the songs themselves as they develop?*

We didn't think about it at all. We didn't have time to. The songs just called out for these arrangements and we obliged. Very quickly. I am really inspired by the approach to recording that Bjork and Brian Eno have. The first take is the right take. There are no mistakes.

*I suppose it's a bit like Kerouac's spontaneous approach to writing applied to music. Would it have been possible then to have constructed these same songs in the same way with a different set of collaborators?*

Of course not. It would be stupid to try. Because you can't get the best out of creative people when you force them.

*In an interview with David Garland a few years ago you described your music along the lines of 'experimental, old time southern music.' Does that description still hold or do the new songs move beyond those parameters in your view?*

That was true for that album. This is different work... I wouldn't call [Soul Retrieval] experimental. I would call it intentionally beautiful.

*Your lyrics are rich with arresting visual qualities. It's impossible to listen to "Without a Body or a Dumb and Useless Mind" for example without picturing every butchered organ and yellow swan feather. It strikes me that many of these songs would provide great fuel for videos and films. Anything like that in the works?*

I don't, but I hope someone else does. Although the real film is running through your mind. Isn't it better to use your imagination? That's the whole idea, for the music to encourage you to dream your own dreams.

*Of course, that's always true, and it remains the most convincing argument against music videos in general. I suppose I was just surprised to find that songs with the richness which yours offer hadn't yet been put to celluloid in some fashion.*

People are always surprised that I'm not more famous in one way or another. Maybe I just want to keep making music without being boxed in by "success."

*On the subject of "Without a Body or a Dumb and Useless Mind," I'm intrigued. While I don't necessarily regard it as the record's best track, it perhaps exemplifies most strikingly an overall sense of passing through hostile terrain to reach sanctuary. It also contains some of the best juxtapositions of poetic images with the almost oppressively mundane. I can't imagine another context wherein the line "I wipe the crusted out mascara from my eye" would seem quite as devastating. Could you say something*



*about the genesis of that song?*

I wrote it after visiting DOLLYWOOD.

*Somehow that makes it considerably more devastating in my mind.*

Does it sound like a Dolly Parton song at all?

*Well now that you mention it. But with a distinctly graver edge.*

It's kind of like Dolly Parton melody and Michael Gira lyrics. I love that song.

*I read elsewhere in another interview where you said something about how feeling beaten and close to suicide also leads to a level of enlightenment. Does that play a role in this song?*

It's great when you've got nothing left to lose. Now that I have a son, I hope I never feel that again.

*It's one of several tracks on the record which set potentially unsettling subject matter against a deeply infectious and upbeat groove. Likewise the lyrics themselves seem often playful in their application of jolting images and rich metaphors, perhaps more so than on previous records. Would you say **Soul Retrieval** represents a more whimsical Larkin Grimm?*

Ha ha! Whimsy! I don't know. I feel like this record takes itself a little too seriously. My next thing will be much more whimsical, I think. I'm in a totally silly kid universe at the moment.

*Haha, that's interesting, because to my ear the songs sound like the work of someone having considerable fun doing what they do, more so than the previous albums.*

[Making] it was loads of fun. But the subject matter was pretty dark

*Another of my favourite tracks is "Lying in a Pool of Milk." It's arguably more easily identifiable as a folk-song in structure, but it doesn't pull any punches. So sweet is the melody that, when I first encountered the line "Fuck that child with silent eyes," I practically jumped from my chair. Clearly it's very in keeping with the primal concerns of much traditional folk music and which became the staple of folk-rock bands like Comus and others. But here it is delivered without the vocal severity one might expect, and is all the more unsettling for it. Could you reveal anything about your intentions with this song?*

I don't think it's a good idea to say too much about that one. Let them speculate.

*Fair enough. As mentioned, your lyrics display a very particular skill and care in your application of language. There's more than a hint of a literary quality to many of the songs on each of your albums so far. Are there any particular writers whom you can identify as having influenced you in this respect?*

That's really hard to say. I don't write down my lyrics until I absolutely am forced to, so it's a living art form, and as much influenced by the spoken language around me than by anything written. But as a teenager I remember being pretty impressed by Nabokov, Faulkner, Joyce, and

Henry Miller.

*On that note, I find it irresistible to draw the parallel between your own literary flair and the storytelling tradition associated with your surname. Do you see what you do as an artist as in any way related to those classic European folk tales?*

They are great great great uncles, I believe. A lot of people think I made up the name Larkin Grimm, but it's on my birth certificate. I hope I'm carrying on that tradition, yes. Taking folk tradition and turning into a more refined art form.

*The challenge of researching someone online is in separating hearsay from fact. I wasn't entirely sure if the familial connection was genuine.*

It is, according to my Grimm family legend. I've only been able to prove that my family comes from the same part of Germany. There aren't many Grimms in America. The American Grimms had to leave Germany in the late '30s because they had gypsy blood.

*Ah, that is interesting. I also heard recently that a whole bunch of previously unpublished fairy tales have been discovered in Germany. I'm not sure if there's a Grimm connection, but did you hear of this?*

Yes! They were collected by a contemporary of the brothers.

*That's excellent. The Grimm Tales tradition appears very much alive in its own circles and phases.*

*While your records are primarily acoustic-based with various backing arrangements, your recent solo shows are stripped, rawer affairs comprising just you and an electric guitar. What informed your decision to perform this way?*

It is just more fun to play electric! And it can be loud. If I need to play in a noisy bar it is much more fun to play electric. But I still play acoustic shows.

*While I haven't had the pleasure of witnessing your live show, I can imagine that some of the songs from the new record might take on a different kind of persona or yield new elements in this stripped electric context. Do you regard the recorded songs and the live performance as separate entities?*

Every single moment is a different moment and nothing is repeated. Otherwise why live at all?

*I think that's what's known as an excellent answer to a less than excellent question.*

*You recently toured with Arrington de Dionyso, an artist whose work is similarly informed by a spiritual dimension. Given his extensive work in noisier, avant-garde rock-based projects, I'm imagining those shows must have attracted an interesting cross-section of attendees. How was your experience of audience engagement on that tour?*

It was one of the most magical tours I have ever been on. There were lots of sing-along moments. We did our best to hypnotize...

*Given that you have moved into the arena of self-released music, I inevitably have to ask for your take on*

*the nature of the current music industry. With the ongoing economic crisis and the climate of digital downloads etc, how has this impacted on the fortunes of a working independent artist? And does the increase in self-released music portend the end of independent record labels?*

I am trying to reduce the stress in my life as much as possible. It was stressful for me to see my former labels suffer, dependent upon me for revenue. I felt that they put so much pressure on me to be a financial success that I lost the ability to focus on the quality of the art. I just don't want to burn out or die young, so I am taking control of my own life and time.

*By being entirely independent of a record label though, are you also finding other challenges in selling and promoting your music as well as making it? I note that a lot of musicians these days feel the pressure to fulfil so many different posts and are faced with the challenge of learning whole new sets of skills in order to survive. I'm cheating there with another question, but as a working artist and touring performer with an infant son in tow, do you perceive that your position is a tougher one than it might have been, say ten to fifteen years ago?*

I hope that the music industry problems work themselves out, but it is a big issue that I cannot control. It is not so hard to get an album on iTunes or whatever. It will be okay. Why complain?

*I imagine that's the attitude which will ultimately separate the successful from the unsuccessful in this climate.*

*Larkin, I'm going to let you go. Thanks very much for doing this.*

You are very welcome. Have a lovely day, and thanks for listening to my record!

Buy *Soul Retrieval* from CDBaby:  
<http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/larkingrimm2>

Larkin Grimm's official site:  
[http://www.larkingrimm.net/Larkin\\_Grimm/Home.html](http://www.larkingrimm.net/Larkin_Grimm/Home.html)

Larkin Grimm on Myspace:  
<http://www.myspace.com/larkingrimm>



GLORISA (M)



## A MESS

Words and Photo By Hank Kirton

"You are a mess, my dear," she said in her Russian accent.

"I know."

"Your organs are not happy."

I had nothing to say to that. The tests had come back.

"You've been drinking today," she said.

I nodded, embarrassed.

"Do you know how I know that?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

“Because I can smell the alcohol.”

She sighed and said, “If you keep this up, you will be dead in one to three years.”

I nodded. “Okay.”

She shook her head. For the first time since I’d been going to her, she looked sad. Usually, she was all business; firm, implacable. My doctor.

“It’s too bad,” she said.

When I left her office, I thanked her.

On my way out, I grabbed a lollipop from the front desk. Grape.

I walked straight to the liquor store. I bought a twelve-pack and then raced back to my building.

In the hall, I passed the woman who lived across from me.

“Hi.”

“Hi.”

Boy, I wanted to fuck her. What was her name again? Erin? Sara? I was pretty sure it was one of the two.

Hi was the only thing we’d ever said to each other.

I went into my apartment – beer cans on the floor, rotting food on the stove.

I threw off my jacket, carried the twelve-pack to the couch and turned on the TV. It was one o’clock and *Gunsmoke* was on. I cracked a beer and the show started. It was a good one. An outlaw comes back to Dodge and visits the wife who’d thought he was dead. She’d been a grieving widow for years and now he was back.

By the second commercial-break, I’d opened another beer.

I thought about eating. It had been a while.

But I didn’t feel like moving. The pain in my side bothered me too much.

When *Gunsmoke* was over (the ending was satisfactory), I went into the kitchen. The kitchen floor was gross: crumbs, stains, muddy boot prints, cigarette butts, what looked like blood...

I opened the refrigerator but everything inside had gone bad, either crawling with mold or way past the expiration date. The milk looked like cottage cheese. I checked the freezer but everything looked awful to me. When did I buy frozen tacos? Jesus.

I returned to the couch, my beer. *Bonanza* was on. The remote control felt like a theoretical object in my hand but I changed the channel anyway.

On one of my many PBS stations, I landed on a documentary on dromedaries that was soothing enough and boring enough to allow me to think and drink.

I dozed off after half an hour. When I woke up I changed the channel again. *The Big Valley* was on and I thought about writing. I'd started several stories but didn't have the energy or enthusiasm for any of them: a story about a woman who seduces strange men with her headless, parasitic twin. A story about a snuff filmmaker who feeds children to starving pit-bulls and films the results. A man and the woman he loves drink ice tea together one summer afternoon, and when she leaves his apartment she is hit by a car and dies. When he returns from the hospital, distraught and in shock, he finds that the ice in her glass hasn't melted yet and he saves the ice in his freezer and becomes obsessed with preserving it.

But I didn't feel like writing. I drank another beer. And another.

Another.

Another.

I stumbled to the bathroom and took a piss and faces appeared in the foam - yawning, screaming, laughing - bubbling, intangible masks that lasted until the convulsive flush.

I felt like shit.

When the twelve-pack was gone, I went out to the store and bought a six-pack and a forty-ounce bottle of Steel Reserve - awful stuff, but it does the trick. Boy howdy. The street looked like a stream.

I got home, took an Ativan and kept drinking. I took another Ativan.

Another.

Another.

More.

My maid, Valerie, came in and started vacuuming.

"Hi, Valerie," I said.

"Hi, Hank."

No, wait. I don't have a maid. I've never even met a maid. I must have been dreaming.

"Hi, Valerie! You look hot."

No. Wait.

I awoke and tipped the last of a can of beer into me. It was a giant missile silo, a water tower, a cannon. Mmmmmm. BOOM.

I think I went out.

I woke up to another disaster. In my hand I found a paper towel stained with dried blood. My face hurt. Something was wrong with my face. I staggered out of bed and went into the bathroom.

I looked in the mirror.

Holy god.

Half of my face was a multicolored bruise. My eyeball looked like a purple grape. There was a scab under my eye.

What the fuck happened?

I lurched into the living room.

The two wooden crates where I store my movie magazines had toppled and magazines were spilled across the floor.

That must have been where I fell. I must have hit my face on the crates.

Valerie?

Shit.

I returned to the bathroom. My face was yellow and black and stippled with purple around the borders of the bruise. That must have been some fall, I thought. I wished I could remember it. I thought I remembered an impact, but the memory was so soft and indistinct, I couldn't be sure it wasn't just my imagination.

This was going to take some explaining. I had to go to work tomorrow. Everyone would stare.

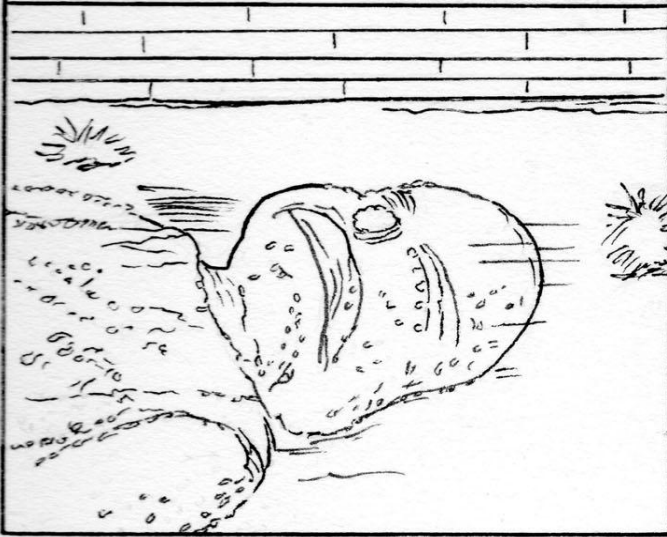
I decided I'd dope it all out in the morning. I grabbed a beer from the fridge, chugged it, and went back to bed. My eye started bleeding again and I clamped the paper towel over it and thought about a girl who didn't exist and fell asleep.

And then I dreamed about a

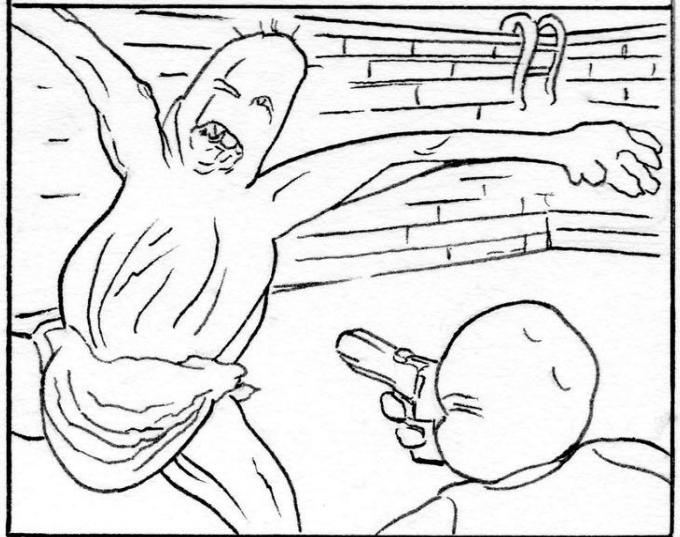
*Editor's note: These were the last words Hank Kirton would ever write. He died on April 15th, 2012 at the age of 45 as a result of liver failure. He is survived by his cat, who he never named.*



I AWOKE ON CEMENT, SMOOTH AND COOL,  
YET SWEATING DROPS LIKE A MILLION ANTS,



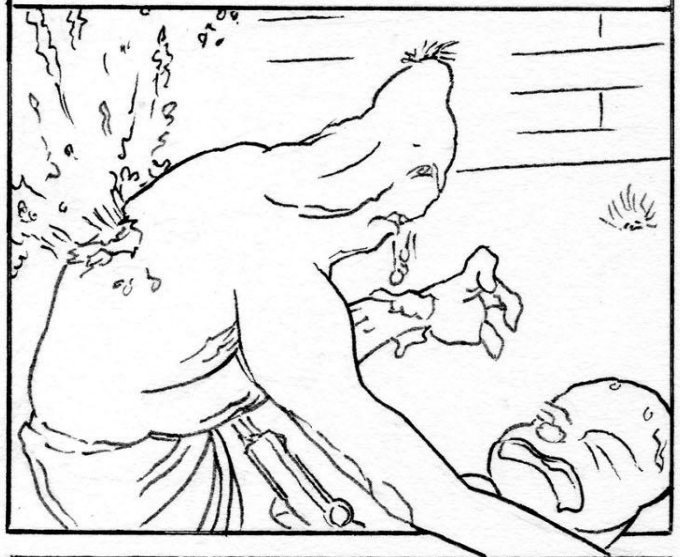
SOME WILDLY ANIMALISTIC, VAGABOND  
CREATURE JACK DANCED TOWARD MY PISTOL.



I HAD NO TIME TO LEARN ITS REASON  
(HAD IT ANY), NOR TO READ ITS PITIFUL EYES.



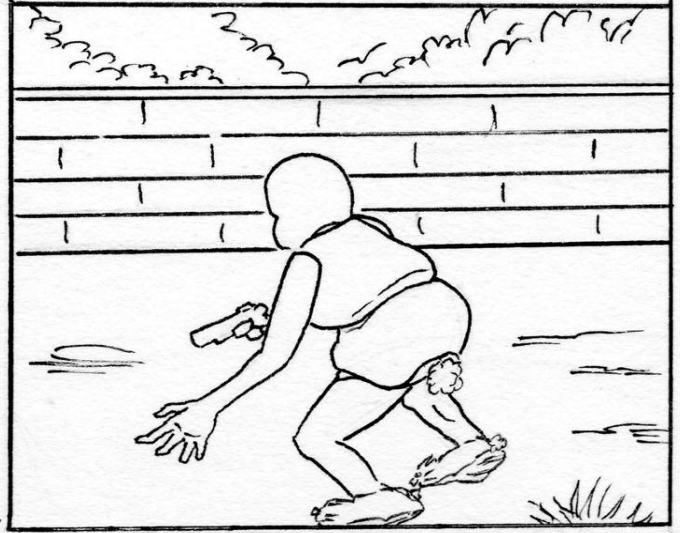
THE GUN, WHICH FORTUNATELY (FOR NOW)  
HAD MADE IT WITH ME ON THE JUMP, BLEW



THE DROOLING MONSTER'S GUTS INTO THE  
AIR, HIS ENTIRETY THEN VANISHING AS WELL.



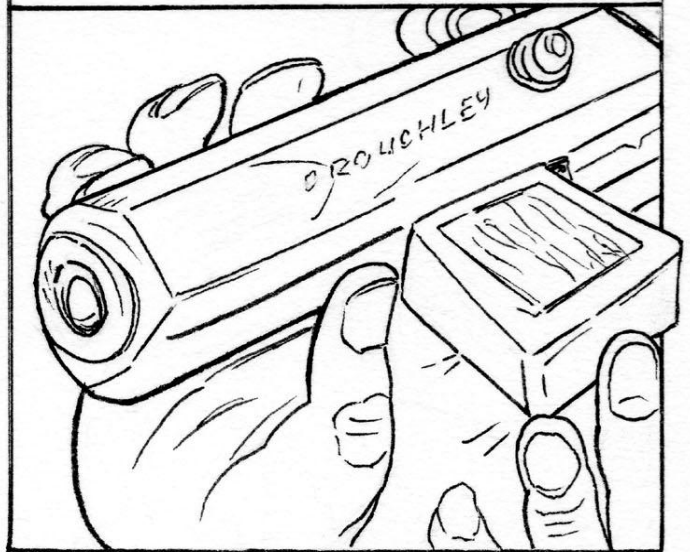
WHERE WAS I? BESIDE MYSELF, CALMING,  
THEN, DECIDED: AN EMPTY SWIMMING POOL!



CROUCHING, CHECKING THE CLIP FOR ANY (REAL) BULLETS WITH 'STAYING POWER' IN



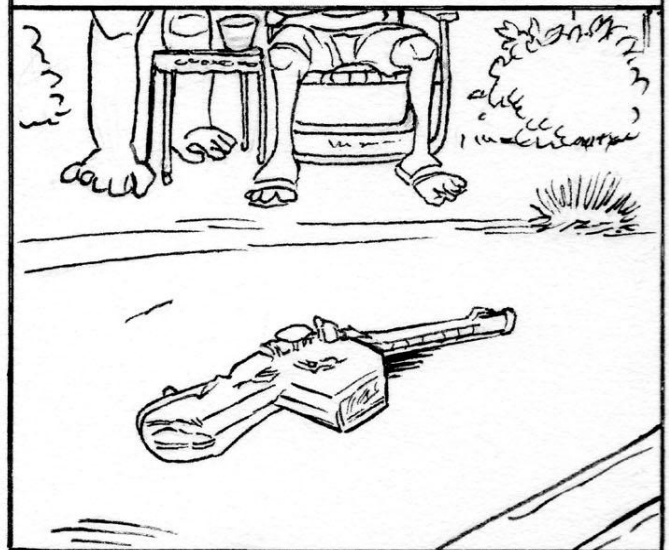
THIS PARALLEL WORLD, WHEREVER IT WAS, MY BREATH COLLAPSED. THE STOCK WAS RECEIVING!



CAREFULLY I PEEPED OVER ONE EDGE OF THE POOL TO ASSESS MY SITUATION.



SOME SORT OF WEAPON LAY ALMOST WITHIN MY REACH. A DUBIOUS SHAPE, BUT



WORTH A TRY. OR WAS THIS SOME TRICK? WAS THAT A GANGSTER? HAD HE SEEN ME?



OR WAS HE ASLEEP? SUDDENLY I SEEMED HELPLESS AND ALL CHOICES BAD + FATEFUL.



# CLOSE TO NATURE

## INCUBATOR

### AND BROODERS.



photos by  
Lisa Wormsley

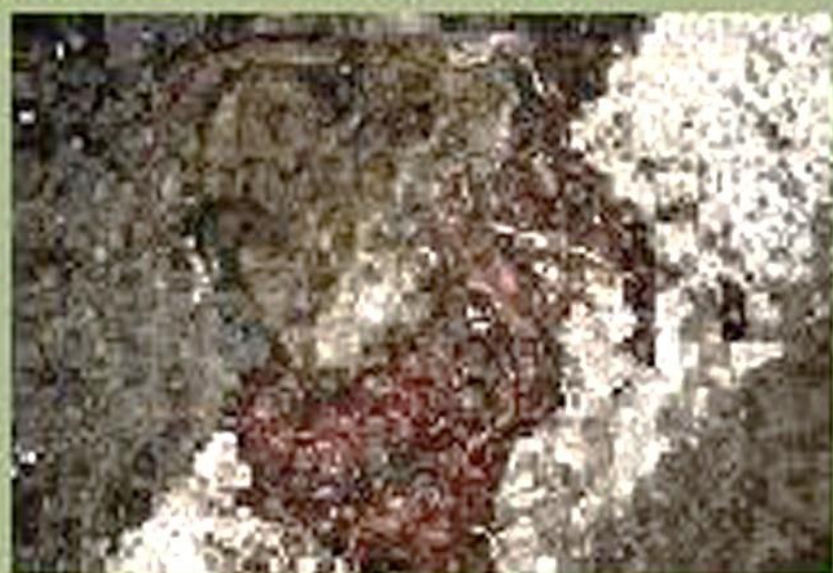
STAY CLOSE TO NATURE FOR SURE RESULTS



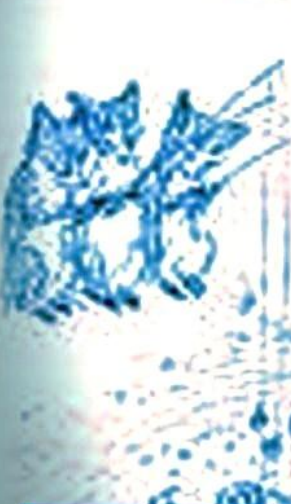
**Friday  
Saturday**

*Hundreds of F*

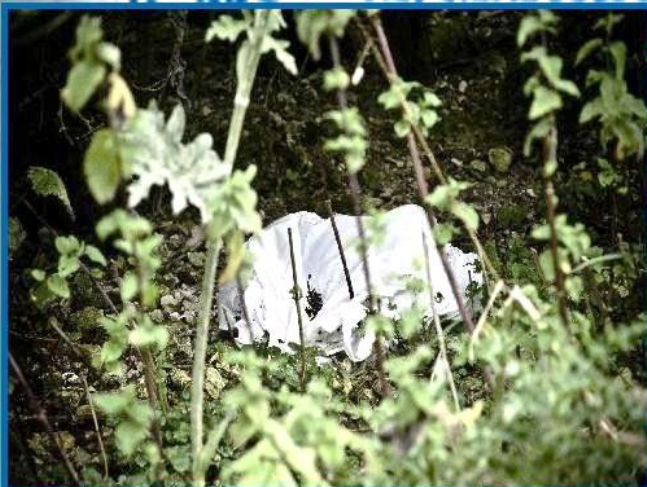
P.O. Box 101  
On AL/FL line (north of FUSSELLA, FL)



antiqueauction.com

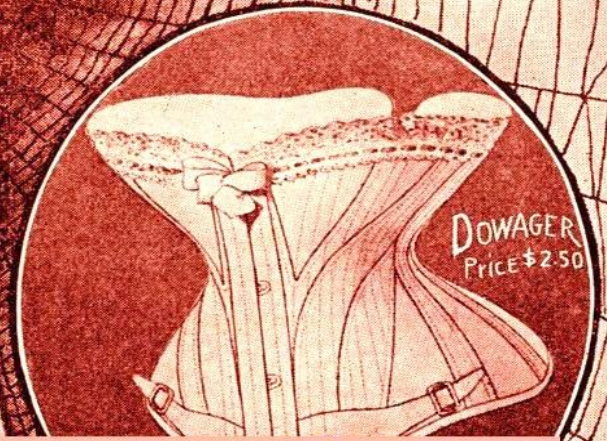
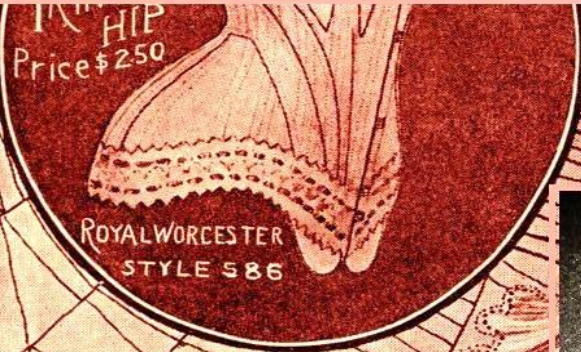


WHEN WE WERE  
 XXII.— THE  
 ONCE upon a time there was a  
 Who didn't wear stockings  
 But they all had hats  
 And they kept their hands  
 They lived in the forest  
 And they didn't wear coats  
 They ran through the  
 And they played "Touch"  
 They didn't go shopping  
 They caught what they  
 They all went fishing, and they caught three worms;  
 They went out hunting, and they caught three hares.  
 They went to a fair and they all won prizes—  
 and three tomy-puns,  
 hats and rings on strings  
 in all occasions.  
 of the three little  
 complete in cardboard boxes  
 rest in three little houses,  
 stockings and they didn't wear  
 A. L. M.



Copyright 1921 by A. L. M.

# Royal Worcester AND Bon-Ton Corsets



**THE PRINCESS HIP**  
Assures correct fit  
in gowning giving also  
grace and comfort



SEND FOR  
HANDSOMELY ILLUSTRATED

*Prevailing Modes for all Figures Correctly Pictured*

**ROYAL WORCESTER CORSET CO. Worcester Mass.**  
Western Salesroom Chicago Ills.



## **I MARRIED A GHASTLY BEAST**

**By Tony Rauch**

**Dolls & Photos By © Christy Lou**

One night I looked over at my husband, his lovely face glowing by the candlelight at the table as he knitted, and for some reason, right then and there, it dawned on me - I had married a ghastly beast.

The strangest thing though is that when we first met, I considered him a beautiful angel, a delicate flower, a warm breeze on a cool fall morning. I saw him as a glorious sunset, a moonlight stroll around the lake on a summer's night, a warm bed on a cold winter's evening. I saw him as so many wonderfully indescribable things, objects, and events. And those feelings all grew to evolve into entire seasons. And that love evolved around me, bathing me in a calm glow that made me feel so absolutely lucky that I couldn't believe it. I never thought I would ever meet anyone who would make me feel that way. And then I did, and for years I felt as though I were living a special and unique dream that only I could have, such was his loving presence in my life.



But for some reason, all of that went away the other night. When I looked over at him, I did not see an ornate cathedral of a man, a fluffy cloud in the summer sky of a person, no, not at all, for sitting before me I found a hideous, drooling creature - a lumbering lummo, a disgusting slob, a rapacious gormandize; a concupiscence evaporatious, sylvan penury, disputatious creature. Oh how I could go on.

Why did my feelings for him suddenly change, as if they had dried up like a withering flower? I sat stunned, realizing my love for him had worn off, as if a magic spell with an expiration date. I no longer could see in him what I once

had. I no longer could feel what I once felt. No more delicate flower. No more warm fall afternoons. No more glorious sunsets. All gone. Now replaced with a horrific slobbering beast slumped wheezing, drooling and spitting before me. I realized in a flash of heat that he was not at all the gracious, poetic prince of my dreams. It hit me - I had married a horrible monster.

I thought about this for a moment, getting all warm and tingly inside, as if I were awaking from some strange cocoon - the way he behaved all these years was actually not loving at all, not in the least, but was something I could probably categorize as "terrible". Oh, you would not imagine the hardships I suddenly realized I had to endure - the constant draining of pus from his many open sores, large warts, and dripping boils; the nonstop running nose, like a faucet that thing is; the trimming of his twisting claws; the untangling of the crust of scum that accumulates in the curls of his fur; his foul breath which reeks of raw eggs and stale, dead squirrels - uncooked squirrels, his favorite meal. In a flash everything about him was modified and became clear - for here before me was a monster, an unbearably unappealing, if not head-turningly repulsive, behemoth. For his every manner and custom suddenly changed from charming to become disgusting:





A.) The way in which he expelled waste material from himself - by shooting it across the room from under his left underarm, as if projectile vomit. Every day with the horrible underarm retching. Oh, the unbearable arm pit vomiting! Finally I got wise, improvised, and devised a big tube to attach to his underarm that would drain into a large canister I attached to rolling casters. I mean, a person can only take so much of that crap. But everyone has their little quirks, I guess. I am not perfect either. Far from it. I guess you just have to learn to accept people for who they are.

B.) His habit of creeping out late at night and returning hours later with feathers and pieces of innards and chunks of who-knows-what stuck to him. So much of it sometimes that several buckets of soapy water had to be deployed to extricate the viscera, scraps, and etcetera that would be left hanging from, clinging to, and entangled in his snarled fur. And the stink. Oh the stink. But you know, I guess every guy needs his hobbies to take his mind off of things. We all have our little activities that help us unwind, after all.

C.) The bellowing and howling outside at night. I guess I just thought this was one of those stress relievers, or that maybe he was trying to get in touch with his primal "inner man" or something. We all need our "alone time," I guess.

D.) The strange yellowy liquid that would run from his seven eyes. I had to wipe the sides and back of his head all the time as whatever that oozing was would crust up in his fur. But you know, we all have our imperfections. And who am I to harp when he has to put up with who-knows-what-all from me on a daily basis.

E.) The fact that we couldn't have any guests or visitors over. Never. No friends. Not one neighbor. Not a coworker. No relatives. Not once. For he emanates such an offensive, sulfurous odor you can almost watch in horror as it rises off him like steam. It is a thick, milky fog of a

repulsive, lose-your-will-to-live kind of reeking fume that wafts off of him several times an hour, like some unfortunate entire-body flatulence. I mean his whole body will regurgitate this emanation from every pore, from every orifice. I just figured it was a byproduct of his diet of raw eggs and stale, dead squirrels. But if you caught wind of this invisible pungent exhalation, this noxious vapor, this cloudy miasma, you would run for the hills and never come back. No sir. You would push and trample whoever would happen to be in your way just to stay clear of this stinging, stabbing, crippling, blinding, tormenting fog of aroma.

Yeah, I guess I just attributed this to his diet. I just figured this was a lifestyle choice, and who was I to question another person's decisions. I mean, who am I to judge others? Who am I to deny another a favorite meal or activity? Who am I to take that pleasure from another? I mean, what am I, the meanest person in the village or something?

F.) His growling, fist-slamming, short-tempered, grunting, snarling, constant mood-swinging personality. How he could be calm and soothing one moment, just slumped there in a corner, wheezing in and out, and the next moment he could



be agitated and flailing his many arms and tails, thrashing them about as if swatting the many flies that constantly encircle him. There were times in the day that you just couldn't calm him down because he would become so excitable over the littlest thing. His interpersonal skills and frustration management definitely needed some adjustments, that was for sure.

But I guess I just passed that off as his upbringing, and who am I to look down on the customs of others? I mean, I consider myself an open-minded and nonjudgmental person. I am very calm and rational, where he tends to be more passionate and spicy. And he does have a stressful job with the village. I can see where juggling so many people and their various concerns all day long could cause a person to lose his patience from time to time. After all, everyone has their own way of blowing off steam and dealing with things.



G.) The trail of slime that he leaves behind as he crawls about on his hairy belly. For I have to keep a mop and bucket at a constant ready to clean up after that horrible ooze. The slime is like a mixture of curdled cottage cheese watered down with sour vinegar. But I guess we all have little things we could change about ourselves, little refinements that would please others. And I surely wasn't going to give up on him. No way. Not with all the losers out there. I am no quitter, after all, that is for certain.

Oh, I could just go on and on with the hardships. But you know, it was "in being together" that made all the

difficulties seem so minor. We just lucked into a comfortable routine, settled into a nice groove, and off we went, thrust into a life that swept us along. And we just flowed and seemed to coast and glide for years until the other night. And then I thought of it some more and wondered if I wasn't the one being the horrible beast. I mean, who amongst us is perfect? I did vow to stand by him in good times and bad. Maybe I was the one who was being unkind, unsympathetic, uncaring, cold, distant, indifferent, holding it all back.

But then I thought back to when everyone warned me about marrying him, the struggles that we would have, the stress our differences would cause, the persecution from those less tolerant amongst us. And how all of that might negatively affect our life together. I appreciated other people's counsel and concern, but felt this was the best thing that could ever happen to me. For he was the Shakespeare that wrote this wonderful life for us. And then, just like that - poof - it was all gone. All those feelings were washed away after that strange rain we had the other night. A strange storm had passed, the likes of which I had never seen before. Perhaps there was some unnatural electromagnetic activity that affected me in some manner as to change the feelings I once had deep inside.



Or perhaps it was something else. I wonder if I had crossed someone a long time ago, and they set a spell upon me. Perhaps they cast a curse down on me. Or maybe that person found someone else who provided that service. Maybe that person contracted some agency to hypnotize me or slip me a potion in order to get me to marry a tremendously disgusting brute. And then maybe the curse wore off and I had, years later, eventually snapped out of the spell and found myself married to this horrible beast.

Or maybe I really was in love with him. That I had the power and self control and determination to see past his many superficial faults, and was at one time able to peer into the beauty of his soul. And maybe it was someone recently who had cast a spell on me to mask my previous loving feelings for him - that I no longer was able to access that part of who I was, and thus could no longer see into his beauty, but only saw the superficial horrendous beast of him. Maybe that was it. Maybe someone recently cast a spell on me or poisoned me with some noxious potion to interrupt or divert my being able to see past the veneer, to dull my heightened ability of perception, to reduce my depth of feeling.



Or maybe love had blinded me, obscuring his flaws, his countless, time-consuming imperfections; and that I was not able to see the actual him, but only the him that I wanted in my imagination, but that he couldn't live up to in reality. Or maybe it was that strange storm that passed through after all. Maybe it was some disturbance in the air, the dew point affecting the way I perceived things. Maybe it carried an evil wind or fog that changed people, changed the way they saw the world. For recently I have even viewed this reeking, backwater hick village I find myself now trapped in as starting to get on my nerves a little.

But whatever had happened, I was still hung-up on how. How could my feelings have changed? Why? Why a sudden and abrupt change of direction? For what purpose? For this was all I ever wanted. How did this come about? I mean, we are all horrible beasts to a degree at times - ill mannered, irrational, unkempt, a little shaggy and rough around the edges. But you have to learn to look past certain things, see beyond them from time to time, to discover the treasure of good in others, and the good things in yourself. So why did I change? For he had not changed in years. He still chased the mail carrier. Fortunately his enormous girth weighed him down to impede his ability to catch up. He still drooled and picked at the gnats and fleas in his fur. But I guess we all carry the burdens of our unrefinements and imperfections. And in knowing all this - that none of us is perfect, I wonder what had gone wrong inside of me, what had caused me to change?

His constant care did not become too much of a burden, for I loved taking care of him and our hut, carved out under a large tree, the roots growing around us. I loved mopping up after him, tossing the buckets of water on him, pulling the leeches and ticks and other parasites from him on a nightly basis. It provided a sense of purpose and structure to my life. It infused me with a sense of meaning and accomplishment. But now, I don't know, I can't figure it out. It's like I lost my car keys or something. Suddenly it was like: why don't you untangle your own fur? I know

you have a challenging job, but why don't you mop up after your own self? I just keep getting lost in the mystery of the loss of the warm safe love that we shared. How could this happen? Why? I sit and wonder until I finally look up and utter, "Honey pie, there's something I need to share with you . . . I . . . I have troubling news to tell you . . ." My husband looks up from his nightly knitting, his several arms twitching away clickity-clackity. His arms slow, and then he lowers his knitting to his massive, hairy lap. I tilt my head in loving concern.

He reaches out one of his heavy claws and says, "No, my sweetie dear, me first," he sighs, looking down, a string of cheese-like drool dangling from the middle of his lip, "This is terribly difficult for me, and the last thing I would ever want to do is hurt you in any way, but for some reason I don't seem to feel the same about our life as I once did. And to make that unfortunate matter even worse, I have met another," he slowly shakes his enormous, hairy head, "I'm so sorry, my treasure. My sweet. My life. For I did not mean to harm you in any manner whatsoever. . . I did not



mean for this to happen. This was not my intention. It was just something that suddenly happened to me. Something in the air recently. Something in the weather. Maybe that unusual storm that passed the other night, maybe that affected me in some way. I don't know. But . . . but . . . I don't know. I can't seem to find the words to describe what I'm going through," he slumps sadly on his large stool. "Regrettably, I have met another."

A shadow appears in the window, a large ragged shape.

"Who would that be this late at night?" I wonder aloud, leaning to see who is there, listening as the rough wind beats at the tiny windows. The large candle in the center of our table flickers in the draft, and part of the shape outside in the darkness is illuminated. For what do I find outside but another horrible beast, another massive, tangled mass of fur, thick muscular arms, many large bloodshot eyes dripping a creamy liquid of some kind, and great curving fangs dripping a thick drool.



"Ah, there she is," my husband sighs. "That's Wendy," he looks down in shame and embarrassment, "the one I told you about. I met her through work. Well, you know how many I deal with in a day. And she just seemed, more, I don't know, more compatible somehow, like she knew what I was thinking and what I was going through. And I was to sneak away with her tonight. But I just couldn't leave without telling you. I mean, I could always tell you anything, my treasure. And I hate spoiling the love we had with this rancid, rotting news. I am so so very very sorry. I did not intend for this to happen. It was something that just happened. I don't know why. I tried and tried to figure it all out and just couldn't," he brings one of his huge fists slamming down on the table in frustration. "I just couldn't shake these feelings surging and infesting my very being, as if bubbling up from the depths of my soul." He places his knitting on the table and stands. "I just couldn't leave a note. Not after all we've been through. Not after the life we shared. I did not want to soil that in any way," he shakes his head, his runny drool swaying from side to side. "I just couldn't leave a note," he repeats, staring down at the floor. Then he slowly, cautiously lumbers his way to the door, as if apprehensive about trying on this new and unfamiliar life that awaits him out there.

Just then a traveling minstrel dances up to our window, plucking and strumming his guitar and spinning and swirling, balancing on one leg and then bobbing high, then low, plucking and strumming, as if to give life to our failure, as if to decorate it with delicate ornamentation, as if to poke at it teasingly with a long stick of pointy music. My husband turns and jams his large, hairy mug into the window and groans a low moaning roar:



*“Raaaaauuuuggggghhhhaaaawwwlllll”* and the minstrel squeals and scampers into the darkness like a scared bug.

“What happened to us?” I stare out at it all and ask the tiny room. Then I look down to the floor. “What happened to us?” I whisper, close my eyes, and exhale in frustration.

“Maybe nothing happened . . .” my husband stops as he opens the door. He stares at the floor again. We are both staring. Staring at the distance, staring off into our respective futures, staring as to wonder, staring as to search, staring as to avoid one another, staring as to fear our own failings. “Maybe we just aren’t compatible anymore,” he sighs in resignation, “I mean, who knows why things happen? Who can ever really know for certain? . . . Goodbye my love. I realize how unfair this is, leaving this void of unknowing between us like a giant black smoky cloud we can’t seem to find our way around. I just wanted to thank you for everything, for taking care of me all these years. For I am lost in this world, lost in other people’s minds, lost in other people’s perceptions of me, never given a real good chance at things. For I am considered by what I am *not*, not ever by all that I *am*, not ever by all that I could ever be. I just wanted to let you know I appreciate everything you ever did for me – all the trillions of uncountable little things, as if each were a star hung in the sky to decorate the heavens forever. . . . Thank you for all your patience with me, my dear, for there is who I am, and then there is who I aspire to be,” he takes that last look at me as I turn away to stare into the darkness. Then he quietly closes the door behind himself, as if not to disturb that black smoky cloud between us. As if not to disturb even the tiniest of things.



# MEONIC MONSTERS: A PERFECT RUIN

(EXCERPTS FROM A FORTHCOMING BOOK)

By Vadge Moore © 2011

Author's note: The prose in this book is symbolic; it does not advocate for the murder of innocent people, rather it represents the expression of complexes of an elemental, archaic, perverse and primal need. It is the intrusion of the forces of Non-being onto the processes of manifest Becoming.

•

I do not fucking rest content within the world of ordinary urges or needs....No. I reach out for those dark whisperings of things strange and deep, vicious and perverse; those Baudelarian-Sadean powers of blackness and violence, of fathomless wells of sick lusts – outer gateways that lead to abyssal chambers of blood and flayed flesh.

I want to drink from this pit of perversity...feces, cum and sanguine juices dribbling down my chin.

I envision strange beasts scurrying around my cock, draining it of its fluid and raw energy, the energy they will use to feed the generator of electric vectors of obscene appetites for sensual violence and hate – the fuel to the fire of an aberrant machine that will smash the fucking world into bits.

Ordinary people cannot understand these queer urges because they are not sensitive, they are not in-tune with these waves of illness and morbidity radiating out from an unknown source, a vortex of salacious hungers and yearnings, a whirlpool of lasciviousness and lechery; they are utterly unaware of that which lurks only just below...and all around.

Lay your innocent little eyes upon the business man sitting at home with his perfect family; he will suddenly encounter a bizarre stimulus, a compulsion from deep down inside, and in the blink of an eye his children are not safe, the neighbors are in danger; a primitive, archaic mania makes the regular walk-a-day world a very uncertain and frightening place to be.

Beware ...or be aware. These things are here; they are intruding. The normal processes of our existence are being invaded by its antithesis and unless you can maneuver through the synthesis then you are in for some very trying times indeed.

You are all so clueless, narrow and contented...There are things that Heaven and Earth cannot explain because they come from a region that is far beyond both.

Terror and torture, torment and death, lusts and perversions, putrefaction and corruption; these are all a means to open you to wider spaces, farther frontiers—to taste exquisite morsels of desire denied to all but the few. You must embrace these things now or be reduced to nothing...because it is precisely this Nothing that is forcing itself onto our world. Embrace this abnormality, this inversion and be free to explore regions too strange to explain. Become the Monster...now.

•

Drooling, just prior to the attack...my hands dug deep into the earth. You twitch, I strike. I can see your fear exploding, popping, sparking into the atmosphere. Don't soil yourself so soon, my darling; I want to savor the sweet sense of your impending humiliation. Don't collapse into a heap just yet; give me time to enjoy your desperate panic...to roll it around my tongue, to taste its cold metallic haste. Try, with all of your might, to get away from me. I want to draw out this bestial, predatory ballet throughout the entirety of the day.

We can exchange scratches and fluids. We can endure each other's breath. We can become as uncomfortably close to one another as is pleasing to me...and horrifying to you. We'll tremble like animals—furious, frightened, ferocious and mean. I want to dent your bones with my teeth...I want our perspiration to mingle and drip...I want to struggle with you in the mud.

Let's strangle each other like serpents, sweet girl; let's race like reptiles over the earth. I must have parts of you digesting deep within my guts; your pieces will be safe, disintegrating and warm.

Scream with me. Scream as loud as you can until our throats are slashed by our sounds; until we drown in each other's blood. Until the animals that we are have been exhumed, brought to the surface and reaped, until we emerge from out of our caves, eyes red with hatred and hunger—the hair on our backs sparkling in the moon.

We'll dream and growl in exquisite pain and chart the pathways and avenues that have made us insane...place your paw within my claw and die.

•

This world is horribly degraded...it is shit. The slaves are in charge and their tiny minds can think in no other terms than safety, profit and security. We are now flowing into the great septic

pool of “civilization,” a downward sweep, a destruction of quality...the annihilation of all things.

Somehow we must amuse ourselves during this great, tragic crash; somehow we must extract tiny pleasures from this swamp. I'll do it with erotic poisons, wine and cruelty; with a keen eye towards the End, the final degradation.

You must either breathe in deeply the stench of this corpse – our world – or sob violently for the sickness that it has become. My advice? Enjoy the disease. She is an attractive, rotting pestilence – allow her to engulf you with her putrefied caresses.

Live in blood and cum and infamy and impatiently wait for a new dawn to come – to spread its red and black rays over this mean danse macabre, this ravaged earth – and wait for the buds of the next great cycle to commence.

•

Why does it feel so fucking satisfying, so comfortable when I dream of murdering, beating and eating my stable of delicious victims? Why do I feel this soft, warm glow down deep inside when I contemplate half a dozen or so of these naked fuckers – hogtied – and hanging face down from my ceiling?

In my mind they swing...like tender, bright little chandeliers...from the top of my chamber; their tears drip like dew onto my skin – like rain – like a terror-rain.

Uuuuhhh...I cum inside of my sweaty palm, again, imagining their poor, sad, frightened and muffled screams; muffled because of the strip of duct tape that has been carefully placed across their rose-pink lips.

To make them swing more violently, I batter their little skulls with my fists. To make them scream more piercingly I bite deeply into their soft, delicate private parts. I savor their flesh, my teeth evoking their blood, my saliva slides along with this crimson paste.

I split open one of these victim's bellies and squirm with pleasure as the pale body bounces in pain, sending spurts of blood and viscera onto my head, trickling down my shoulders like a warm shawl...running across my naked flesh, moistening my hard cock as I stroke it over and over again.

Oh, these horrible reveries; I can't stop indulging in them. I can almost taste these wretches beautiful pain...so damn sweet. I fear that if I stop these perverted imaginings of mine that one day I may actually find one of these darlings trapped in my chambers---suspended from my

ceiling...afraid and crying; then I would have gone too far and there would be no chance of my letting them go.

Then I would have to indulge fully in these imaginings, I would have to feed this sick beast inside of me and then there would be no turning back.

I'll stick to these reverie's and I will not allow the materialization of my perversions to come to pass...for now.

•

I drink the champagne from your cunt; my semen and your nectar mix with the booze. I slice the tip of my finger with a shard of broken glass and slip it slowly into your hole; a beautiful, bloody, bubbly amber and crimson elixir.

I chew on your clit and you squirm against the cuffs holding you firmly to the bed posts. It's been almost a week now; the room is a mess and is beginning to smell, but room service keeps bringing us more food, alcohol and water.

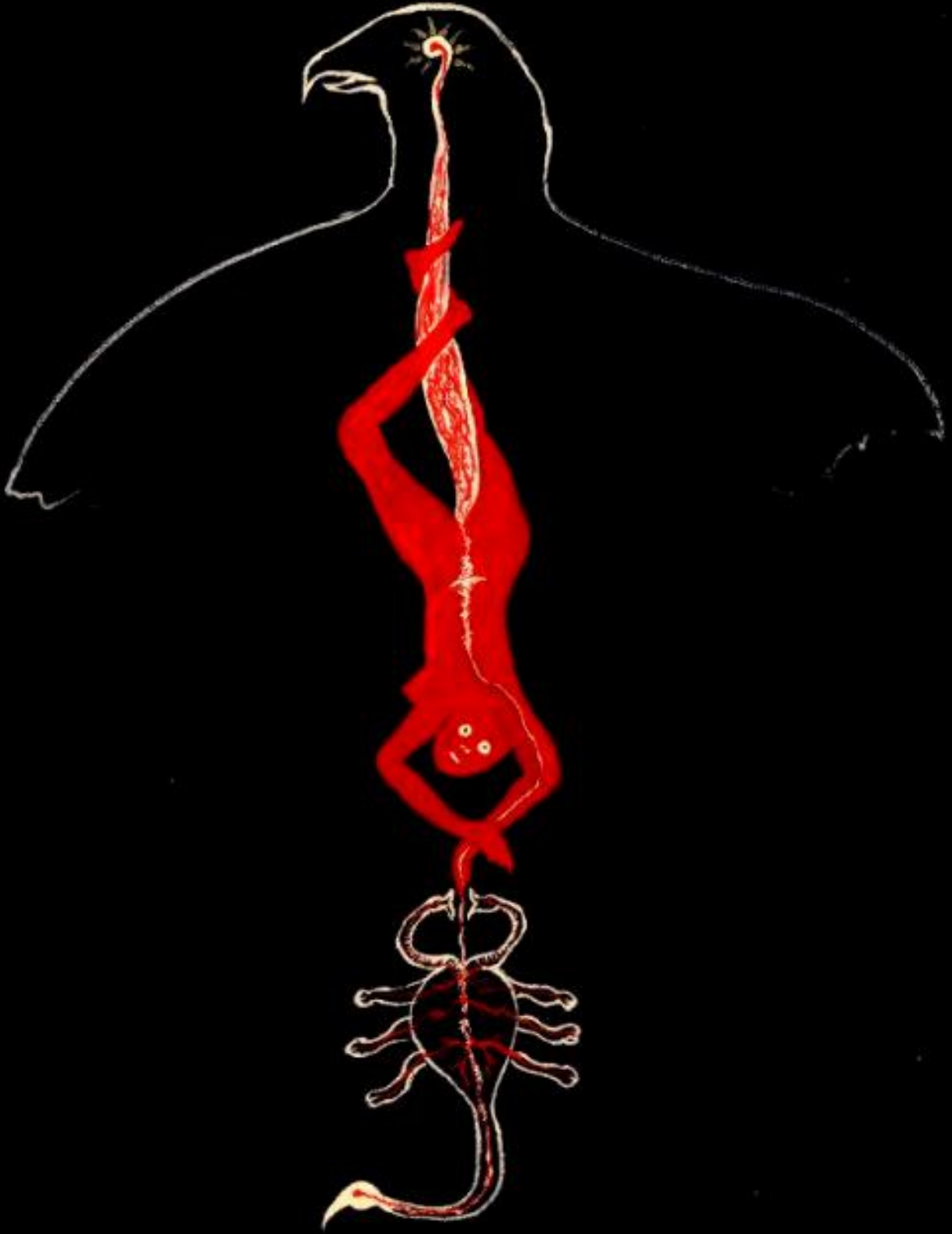
My card is still valid—the bill keeps ticking away with no end in sight. But there is going to have to be an end to this...eventually.

You don't cry for help when the servant leaves the food cart at the door; they don't call the police even with the constant flow of screaming and crying coming from our room. I think they have left the rooms surrounding ours empty on purpose; they are probably being charged to my card. I guess money can buy you anything—even crime; especially crime.

I wonder if they would haul your body away with the same professional indifference that they will clean this room after I'm done...just taking out the trash.

I am going to have to end these festivities soon, this gala we have fashioned...you and I. I am going to miss you, dear. Perhaps we'll bump into each other in our next incarnations; perhaps you'll see my eyes and recognize some kind of subliminal horror, some barely perceptible memory of terror and pain; and perhaps you'll be drawn to me again, knowing full well that I will take you outside of yourself, to catch a glimpse of something we all should know; that there is a territory between life and death that we can all see...if we simply accept the invitation to die.

DOLCEROSA (A)





## PLAY IT LIKE YOU MEAN IT

### A CONVERSATION WITH PETER AARON

By dixē.flatlin3

Photos © Keith Marlow

I must be honest, I was going to attempt to write an introduction that would be worthy of the subject matter, until I stumbled upon the brilliant words of The Chrome Cranks themselves. As deadlines are looming (ok, I blew the deadline weeks ago) and things are on hold until this is in, I will use the synopsis from their Kickstarter page:

*"THE WORLD NEEDS TO KNOW: THE CHROME CRANKS ARE BACK WITH A BLAST! After 15 years New York City's underground rock legends the Chrome Cranks are back – and ready to once again kick the world square in its soft, pathetic, and pain-deserving ass. In 2009 and 2010, the band's best and best-known lineup of vocalist/guitarist Peter Aaron, guitarist William Weber, drummer Bob Bert, and bassist Jerry Teel reunited for the making of Ain't No Lies in Blood, the band's first*

*album of new recordings since 1997. Recorded in Upstate New York with producer Kevin McMahon (Swans, the Walkmen, Titus Andronicus) and featuring eye-gouging cover art by Swans/Angels of Light leader Michael Gira, it's a devastating masterpiece of which we're extremely proud."*

I deferred the review of the album to someone with a broader knowledge of music than I because I truly know fuck-all. Their response was glowingly positive and composed of nothing more than the following string of words that feel appropriate:

Shamanic - blues - reductionist - Sabbath - Raw Power - Primal/primitive - Amygdala - Reptile Brain - Old Testament - visceral - Cro Magnon - Armageddon - righteous - revolution - jumping aboard some other fuckers' revolution is better than nuthin - 2012 pyramidiots - pagan Yankee  
(Mitchell 2012)

I had the pleasure of speaking with Peter Aaron several weeks ago. I prefaced our conversation with the disclaimer that I am mostly a writer of fiction and not a conductor of interviews. However, I do enjoy talking to people and what follows is the result of my curiosity. Mr. Aaron was kind enough to play along and indulge my slightly askew methodology.

**dixē.flatlin3:** *In doing research for this interview I discovered that you were once Journalism major and are presently a journalist. How long have you been writing in this capacity?*

**Peter Aaron:** I've been a music editor for an arts magazine called Chronogram, which is local magazine in the Hudson Valley of upstate New York for the past six years. Prior to that I was a music columnist for a daily newspaper here locally for three years. I was also a copy editor at a weekly paper in New Jersey before that. So, I guess I've been doing this for about ten years now. I never finished Journalism school; I wanted to get more involved in music, so I dropped out after two years. I sort of got into it again because the Chrome Cranks broke up in '98, I was trying to figure out what to do next and I've always been comfortable with the written word. It seemed like a natural transition. Took a bit of soul-searching, a bit of 'what the fuck am I going to next,' I didn't go straight into journalism.

*It seems like a natural progression. How long have you been involved with The Chrome Cranks?*

William, the other guitarist, and I started the band in Ohio where we are from. We were just kind of jamming around with different people, not really playing out, I would say 1988, might have even been late '87. Our first show was in Cincinnati, opening for Pussy Galore. Which is ironic, because later on Pussy Galore's drummer, Bob Bert, became our drummer. So that was a full-circle thing. So that is where The Chrome Cranks started. Personally, I have been involved in music and punk rock, or whatever you want to call it, jeez, since I was 15. Before I lived in

Ohio I spent most of my early years in Morris County, New Jersey. Which is about half-an-hour outside of New York and I was in one of the first hardcore bands in New Jersey. I was taking the bus into New York and going to Max's Kansas City and CBGBs. It has been a long, long journey. (laughs)

*Howard Wuelfing sent me the latest album and I can definitely hear New York City in it.*

It's weird, because we all live in four different states now and Bob actually lives in Hoboken, New Jersey and grew up in New Jersey area, just outside of the city. He did live in New York for a little bit and has always been a part of the New York scene. The rest of us have all lived there for long periods of time, but the other three of us live elsewhere now. Jerry, our bass player lives in Virginia now and is from the South originally. William is back in Cincinnati, where he and I are from. I guess it's the kind of thing where we all gravitated to New York, before the band really got going, because we were moved by the music and art that was going on in New York. Even when you leave there, it is always going to be a part of you and will come out in some way. Although, it is interesting, I was doing an interview last week and I was asked about if I thought we embodied the "New York sound," and it's kind of weird. New York has always had an attitude, but I am not sure to what degree it exists now, but specifically a sound? Speaking just within rock, the New York sound is everything from The Velvet Underground to Bush Tetras to Sonic Youth to Heart Attack to Television to the New York hardcore scene. It is an extremely diverse sound and they are all very different from each other and everything else.

*The New York City music scene was very experimental in the 70s and early 80s. I never lived there, but I paid attention to it. Now there seems to be a resurgence of nostalgia and interest in the scene, with the release of numerous documentaries regarding the New York City underground mythos.*

I guess the thing with New York, while there are exceptions, is bands like The Ramones and the New York Dolls, those guys were born and bred in New York, but for the most part New York is composed of people that come from other places for the art scene. Obviously New York itself is built upon waves and waves of immigrants, from all over, and the melting pot vibe resonates there. There are so many outside cultural influences; it is definitely hard to say what embodies the New York sound. At different times there have been bands, which represent what was happening at a specific time, the whole No-Wave movement and that sound. Then there was the arty-funk sound shortly after that, in the early 80s with the Bush Tetras and Konk, and obviously you have the hardcore wave. Which varied greatly from what was going on in New Jersey or Connecticut or outside the more suburban areas of California. New York hardcore was angrier and meaner, more desperate and harsh. Then you had Sonic Youth and The Swans and



that entire era. I definitely agree that there were certain times when there was a ground swell of a particular collective aesthetic that could be perceived as a “New York sound.”

*I differentiate the sounds between what I grew up with: Suicidal Tendencies, Black Flag, The Germs, Circle Jerks, The Vandals, Fear, The Dickies, and it does have a different sound that my ear recognizes as Southern Californian. I can typically tell when something is not homegrown. But you are definitely right, we do not have 30° below winters in Southern California, so circumstances are different. Have you seen any of the recent documentaries?*

I saw *American Hardcore*, but I found it very flawed. It’s too myopically focused on certain scenes, Boston, in particular. And there’s not enough variety, there’s not enough of an explanation of what made certain key bands unique. It makes it seem like all the bands sounded the same, which wasn’t the case. There’s also that one ostensibly about no wave, *Kill Your Idols*, which I haven’t seen. I have heard some negative reviews, specifically from Bob Bert, who came out of that scene, with Sonic Youth. His main complaint being about the inclusion of more recent bands that were supposed to be descendants of, or emblematic of, what was influenced by the scene but really had nothing to do with it.

*The reason I mentioned it is because I am fascinated by the effects mass media has had on the industry. We have never experienced a generation that is a product of the proliferation of mass media and seem to have no interest or foundation in genuine influences. With your experience as a musician and a journalist, what affect do you think mass media has had on your business as a whole?*

Are you talking more about the Internet and digital media, or the entertainment side?

*Digital media is a facet of it. I am more speaking to the Business Intelligence aspects of what appears to be the current model labels adhere to. The use of analyst predictions and measuring by metrics seems to have allowed labels to identify a particular music style and/or image that sells and they are not willing to take a chance outside of this proven model.*

It’s obviously been good and bad. It is good in a sense that it levels the playing field for independent artists, which is what most artists are now. Making it easier to reach a wider audience and promote your band. The down side is that it fosters this hyper-short attention span with people who are following music. You would think that it would overall be a great thing, because you can find more music, which it certainly is in that aspect. However, it seems that it is harder than ever to focus on one artist. I hate to talk about “well when I was growing up and getting into music,” I try to consciously not do that, because it doesn’t apply to now. But it was great to think for a while about what record you were going to buy. Something you heard was good or had read about in *Creem*<sup>TM</sup>. There would be a lot of thought beforehand and once you got the record, you would spend time with it, get to know it more intimately and connect

more on a deeper level with the artist. Even if that meant that you listened to something and decided you couldn't get into it, you at least gave it a good chance. These days it's song-by-song and you're lucky if you can get someone discovering your music on the Internet to listen to one song all the way through. To me, that sort of makes it difficult for an artist to sustain any kind of interest and it makes music much more disposable. I really don't buy instant music digitally, I don't buy downloads or MP3s. I don't know, if I was in a situation where I used my iPod more frequently then perhaps I would. It just seems to me that someone will buy one song at a time and if they don't like it, they delete it. It's a constant, never-ending flow and I don't understand how you can connect with anything that's constantly in motion that way. But that's just the way things are. I can't do anything about it. I have no doubt that there were people like me, in earlier generations, who didn't understand the microgroove LP in 1945, who were use to listening to 78s, one side at a time, and it seemed like too much. Prior to that, radio came in and musicians felt threatened by the idea that free radio access to music would put them out of work. That didn't happen and they were able to promote themselves better that way. There are some parallels there with the Internet. I don't know if any that answers your question or not. (laughs)

*Absolutely, I believe it is all driven by big business in an attempt to commodify everything. Now, we are dealing with a generation of kids who bill themselves, as the "most evolved" generation and I believe they are fast food, consumption machines with the attention span of a sound byte, which is why things can go "viral."*

I agree, one-hundred-percent. That's just the way it is, the genie is out of the bottle, and I don't think there's any way to reverse that. I think the whole game has changed and a lot of that is obviously the corporate controlled entities and the digital distribution mechanisms that are in place now. It would be healthier to cut them out of the picture and I believe that will happen, here and there, but that whole way of business stinks and I don't like it either. I totally see it and it makes me angry when I really think about it. Especially the way everything gets cheapened and people are not use to paying for music anymore. I think that's what burns me more than anything, you know? You'll put a record out and it gets shared, people steal it and it gets shared for free. Yeah, we used to make mix tapes and tape albums for each other when I was growing up and that's how we learned about a lot of great music that moved me and continues to do so. But someone, somewhere would buy the album. (laughs) There was still more personal involvement with that method, you were turning people on to other things, you would meet people in the flesh and get a cassette to them. Even with CDs there was more of that personal investment element. I think people take stuff for granted now and everything's cheapened. I one-hundred-percent agree, but I just don't know if there is any real solution to it. It's one of those things where we can all complain about it and maybe people will be more respectful because of that, but we cannot put the genie back in the bottle.

*I don't believe any music label is willing to invest in a band now. I frequently hear from independent acts that because their sound is not easily marketed, the labels are not willing to make any type of substantial investment into them, which makes no sense to me when their business is supposed to be marketing art. The days of the over-produced concept albums are definitely long gone.*

That's always been going on. There's a lot of great, iconic music that was ahead of its time and has had a lasting influence, with people just discovering it now. The Velvet Underground is a perfect example of that, Captain Beefheart definitely faced the "we don't know how to market you or fit you in," conundrum and they ate dirt for the time that they were together because of that. I think that is always going to go on to some degree. But you're right, that's the way the marketing machine works. Once one thing is successful they will quickly try to replicate it, at that corporate, major label level and flood the market with similar products just to make a quick buck. But the days of the concept albums are definitely long gone, just from an economic standpoint. With file-sharing and what have you, there's just not enough money coming in to support being hole up in some six-million dollar studio, at the top of a mountain and taking three weeks to get a bass drum sound. I think that's good, I like a lot of high-concept music, but I am more inclined toward music that is more in the moment, at least for rock and roll. More in the moment and less produced, more immediate. The new Chrome Cranks record was produced in three days. (laughs)

*And that is common that is typically the norm.*

It depends on the style. I think usually it takes longer than three days, but there is nothing on the level of some Yes album that took two years to track.

*I definitely miss record stores and vinyl. What vinyl offerings does the Chrome Cranks currently have?*

Our latest album *Ain't No Lies in Blood* came out on vinyl on a Spanish label, Bang! Records. Really great label, they did a fantastic job with it. We did an anthology with them called *The Murder of Time*, which is kind of a Best-of The Chrome Cranks, with a couple of rarities thrown in. They released that as a double LP with a nice gatefold package. They've also done a really nice Jeffrey Lee Pierce anthology with another release for him coming up. Mudhoney and Kim Salmon have also released vinyl through them. They have a really good reputation.

*I frequently hear that the American market is ridiculous compared to the European market. Has that been your experience as well?*

Oh yeah, absolutely. We toured Europe much more extensively in the 90s than we ever did over here. There is someone in France who is organizing a Chrome Cranks tribute album and there is a cover band over that that performs our songs.

*I saw that the album is called **Collision Blues**?*

Yes, that's one of our early B-sides. America has always been this way. Europe is much more receptive to the edgier, more adventurous music that has come from America. Certainly a lot of fantastic American jazz musicians were much more celebrated in places like France than over here.

*Yes, Europe is known for its extensive festival circuit and America has maybe a handful of yearly events.*

Obviously America has always been more focused on making a profit than making art. Whereas in Europe, if you're an artist, you're considered a special, gifted person and there is financial support readily available to help you along. Certainly the economic downturn and austerity measures have impacted this, but in America if you're exclusively an artist you're considered a bum or a deadbeat and you need to go out and get a real job. A lot of the clubs we would play in Europe were subsidized by the governments to give the kids something to do, to stay out of trouble. In America it's pretty much "you're on your own kid," or put a remote control in their hands.

*The European distribution market seems to be booming with vinyl sales and the American market has stalled.*

There is definitely a resurgence of vinyl in America and worldwide, which is great, but it sells much better in Europe. However, our American distributor is having a hard time moving just CDs. The market is moving more towards digital release or vinyl and away from CDs. But I don't know if the vinyl is going to stick around, as everything seems to be moving towards a purely digital release platform

*I believe that American kids are embracing vinyl more and more and, as strange as it sounds, it is going to take some time to catch on. (space here)They are becoming more cognizant of the sound quality and developing an appreciation for it. I don't know if it will ever become mainstream again, but it gives me hope.*

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. It will always come down to the music, while it pains me to say that, being a sick vinyl collector myself, if something isn't released in a physical format it doesn't appeal to me. But I am old school and it will always come down to the music for me. I hope that

it will ultimately fuel the live music market. It's cool to make a great record and piece of art or great recording, I should say, because it's always going to be there. There's nothing that can replace live music and seeing a live performance. So no matter what format music is ultimately delivered in, as long as people continue to go out and see live performances because of it, then I think things will be ok. Though I'd hate to see vinyl become obsolete.

*I have always made the effort to support band through going to gigs and purchasing merchandise, because I knew they were more likely to see profits from this than an album that I might have purchased. I noticed you have a Kickstarter campaign starting, do you also have a tour planned?*

We do, but the Kickstarter campaign is to raise funds for our publicist Howard. That stems from the record labels that we were on in the 90s used to provide publicists and now they are struggling just to put the albums out. So, we are left to promote it ourselves basically. Obviously, we do not have the connections or resources to promote it ourselves. So this is a cool way to do it. We are offering some really cool packages through it as well. (Note: their Kickstarter campaign has ended and we are happy to say their goal was exceeded!)

*I find it very interesting that this aspect of the business has been handed-off to the artists. It is almost as if the labels are saying "well, you figure it out." And I completely appreciate the ingenuity and risk that some independent acts have undertaken. I recently went to a gig where the artist had various packages available and it allowed the consumer to purchase their level of access. Which makes total sense, because meet-and-greets are standard through PR agents, so why not get paid for it?*

There's more of a personal connection that way. When people are getting something exclusive and signed, there's definitely a feeling that the bands are more directly involved with the release and marketing of their music and you are actively involved in supporting acts you enjoy.

*At this point the public seems to expect this level of interaction, whether it be through social media or public appearances. It was once common for bands to take the stage and then somewhat disappear afterward*

Yeah, definitely getting out there and selling the merch and meeting people. It is really crucial to do that nowadays, especially at the level of a band like ours. From a fan standpoint, I think it would be really cool.

*We ventured away from the topic, but is there a tour in the works?*

It looks like we might do some gigs in New York in the late summer or early fall and we are hoping to get on some European festivals next season. The record is getting more attention now

and generating more interest. However, even the European festivals have taken a hit from the economic downturn and there is less money to work with now. As have the clubs. Everything is downsizing. For the most part we haven't been actively touring for a while. I mean, we are older now and spread out. Our drummer's wife passed away recently and he had to focus on taking care of her for the past several years. Most of us have day jobs and families and commitments.

*Oh yeah, it's not easy to just jump in a van and go on tour now.*

Yeah, we're not 20-whatever anymore. But that's fine if we can do some abbreviated things here and there and get it to pay for itself. We're not out to be rock stars, we just want to do what we do and let the people who want to see us, see us, not lose any money doing it and keep it fun. I am very happy with that and I am very proud of the new record. I really don't hear any other bands doing what we are doing presently. It seems like, by-and-large people, who weren't around when we were active don't realize that you can play music like you really mean it, put your whole being into it. That music doesn't have to be cerebrally over-analyzed like its some kind of art project.

*You can have fun.*

Yeah, you can play it like you mean it. There's a lot of trying to adhere to an archetype. I think it is good to be connected to a tradition, but when bands are trying to do what they think they are supposed to do, drinking from the gene pool they just peed into, sort of just regurgitating something...

*I use the word regurgitated a lot with regard to modern culture. I love that word and it seems appropriate because it has become like accelerated cell division, it's happening too quick. Something is influencing something else without having the foundation to be a true influence, if that makes any sense?*

Yeah, that definitely makes sense in certain cases. You can have peers, or contemporary influences, like the Beatles and the Stones and the Beach Boys all influenced each other at the time. Not to compare the Chrome Cranks to that, but our idiom that we work within is not unprecedented, we didn't come out of a vacuum, and there are recognizable influences in what we do. However, how we filter those influences, through who we are and they way it comes out, make it singular. At least that's my intention and how I approach it when I'm creating music. But I see a lot of music now that slavishly tries to stay within a norm and emulate something else. That's how you learn to do what you do and it's ok to do for a certain amount of time in development, but I guess I feel like our new record is very honest and very much a reflection of who we are. I think it's the hardest, heaviest, nosiest, nastiest record that we've

ever made. For a group of guys who range from their late-40s to mid-60s, I think that's shocking. (laughs)

*It's definitely very raw and powerful.*

Yeah, that was the intention. We were able to just play and that's how it came out. It just seems like some of the bands don't even think to do that, don't feel like they need to do that. I think that there is some great stuff happening but what we typically get assaulted with is usually crap.

*I couldn't agree more.*

**Chrome Cranks on the Web:**

<http://www.myspace.com/chromecranks>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Chrome-Cranks/122677111755>

**To Purchase Chrome Cranks Albums:**

<http://www.bang-records.net>

<http://www.thicksyruprecords.net>



# TIME'S CHANGING 16

## *(FUCK IT DUDE)*

By Danny Baker

The Age of Aquarius just went into retrograde. Finger nails are chewed at a feverish pace. Sweat drips from angst driven brows. The non-violent turn bloodthirsty. The bloodthirsty introvert, dying cowards' thousand deaths. Rolling seas of swaying hip-tall wheat grass bordering babbling brooks under watchful eyes of red tail hawks offer no refuge. Seas, brooks and hawks disappeared in a vapor cloud. Yet the babbling continues. Incessantly. In Beverly Hills cafés and under its hair dryers and in pizza joints and tattoo shops or by water cooler transmission and text, the babbling continues. Incessantly. The beat lost its rhythm. Incomprehensible banality its replacement. The house is in direct path of a typhoon which hopefully doesn't hit before Real Stories of the Highly Moronic airs.

A grand edifice still in infancy is demolished. Progress, they call it. I guess it's in the eye of the beholder. Squawk squawk squawk, the needle's stuck and we're all too tired to clean the record. A putrid aroma fills the sky as directives, missives, invectives and the like are sent flaming upon the people by the people. The highest floors of the ivory tower fall farthest, though those on the lower eat the brunt of mass, suffering expected consequences. Nobody's cleaning those records. Truth breaks glass structures. And the wolves are guarding the coop. Why clean a fucking thing? Even the socially numb from up high know that in the clean up lays the risk. It's better we don't know, you say. Fuck it. You're right. Ask Tricky Dick.

Velvet ropes line boulevards and side streets. Fronting establishments once the purview of bars still referred to as establishments. Where smoke lingered somewhere between hand held fans and tracheotomies. Where drunks sat just to get even and kick tremors. Comfort zones for those who lurk as the moon reaches its apex, gangsters, fading stars or those who never shone, the beaten, used, abused, drug riddled downtrodden and rest of the outcast hordes and post conflict children of a war turned in upon itself. Where some people may have known your name. Or not. A place of juke boxes singing the shit you wanna hear. Perhaps a live act for the vampire crowd. The occasional bar fight. Gone. Progress, they say. Bullshit. Though employment opportunities for nose tackles that didn't make the cut improved greatly.

"Fuck it Dude, let's roll," no longer has a lane. A dream is planted six feet under. Thirty years erased. Eminent domain. A new school with all accouterments desired by them in charge of desiring them, met by children acting poorly as expected. Products of nature and nurture. It takes a village is on vacation. Eyes blinded by green handouts spend green handouts like a



Marine platoon in a Bangkok whorehouse. The sieve is working day and night and can't keep up. Why then the dismal display of our progeny? Want a government quality education? Leave it to the suits (Tricky Dick sneaks in again). They're certain to meet expectations. This, the ends to a man's existence as he's known himself three decades in the making. Progress, they say. Bullshit. Ask The Dude. Better still, ask the former owner of the Holly Star Lanes. At least the kids can get lied to, bullied, bully others and in general, shape the dismal die from which their likely repugnant lives will be cast in great comfort. Next stop, The Ambassador on Wilshire. We all know education is about location location location.

Prisons overflow with the byproduct of a prison/government-control/ industrial/fear complex. If we can't get them on what we've got, we'll make a new law. Enough of them on the books and we can get anyone for something. Expanded powers aren't met by expanding walls but walls exploding at the seams as contractors work in haste to construct more cages for human beings...at a rabid clip. As in we must have fucking rabies to allow this to continue. What else to explain the insanity? What else grabs at our closets, tugs on our own misdeed, demanding retribution for our own transgressions to find absolution via one word cast upon another for our own sin? Guilty. As are we all. As the well shielded lawmakers, protesting too much. The original 'tell', indicative of their own status as lawbreakers. Prison guard henchmen rallying for more and harsher sentences with dollar signs in beady eyes. A populace, so afraid, so naïve, unabashedly throwing rights to those in absolute power. Those who prove the cliché. Progress...yeah. Tell it to the judge.

Resting in a nook. A stack of children's books by my side. Dinosaur outside the window. Mesopotamia is bustling with activity. Merchants bartering their goods. Genies escape lanterns. Cast daisies upon the masses. Thickets of redwood and sequoia host brilliant caterpillars which turn majestic butterfly in an instant. Ruby slippers return to Dorothy as she trips out in the poppies. Winged monkeys crash head on into one another. Mickey's conducting the symphony of all symphonies as the inebriated galaxy watches blurry eyed from boxes above stage. And a thousand horses run free through painted desert. Julie Andrews' voice never cracks. Marianne Faithfull's never stops and the chipmunks are singing in key. Victoria's secret is no longer secret. Blissful is slumber when in the sandman's good graces. It never lasts. I awake to a maturity for which I never asked. Knowing more than I wish. Feeling more than I'd like to admit. Perspiration flows not in sleep, but in nightmare reality. Progress. "Fuck it, Dude."



## PINCHED

By A. Razor

March 22, 2004, Marin County Sheriff, Marin City Sub-Station

*On 3/22/04, at 0252 hours, I was driving a marked Sheriff's patrol vehicle on Shoreline Highway in Mill Valley. I observed a purple sedan driving on Shoreline Highway. The license plate light of the sedan was not working, which is a violation of CVC 24601. I initiated a traffic stop on the sedan and approached the driver.*

A few days before this arrest report began I was in Los Angeles trying to force life to happen and just not getting the desired results. I wanted to be planting a new crop back up in Marin County, but I was trying to tie up loose ends that just wouldn't tie up or end well no matter how I tied them. I was coming back into consciousness in Venice Beach, in a backyard bungalow at 7<sup>th</sup> and Brooks, laying out on a futon with two naked young ladies. They were both still passed out and barely breathing, so there was a near stillness and the only sound was a lone, buzzing fly trapped near the skylight and birds chirping outside the window. I wiggled my toes to test my reflexes and slowly maneuvered to get out of the entanglement of sheets and bodies. The young ladies and myself had been in each other's company for 3 days straight, going on the 4<sup>th</sup>, and I was not having any luck with any of my pursuits, which I knew was due, in part, to my lack of focus. On the other hand, I knew that I was in a holding pattern and that I

had to do something to take the edge off of the endless waiting and inherent risk in my moment to moment existence.

I was finishing a script doctoring, dialog fixing job for this low budget concern that wanted to make a compelling crime drama. I had always wanted to be a real scriptwriter, but could never make the inroad despite my best efforts. Mainly due to the fact that all my best efforts in life, in general, were devoted to procuring, producing, transporting and selling of what society deemed "narcotics". Some of which were actual narcotics, but mostly what I dealt with was wrongly labeled as such and this was the basis for the existence of the infamous "War On Drugs", which meant I was leading a life somewhat similar to that of a refugee war criminal in my own homeland. Hustling bags of contraband around for profit was the only way I could stay ahead of the curve as it bent against me more and more over the years. The more I reaped, the more I sowed. I had avoided serious prison time and death on many occasions, settling for serious wounds and months to a couple of years of incarceration instead. The reality of this world was you are only as good as your last deal, and my last couple of deals weren't that good. Sometimes you make the low-profit, quick deal to keep it moving, but I had been doing more of that than the large cash and carry deals for a while. I was getting worn down and the thing about it is, the risk is the same no matter what the profit margin is. That thought alone was enough to drive me into purposeful moments of temporary madness. The only treatment I knew of was a self-prescribed regimen of drugs, alcohol, sex and gambling. Along with some retail therapy, usually in stolen goods that different provocateurs I had business relationships with had on hand. The thing was this madness caused a hole in my world that was getting bigger by the moment and was rapidly harder to fill no matter how much I attempted to satiate its demand. I was really worried about it. It was interfering with my edge, my trained nerves, my ability to conduct business and, most importantly, my intuitive judgment ability. I was coming undone as I looked at my reflection in the window pane outside the bungalow and let a long flow of piss shoot into the Bougainvillea that grew up the side of the wall and past the roof. Its thin and thorny branches framing my raggedy features and deepened eye sockets. I was shaken by the vision and I knew I had to get it together. I had to take stock of my situation and pull the trigger on whatever decision I could to get me back in a better position. I had to make a move now.

As I quietly crept back inside, trying not to disturb the girls so I could have a moment of quiet meditation with which to assess my circumstances, I began by carefully noticing the wreckage at my feet and immediate area. My eyes were moving slowly about the room as I gently lowered myself into the papasan chair with a multi-colored blanket from Tijuana wrapped around my nakedness. There were overflowing ashtrays, empty and half empty beer can and bottles of several different brands, some spilled out on their sides. There were fast food bags overflowing with garbage that I could see little freeways of ants coming and going into. There were baggies, cups, folds of wax paper and folds cut out of porn mags as well as those smaller "coin" bags strewn all about. There was an M5 mini oxygen tank that had been full of 162 liters of nitrous the day before. In the middle of the floor was a futon and laying quietly on the futon,

in such deep of a sleep that you could barely see their bellies rise and fall, were Wanda and Candy. Both were blonde girls with physical features that screamed a lifetime at the beach, lifetime in this case being 23 and 20 respectively. Candy was more pale, since she had driven down from Northern California with me a week earlier and was not an aggressive tanner like Wanda, who lived in Huntington Beach with one of my old employees, who resembled Wanda when she was 23, and who had turned her life in the Southern California sex industry into an Orange County Republican real estate wet dream. She liked having Wanda stay in her overpriced HB tract home to keep her company and augment the cost of hair and nail salons, bikinis con waxing, tanning beds and shoes with sunglasses as accessories. These two girls could not be more different in lifestyle and beliefs, but yet they had never argued or disagreed once in the last 3 days. Like they were best friends forever. Everything has its expiration date, though, and I knew that this carton of milk had the potential to go sour real quick. I had to make a move to avoid any dull drama that might have young girls raise their voice in public. It was time to make that move, definitely.

My stomach was not well and neither was my head. I took a deep breath through my nose after assessing the immediate situation and I felt a bit dizzy from the stench of all the different smells invading my nostrils. The booze spilled out everywhere, the different kinds of smoke and gas, the smell of prolonged sexual sweat and emissions. It was the binge smorgasbord and it was heavy in the air of the room. I reached down to the nearest ashtray and fished around until I found a blunt roach that was about the size of the last joint on my pinky finger. I also retrieved one of the several lighters strewn across the floor and then remembered how many times I couldn't find a lighter in the haze of the previous evening. The paradox of the errant lighter is never ending. I spark the roach and take a big, coughing hit and do my best to hold it. Candy stirred first, like I had figured she would. She had grown up around weed deals and hippies north of the Golden Gate and she physically craved marijuana upon waking worse than anyone I had ever met. Her long, slender 5'8" was sprawled out in a twist of limbs that hid pubic and breast area well enough to photograph. I had no film in my camera, but I put it up to my eye and pulled focus on her in the early morning light just to see what it might look like. Just as I put the camera down, Wanda rolled her on her back, still completely comatose, but exposing her muscular abdomen to a ray of sunlight that jutted into the room. I look through the SLR and just focus on her belly, which had a cursive "Featherwood" tattoo across it. She had been with a guy who was doing time and she got the ink before he went in to show her commitment to him. Both of these girls had an appetite for a hedonistic release that matched my own and that was our conspiracy for the last couple of days together. For me, though, it was time to get back in action and make something happen. I got up and moved over to the bed. I stood over the girls for a moment and then bent down to move my pillow to the side. Underneath it was my Para-Ordnance .45 which I quickly scooped up and took over to my backpack by the papasan. I check the magazine and the round in the chamber before I slip the pistol into its hidden compartment in the backpack. As I zip it up, Candy sits up with a slight moan. I reach in the backpack and pull out a green tin that has bud in it. I toss the tin next to her on the futon and then I throw a

Swisher Sweet that bounces of the top of the tin and practically in her lap. She quickly snatches it up and begins peeling it and preparing it to make a proper blunt. She is barely awake, but the actions are second nature to her.

*I contacted the driver and identified him with his California driver's license. As I spoke with the driver I could immediately smell the strong odor of marijuana coming from the vehicle. I asked him if he had a medicinal medical card. He said he used to have one, but could not find it. He said it might even be expired. I asked him if he had any marijuana in the car. He said yes. I asked him how much marijuana was in the car. He said about a half an ounce. I asked where it was. He said it was in his shirt pocket. I asked if I could see it. He reached into the left breast pocket of his shirt and pulled out a clear plastic baggie with appeared to be marijuana in it. I inspected the baggie and discovered it contained 5 individually packaged baggies. Three were sandwich sized baggies with each containing 3.6 grams of marijuana. Two were 2 inch by 2 inch and each of these contained 1.3 grams of marijuana each. See property sheet for evidence items BC1-BC1E1. A DMV check revealed he had a suspended license. I asked him if he knew his license had been suspended. He said yes. I arrested him and placed him in the back of my patrol car.*

While Candy rolled the blunt I began to check my cell phones. The 415 phone had 6 missed calls, the 213 phone had none. My 718 phone had a text message, but no calls. This was frustrating. There was 5,000 dollars that I needed to nail down, but it just wasn't coming together. I couldn't wait it out anymore, I had to go back up north and begin the planting. The previous harvest had been plagued with problems and this was a do or die year. I had to bust ass to get the plants in the ground that were ready and get another battery of clones rooted. I had 5 pounds left to sell here in LA, but I couldn't wait any longer. I was going to have to leave Candy with the 5 pack and hope for the best. She was loyal to a point, but she was a lifetime stoner raised by Deadhead drug smugglers. She had a tendency to be flakey and slow when it suited her. Wanda had to work the weekend at 4 Play and she was not going to be any help at all since she had just re-upped on GHB and was planning on losing herself in debacle only to hopefully come out of it on Sunday morning with a pile of cash. I had made enough money at the beginning of the week on a couple of ounces of pure MDMA that I had pressed into about a thousand pills and sold the rest or did it with the girls. It was lucrative, but a pain in the ass dealing with these petty house party idiots. I had some other irons in the fire, but all for amounts that didn't add to much more than a G here and a G there. I needed more cash to put a shipment of mids together for New York and pay rent on my compound in Marin County. I had to keep it moving. I was avoiding selling blow, but if I had to go to the cokeheads for money then it was just what I would have to do. Fuck it.

"Ok, daddy, ready to smoke, should I wake up big sis?" asked Candy in her most perverse little girl voice.

"Nah, she finished off a lot of booze with her G after a lot of nitrous. She needs to be left alone. Look, I have to go up north for a few days and I need you to babysit the herb until the Armo gets his bread together. You have to placate this producer for me, too. He likes you, so let him

take you out to dinner. He is low budget, though, so don't go blowing him or anything. Just keep him on ice till I get back so I can maybe get him to cut me in on this movie deal. I got to try to get some legitimate hustle going and if I can get a screen credit for the work I am doing it might help."

Candy looks up at me like every word was a foreign language, which is her demeanor most of the time, but I know there is an evil machine of revenge working beneath that faux hippie exterior. As she passes me the blunt and I take in the chocolate skunkiness of it she blurts out "If you leave me behind then I don't get to give you road head on the ride back." She does a fake pout to exaggerate the statement. I take a big hit of the blunt and almost choke on the comedy. When I pass it back to her she looks like a greedy kid taking the last of the candy. They named her perfectly.

"I can't have everything, princess. I gotta go now. Let Wanda sleep as long as she can. She has a big weekend. Don't do anymore E, just stick to weed. I don't want to come back and you are all tweaked out and useless." I rise up and put on pants and hoodie with a t-shirt in it. As I slip on my flip-flops I say, "It wouldn't hurt to clean this place up, either." As I head out the door she jumps up and runs to give me a kiss. As I walk to the car I figure that if I make the Grapevine before noon, I'll be alright.

*I requested a tow truck to store the vehicle per CVC 22651(h) and performed an inventory search of the vehicle. I found three cell phones and a marijuana pipe in the passenger compartment. I found a paper grocery bag in the trunk with approximately 124 grams of marijuana in it. I also found a black backpack. Upon opening the backpack I discovered three large baggies of marijuana, two of which contained approximately 28.6 grams of marijuana each. The other bag contained five smaller baggies which contained approximately 3.5 grams of marijuana each. See property sheet evidence items BC-3-BC4A and BC6-BC6E1. I also found an electronic scale, approximately 50 two inch by two inch baggies, one box of zip top baggies, one vial that contained black liquid, one film canister containing approximately 2.5 grams of marijuana, a knit hat containing a marijuana pipe, and one small baggie containing approximately 1.1 grams of marijuana, (see property sheet evidence item BC7-BC7A), and a binder containing correspondence addressed to the suspect. The majority of the small baggies had the same logo printed on them as the baggies removed from the suspects pocket. Also in the trunk was a black ski mask and back gloves. I secure the evidence in the trunk of my patrol car and transported the suspect to the Marin City Sub-Station. The suspect vehicle was towed by Quality Tow.*

Driving past all the fields and the cattle yards, stopping in Coalinga, then back on the 5 heading north, the whole time I have numbers dancing in my head, how much for this and who would pay what for it, what is my overhead, I should stop partying so much. Maybe I should settle down with one girl. Fuck that, I can't take another divorce, the last one almost killed me. I have to get these plants in the ground and get some more going indoors. Fuck those Canadians and their cheap garbage that ruined the market. I will sell rocks in the street again if I have to. Fucking ravers are ratting everyone, they can't be trusted. That and those fucking hyphy idiots. I wish the wise old wizard would bless me with some crystal LSD, it's been too long. I wonder

if one of these cartels is ever gone find out that I do business with the other one. If I ever get my hands on that asshole that smoked my partner I got to get him. If I ever find my other partner that brought the Feds on me, I got to get him, too. I hope my son still loves me. I wonder where my daughter is? What happened to that dream of being a writer/director? Will my ex-wife testify against me know that the divorce is final? Shit, I got to stop asking questions, back to what I got to do.

It was just a constant circle of thoughts feeding on themselves with differentiating variations, but always running into a self-questioning that I knew would never lead anywhere but trouble. I had to keep it together, there was much work to be done. I was tired from the road by the time I hit Oakland and it was after 9pm. I called my friend and she said they were going to a club in Frisco to see Tanya Stephens, my favorite dancehall gal with nice roots to her soul. I felt like some rude gal vibes from Jamaica was what I needed to unwind and relax. Tomorrow I could water the plants out in Marin County and deal with the work that has to be done to the spot. Most of the prep work has been done for the plants to be planted, it's just getting them out into the holes and getting them the start that they need. It is still plenty cold and a bad frost can wreak havoc on them, but if the first set of 100 don't go in the ground now, there will be a longer wait for first harvest. By the time I got to the SOMA part of San Fran, I was pretty happily mindless for a change. I was brought into the show by the promoter and saw many heads I recognized. I went to post up with some folks after I grabbed a Red Stripe from the bar and was greeted by a baseball bat shaped spliff of the best Nor-Cal kush. It was as close to home as I have known in a while.

I am lost in a wild rush of music, dancing and escaped thoughts that run away like convicts through a swamp at night with the sound of barking bloodhounds barking in the distance. Afterwards, I decline the invitations to go to other clubs and parties, even a call from two girls who get off work at O'Farrell Street Theater and who want to "roll around naked and fuck like rabbits". I roll up Market St. towards Van Ness and turn right to head for Lombard. I consider the girls offer as I pass O'Farrell, but I let it go. Been allowing myself too much of that lately. I keep it moving. I am feeling a little bit woozy so I stop at Mel's Diner after I have made a left turn at Lombard. I get some grub and a shake. I am pretty done in, but the food makes it so much better. As I roll out into the parking lot I see a girl with a suitcase and mascara smeared all over the face. She has recently been hysterical, as they say. I avoid eye contact and move towards the car. Something snaps me into clarity for a moment. I need to pull it together and cross the Golden Gate Bridge and exit at the Stinson Beach, Pacific Coast Highway 1 off ramp at nearly 3am in a ruddy condition and driving a car that has multiple felonies everywhere. I have been driving this route for nearly 20 years and never once have I been pulled over. The goal is simple, make it off the 101, head past the Dipsea Café and approach the signal light that is Tam Junction. Execute a left hand turn from a left hand turn lane there and proceed past the 7-11 toward Mt. Tamalpais. A hard, upward left is the sign of being pretty much home free. There is a fork up ahead were you can pick the coast road or the mountain road. The mountain rolls quicker and drops you down in a series of switchbacks that give you a view of Stinson Beach,

Sea Drift and across the channel of the lagoon into Bolinas. The coast road winds around and down into Muir Beach and then up again for a winding ride along a dramatic sea cliff that drops into the churning waters Drake's Bay. The coast road is the official Highway 1 and it steams down straight into downtown Stinson Beach, where it is joined by the descending mountain road just before it approaches the Stinson Beach fire house. Steady driving is required through Stinson Beach and around the lagoon as Highway 1 curls around it with the mountainside at your right and the lagoon at your left. Sheriff or CHP vehicles will sit at turnouts with their lights off waiting for the obvious traffic stop. As the road rounds the lagoon and keeps on its way to Olema, a small opening to the left appears like a bat cave. Hit that with no patrol cars in sight and you are home free.

I calm my fears with a puff on a fat dank roach as I roll over the Golden Gate. Fog is rolling across in a solid thickness that obscures the water and Marin County on the other side. I hope for fog all the way to the mountain, but it breaks up as I come out the other side of the tunnel that is on the Marin side once you cross the bridge. I have done this in worse condition many times, with worse felonies on board and driving a more obvious vehicle. There should not be any problems. As I come down the 101 toward the exit, I begin to feel more at ease, but the weed I smoked on the bridge has me a bit more stoned than I care for. I roll down the driver side window and let some cool headlands wind hit my face. The sensation is immediately refreshing. I am rolling off the freeway, no other cars in sight, cool breeze in my face, blasting a Mad Professor vs. Scientist dub plate. As I round the turn near the Dipsea Café, I notice some headlights just before the intersection up ahead where I am preparing to make my left turn. As I put on my signal and begin to slow I drive through the wash of the other car headlights and look to my left, right into the eyes of two deputy Sheriffs sitting in their vehicle looking right back into my eyes. I know in that second I have driven into trouble, but that I have to remain calm. I realize I need to piss badly at the worst possible moment. I stop at the red in the left turn lane, looking in my rear view at the headlights to see if they move. The light turns green for me and I make my left. As soon as I have executed the turn, red and blue lights begin to flash behind me and headlights pull into view from my right. I begin to pull over and I can see that there are two Sheriff's vehicles now, the one I passed on my left that had its headlights on, and the one that is closest behind me now that came from my right. I consider the distance ahead and stepping on the gas. My heart speeds up and adrenaline hits my blood. I know if I can make it to the mountain that my vehicle can outperform the patrol cars on the twisting road. Their only hope would be to have a vehicle intercept me from Pt. Reyes. I could ditch the car by the Mt. Home Inn and walk back down to Mill Valley. Every muscle tenses and I grab the wheel. I am too stoned, I will wreck and it will be game over. I might just be able to talk my way out. I have a medical marijuana card, but it's expired. Still, I should be able to just agree to being cited out and go on my way. I didn't break any traffic laws, so I know that they don't have probable cause to search. I know my rights and I know these deputies will know my lawyer's name. I can bluff this round. Worst case, they tow the car and I get cited out of the station and pick the car up before the tow yard guy steal anything from the trunk. I take deep breath and let



it out. My window is already down and I have turned off the music. A third patrol vehicle pulls into the front of my car with its high beams on. Good thing I didn't run and gun. Shit, I am armed and the trunk is pretty bad. I have got to get as jedi as possible, and quick.

The deputy in front of me gets out with his weapon drawn. I keep both my hands on the steering wheel. The other deputy approaches on my left, from behind. I watch him get closer as I look into the eyes of the one in front of me with the weapon pointed at me. I try to size up his commitment to shoot. He looks nervous. I can see another deputy in right hand side mirror. He has the 12 gauge pump at the ready. These guys are not just randomly stopping me, there is something they are all in the vicinity for and I drove into it. I realize there is no unfucking myself at this point, but I have to not make it worse. I focus on trying to talk these guys out of seeing me as the equivalent to whatever threat they are anticipating. I know I was driving below the speed limit and that I signaled and slowed down properly. My seatbelts are on and I am not drunk. I might be a little stoned, but I am a medical marijuana patient and I am on my way home. Ready, and... the beam of the flashlight is blinding and he trains it on me as he walks up to the open window.

"Can you show me your license, insurance and registration, sir?"

"Certainly, officer, can I ask what I was doing to get pulled over?" I reply quickly, but not in a challenging way and definitely not too quickly. I am just a harmless stoner, not a dangerous junkie tweaker. I have to believe that so I can project it.

"I am a deputy, not an officer," damn, one of these guys, "and I pulled you over because I noticed you light on your license plate is out." This is a bad sign. This is bullshit. My license plate light is not out, but, even if it was, it doesn't take three vehicles to pull someone over for that offense. Or drawn weapons and a blocking vehicle for that matter. It will take a small miracle to keep me from getting cuffed at this point. My only option is to surrender myself in a way that I don't provoke a search of the vehicle. I give him the paperwork and my license. I give him my legit license and hide the fake one. I don't want to bring another charge down if this gets too hairy. It is going to be hard enough on my lawyer as it is. This is going to cost me, but I am sure that if I can keep them out of the trunk, then I have a chance of walking away without any time back in the joint. This is not my first barbeque, so I figure even if I get searched in the trunk I can say it is not mine. The car is not registered to me, it is in Candy's dad's name. I can just cop to what I have in my pocket and fuck the rest. Reasonable doubt, motherfucker.

"Sir, do you have any marijuana in the vehicle?" he asks.

Now is my chance to start deflecting and hopefully calm the situation. "Well, deputy, I am a medical marijuana patient and I do have several small bags of medicinal marijuana." I say matter-of-factly.

“Is it on your person?” he asks.

I slowly pull the bag out of my pocket on my guayabera and hand it to him. He looks at it and asks, “Do you have your card?”

I quickly reply, “Not on me, but I should be on the computer. It might be expired, but I still have the doctor’s prescription that I can produce for a judge.” I can tell my willingness to produce things for a judge sets him back a bit.

Then he comes with what I was preparing for, “Who is this vehicle registered to?”

“This is my girlfriend’s car. She let me borrow to go over the mountain and I am taking it back to Stinson Beach.” I know better than to ever mention Bolinas to a Marin County Sheriff or a CHP. They are antagonistic with the people from there, far more than the people of Stinson Beach.

“I will be right back.”

As he walks back to his unit, I realize that the other two have not backed off and I make sure I don’t make any furtive movements without looking too tense. I have to back them down by my demeanor. I am thinking calming thoughts. I am fucked, no two ways about it, but I am not shot in the head and there is no way to get to my pistol to shoot my way out. The idea of suicide by cop crosses my mind. Am I that fucked? It’s hard to decipher. I have been in prison and have an uncertain amount of felonies. I have also been the focus of many investigations. I have evaded a serious incarceration of more than two years so far, but I have been threatened with life in prison on several occasions and several different jurisdictions. I know I am in trouble and the rush of adrenaline is really clearing my head. I can feel a panic attack shadowing me. I have to keep it together, keep a calm exterior. Fuck, I have never been pulled over here. Driving this road for years and never, not once. This fucking sucks, but I have to just crawl into it and own it. Act as if. I can’t let these fuckers see me sweat a drop. I can see the break in the spotlight behind me to indicate that the deputy is returning. It has taken longer than a normal license scan. I am hoping he did not NCIC me. The whole rap sheet would be filing by and there is always the assault on a peace officer charge that raises the ire and turns this into a different set of rules. I am determined to not just let a group of late night deputies shoot me in the back without a fight. I will die fighting. Fuck this, maybe this is as far as I go. Make peace now. People will tell my son I love him. Family will be sad. I will miss everyone. It seemed like I was so close to getting somewhere. I am not sure where, though.

“Sir, do you realize your driver’s license is suspended?” the deputy asks.

“Well, no, or I wouldn’t be driving... damn it... it’s a registration ticket I got in Berkeley a couple of months ago. I sold that car. I thought the ticket was taken care of.”

Marin Law Enforcement Data Systems  
Marin Sheriff - Marin City  
CA0210000

**INCIDENT REPORT**

Reported Date: 03/22/2004 Monday 02:52  
 Incident No: SO04-1421  
 Code Section and Description: 11370.1(A) POSS CONTROLLED SUBS. / ARMED CC 8603  
 Incident Classification: 8270-Weapons

Occurred From/On: 03/22/2004 Monday 02:52  
 Occurred To: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ is arrested for PC 12031(a), PC 12025, HS 11359, HS 11360(a), HS 7(c), HS 11377, and HS 11370.1.

**SUSPECTS**

SUS-1  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Place of Employment/School/Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Additional Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Driver's License: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Build: \_\_\_\_\_ Eyes: \_\_\_\_\_ Hair: \_\_\_\_\_ Descriptors: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Arrested: \_\_\_\_\_ Arrest Status: \_\_\_\_\_ Disposition: \_\_\_\_\_

Charge Level	Description	Warrant #	Date of Warrant	Court	Judge	Bail
F	11370.1(A) POSS CONTROLLED SUBS. / ARMED CC 8603					
Charge Level	Description	Warrant #	Date of Warrant	Court	Judge	Bail
F	HS 11357 (A) POSSESS CONCENTRATED CANNABIS CC 8606					
Charge Level	Description	Warrant #	Date of Warrant	Court	Judge	Bail
M	HS 11357 (C) POSSESS MARIJUANA > 28.5 GRAMS CC 8606					
Charge Level	Description	Warrant #	Date of Warrant	Court	Judge	Bail
F	HS 11359 POSSESS MARIJUANA FOR SALE CC 8616					

**CONTROLLED DOCUMENT**  
 DUPLICATION OR REISSUANCE  
 FORBIDDEN BY LAW  
 MAR 23 2004  
 Released to: \_\_\_\_\_  
 By: \_\_\_\_\_  
 MARIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

ID. No./Attorney / Remanding Officer: 16  
 Date: 03/22/2004  
 Distribution: District Attorney Task Force

"I'm sorry to have to do this, sir, but I have to take you in on this offense. And I will have to confiscate the marijuana. You will be able to get it back upon producing the proper documentation as to your medical status, I will cite you out on both the driving on the suspended and the controlled substance. You will be out in just a few hours at the most." All of a sudden this guy is agreeable as hell. I notice the shotgun wielding deputy is backing off slowly. The deputy in front of me has brought his gun down.

"Well, I want to get this taken care of as soon as possible, anyway. I appreciate your tone and that it is your job. Should I just step out of the car and secure my vehicle?" I say calmly in reply. My mind is reeling. There is an outside possibility that just opened up. I give up easily, they take me to the sub-station and book

me and release me on citation to clear all this up like a misdemeanor, no one needs to look in the trunk, as it's not even my car, I have already been co-operative concerning what I have on me, been clear about the car, the deputies are standing down, I still appear calm, I can retrieve the car after I am released and be on my way. This is starting to go my way, somehow. I roll up the windows. Put the keys in my pocket. Exit the vehicle easily, not too slow, definitely not in a hurry, more like I do this every day, and it is a little annoying, but hey, it's just a technicality and we'll all laugh about this later.

"I appreciate your co-operation, sir, I will need to cuff you, but you won't need to turn around. Just put your hands out and I won't do them too tight."

What fucking charm school did this guy go to? I can't break my composure, I act as if it is the type of consideration I am used to. "No worries, deputy."

"The tow truck will be here in 10 minutes," the other deputy, sans shotgun, says from behind.

Damn it, this means I will have to get the car out of impound as soon as possible, not as neat as I had hoped for, I can contain my displeasure. "Is there any way you can just leave the car and I

can retrieve it after I get out. My girlfriend is going to be real upset with me as it is. It is not illegally parked or anything.”

The deputies shoot each other glances as if they are considering it. I have never really been in this calm of a place during an arrest. I can't outwardly show how unsettling this is, but I have to act as if this is all an inconvenience that I am just willing to go through at this point. I am just trying to be reasonable and lessen the inconvenience on all of us if I can. I am beginning to buy into the game I am playing.

Right at that moment the deputy begins to shake his head. “I have to tow the vehicle and it will most likely be held for 30 days according to the law when you are driving on a suspended.”

I act as though I am shocked. “I did not know that that was part of the penalty. She is going to be pissed.” I reply. In my mind I am seeing the tow yard attendants ransacking the trunk. Fucking karma. I have been buying and receiving items from the Oakland tow yard for years. Getting tips on when a good car is up for auction because the driver got busted with so much dope it will be used as evidence until the police release it for auction. Even getting called once to come pick up two kilos of coke that I split with the yard attendant. I was definitely open on this one to lose everything. It could all be replaced except my .45, that was my only sentimental and practical attachment to anything in the trunk, I figured.

I snap out of it as I realize the deputy is approaching me for the keys. I reach in my pocket, with a bit a struggle from the hand cuffs, and I pull out the keys, my expression slightly sad, but I am careful to not give away that I am obsessed with the trunk. The deputy does an about face and walks directly to the trunk. Fuck, I didn't want to think this was going to happen. Now I am back to real fucked. I have to act like I don't care about it and in a moment I have to react to his reaction with some kind of front that is not usable as a way to color my defense in court. I can't give them anymore than what they are about to get in discovery of the trunk contents. This is about to become a bail and trial issue in less than five seconds.

“I just have to let you know that I need to inventory your trunk so if anything is missing when you go to the tow yard you will have grounds to file a complaint,” he says over his shoulder.

I crack a little bit. This will be last politeness in exchange. “Well, I don't know what is in there, anyway.” As soon as I have said this, I wish I could take it back. It will be the last incriminating thing I am determined to say. It is not that bad of a thing to say, except for the fact that by omission of knowledge an astute observer would be able to conclude that I admit to a secret knowledge and have given up that I am involved in an attempt to mislead. I have to play smarter. Give up less. As the trunk opens and the deputy reaches in after pausing, I steel myself inside. I have to give up nothing.

“Look at this,” he says, as he holds up a paper shopping bag to his partner. “Is this yours?” he asks me as he shoots a look in my direction. I just shake my head. The blocking vehicle driver

also comes over. They begin pulling the contents of the trunk apart. I have clothes bags and a duffle bag of dirty clothes. But then I see him pull the backpack and I know it will be changing quickly. I get a momentary reprieve as he only looks over the backpack for a moment, but he determines it will be taken as evidence and hands to the other deputy. I just hang my head down. I am being hit by a wall of exhaustion and the overwhelming need to piss. Plus the crushing demoralization that this is me fucking it up for myself. I could have just gone a little further in SF and crashed with a couple of strippers from O'Farrell Street Theater. I did not have to be here right now. Light of day and no deputy can claim the license plate light is not working. Now it is game over. I am certain I will make bail, somehow, but I can't imagine how much damage I have done to my cash flow and ability to keep it moving. I know it was being hurt already, but now it's going to get serious. The other deputy comes over and undoes the cuffs. He turns me around. "Put your hands on top of your head." It is no longer the friendly, polite arrest it was a few seconds ago. The cuffs are on behind me and tighter. I am put in the back of a patrol car. The deputies say a few words to each other. The first deputy I spoke to gets in the front seat and asks me if I want to tell him who the drugs belong to. I say I don't know anything about any drugs other than the medical marijuana that I had on my person. He reads me my Miranda at that point. I have nothing to say except, may I use a restroom, I need to speak with an attorney and I need to know the amount of my bail so I can call someone. Game over. Tilt.

*While en route to the sub-station I told the suspect his Miranda rights. I asked the suspect if he wanted to talk about what happened. He said yes, that he wanted to cooperate. I asked the suspect who the black backpack belonged to. He said it was his but that he was unsure how it got into the trunk of the sedan.*

As I was pulled out of the patrol vehicle in the prisoner bay I realized I had an excruciating piss that I had to take and that booking was never really sympathetic to that affliction. I was put on the footprints on the ground in front of the booking desk once they got me inside. My paperwork was handed to the booking officer and he began entering in the computer. I had never been arrested in Marin County, but I had been arrested in other counties around the state. Orange, Imperial, San Bernardino, Riverside, Los Angeles, San Luis Obispo, Kern, Merced, San Francisco and Alameda counties to be exact. There was a prior record of me, so to speak. I copped to being "that guy", which actually brought different reactions from the older deputies. They wanted to beat me, I could tell. They were thinking about the not so old days of beating on guys in the back room and saying they posed a threat and were uncooperative. The booking officer called them over to show them where I had already been entered as cooperative by the arresting deputies in their report.

"Reports can be changed," said one of the gray haired, red-necked Sheriffs.

"Yeah, sometimes they have to be," replied an older, black deputy with salt and pepper hair.

They all had a good laugh at that one. I was starting to feel like I might piss myself if I didn't get to go soon. I had to break my silence. "Excuse me, I really need to urinate." You would think I

told a joke with a better punch line, and I suppose, from their perspective, I did, because they howled even louder than they did for the report joke.

The red-neck approached me hastily with a terse look on his face. "If I want to hear shit from you, I'll squeeze your fucking head, you scum fucker."

Obviously, he enjoyed the graveyard shift after all these years of service. He stepped behind me and pulled my arms up by the chain of the cuffs. I didn't resist, I knew that could injure me. I might need to punch back at somebody soon, so I didn't want to get hurt fighting these old school tactics. He unlocks the cuffs one at a time, directing me to put each hand in front of me on the counter as he releases them. From where the footprints are painted on the ground this sprawls you forward. It's the standard booking room set up. I know how to try to anticipate by his position which of my feet he will kick sideways so I can be lighter on that foot and not go down with the first kick. If you do go down, you get the complimentary hair grab and face plant into the counter. I anticipate well and he kicks out the foot so far that he can't possibly get the other foot out equally as far without dropping me blow the edge of the booking counter. This is the usual set up for the "rabbit" punch at the booking counter. It is a favored attack as it is delivered from behind, so you can't see it coming, and it contusions the back of the head, which is hard to notice if there is hair there and I have plenty of hair to hide the damage from a punch at that moment. I have been beat down in many booking rooms at this moment. I usually react to the "rabbit" punch, once even anticipating it to the point of catching an officer with a spinning back hand before he could unload it. This time I figure I can take this fucker's best shot and keep going. I really don't want to piss myself during a multiple deputy beating. I am not going to get out anytime soon. I know I will have to be transported to the main county holding before I can even make bail and that may take a day and sometimes a night as well. I go as near limp as possible without falling down. The red-necked deputy is called away at that point and one of the younger deputies come over to relieve him. No rabbit punch. Strict instructions that I follow to the T. He leads me over to the computer fingerprint machine. The finger prints are knocked out quickly. He is newly trained and I am old hat at it. I ask him if I can urinate and he complies, watching me as I go. That was all I needed. I am led to an interrogation room and the door is left open. I am allowed to hear them inventory my belonging from the trunk. The mood is about to change in there, I know that much.

*I arrived at the sub-station and performed a more detailed search of the backpack. I found a loaded .45 caliber pistol in a black holster that was built into the backpack to conceal the pistol. The pistol had a full, 15 round magazine and one cartridge in the chamber. The black case also contained an additional full, 15 round magazine. I also found a small whit box that contained three pills of suspected ecstasy. A NIK test of the suspected ecstasy came up positive. I also found a small vial containing an unknown white powder, 2 baggies with approximately 2 grams of white powder each that NIK tested positive for methamphetamine, 10 clear capsules with a white powder in each that NIK tested positive for ecstasy and dried leaves. I asked the suspect what the leaves were and he said they were tea. Also in the backpack was an "Altoids" tin that had approximately 1 gram of marijuana and approximately 1 gram of concentrated*

*cannabis. The black liquid was determined to be approximately 4 oz. of concentrated cannabis. Another electronic scale was found inside a pocket of the black backpack.*

*Based on the way the marijuana was packaged, the amount of marijuana, the additional packaging material, electronic scales, cell phones and the loaded pistol, I believe the suspect possessed marijuana for sales.*

*Deputy XXXX transported the suspect to the Marin County Jail where he was booked on PC 12025, PC 12031(a), HS 11359, HS 11357(a), HS 11360(a), HS 11357(c), HS 11370.1.*

As I was escorted down the hallway to the elevator at Marin County Jail, one of the deputies laughed and told the other, "We caught the Al Capone of wacky-tobacky last night. He's not getting out anytime soon, either."

I'll make bail soon enough, I thought to myself It will take a while for it to come together, but I have to make it. I'll make the collect call to get the wheels in motion. Candy will come back up north, although I rather she just stay till the deal went through. Always thinking about the deal. It is all I have at the end of it all. Once the word is out I just need to get to a steel bunk with a plastic mattress and rest my head. I am exhausted beyond reason now. It is sometime near noon. I get to the "pod" and am led to my cell. Men are watching television and playing cards in the common area. I am not interested in any new friends right now. I go into the two man cell and introduce myself to my cellie. He gives me the bottom bunk and I make it up haphazardly. I sit for a moment before I drift off to the afternoon sounds of the men shouting their chaotic chorus before the guards shout for lockdown. Everyone moving to their cells and the televisions go off and the modern doors electronically lock. It is somewhat quiet, except for the echoes in the vents of the men in their cells.

Something seems different this time. I am not sure exactly what it is, but I am not able to shake it. I think back to the first time I was approached by men with badges. They were San Bernardino Police Officers and I was 11 years old. I had taken a broken broom handle and cut it into two pieces, wrapping each piece with spiraling, black electrical tape and affixing a short chain from the screen door on the back porch to each end of the two pieces with eye screws. They were nunchuks like I had seen in the kung fu movies. The police officers took me home and told my mother that I had made a deadly weapon, not a toy. They were illegal and if I was caught with them again I would have to be arrested. My mother felt like the cops were over reacting. She told me I had to not be so ignorant of things as to attract the attention of the police in broad daylight. I was told once again to get my head out of my ass. The next time the cops had me a couple of years later for trying to rob a 7-11, she was hurt with a deep shame. I never got over seeing her like that. We were never close again.

I thought over my adult life of arrest and capture. The Mexicali-Calexico crossing, the aftermath of a gunfight in an afterhours club in downtown LA. The raid of the house in Venice beach, the traffic stop in Beverly Hills, the arrest on the Venice boardwalk right after getting released from

the Beverly Hills incident, the detainment in San Quentin, Baja California, the arrest in Tomkins Square, NYC for inciting a riot, the arrest in San Louis Obispo while sleeping in my car, the arrest in Iowa for driving weed and mushrooms cross country, the arrest in New Orleans at Mardi Gras, the arrest in Minneapolis for fighting with the skinheads, the detainment in Bangkok for conspiring to smuggle, the drunk in publics while homeless in the Tenderloin of San Francisco, the arrest in Oakland when I appeared in court without my lawyer, the arrest at JFK in NYC for boarding a plane with a firearm, all the near misses, detainments. The questioning about other cases that I was connected to. The lawyers and dirty cops warning me that I was under investigation or that someone was trying to ascertain my real identity. It had finally become too much. It had finally been the metaphoric straw that broke the metaphoric camel's back.

It had all come to this moment where I felt like I was tired of being locked up like an animal every so often. I wanted something different, I was not sure what it was, but there had to be something different than this. I knew there were three strikes to be brought against me now. I suddenly knew that I could not survive in here anymore. I would die in here if I did not get out. I was finally not uncertain about wanting to live. I was very much wanting to live in that moment. More so than I had in a long time. I just needed to sleep some and figure it out. I just needed some rest and then to see what was going to happen with bail. I wanted out, but I wasn't sure what out meant. I just knew that I wanted out of more than just that jail cell. And, more importantly, I wanted to live. I actually wanted to live in a way that I had never felt before. I knew I needed to change, I just didn't know if it was too late.







## KERB CRAWLER

By Claudia Bellocq

Photos © Malcolm Alcala

**The Home Office and police are clamping down on street prostitution with a new advertising campaign targeting kerb-crawlers...**

The john slowed down. The girls were looking good tonight; there were lots of them out... strutting, hanging out, catching his eye. Tempresses, every one of them. There was one who was particularly attracting his attention. The shortest of little black skirts, knee high socks (white), shiny black mary-jane shoes, white blouse, little back cardigan. Mid twenties at a guess or maybe older... it was hard to tell in this light. Probably older in his experience. You picked them up, drove somewhere, pulled up a skirt and it was then you could tell that a tom was older than she looked. Either way, what she was selling he wanted to buy.

**(Advertisement)**

**The adverts will feature on local radio stations and carry warnings that kerb-crawlers could face arrest, a court appearance and warning letters to their home.**

John's wife scrubbed the dishes on auto-pilot. Fucking hell, that had been a hard day. The kids were really testing her recently, demanding, crying, fighting almost constantly. She'd no idea what had gotten into them; all she knew was that she was exhausted. She shoved a falling piece of her hair out of her eyes with a marigold wet hand. She felt really old lately; unattractive and old and it felt like months since she'd had sex, even wanted to, even thought about it... it must be hard for John, he was such a sweet husband, always there for her, never complaining. She felt terribly guilty about not fucking him. Once, when they'd met, he'd told her he loved her sexual openness. Now she felt as tight as a clam. Dry, sexless, dull.



**A £1000 fine and a driving ban will also be mentioned.**

John tried hard to ignore his growing debts. He didn't seem able to find a way out of it lately, so he just hid from it. His job in the haulage firm was all that kept things afloat really. Thank fuck for small mercies he thought, laughing bitterly at the same time. God he hated that job, but at

least it got him away from home, away from the kids endless whingeing, his wife's depression, the thought of his debts... at least it was something.

**The six week campaign is launched this week in London, Middlesbrough, Peterborough, Southampton, Bristol, Bournemouth and Leeds.**

John wanted to move one day. Manchester was okay but the beats were dead there now. Cleaned up in the multi-agency drive to make the streets safe, the red light areas had all but disappeared and besides, living in the heart of one of the old areas meant he couldn't really pick up there; too much at stake. That old German bag might have died but there were always other busybody fuckers wanting to poke their noses into other people's affairs. He'd almost been caught out by that old bitch once. She'd flour-bombed his car then chased him down the road scratching his number plate onto her little pocket pad. The sad old witch. Why couldn't she just watch telly for entertainment like most of the o.a.p.s did round there.



No, if he could go anywhere, he'd try Leeds he reckoned. Lots of trees, nice and green... Maybe cheer his wife up?

**But the adverts face criticism from those who would like to see prostitution legalised and think such "draconian crackdowns" will drive sex workers underground.**



Stella re-applied her lippy and shoved the tatty old make-up bag back into her purse. Fingering the condoms inside her handbag, she counted six (none of the punters would use them anyway out here) and they'd sat in her bag for a month or more now. Plenty of trade, but condoms? No way missy! Tenner or do without. No condoms it was then... She looked around her nervously. It was rough out here. She was no pussy but this 'beat' really scared her. Two girls had been found dead only last month and the van that gave out rubbers and pins didn't come down here, it was stuck in a beat were there weren't even any more girls... service provider providing services to billy no-mates. Fucking great! Nowadays

you couldn't even get a break when it was all too much. If it wasn't the crackpot fucking punters it was the nasty bastard pimps. Lost... she felt fucking lost lately. An empty shell. Any sense of family she had from meeting her mates or the workers on the van was gone. She felt alone. She carried a knife now but what good that would do if some psycho got hold of her she'd no idea. Still... better to feel it in her purse and feel safer someway or other hey? A mate of hers had been to Amsterdam last week; told her about the windows. 'Fucking hell,' she thought.... 'that'd be a right old cushty number. Indoors, a bed, music if you wanted it, on full view so the psychos would be less likely to grab a girl there I bet.' She sighed... luxury she couldn't afford to think about really. This is how it was and she'd better just get on with it. Bills needed paying. Nothing else she could do in this fucking world anyway... this was her. This was Stella.

**The Government hopes that clamping down on the demand for street prostitution will challenge the existence of street sex markets.**

The government minister straightened his trousers and tucked his shirt back into his Armani trousers. That one had been good. No complaints when he'd wanted to fuck her arse. Less likely to get the clap that way he'd decided after one close shave when his wife nearly found out about his little habits. He'd discovered a leaking yellow pus from the end of his cock about a week after one particularly dirty looking whore had arrived from the agency one night. He'd been horny as hell and with no time to send her back (like he usually would) and demand someone more 'suitable.' 'I can do dirty,' he'd thought. I'll give it a go. And he'd almost paid highly for it. A quick visit to the clap clinic and he'd sorted it all, hoping no-one would recognise him on his way in or out. Got to be careful about these things; it wasn't long since that judge had lost his membership of the Bar because of something similar. He'd changed agencies since then and things had calmed down again. He'd also reined in his occasional desire to go prowling the streets for the real dirty girls. Too much at stake...

**Home Office Minister Vernon Coaker said: "Local communities are fed-up with street prostitution – the sexual activity taking place in their parks and playgrounds, condoms and discarded needles littering the streets and innocent women mistakenly targeted and abused by men on the prowl."**

Innocent women/guilty women? Fucking bitches the lot of them, he thought as he prowled looking for his next target. She looked all right. She would do... bitch! Yes... she would do nicely.

**"For the residents it is intimidating, unpleasant and unsafe."**

For Stella, she was already dead. For John, he was about to lose everything. For John's wife... the prescription would need to be upped soon. For the Minister – a good red and a steak for dinner he thought... that would do.....

For the residents, uninterrupted satellite t.v. and a pleasant view from the living room window would suffice.



Pollock 118

# ZAR ON BEKSINSKI

## A TALK WITH CHET ZAR

By Lana Gentry

Untitled Paintings © Zdzisław Beksiński



It has been said that a photographer takes something that is already significant in his own view, and wraps the perfect frame around it, that you may better see its significance through his sequestering lens. Something that was already there, waiting to be beheld in the manner in which his eye had originally perceived it, can now be viewed in a way that leaves us saying, "Yes, I see." Now we will take an emotional journey charted by art giant Chet Zar (*pictured at left*) into the mind boggling and deeply affecting work of Zdzisław Beksiński. Here, Zar is that metaphoric photographer who has generously framed Zdzisław Beksiński, so that we can better examine Beksiński's beautiful work while addressing the untimely tragic fate of this iconic master.

**Lana Gentry:** *At what age did you first become aware of the work of Beksiński and describe if you would how it affected you?*

**Chet Zar:** I first saw the work of Beksiński when I was working on Tool's "Aenema" video. Adam Jones referenced the painting of the man sitting on the bench for a character in the video. For me, it was love at first sight. It was like, "Where have you been all my life?" He has pretty much been one of my favorite artists ever since.

*When I hear people describe Beksiński merely as apocalyptic I often feel they are missing something. What are your feelings on this?*

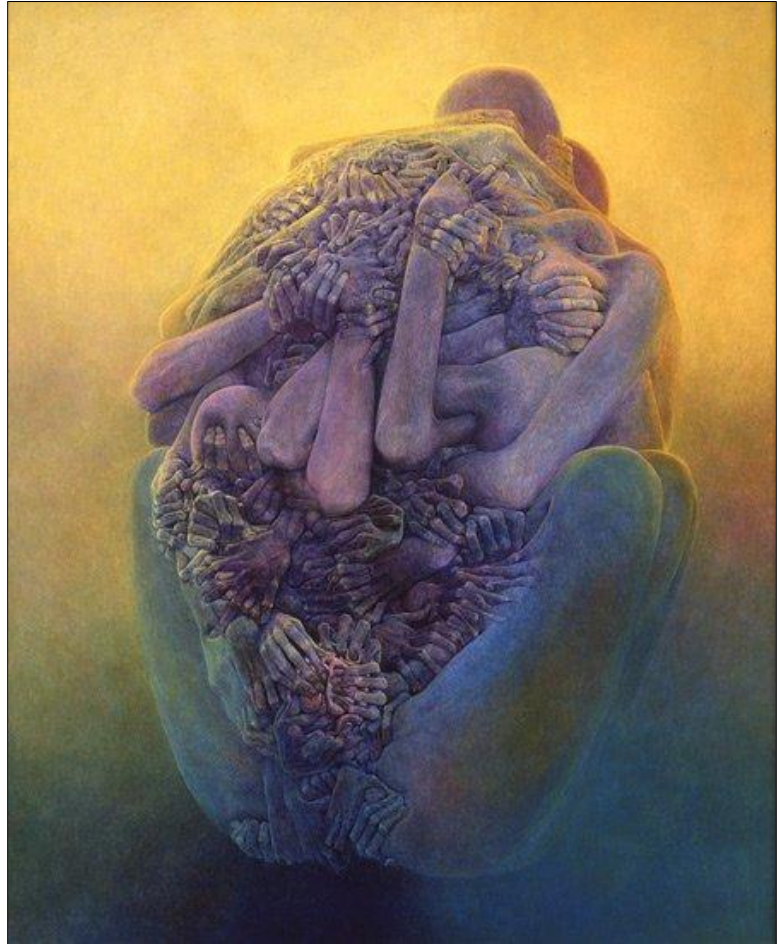
I don't see the work as apocalyptic, although I can see why some people might. I see the work more as dream landscapes. What strikes me most about his work is the same thing that I always felt about Giger's work - the places he painted seemed like they really existed someplace, in some other dimension.

*What would you say Beksiński has contributed to your own personal vision as an artist?*

There is no question about that. When I first started painting, I did some 'very' Beksiński influenced pieces. Once I really noticed what I was doing, I had to really make a conscious effort to not be so influenced. But I think Beksiński's influence is still evident in my work. You can't love an artist's work as much as I do Beksiński and not be influenced by it.

*Describe your favorite work by Beksiński and explain why it is.*

That is a difficult question. One of the most amazing things about Beksiński's "Fantastic Realism" period was how many 'hits' he had. Not only did he create an unbelievable amount of work but it seems like almost every painting is a masterpiece. With Beksiński you don't see many clunkers.



I really thought about picking a favorite but I can't. I don't even have a top ten. There are just too many pieces that I love.

*You've been a fan a long time, but to what would you attribute this mass recent movement of interest towards these brilliant works?*

I knew when I first saw his work that it would simply be a matter of time before his work would become popular. He was just too good to go unnoticed for very long. I think the internet has a lot to do with getting his work seen.

*There was an emotional moment which led up to your effort to contact Beksiński before his death. Could you share that here, along with your reaction when you heard of his untimely death?*

I was in contact with another Polish artist by the name of Lukasz Banach. I think he was only in his early 20s but he was friends with Beksiński. I sent Lukasz a copy of my *Disturb the Normal* DVD to show to Beksiński. I was fully into digital during that time. I was only just beginning to paint. He did share this with him, and he liked it. That was very exciting to me.

Soon after, Beksiński was murdered. I was shocked when I heard the news. I completely broke down and cried like a baby. It felt so incredibly random and tragic.





My mother in law was living with my wife and me at the time. She was in hospice, meaning she was basically dying. I think this had a lot to do with my reaction as well. It was a very sad time for us.

*If you were trying to solicit a person who had never been acquainted with this work, what would you say?*

I think I would let the work speak for itself. I have yet to meet somebody who was persuaded to like my work, or began liking it after reading my artist statement. I think it's one of those things. It either resonates or it doesn't. Verbally describing it to somebody misses the point, I believe. Visual art is a language unto itself. It says things that words cannot, and that's one of the main things I like about it.

*What would you say separated Beksiński in a sea of artists who render the dark surreal. Many have tried, but few were as effective.*

I think it is the sense of mystery in his paintings. That is something that I try to carry into my own work. I think his work transcends the category of 'dark art'. It's not just dark for dark's sake. Sure it's dark, but it feels true, and there is a lot of humanity there.

*Expound on some of the works to which you would first alert us, that would be in your view most affecting.*

Any of his more figurative works from his Fantastic Realism period. Some of his more abstract pieces or Photoshop stuff might be a little less accessible.

*If you could talk to Beksiński today, what would you say to him.*

"Thank you."

*Special Thanks to Keith Wigdor*

# WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ODIA COATES?

## A TRAGEDY IN SIX ACTS (PART I)

By David Gionfriddo

Photos © Claudia Murari

1. *October 2068: The Museum of Fun*

The old-time washtub bass and fiddle playing on the multiscan in Algernon Passmore's month-old red Encanta drifted weakly in and out, as if in this flat, featureless landscape the very idea of music had begun to evaporate. It was impossible to imagine that, to bygone generations of Americans, this slick black ribbon of transway (and the highway it replaced) had once betokened a kind of provisional freedom. Watching the mile-sensors pass like flickers in some homemade dream-machine, he could only imagine the road as a psychic chain whose end, wherever it lay, was being tugged by some unseen captor. He thought about the days before the transways, when people fleeing dark events could count on the perils of motoring - changing lanes, battling sleep, fending off the reckless darnings of even more distracted daredevils - to keep their minds off the Furies at their backs. Now, it was just the hum of the rototracks and their sallow reflections in the autoglass that the darkening sky had transformed into blacknight mirrors. There was little else to occupy mind, ear or eye. No poetry, no terror.

Had the evening really happened the way he remembered? Was the tangle of impressions stirring under this uneasy drowse really his?

How strange the day had been. The stifling heat of Indian summer had finally surrendered to advancing autumn, the gray sky shaking out a cold drizzle that occasionally crystallized in a sugaring of freezing rain. It sent chills through Passmore, too lightly dressed in only a business suit, as he lunged at the door handles of one, then another, passing autocab, until he found one that would accept his instructions.

"Saviour's Gate 36," he said, waiting to hear the onboard computer purr its approval. "Take the Lescalles Tunnel at 82<sup>nd</sup> ." It was not the quickest route, but he was in no hurry. It would give him a chance to scan the fresh quarterlies in advance of the morning sales call.

He had left the office early in order to beat the weekend traffic, and the first of the Martyrs' Processions that would surely tie up the roads and bridges and flyways by eating time. He had a strange, warm feeling of peace and success, and he believed he and Landra could forget their issues, the rising pressures of the prior weeks, over a quiet dinner and a glass or two of the good Serbian Azulia he had gotten, under the table, from his friends at the Customs House. It would be nice to drown the nightly sniping and suspicion, to stretch and breathe deeply.

Even stout Henrik, something resembling a grin on his pockmarked face, seemed more like a greeter and less like a security agent as Passmore crossed the glittering citrine floor of the Laurentian lobby. Henrik did not assay him as he walked by, but ruffled the pages of an ancient paperbook of Guido Reni drawings with an uncharacteristically carefree air, humming the fatally catchy jingle from the MentiGro brain enhancement ads. He did not even glance up at Passmore's nervous greeting, and the executive took it as a sign that, for a few hours, the city had come unclenched.

So it was with a strange optimism that Passmore opened his unit door and swept past the plastiform dining table, his treasured pair of Mezvinsky demantoid centaurs, the Lalique Sisyphus clock, and threw open the sleeping chamber door. He thought Landra, tucked compactly as an Olympic diver beneath a mound of blankets, had tired herself with a day of voice and text-canvassing at the WomensHearth Center, but the pressure of his body, his measured caress of her tightly-shorn hair and his tired breath on the nape of her neck, did not wake her. Touching her inert cheek, he could feel it cool under his fingers. He froze, unsure of what to do next, then reached awkwardly for the reading lamp, knocking to the floor an empty medicine bottle and an envelope that bore his name in her heavy, masculine script. The truth of what had happened began to set in, and he found himself chuckling inwardly, bitterly, that, even at such a terminal moment, dear Landra had seen fit to use her heavy formal stationary with her mantis crest.

Through a thin film of nervous tears, he read what she had written:

*The Hydra has been by, and it won't be long before they will be taking people in. Much, much you don't know. Grae is moving to Gaia Land to stay. And your dedication to your "work" is the last straw, Puffin. It's just become too much. I'm tired, Pass, bone/soul/will tired. I have no one left to be strong for. Be well as you are able. L.*

She really thought she could keep her secrets, he mused, and this last, needless, apology (if that's what it was, he was too confused to tell), just made the tragedy one level sadder, more poignant. For a span of time he could measure only by the drifting angle of the setting sun's rays on the bottle that had once held her Hypnoclast caplets, he sat in a sort of shocked haze, the world wrapped in a cottony dressing, holding Landra's lifeless mannequin hand, wondering at her body's obscene absence of motion, the surrendered focus in her unseeing gaze. There were so many things a rational man would have done, so many arrangements to be made, but he felt only a growing, nettlesome urge to go, to move, to be somewhere, anywhere, else. It made no sense, and he would have to answer for his choices later, but he refolded the note and replaced it in its envelope, returned the envelope to its place on the bedside table and, with a kiss he left suspended in the air millimeters above the skin of Landra's unlined, aristocratic forehead, he abandoned her to be discovered by Jacqueline at breakfast time.

What made him run, climb into his vehicle and ride away from town toward nowhere at all? Fear? No, for he was criminally blameless. Guilt? Perhaps, for he had no small part in events that had crushed his wife's spirit like stacked stones on a witch's belly. Shame? Maybe even that, too. He needed time alone to assemble his thoughts, to piece together some emotionally cogent version of events, something he could present convincingly to the world. And so his transport moved steadily west, past the outlying districts, through the interstate connectors, toward the feeder roads leading into the free states of Jericho and Cana and, farther on, the farming hamlets of Middle America, Atlanta and its satellites in the New Southland. But these were hours away, through miles of the empty, haunted roadways that linked the population centers like a beggar's sinews, so he unlocked his guidance panel and selected the button for Fuel. Just several minutes later, his navideck had chosen an off-ramp and moved toward a lighted island with pumps for ethanol, electric and natural gas. He thought he might take on a little of each, along with lungfuls of the clear, chill exurban air.

The station was not a typical Sharrod's or TravelChrome. It must be one of the independents grandfathered in when the smartroads were built, he thought. There was nothing remotely modern about it. It gave the appearance of a 20<sup>th</sup> century clapboard general store connected by a makeshift breezeway to a quonset hut the size of a pair of tennis courts. In front of the main building stood a lawn sign painted with uneven red and blue letters:

SANDOR'S ROADSIDE

FOOD, FUEL AND AMUSEMENTS

ADULT ARCADE AND MUSEUM

WE'RE RIGHT ON YOUR WAY TO WHEREVER!

Its guileless tone was instantly appealing. Without another thought, Passmore accepted the Encanta's refueling plan, and gingerly disembarked outside the front door.

"Nice ride! How many miles do you get per cubic foot, General?"

As he walked inside, Passmore was instantly struck by the timeless scents of road food, the rich tang of real pig bacon and the hearty smell of charred potato. At a hissing vintage grill, a wiry man with slick hair and van dyke beard was scraping away grease and meat leavings, the sweat on his bicep making glisten an ink needle tattoo he recognized as the Unisphere from the old New York World's Fair. The man mopped his brow with a cloth napkin, and walked from behind the five-and-dime style lunch counter.

"I haven't seen an Encanta in months. Is that carmine red?" For just an instant, Passmore was so swept up by hunger that his mind wandered, while Sandor stood, arms akimbo, waiting to be civilly acknowledged. There was a lot to take in. The room was dominated by a formica service counter with real swivel stools. Along the wall, a handful of padded booths, crowned by 1950s

table jukeboxes, sat beneath an assortment of vintage motoring memorabilia like he had never seen: signs advertising Chevron, Esso, Arco and Gulf; a great plastic Pegasus arching upward through a Mobil emblem; antique license plates from the old state subdivisions; framed paper magazine pages with stiff, smiling pump boys and carhops vying to serve food and fuel to 1940s postwar holidaymakers; framed clippings of Governor Leung driving the final spike in the state's first smartroad, August 13, 2021. At the far end of the room, a spicurling Big Boy hoisted a burger the size of a SheWolf radio satellite. Passmore wanted one of those old meat patties so badly he temporarily forgot the grim tableau from which he was running. Sandor, who walked in the self-consciously erect manner of one fighting a high wind, pulled a nickel slug from his pocket and placed it in a juke, filling the café with a jangle Passmore recognized from grad school as Billy Lee Riley's "Flying Saucers Rock and Roll."

"I'd swap Hedwig's hands for one of those juicy double-deckers," Passmore said. In the farthest booth, a stylish woman, her face kissed by a bit of veil that dangled from a blue pillbox hat, grimaced at the blare of rockabilly and dabbed a tiny rivulet of beef juice from the corner of her crimson mouth.

"Careful, Pop," Sandor said. "Out here on the way to the religious protectorates, they can get peevish about city snakes taking their heroes' names in vain." It was good advice. An Estro-separatist in Gilead had amputated her hands rather than submit to fingerprinting by the territorial police, and now she was more or less a walking saint to the Esters. He'd have to watch his mouth out here. It was pretty country, but some of the sects fed themselves through banditry. People had been known to vanish off these roads, especially at night. That would be so fitting, Passmore reflected, the way his luck had turned.

He laughed. "Am I so obvious?"

"Fraid so," Sandor said. "You'll go many a fortnight before you see a Kimori buggy or a sealskin coat around these parts. You might as well have a tranqdart target painted on the seat of your trousers."

Together, they ate and, as Passmore's strength and focus returned, he quizzed Sandor about his life and times. Sandor spoke, at the very slightest urging, of his time in the Middle Eastern Expeditionary Force policing the new Syrian splinter-states, illness in the norovirus outbreak of '41, brief careers in offshore reclamation farming both legal (sugar cane, rice, carob) and quasi-legal (hemp-grade cannabis), and his ultimate falling, by sheer happenstance, into his current business, when the Roadhouse came available in a sedition forfeiture. Passmore, though, shared little of his own sad, up-and-down story, his taciturn New England temperament deeming it unkind to dampen his host's spirits with his private woes. He held his melancholy in reserve, even as he tucked into the mountainous slab of rhubarb pie Jalise, the flirty Filipina waitron, placed before him. In a few minutes, Passmore thought, he would be fed, brushed up, and back on the smartrack to who-knew-where. He drained the last swallow of honey-laced chicory liquor from his chipped Sambo's mug, drummed his fingers to the dying coda of The Righteous

Brothers' "You've Lost That Loving Feeling," and reached for his vehicle's activator pod, when Sandor bolted from his seat and blocked his path.

"Hey! What's your hurry?" He had the desperate air of a man putting off an onerous, long-overdue chore. "Don't go yet. You look like you're headed to the gallows."

"I really need to work on my poker face."

"Sides, you haven't seen the Museum of Fun." Passmore must have come up short, because Sandor immediately explained. "Aren't you curious about those amusements we advertise? Not a con, you know..."

The snooty woman and her friend, a stocky man with symmetrical notches cut in his eyebrows, had packed up and decamped, leaving Jalise to gather what seemed like a hundred plastic purchase tokens, humming an angry, improvised bossa nova.

We get a bunch of long-haul traffic through here, guys needing to unwind and recharge." They were walking toward a side exit, and Passmore, through a half-closed door, could see a Porta-bed beside a stack of holodiscs, a urethane vibroform peeking from under a paper sheet. "You might appreciate our," he reached for a word, "collection..." A note of muffled glee in Sandor's voice made Passmore wonder if they were doing something borderline-illegal, entering an opium den, or a cutting parlor full of pre-teen girls with straight razors and money belts. Clearly, he thought, Sandor wanted to cultivate a roguish pose. Through the passage was a green door, and Sandor turned in its lock an elaborate, old-fashioned silver skeleton key. Wiping his hands on the oily front of his wife-beater, he beckoned Passmore through a dim anteroom, past a wooden portal gaily painted in imps and satyrs, crowned in cursive words:

#### THE CAVALCADE OF THE MIRACULOUS

"Nice, is it not? Rescued from a traveling funfair in Alberta. Tarry awhile in our House of Games."

Passmore took a few hesitant steps, his eyes slowly adjusting to the low flicker of electric mock-torches. From the murk emerged, bit by bit, two rows of painted stalls, in which his eyes discerned the still forms of wax statues, or mounted corpses. He looked back to see Sandor beaming, urging him forward. The proprietor flipped a switch, and the first booth was flooded with a white light that flowed down soft ochre shoulders, the straight jet hair, of a woman reclining on an antique Empire revival couch. By now, Passmore could see that each space held such a figure, frozen in a graceful, submissive pose. He was momentarily frozen, as if by the spotlight of a pursuing mob.

"Christ on a helioped, he said. "These are museum pieces. You've been saving these for years. All the way back to the blondroid days."



"And beyond," Sandor said, pointing out his proud, reclining ladylove. "And every one in working order."

"Impressive," Passmore said, just above a whisper. "Are they coin-operated?" He strode into the booth and gently ran a finger down the languid lady's still-shimmering human hair. "Where does one even get parts for...? Our girl hasn't been in production since the '30s. There were only about 300 of these made."

Sandor smiled and toyed with a greasy wrench. "A man who knows his merchandise. You'd be surprised what kind of parts you can scavenge. Been a hobby of mine for a while. The haulers enjoy it. Pulls in as much as the diner. Seems like more and more of the guys need the escape." By now, he was fingering the silk of the lady's emerald kimono. "A lot of the real purists will only have a go with the old models. You wouldn't think it, but they swear that the feel of the pulleys and the fiberglass belting is some kind of hyper thrill. They call themselves 'The Rough Riders.'" He laughed a little. "Macho bullshit, but I can get \$10 a go. Me, I'm an Arielle man. Three to five, specifically, but, different pokes for different folks."

Passmore gazed into the glassine hollows of her green glass eyes, his mind flooded with memory, regret and guilty pride. "You've got to watch the torque on one of these queenies. No joke. And no loose clothing."

"You have a real familiarity with the old rolling stock," Sandor said. "I had you pegged for an early adopter."

Passmore smiled and let the silk slip from his fingers. "*Mon ami*, you don't even know. Let me tell you a story..."

## 2. July 2033: Princess Suki

"I needs you, baby. Please! *Come on...*"

The woman in the window leaned in conspiratorially, attracting Passmore and two other men, who watched the misty web of her breath grow and recede on the glass. He had seen better, but not many. Her arms moved gracefully to trace imaginary letters on the window, the bulb behind the red lampshade casting a warm glow that traced in light dew the tensely-drawn muscles in her arms and shoulders. Her expression of false pleading gave Passmore a thrill of danger that ran down his spine and buckled his legs. And this little scene was, he saw, being enacted in front of three dozen picture windows all along the crowded street.

"You should get a quote," his friend Stendahl from accounting suggested, tugging his windbreaker sleeve, "for later. Just in case." On the corner, a man in a mobile kiosk sold tokens, redeemable, Passmore imagined, for the women's favors.

Gilfix, the regional sales director, was the expedition leader, and cultivated the nonchalant air of a regular patron. "Enjoy, fellas. This is a far cry from the bad old days of '27." On and on he went about how Candyland used to be, the downsized factory workers, superannuated casino waitresses and upwardly mobile streetwalkers, and how the dismantling of the federal immigration apparatus had opened the floodgate of topflight ladies from Central America, Eastern Europe, and the Pacific Rim. "The devaluation of the shekel last year changed everything," he said, leaning in to make eye contact with Passmore's woman. "Dozens of magical Sabras like our pal here, irises the color of caramel, hair that shines like a thoroughbred's freshly-brushed haunches." He made a sound like a hungry child. "Too bad they secretly hate us. Yes! Bet on it. Rachel here has driven tanks and holds us in abject contempt." Passmore couldn't resist a final backward glance at the bazaar from the end of the cul-de-sac.

"Maybe a nightcap, after our revels have ended," Gilfix said, clasping Passmore's shoulder and exhaling a sneery chortle, the sounds of negotiated commerce fading behind them.

It was a crisp evening in mid-October and the entire glittering grid of New Vegas lay at the feet of the men from the Mid-Atlantic Marketing Mod of Life Enhancement Services, Inc., a New York LLC in the business of developing high-end appliances "to tame the inner frontier." Even in the final throes of a lingering recession, it had been an auspicious year for Kit Gilfix's boys. The Home Telemetry sector was booming, and the InstaFuse home infusion system had hit the market like a Force Five gale. Their 8% revenue bump was the lone high point at the annual stockholders' meeting, and earned Passmore, his boss Andrachuck and two dozen team members a four-day romp in the reanimated corpse of Sin City. America was graying, two-parent families with kids were on the way out, and the vision of Vegas as family playground had become less and less appealing. Casino takes were down, and it no longer made sense to send red-blooded American breadwinners off to some double-wide in Clark County to legally



get their rocks off. So the town re-reinvented itself as a font of corruption. Enclaves like Pigalle Place, Joyville and the Street of Dreams, legalized six years ago, were now big profit centers for the casinos, and brought in big players with world-class beauties, elegant accommodations, even old-time radio rock acts in the bordellos' round-up rooms and promenades. And LESI made sure to have plenty of tickets to EROTEX 33, the carnal show of shows, at the World Commerce Center. Gilfix could hardly wait. For them, it was still the salad days.

From the instant they stepped off the hovershuttle at The Big Shoebox, Passmore and his colleagues were assaulted with an all-out aural/visual/tactile fusillade of panerotic stimulation. Musky stripper perfume (laced, he imagined, with every kind of pheromone and herbal aphrodisiac) wafted out across the grand foyer from whispering overhead vents. Great ceiling-high screens featured every sort of woman, clad in diaphanous gowns, swimsuits, jeweled bracelets and necklaces, and, in some cases, generous lashings of chocolate, mint, and other sweet toppings, beckoning, imploring, the conventioners toward the great iron doors of the inner hall. All around, the walls pulsed with excited bodysounds, dappled with beautiful bits of harp, mandolin and cello. Great, long-legged temptresses, in the garb of minstrels, jugglers and acrobats, sang and tumbled, teasing the eyes and ears of the hundreds of tired but mischievous-looking admen, vendors, and junior executives that flowed in from Love Street and the High Commerce Footbridge. A blonde contortionist landed a round-off just inches before Passmore, reached into her fanny-pack, and handed him a key in the shape of Titian's *Venus of Urbino*.

"Enjoy," she said, pirouetting away and vanishing into the crowd. He wondered where it fit.

Inside the hall, the walls were lined with booths adorned in neon and fiberglass, hyping a dizzying range of products, all designed to heighten the frequency, variety, intensity of sexual activity. There were remote controlled VOIP sexual devices for the spouses of prisoners and deployed servicemen; 3D holodiscs; fetish clothing in every synthetic fiber, suborbital electrical stimulators; brainwave modification tiaras; a battalion of piercers, tantric yogis, nutritionists and gymnasts; contraceptive devices; surgeons to make you younger, longer and stronger; pharma- and nuticeuticals to extend performance and heighten sensation; and, at each booth, a wearying profusion of booth babes calling the patrons forth like sirens of sales, dressed as every heroine from comics and history, offering literature and samples in such quantities that some men had radio-controlled carts to hold it all. Beneath a plasma screen on which a young territorial governor fellated a temporarily-famous publicity aide, a beautiful naked redhead, in the pose of Rodin's *She Who Was Once The Helmet Maker's Beautiful Wife* and a willowy blonde emerging from a Botticelli clamshell promoted the Erxleben Sex Retreat ("Make Love Like An Old Master"), and motioned Passmore toward a wooden door carved in the style reminiscent of a Renaissance palazzo. Akita watched as Passmore inserted his Titian key and opened the door. For an instant, Akita and Passmore's eyes met, and they slowly walked inside.

In the dim light, a dozen or so men ringed a makeshift stage trimmed in red velvet, where a rising spot picked out a short, painfully erect figure, an expressionless girl of indeterminate age in the tailored suit of an executive assistant or a budget-airline flight attendant. Passmore looked more closely to check the warmth of her skin, to see how the light would pool in the topography of her face.

“My name is Cassandra,” she said. “I can’t wait to meet you all.” Her handler, a round man in the kind of mass-produced baseball cap used to sell soft drinks and athletic shoes, gently squeezed her hand, at which she smiled and turned to him in a gentle curtsy.

“Heaven help us,” Akita whispered. “Is that a robot?”

The man seemed to hear. “Not merely a robot, but the world’s most sophisticated sex robot, anatomically perfect, capable of replicating a dozen popular sex positions, able to respond to touch and voice.” Passmore could now see the unnatural smoothness and symmetry of her doll’s face, the rigidity of her legs, the artificial sheen of her hair. “Close your eyes, and let your imagination come out to play!”

Akita and Passmore shared a smile as the *tumbler* put his device through her paces, letting her narrate a clumsy striptease from a prerecorded repertoire of enticements, roll around on an overstuffed mattress in simulated sex play, even French kiss a punter who struggled to look comfortable in her mechanical embrace.

“Her bush looks like a carpet sample,” Akita laughed.

“One of those throw rugs for when you step out of the shower,” Passmore added. “It’s like a five-car pile-up. You can’t look away.” He was thinking this, even after the volunteer unhitched his belt and prepared to road-test the fatman’s creation to the pounding electronic sounds of The Albigensians.

“Gilfix will never believe this shit,” Akita half-shouted over Cassandra’s affectless rendition of “Teach Me, Tiger.” Passmore made the rounds of a dozen other booths, videochatted with Thai sexworkers, played a maze-race game against a busty, indigo-haired coed in the leather corset, leggings and foot-long French braid of FutureGirl, but, still, he could think of little but that crude robotic wench and the looks of rapt, impure attention on those conventiongoers’ faces. He could not get the scene out of his mind, even as FutureGirl threw her arms around his neck and saluted the victor with a showy nibble on the neck.

Passmore rotated a giant waffle cone full of acai sherbet past his tongue, taming the molten mass into manageable half-dome shape. “All I’m saying,” he spat out between licks, “is that we make an awful lot of stuff designed to save people time and expenditure of effort, and why? So they have more energy to chase each other around and fuck. There’s a pretty penny to be made by the man whose strategy is less...*indirect*...”

Stendahl's face and gait were showing the influence of the mescal shots that had launched the evening back at the El Cordoba. "Hear that?" he chimed. "Our young Turk wants to get into the business of marital aids."

Gilfix churned a rolled-up poster like a drum major's baton, leading his merry band. "Well, that's what I get for trying to show my charges a few laughs. Maybe next year," he added, leaning over to pat a hostess in satin hot pants a tap on the rump, 'it's going to be Dearborn Village. The Henry Ford Museum."

Akita looked up from the exhibitor's table where he was manipulating an array of packaged dental dams like Marine Band harmonicas. "Holy Hester, Assmore, you really know how to quash a good time. Send him back on the next shuttle!"

But the idea kept digging into him like a stone in a summer slipper. "You guys are all fucked up and testosterone-addled," he said, "but we ain't done kicking this around. Not by a long shot."

\*\*\*\*\*

He would have liked her to be prettier. She was a little too tall, her mouth a little exaggerated and sad, the copper hair betraying unexceptional mud brown roots. She walked with a slight hunch, as if afraid she might bump her head on the stucco ceiling or the garish brass chandelier. Her flaws were not noble or endearing, but she was all right, he guessed. With Gilfix footing the bill, Passmore was in no position to complain.

"How does it feel to be first prize in a sales contest," he joked, looking in vain for a smile or a sign that he had connected, "instead of a fully-loaded rover?" He searched her movements, her eyes, and tried to define the micro-elements that betrayed the woman in her, that separated her from the exhibitor's doll. As she slid down beside him, his hands moved gently, clinically down her spine, and he closed his eyes, feeling the variable pressure of her embrace, measuring the speed and severity of her reactions to his fingers, his tongue on her warm skin. He was, he thought, a scientific instrument, gathering data for a new project, as he flowed into her, and gave in to liquor and sleep.

In the chill light of morning, he was once again alone.

He always dreamed about sex, but rarely had he dreamed of love. Yet, here it was; in this last dream, he was conscious of an ever-present mental warmth and security, a home-feeling he had with this woman, a sister of sorts to an ex co-worker, but slimmer, slyer, her eyes shining in a perpetual near-wink. He had not seen her before. Her clothes kept changing: track suit, a rose shift, a linen robe she wore with a beautiful white turban. He stood closely before her, felt the rub of her breasts on his chest, but she did not pull away. He wanted to be with her there and then, there and then and a thousand moments to come, but he was aware of an obligation that pulled him away, of all things, a grown-up baptism, something so important, so tied to filial loyalty that he dare not skip it. He knew he lacked the strength to say no to his commitments,

and that, having left her side, he would never have her back again, and the magnetism of his obligations was quiet, gentle torture. Would you call it dream or nightmare? It left a rude, painful hole, like he had been scraped out. It all made sense, in the slow, exquisite way, he thought, that we twisted each other, and pulled ourselves apart like warm bread.

Once, women had sung to him. Sung him to sleep and sung him awake. Now, he was alone, alone to make sense of the prior day's sights and sounds.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Fuck me, you're serious," Gilfix said, crossing his legs at the knees in a louche pose. "I thought you were wasted, just, y'know, perversely fascinated - and rightly so - by ritual displays of orgasmic weirdness. You've got to learn to take a joke."

Passmore struggled to work his thoughts into shape, sensing his chance might already be receding. "Think about it. Have not all transformative inventions begun as some absurd, widely-ridiculed novelty? People say 'There's no market.' Well, no shit! The product has never existed before. People don't want it because they don't know they want it. They have to be *shown*..."

"Shown," Stendahl asked, "that they need a sex doll?" Akita choked back a laugh that built into a ripple and filled Gilfix's corner office with an uncomfortable jollity.

Here it was. The salesman's moment. An objection to be overcome. "No, not a sex doll. Something new. Something altogether new. A sophisticated machine that combines all the grace and attention to detail our animatronics lab uses for the pavilions and park attractions, and the consumer orientation we use for our Plusher Living R&D. A lifelike work of art that can cook, clean, mix drinks, greet guests, calculate, coordinate, collate..."

"...and fuck..." Gilfix appeared unmoved.

"That could be a viable assistant, companion, elegant complement to a finely furnished home, top-end plaything for the man who has everything. Reference tool. Beautiful object reflecting the highest echelons of design to enjoy, to envy..."

"...and to fuck."

"One of a potentially infinite number of uses," Passmore challenged. "This will be the teleporter, the flying car, the future manifest as synthetic flesh. And the beauty is that every incremental advance in technology will breed a new version, more advanced, more desirable. Built in obsolescence and upmarketing."

The titters had stilled.

“And the market for this totally new product,” he added, careful to pronounce each word, “is. All. Ours.”

Gilfix wrote some figures on a legal sheet where he had hastily sketched a figure of a bikini-clad ostrich-girl standing in *contrapasto*, hands on hips. He slid Passmore the paper and walked silently out, grabbing his coat, as the rest followed thoughtfully, in single file.

Maybe, Passmore thought. Maybe just.



The next week, Claire McGlynn, one of the VPs from Legal had a sheaf of papers on Passmore’s desk, awaiting his signature; and by months’ end, a charter had been filed, agents for service appointed, and share certificates issued. Intimatron, Ltd. was incorporated in the British Virgin Islands, with Passmore as Managing Director, Gilfix as Treasurer, and Akita as Recording Secretary. Five-hundred shares were issued to LESI, with the officers holding options to purchase 150 more. The small initial budget was

siphoned from one of the half-dozen or so slush funds Gilfix maintained for wining, dining and whoring, and Anderchuk had given them (against his better judgment, he was sure to add), three engineers and a suite of workrooms formerly used by the developers of the abandoned In-home Pre-school Sensory Deprivation Project. Harried parents’ loss would be Passmore’s gain. “From Skinner to Skin Job,” Akita crowed, pouring cheap *prosecco* into plastic flutes under the disapproving frown of Gail from data processing, their temporary waitron for the impromptu launch party. Now, Passmore knew, the door was ajar; they had only to cross the threshold.

It would have to be a delicate balancing act. Gilfix was explicit about keeping LESI’s name out of things, but Passmore knew that their Galatea would need something more arresting than the sloppy workout he had seen in the Red Room at the Vegas convention. They had to change

minds, to get people thinking in a new way, of the android not merely as an attainable toy, but as an ultimate benchmark luxury, the kind that lifted an owner's status, that got the neighbors playing mental catch-up. There would be no hands-on groping by sweaty robot hobbyists. But it had to be done tactfully, carefully, attracting only the right level and type of attention.

For months Passmore labored, once his daily money-spinning duties were done, with his small crew - Endino the animatronic sculptor; Muldaur from network engineering; Redfawn, whose facility with superconductive membranes helped them develop a smooth, studiotanned artificial skin; Ms. Wakabayashi the librarian, who provided anthropological photos depicting women of all races and eras, as well as information on hairstyles, adornments and fashions. Starting with an automaton of Joan of Arc from the recently-closed Land of Nod, they built her, piece by piece, making her movements more supple, her expressions more diverse and inviting, refining the connections between skin and the microprocessor that moved the subtle, solenoid clockworks behind eyes and lips. Bit by bit she emerged, until the time arrived for functional testing. Passmore, Akita, Stendahl, sheepishly took their turns, comparing their trysts in notes of surprise and quiet satisfaction.

"No substitute for the real thing," Stendahl concluded, "but not awful. A bit stiff, unyielding. Expression and gesture were reasonably responsive. The hydraulics keep things warm and...well-oiled. Needs a bit more vaginal elasticity, I.M.O."

"Well, I enjoyed it," Akita said. "Could be a bit smoother in transition from one position to another, but what do you expect, I guess. Most of our guys won't be working through the *Kama Sutra*. She can fake an orgasm as well as Stendahl's wife, anyhow."

"Asking Akita to test your bot is like asking a drunkard to sample a new vintage," Stendahl said. "Anything with two legs and a Social Registry number is a quantum advancement."

Endino stood by the office door and made a serious face. "I think I hurt myself. I got the sciatica."

Passmore sighed. "But would we go again? Is it an experience worth premium prices." Not yet, he knew, not yet.

The Suki (Synchronized User-Directed Kinetic Interface) they had labored to prepare was based on a life mask of Susa Li, a 28 year old beauty of Chinese, Indian and French extraction who had appeared in a handful of softcore holocausts. The body had been originally cast, so they were told, from Anka Someone-or-Other, a chorus dancer from the Lincoln Center Ballet. Passmore had to admit, the final product, crowned with real human hair shorn at a Hindu temple in Vrindavan, was a lovely thing. To present their creation, they arranged for Suki to appear during the intermission of Bourelly's full-frontal staging of *Il Trovatore* at the Atlanta Civic, in a modern dance set to the music of the cellist Paolo Zum. Accompanied by an Argentinian body builder they imported from a Long Island company boat works, Suki swirled, a blanket of

sparks in a two-piece costume adorned with Qing Dynasty dragons in cloth of azure and gold, necklaces of nephrite jade mirroring the sheen from her lucid, emerald cats' eyes. She floated along the theater lobby, drawing the amazed stares of operagoers, who momentarily forgot their champagne flutes and palmsful of ceviche. Suki's partner Rigoberto cradled her with a tenderness just insistent enough to communicate the imminence of mutual desire. At the climactic moment, he hoisted her skyward and, with a graceful, sweeping gesture, she unhooked her beautifully crafted polymer faceplate to reveal an intricate nest of wires and gears.

"The 2035 Suki, from Intimatron," a voice cooed over the public address. "All a man can ask for. All that Heaven will allow." The initial shock and breathlessness resolved into a chatter, then a healthy cluster of questioners around the bunting-bedecked information table. On the flight home, Passmore was told that their storage crate had been broken into and their invention sampled repeatedly by Thad Spite, an adult performer showing off before some drunken co-stars.

"Gents," he informed the inner circle, lifting a half-empty can of airline seltzer, "I think we have our first celebrity endorsement."

\*\*\*\*\*

It was the moment Passmore had dreaded for months. Working on the Suki, in a bubble of secrecy, away from the mad pressures of sales quotas, had been like a vacation. He was a creator, an inventor, working closely with a hand-picked team, toward an exciting goal. But they had come as far as they could with their jerry-rigged arrangement. They had a prototype, the world had seen it, and now people were asking questions. It was time to surface. They would have to go seriously public, and in order to survive the initial shockwave of skepticism and ridicule, they would need the marketing muscle of LESI behind them: interactive videoboards, holocast adverts, web plug-ins keyed to a dozen search criteria, subliminal ambigrams transmitted over public spaces, maybe even some celebrity endorsements or placements in some theatrical films. Kurzweil had a whole plan mapped out, but it would take real backing from the people Passmore feared most: the very activist, fiercely divided, Board of Directors. And he would have to face them without the one sure-fire convincer: a proven stream of revenues.

He had been studying up for weeks, during every moment he wasn't watching joint responsivity tests, sitting in on synthskin seminars, meeting with costume designers or caucusing with pollsters, trendcasters, forensic anthropologists and sculptors. LESI was a giant even among the pan-nationals. It had 48 subsidiaries and 109 separate business divisions, some independent, some hung in LESI's spidery organizational chart like so many fat flies. The holding company board was like that of most of LESI's peers: in majority, loyal to a *paterfamilias* (in this case, Chairman Emeritus Sir Grady Swiftwyck, now in hospital with a flare of gout),

composed of big noises drawn in equal measure from real fields like banking, aerospace and academia, and the splashier but less substantial fields of entertainment, sports and government.

Passmore's strategy, he felt, was best kept basic. He divided the Board into three camps: the pragmatists, who could be swayed by production costs, marketing surveys and high margins; the moralists, who would find his project repugnant and attempt to infect all with their distaste; and the progressives, whose social policy objections could be overcome with high-level thinking about the direction of social, sexual and technological evolution. These ideas people were the swing votes, and he believed that the support of two or three such directors – people like Crocus Carmody, the Olympic trekking champion or Seraphine Saint-Malhereux, Professor of Comparative Sexuality at the University of Nantes, could sway the mood and carry the day. But Passmore knew their temperaments only from rumor and legend. Success was anything but certain. At best, he gave his project, and, consequently, his own campaign for advancement, a 50/50 shot.

There was nothing really as grandiose as a strategy. The prospects for success were too remote for Gilfix to slap his fingerprints on the Suki Project. He would do the real business – quarterly sales results and revenue projections, marketing trends and expense reduction, *etc.* Once the sap had settled and that attention-fatigue that so often set in at the end of a lengthy meeting had glazed the directors' eyes with languor, Gilfix would make a joke, shoot his cuffs a final time, and introduce Passmore for the comic relief, a lighthearted look at a fun and entertaining little pet project under development. There would be video, a rundown of some bullet points, a preview of the developing marketing strategy, and a request for the Board's tacit imprimatur. Suki, or whatever replaced her, would emerge from the corporate twilight. It would be a subtle thing.

The hallway outside Board Room A was filled with nervous junior execs in bad-fitting linen suits, wilting under a pall of coffee breath, cigarette smoke and the all-nighter sweat that one could never fully expunge. On Passmore's way inside, Endino gave his shoulder a pulled punch that almost knocked the redweld and the holodisc case from the crook of his arm.

"Party time, kid," Anderchuck laughed. "My money's on a half-hearted reproof that everyone forgets two weeks later, so we can all go back to selling cookstoves and security systems. Like the gods, I wait to be astonished." Passmore thought how that glibness that was supposed to make the medicine easier to swallow just made Upchuck seem like more of an ass. He was still thinking it as Gilfix put the final spin on a lukewarm quarter and motioned him inside.

"Before we let you go, we wanted to leave you with a little peek at the future. So, to clue you in on a little project bubbling under the surface, here is a young comer spearheading things, our Northeast sector retail electronics sales champ for 2031 and 2032, Algy Passmore."

Passmore strode up to the dais feeling the full weight of ambition crushing him. This was the chance of a lifetime. The Board would be the first real litmus test of what they had jokingly



termed Project Pris. But if he was insufficiently convincing, he would wear this failure like a millstone necklace. He would be wrangling with retail reps and goosing lazy service departments until they punched his ticket and disappeared him from the executive floor. "Retirement" was too nice a word. He took a deep breath and closed his eyes. Energy. Certainty. Vision. Let No Objection Survive.

"Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your attention this afternoon." The Rev. Ajax Fulton's head was already slipping from the cradle of his hand toward the unforgiving lucite of the conference table. Passmore hit a switch and the holo projectors around the room began to spit out an omnidisc environment. The show was about to begin.

"LESI has established itself as international brand leader in so very many sectors of consumer electronics and services. In fields like kitchen appliances, wall and floor covering, home security and health, flood and fire protection, leisure services, one can hardly make a purchase without at least considering one of our fine family of companies. But with success comes the weight of expectation. The world expects us to grow, and this requires not merely perfecting our existing products, but developing exciting new products...the next generation of must-haves, the new horizon in consumer need...something that has never existed, but that, within a generation, the world will desire *and* require, like the electric light, the telephone, the automobile, the personal computer..."

"How long has it been since we had such a paradigm-shifter?" he asked, watching the fruitless mental searches reflected on the directors' faces. The environment had resolved itself to the Atlanta theater lobby, the room filled with the ghost images of people waiting for Suki's big entrance.

"I give you, the next big thing." He had already seen the show, so he kept focused on the directors' eyes. There were the LESI execs: Carragher, the big man, his face a mask of nervous concern; Dinwiddie the dipsomaniacal EVP, his red face flushed with illicit amusement; old man Krause, looking irritated, as if Suki was a cheap taunt. Rev. Fulton had come to erect attention, as if facing an imminent threat to global decency. The women - Carmody, Alice Henriques, the ex-Commerce Secretary, Mynx Appling the astronaut - skeptically stroked their chins or scribbled on notepads, all the while maintaining a stern attention. In the corner, in a marvelous teal alligator blazer and matching fedora, Saint-Malhereux conferred with an aide who took Suki in with dark, unblinking crow's eyes.

"Perelandra Pindar," Majeski, Carragher's assistant, whispered to Passmore. "Boswell to Madame's Johnson or something similar."

The small, perfect 3D image of Suki in (and out of) her magnificent robes, twirling and orbiting around her partner had captivated the men around the table - even Krause, who spastically clicked and relicked his antique ballpoint like a cricket in a heatwave. Mauritius Phibes the talk show host gave the lone aural sign of approval, a low sigh/whistle that coaxed a grin from

Dinwiddie, and set off a tense and fluid dynamic. As the dance got more sweaty and sensual, the men inched imperceptibly closer to the edges of their chairs, scowling, studying, or, in the case of Dr. Gillis Raincrow the Hopi herbalist, propping his chin on bridged hands, mouth slightly ajar in a dreamy, drunkish smile.

So what do we have then?," Rudolf Emmerich, inventor of the NiteScholar insrant learning bonnet, asked, somewhat distractedly. "Some kind of big wind-up toy?" Seraphine stifled a noise like a sneezing terrier. A few of the go-fersalong the wall laughed gently, imprudently.

"So much more, sir," Passmore interrupted, his sales training kicking in at last. "For years, the dream of robotics has been to create a device to fulfill basic physical needs, in particular, marital needs. Various initiatives have worked toward this goal with only the most limited success. LESI scientists, as you have witnessed, have created a prototype superior in every regard, capable of almost-human movement and responsiveness, capable of giving highly refined pleasure over a useful life in excess of - with proper maintenance - some 20-25 years. In addition, the workmanship, detail, verisimilitude, achieve a level of aesthetic perfection so superior to previous models, it almost requires our android to have an entirely new name." He made a mental note: invent new name.

A solemn-looking man a few seats away cleared his throat. "But this company has a sterling reputation for impeccably-made household goods. We are a family company. We bring families closer. Do we wish to risk all that on some ill-considered venture into...sex toys?" The group murmured its quiet affirmation. "Is this a Rubicon we dare to cross?"

Passmore could feel Carragher's eyes bearing down on him. "Clearly," Passmore said, this is an historic moment, and one that will require our full commitment. We can change public perception as it relates to this product. We can bring Companion Sciences out of the back pages and into the mainstream. Imagine the benefits: first to the military, the incarcerated, those working far from home, the disabled; then, to the widower, the divorced man, the lonely seeking consolation. But why stop there? Androids like Suki are no threat to the family, but can become an essential part of it. Imagine couples shopping together for their own Suki, as educational aid for the young, simple source of aesthetic pleasure and companionship, domestic service, or even, yes, a valuable outlet to remedy imbalances in connubial desire. How many marriages can be saved? Saved!"

There was a stony silence that Passmore interpreted as a small victory, a stemming, if not a turning, of the tide.

Prof. Saint-Malhereux had finally composed her thoughts. "Well, I, for one, find it very forward-thinking. Human sexuality. The new frontier. Why shouldn't our finest minds, our richest sources of capital, be used to refine and maximize the experience? Cast off the shackles of Victorian morality once and for all. We can do it. We are perhaps the only ones who can. But

I would demand we undertake a study on the long-term social impacts, particularly on the sex work industry. Many women will be displaced..."

"Rescued," Fulton coughed.

"All that's well and good," said Kix Weingaard, the head of Global Auto Works, a notorious cost-cutter known to his small network of friends and fans by his hard-won nickname, Kickass, "but when will we start to show profits. This change-the-world stuff is for schoolkids."

"It's hard to estimate the market, because our product has never existed before. We won't be exploiting the market. We'll be creating it. Where to begin? There are currently 145 million American households, globally, between two and three billion. The top end of the revenue scale is staggering."

"Achickie in every pot!" chirped elderly Quevas, founder of the Pan American Ironworks, just before surrendering once again to age and fatigue.

"And why not? Because, at present, we have no viable global competition. This is virgin territory --so to speak. Edison, Jobs, DePuyster,...Lewis and Clark! Our estimates indicate it would take a minimum of 18 months for any competitor to ramp up a commercial marketing operation, while we could do it in three to six with a coordinated effort."

Byong-Jin Choi, Engineering Department Chairman at Kongju National University, cleared his throat and rose. Passmore knew his support would be key. If anyone could challenge them, it would be the scientists of Unified Korea.

"How can you ensure this kind of demand - or indeed, *any kind* - will materialize?"

Passmore produced a pack of cards from his coat pocket. "True, the downside of such a trailblazing venture is the lack of market research. It's never been done. All I can point to is the slow penetration of mainstream markets by sex-related products: male enhancement and virility medications, massagers, the KJN Remote Sex Modules for PC and wireless, the popular Virtual Reality gloves and goggles. And, of course, these." He brandished the multicolored plastic cards. "The demonstration you saw earlier was given to 530 people at an Atlanta erotic theatrical production. From that came these...112 indications of interest from potential purchasers."

"A far cry from an actual purchase," the Chairman rejoined.

"No doubt, sir. But consider, 20% after no ads, no marketing, no holo or magazine stories, no product placement, no priming of the market...nothing. Suki drops from the sky, potentially into 30 million homes. But I would not even propose going to the market with this fine product. Best of all, we will take advantage of every advance in information technology. Every day, chips are getting smaller and more efficient, holding more data more cheaply. As you know, our

colleagues are months away from perfecting an octium chip that can theoretically hold three Libraries of Congress. And our animatronics division also has several exciting, but still confidential, breakthroughs being developed for Educational Services”

“Meaning?”

“Meaning, I believe we are 6-12months from unveiling a next generation prototype of such beauty and refined functionality that it will shock the world. That will make even the lovely and graceful Suki seem crude and primitive.” He paused for effect. “This, ladies and gentlemen, is a watershed moment, the type that comes once in a generation. We have a great opportunity, and we ignore it at our peril. Thank you all.” Passmore gathered up his notes with a welling sense of triumph and exited through the wonderful, dumbstruck silence. At the bend of the corridor, he felt Akita’s skeletal fingers grasp his arm. He kept looking straight ahead.

“And so, it begins,” he said. They would have to make good on his promise. Their next-generation bot would have to be human enough to tempt the most hidebound consumer to test the taboo. It was, as the playwright once wrote, time to fuck or walk.

*To Be Continued...*







## FROM THE INSIDE OUT

### A CONVERSATION WITH HARDBOILED WONDERLAND

Hardboiled Wonderland is a Sacramento-based, electronic duo featuring Martin Birke (synths, samples, electronic percussion, drum programming) and Percy Howard (lyrics, vocals, vocal samples). They recently released their debut album, *As Small as a World and Large as Alone*, which was reviewed in Paraphilia Issue 13.

Prior to forming the band, both were already established musicians in their hometown of Sacramento. Vocalist Howard, no stranger to musical performance, was the singer in the local band NUS, who released two recordings, both produced by Bill Laswell, which came out on the Belgian Art label Sub Rosa. He is also the generator and impetus behind the Meridiem Project, which has included collaborations with Bill Laswell, Vernon Reid, Buckethead, Charles

Hayward, Fred Frith, Jarboe, Happy Rhodes, Trey Gunn, Robert Rich, Jill Tracy, Eraldo Bernocchi, and Oz Fritz, amongst others.

Composer/producer Birke, whose adept technical skills allow him to create richly textured electronically-rooted compositions, is the writer & director of the studio project Genre Peak. He has created commissioned scores for The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, The Oxygen Network, and Lions Gate Films (*Blood, Guts, Bullets and Octane, Retribution*). He has also co-scored two films in collaboration with the band Sandbox Trio (*Animals* and *Heartbeat*) in addition to touring and recording in Europe with the Frank-Mart-Arts label with the bands Casualty Park and Sandbox Trio.

Percy Howard and Martin Birke recently chatted with DÍre McCain and D M Mitchell of Paraphilia Magazine.

**Paraphilia:** *How did Hardboiled Wonderland come to be?*

**Percy Howard:** Martin, give your version...

**Martin Birke:** I was doing some Genre Peak songs and invited Percy to sing on a few tracks. When that turned out good, we decided to try to record and eventually started a new Genre Peak album. As we progressed with the new material, we opted for a whole new band name altogether. Being big fans of Haruki Murakami, Hardboiled Wonderland was born! Based on the novel *Hardboiled Wonderland and the End of the World*.

**PH:** A little of the pre-history... Martin and I have been on many bills together in Nor Cal from the 90s, in our bands NUS and Sandbox Trio. So we have not been strangers to each other.

**MB:** Yes, we did several gigs together here in Sacramento. So Hardboiled Wonderland started in 2009, and by 2010 we were in full recording mode with co-producer and engineer Christopher Scott Cooper at his studio Blue Seven Audio in Fremont, CA.

**Paraphilia:** *How long the process was from the formation of the band to the birth of the album?*

**MB:** I did the composing at my home studio, and would present Percy with drum tracks, and synths, and he would then add his lyric ideas, like jazz.

**PH:** I think the link from formation to the idea and intention of recording was immediate. We both seem to like the recording process and that particular creative environment more than live performance. We immediately decided to record.

**MB:** Buying new instrument software hyper inspired me as well by 2010 we had a real coherent working order going.

**PH:** I think that was the synergy and openness on all fronts from the beginning. We really had no particular plan with what was going to happen with the album when we decided to record it. The journey was the destination, as it were, to put it in a pithy context.

**Paraphilia:** *How does the composition process go with you two? Do you work separately and then put it together?*

**MB:** I would work on demos and send the mp3 to Percy, after he was good with his lyrics, we would meet at my studio for a rough cut of the song.

**PH:** Martin would construct these song forms that sometimes had verse-chorus structure, sometimes not. I would craft lyrical melodies to fit these, and sometimes suggest some structural context to help form them into songs that could support vocals. The music in its original context could rightly be called instrumental, but was so inspiring that it was easy to accommodate vocally.

**MB:** Then we would take the tracks down to CSC at his studio to make everything complete, song by song. Chris really polished and re-recorded Percy's vox, add guitars and other musicians Percy knew.

**PH:** I see Martin's music as being a great template to construct mood-poems to. The songs beg lust, or agape, or whatever the emotion that needs to be expressed by the lyric. It was some of the easiest and best lyrical creation I've ever done, because the aura and mood was always right to tell a story.

**MB:** Percy was able to work just about everything I gave him, even just a drum track that turned into the very cool song "Storm Queen."

**Paraphilia:** *The music is very singular. It evokes images of some huge ornate baroque clockwork mechanism.*

**MB:** I was inspired very much by Recoil and Massive Attack for our album. I liked the idea of an electronic sound with a deep soul singer over it.

**PH:** It is very singular, and to consume requires a "prepared" audience. Prepared in that you need to be open to pursuing the emotional response, whatever it is, and be okay with that. It is quite opposite in that most electronic music is presented with female vocals, or male vocals that are *very* pared down and anti-expressive. Some reviewers have been quit offended by my voice in this context.

**MB:** Critics either loved us or hated us, nothing in between.

**Paraphilia:** *The voice and music gel perfectly and yet there is a definite frisson there that's hard to pinpoint.*

**MB:** Yes I agree. Percy really wrote the best lyrics and vocal melodies, over some music that was static in some areas, he made smooth the rigid electronica too.

**PH:** The strong response is fine... I'm used to it. A lot of younger music critics do not know that I'm blending traditions in my vocals, the bard, the soul singer, etc... Paul Robeson, Nina Simone,



Scott Walker... they all make appearances in my vocal performances, and people that can get with them can often get with me.

**MB:** At our last show a bassist from another band on the bill mentioned he could hear some of the influences I had... Portishead, Koop, even a bit of Depeche and he liked the soulful sound of Percy's voice as a counter to the arrangements, saying that it worked. I was very pleased to hear this coming from a folk musician.

**PH:** I think the music can be perceived, on the surface, and by music, I mean music, vocal melodies and lyrics, as anachronistic, but I see the infusion of this inspired anachronism as almost a duty. EE Cummings is a virtual lyrical collaborator on this recording... the modernist impetus of Cummings work, it's over the top sensuality, and sexual longing must not be forgotten. How better to recapture it?

**Paraphilia:** *Are there plans to record more at some point in the future?*

**PH:** We will record more, but have not conceptualized what that will look like. I'd like to carry on the virtual collaboration on lyrics with WH Auden next time.

**MB:** We've created a very good Hardboiled Wonderland live show we want to explore over the summer and fall. With maybe working on new material from that end, a live composing part I think may happen, like regular bands do.

**PH:** We will also be adding guitarist Haroun Serang to the live show. Haroun has collaborated with me in Meridiem over the years, and held his own quite well with Vernon Reid, Buckethead and others that respect this playing immensely.

**MB:** We have a an intro song called "In the Sea" that I really like with Percy doing an EE Cummings poem, playing to a synthy loop and I play drums over. I would like to record that at my studio. With Haroun there will be more live sound that will probably lead to us wanting to write more... we will see.

**Paraphilia:** *The album title is a Cummings quote isn't it?*

**PH:** Yes, it is a Cummings quote from "Maggie and Milly and Molly and May."

**Paraphilia:** *This synergy between the two of you, are you confident of it developing?*

**PH:** I am. I can see some turns to take. I'd like to include some of the more interesting elements of hip hop sounds in the music, a la the type of stuff Frank Ocean, et al are doing. I'd also like to do some duets with female singers. I've spoken with Sussan Deyhim about that, and will be talking with Lori Carson as well.

**MB:** We worked very hard and fast on the debut album. I'm not sure if the same method would serve us again, but I always have music to work on and usually bring my new ideas to Percy first. I sincerely hope there will be a second Hardboiled Wonderland album.

**Paraphilia:** *Back to the synergy. It seems to be the secret ingredient that makes things work. You can have all the influences in the world, all the chops but without that particular thing they don't necessarily make anything special.*

**MB:** We found each other at the right time, mainly eager to make new music.

**PH:** It is, but it's always a mystery. For instance our first gig together was a total flow with a small audience, but they were immediately drawn into the current. It was easy and very satisfying.

**MB:** Yes, our live show was really good, very surprised that our duo performance came across so well.

**PH:** I'm hyped about being in a "band" with only three people. By the way, Martin, all the girls at the Starbucks at 19th who think I'm cute are definitely coming to the next gig. Haha.

**MB:** We will get some proper video too, I hope. We have local press too. And I'm glad that one of my passion projects can play live too!

**Paraphilia:** *How are you going about promoting yourselves? Are you making use of the social networking craze in that department?*

**MB:** Any way we can, through local connections for performances we sold more CDs than through stores in a month.

**PH:** I suck at promotion, and have generally always had labels to do it, or with Nus we had a young fan that did it. Meridiem required label promotion and was supported that way. Martin is much better at it than I am. I am also shitty at social networking.

**MB:** Facebook has helped us a wee bit.

**PH:** I'm not sure how to use it. Bandcamp, and all this other stuff. I do think I'd like to try and fund our next album through a Kickstarter campaign, though... if we can work up a small fan base that might support it.

**MB:** I have way too many "band sites" to keep track of

**Paraphilia:** *A lot of people have had great luck with Kickstarter.*

**PH:** I have two friends, singer Essence, and composer Jack Perla, that have significantly funded projects with it. Essence got all the money she needed to make an album, video, purchase outside promotions.

**MB:** PR is always the main battle, though.

**Paraphilia:** *The SN sites have been a boon in many ways, especially for reaching people all over the world, but it can be a fulltime job. And PR can be like herding cats sometimes.*

**MB:** Very much so. I grow weary of just pulling teeth for local show booking. I really thought the strength of a good record would count, but it's never enough by itself.

**Paraphilia:** *The idea of creating a 'meisterwerk' – you know, a **Ulysses** or **Sgt Pepper's** doesn't seem very relevant anymore. Since sampling everything new seems derivative of what went before... which is valid in its own way, but frustrating in others.*

**PH:** There are many many amazing records moldering in the graveyard of anonymity.

**MB:** Sadly, a great record will never be heard unless you have the money and people to go with it. And live performance has suffered too, for many MTV bands that no longer fill arenas because YouTube brings it to you in the comfort of your living room.

**PH:** Well, it's irrelevant if you let go of the outcome. I have a Meridiem album coming out next year that I did with Robert Rich some years ago that is expansive, and narrative... and I think it will be a sort of masterwork, but no one will hear it. That's not totally true, though. I will hear it, as will you guys, and probably about a thousand other people on the planet, and they might stack it next to *The Wall*, and listen to it just as often, or not. My work is to divorce myself from caring too much.

**Paraphilia:** *The internet is definitely a double edged sword. It enables people to promote their work and reach people, but then there are other, less appealing aspects.*

**MB:** We do the best we can with our connections, time, and money... and I'm very happy with what we've achieved and getting to play live with Hardboiled Wonderland is really fun... something I thought we couldn't do. Letting go of expectation and outcome has taught me to enjoy the process very much. We do this because we love to do it... any money that comes is nice too, but as artists you're only as successful as you are productive, I think.

**PH:** Well, the internet has opened up a huge portal of mediocrity as well as opportunity. Warhol's fifteen minutes of fame has shrunk to two minutes, with everyone trying to get every second of that two minutes...

**Paraphilia:** *It's opened up immense vistas of freedom. Maybe we just haven't seen the people who will be able to adapt to it yet, and forge a new form of expression with it.*

**PH:** There are always unknown possibilities, but growth lies in building relationships. All kidding aside, those Starbucks girls will be at our show because they are interested in me. I buy my coffee, chat with hem, inquire about their lives, show kindness, and in turn they want to share. Issue is, how do you do this in the simulacrum of cyberspace?

**MB:** That's a new part of PR... or an old one.

**Paraphilia:** *Cyberspace is a part of the real world rather than some alternative dimension, as a lot of people seem to regard it. You don't have to give up your real friends when you make friends on Facebook. Haha.*

**PH:** An old one, I think, Martin. The best salesmen are legitimately passionate about their products. And yes, I agree, cyberspace is the start of real experience... I'm just not adept at navigating that aspect of experience.

**MB:** Well, we did a good record, and any way of getting it attention is good.

**Paraphilia:** *Percy, Martin, it's been a real pleasure. We went some interesting places today.*

**MB:** Thanks very much!

**PH:** Yes, thanks! You guys take care. Talk soon.



# UPTOWN SATURDAY NIGHT, DOWNTOWN SUNDAY MORNING

(EXCERPT)

By Gari M Joubert

## TILL THE END OF THE NIGHT

I freeze as my body locks into the moment.

Only my head swings.

The room swims in candle light as their flames follow in streams of yellow/orange retina after-burn, merging and swirling about in slowed time-lapse, then cease before fading.

There is no finger around the trigger.

Dropper still in my left hand, I lunge toward Randall, my unstable weight crashing into his one footed stance as Dave, simultaneously having seen my move, swings a fist into the pistol holding hand. I hear the gun crash onto the wall.

Then feel the dropper needle sink into flesh before snapping.

The three of us tumble to the floor. I pound my fists double-time about Randall's head and ram my knee hard into his exposed side.

Fleeting I can't see who's who, and my eyes dart about looking for the gun.

I see Lynn run across the room out the corner of my eye.

Randall's check shirt is a swirl of colour under me. Dave's soap spiked hair lunges into my eyes and I'm blinded a moment wrestling with the big check shirted arm.

I see the gun on the floor, lunge and it's in my hand.

Pushing back I roll out of the corner wedge into the centre of the veranda. The room see-saws, Dave's kicking himself free of Randall's grip, I stagger to my feet.

Marius comes out of the opposite corner and I level the gun in his direction, he steps from it and sinks to the floor.

"DAVE!" I scream.

Dave's still kicking Randall's floored body, he flashes a look over his shoulder, sees me standing with the gun and steps back.

Randall is in the corner, wedged in by the overturned chair. Dave stands over him.

I catch my breath: "What the *fuck's* going on with you cats!"

"This cunt! I—" Randall begins,

"—*Fuck off!* I wasn't doing anything. You fucking doose!" Dave shouts back.

"What you on about? You've been making moves on Lynn ever since you walked in here!"

"*Fuck you!* No way bru!"

Lynn appears in the kitchen doorway, comes toward Randall.

"Randall nothing was going on. He was just talking to me!"

"Fuck off Lynn. You'll get another slap in a minute —You liked that? —you want another one? I know Dave! —he's fu—"

"—So do I Randall!" I cut in, "—and I'm sure no harm or bad vibes were meant! Really bru, what's wrong with a little friendliness? What you pulling gats for? This isn't the border bru! You *bos-befoked* or what?"

"—Yes you cunt! Pushing a gat in my face like that! You fucking dickhead! I was talking to your aunty! You didn't have to hit her! I'll fucking kill you! You don't hit woman and you don't pull a—!"

Dave and Randall are shouting full boom at each other. The argument is fever-pitch now.

"—*SHADDUP*" I scream, my vision blurring outward in waves.

"Listen! Listen, just now we wake someone and they call the Boere!"

"I don't know —what came —Dav—"

" —Fuck you! You're no—"

Lynn: "—Dave. Randall's sorry. It was a mistake. Let's all smoke another knocker—"

"—Shut up Lynn!": Randall.

Lynn, again: "—Baby, come on it was just a misunderstanding."

"Lynn!"

Downer now: "Don't shove a gun in my face again! It'll be the last thing you do!"

"Dave. I thought you were moving on Lynn!"

"Baby that wasn't happening, I was just chattin—"

"—Shut up Lynn!"

Five minutes later the argument has eased. Lynn stands in the kitchen crying. Marius sits transfixed on the settee. The coloured guy is still passed out.

Over the next half hour Dave and Randall smoke Mandrax. I start to ease off what remains of my shot. They smoke. No one's invited to join them. Things cool off. I have the gun shoved in the front of my Lee's —Fucking idiot!

I walk through to the kitchen with a glass of water and lime juice.

—Look all about for the vodka. See my dropper is in my shirt pocket, the snapped needle sticks through the fabric. Lynn turns from the sink as I continue my vodka scan.

Jacket pocket. Jacket? Front room. I need a hit —of anything. Lynn sees the dropper in my hand.

"James, won't you shoot me up!" I laugh at her malice, the bog down immovable might of this shallow thing that is: *I want the things I need the least* —lift her two arms to inspect them. They are slender and teen, unsoiled and sensual. Turn them about; their insides pale, provocative and silken to the touch. I release the right, it falls to her side —and run a tested finger lightly from the pulse up the inside of her left forearm; flick a hidden vein to the surface at the upper and forearm join. Lynn's eyes widen in surprise —*anticipation*.

"Come on James, I need a lift."

I press my thumb into the raised vein until its willingness dissipates, then run my fingers gently back down to her throbbing pulse. The kitchen strip light turning her skin translucent and dead, and I *know* they are with me at each step. Their haunting faces rise with each day's advent as

gloomy forms silhouetted in pre-dawn light.

Lynn eyes me expectantly. I smile.

"I dunno about that sweetheart—" I chuckle softly and flat, "—if you wanna do it get Randall to shoot you up. Not me! Downy's an expert too, ask him, I'm sure he'd be willing to help you."

I walk through the kitchen down the passage and into the lounge.

Where had that needle broken off? Back up the passage and into the bathroom. The toilet, have a piss.

Back to the lounge. Remember... on the enclosed porch —snapped somewhere.

Hopefully in Randall's thick head!

Slap your girl and pull a gun because someone's chatting her up —*crazies everywhere!*

And shove it in your drug buddy's face—

I sit down on the settee in the lounge, drag the coffee table toward me and start to set up another shot. No doubt Downer was trying to make a little unimposing move with Lynn —just done three months in rehab he must surely be feeling somewhat racy. I know him, and Randall knows him as well as I do. I expect he saw something that threw his unbalanced and aggressively pre-disposed self, into that state —got his gun from somewhere —maybe he already had it on him?

Walked in on them getting a little too self serving and pulled it out before he even thought about it.

I mean ...I killed a man in Xangongo; I shot him down in cold blood —Just to watch him die.

"James."

Lynn's in the doorway, teen body framed in passage light shimmering through thin cotton dress.

I don't want her in here —My groin tingles.

"Lynn don't ask me to spike you. There's just *no way* that's happening."

I have a shot half cooked up and a new needle in my dropper.

Lynn sits down next to me.

"Do me a favour sweetheart. And don't take it personally. Go sit over there." I point to the chair furthest from me. Last thing I need is to be half way home and some mother shoves a gun in my mouth.

"Please, you're very nice —and let's face it, you're a prize catch... and I like you, and if I thought I had just a small chance with you —but there's been enough shit for one night, don't you think?"

Lynn gets up silently and moves.

I drop my cotton wool into the cooling solution.

Tighten my grip on the tourniquet.

Drag the contents into the dropper.

Try to shake out most of the air bubbles.

Flick the scab and after a little bit of a fiddle, plunge home into the same dark pool. Pull back and... Lynn is bathed in soft light, the room fringed in fuzzed tunnel vision and I head-swim.

I loosen my toothy grip on the surgical rubber.

Pull the needle out of my arm.

Slip the dropper onto the coffee table.

Slide back into the settee.

I sigh, slot machine eyes watering in the light —Could do with some sunglasses. Lynn stares from across the room, riding my rush. Ten times better than any Button —don't tell her that, she'll have dick out before you can say fluffer!

Enjoying this. How the hell did I ever deal with that situation back there?

Dave Downer comes through. Sits next to me, picks up the bag with the three remaining Welconal in it. Gives me a 'one for me look'. I shake a slow yes and he's to work.

The room is warm. I ask Dave to shade the lamp. He picks up something, tosses it over the cover —better.

"Lynn, crush a blow." I say, hardly hearing, but knowing, that I have mouthed the words carefully. I toss my bank bag of grass across the room. It arcs and turns through the air landing near her bare feet. Dave makes short work of the Welconal and is about ready to ram home minutes later.

"Where's Randall?" I ask sluggishly, before he finds a big blue vein.

"Passed out."

"You sure." I mouth; he gives me a positive nod. Thank fuck for that! I close my eyes.

When I open them Lynn is nudging me with a jointed hand. Dave's eyes are slots, his face one big smile. I take the joint. Lynn sits down next to me. I stretch to the table for my drink. Still no vodka in the glass just lime and water.

"Lynn find my jacket, the vodka's in the pocket."

Lynn's up, picks my jacket off another chair —tops my glass up.

"Help yourself." I say nodding at the bottle. She heads out the door. Something is bothering the corner of my eye. I open them fully —the test pattern from the television. I sit up, sip my drink, drag on the joint, nudge Dave and press it into his limp hand.

Time passes.

Things to do.

Get my head together and get going.

Assemble my works, put the last two Pinks in with the rest of my stuff and zip up the case.

Slip my lighter in my pocket, drink down half my vodka, and make an attempt to stand up.

Yes.

Dave is unmoved, the joint, dead between his fingers. Lynn comes back with a glass and splashes more vodka into what remains in my drink.

Dave is immobile.

"Come on bru! You can't tell me you didn't have one shot the whole time you were in rehab."

"No shots," he murmurs, "too tight, no shots."

"James."

"Lynn. Don't ask."

"No —Not that, I just wanted to know where you guys are heading now?"



I don't want to even think about what could possibly be running through her head.

Don't need it.

I look at up at her through drug soaked euphoria.

Start to feel sorry for her.

Nineteen. Mandrax. Living with a mentally unstable —*totally* mentally unstable gun wheeling, drug taking, dealer. And all the other trappings —now I really feel sorry for her.

She stands legs astride in her Indian cotton frock, looking for something, but not quite sure what it is. Seeking ineffable answers?

"Faces." I say.

"Can I come with youz?"

Like I say. This is the problem. And it's really better if I have nothing to do with it.

Dave is dragging himself out of the settee.

"Sure aunty, come with us."

"You think that's wise Dave?"

"Fuck yeah."

"Bru. Haven't we had enough shit for one night?"

Dave laughs: His way of dealing with problem; laugh —if only it worked —we'd all be so much happier.

"What about Randall?"

Dave: "Fuck that puss!"

Lynn now: "He's let me go out by myself before, plus I can do what I like. I can leave here tomorrow, I don't need Randall —you saw how he slaps me about, he treats me like a piece of shit, I don't need him!"

"Yes, he's a madman, too much rage in there—" I tap my head.

Dave: "He's a fucking cunt!"

"Right. So why push the madman? When we all know how unhinged he can be, hey?"

"No reason really."

"Fuck you Downer, I know you well enough not to believe that. Actually —*You Know!* I don't give two shits."

Dave pulls on his Tiger jacket, eyeing me sideways, head lowered. Smiling.

"This cunt's gunna go mad when he wakes up and his kitten has vied with us. I don't scheme it's a good idea. We've —at least, I've —got to come back here and score."

"Fuck it uncle, we'll take it as it comes."

"More likely we'll take it from wherever we can get it—"

Lynn stands, hanging on Dave's and my dispute. I walk out the lounge, up the passage, through the kitchen into the enclosed porch. All three men lie passed out. Randall snoring on the settee. I pull the .38 out of the front of my Lee's and walk back. Dave is standing with his arm around Lynn —pushing the spadework.

"Where does this go?" I indicate the gun in my hand to her. I follow her through to their bedroom. Bed unmade, clothes everywhere. She takes the gun from me pushing it under a pile of clothes in the wardrobe.

"Can I come?"

“Sure Lynn.”

“Thanks.”

“Don’t thank me. What you do in life is your affair, not mine. I’m not in the business of passing judgment on the actions of others sweetheart —and I don’t want to know, that’s your concern. We all make our own beds, then we either choose to find someone to drown in them with us... or not.”

I walk out of the room. Into the lounge, finish my drink and pull on my jacket. Dave comes out of the toilet down the hall. I give him an Obex. It’s 2:10 a.m. on the kitchen clock. I stash my grass, pick up the last of the vodka, down a slug and pass it to Dave. My head floats on a soft tissue of fluid. I pick up my works, everything’s there.

In the bathroom Lynn has changes into a red leopard skin dress and black tights. She puts on make-up and disguises her welted up cheek while I rinse the dropper under the hot tap. I finger two Obex out of my bag, swallow one down, pass the other to her, eyeing me in the mirror, give her a smile and stumble out.

Minutes later we leave. Dead Joe’s engine springs to life and I wedge my works back into their place of safety. We swing a U-turn and head toward Stamford Hill Road, left into Argyle and right into Umgeni —towards the city. The streets are quiet. Street, building and neon light merge into tainted webs as we snake into its dark heart.

Dave’s wasted, but as I glance over at him a smile cuts across his sharp features.

Lynn’s in the rear view mirror: Hair; dishevelled, abundant and wild, lips; defined and sculpted in ruby, eyes; sparks in pools of dark lashes and mascara —cut with shop strip light and overhead streetlamp strobes. A cigarette smoulders in her hand, then in her red leopard print dress, she melts into the seat covers.

City lights and patterns reflect off the hood, the screen, the polished black and chrome of our roam —like shuffled cards in a slow motion monochrome movie.

I cut down Grey Street, the heart of Indian-Town. Two large temples, one Muslim the other Hindi, silhouetted on the black pudding and star studded skyline. Newspapers, wrapping and plastic waste ride on motion pools down the broad pavement; back from these, rows and rows of small Asian owned businesses: fabric dealers, tailors and outfitters; wholesalers, hustlers and style merchants —get your Crown shirt, Chuck Taylors, Lees, Jarmens, Onitsuka Tiger Jacket, clothes shops where we buy much of our apparel with a haggle and a tongue waggle. Between these shops run long alleys, passages and walks where hawkers, black and Asian traders ply theirs, from packs of cards to packs of grass. During the day, the whole area about Grey Street is a colourful mix of East, West and Africa melting twine in the Durban heat and humidity, but at night it’s not the soundest area in which to sojourn and few faces coast the littered pavements.

At the end of Grey we swing a right into Smith Street, veer off a little up and loop into College lane; head down to the Faces car park. I pull slowly into the lot and wedge Dead Joe into a gap near the far end, switch off.

The night air warm, the sky low, I stretch up and touch the stars; soft and spongy.

We make for the lights and noise.

There’s no queue; a handful of voracious creatures of the night hang in the club entrance.

Roger's there with Steamy.

"Howzit howzit bru."

"Where you been?" Roger smiles at me. I say nothing.

And slide by toward the stairs as Dave begins to hustle a free entry for Lynn. Stagger on up, the music growing with the carpet. Every step, swimming, brimming over. Oranges and reds. First floor landing; music drowns out much of everything. I pop my head through the doorway.

Lights flash and whirl, people squeezing past, Hi-Energy pumps.

The place is packed; I turn around and start upstairs, the downstairs music fading with each step, the carpet jumps at me, people circle past —up and down.

Halfway up: the landing; bodies block trajectory; standing, chatting, smoking, laughing. Readjust focus on my film ...zoom in close, swirling past. Fleeting moments, freeze framed, flash by.

Last landing, going up. Music strong and... Alternative, can't figure out what number's playing. Someone speaks to me... Skinny Ray, a girl. I nod my head in agreement —probably about the acid, must be —don't know. A punk lass coming down the stairs nearly shoves her Mohican in my eye.

—Had enough of that for one night. I greet a few familiar faces and some I don't know. Top of the stairs. Swing left. And —Music —Lights —People swirl into view. Retain balance, stop a moment. Grab at my stash, feel all's there. Stagger a few paces further. Gradually needle my way toward the bar. Capriciously gapping through the crowds at the edge of the dance floor, someone crash-dances into me —I'm going down —saved by unseen rescuing hands.

Gesticulation of thanks toward colour explosion above eye level and move on, not far from the bar now. Really need somewhere... anywhere —well preferably the bar; there are drinks there, to lean up on. People part as I do my last stagger/fall toward it. Grab the lip and pull myself up.

Leanne comes over. "James, you all right?"

"Yeah."

"Get you anything?"

"Glass of water please sweetheart." I swing around and knock some Goth girls drink flying.

"Sorry." I mouth, leaning forward toward her ear and stabilising myself on a wooden beam running skyward off the long counter.

In her ear now: "Sorry. Can I get you another?"

"Who the fuck are you!"

"James —James Jingo."

"Hey —that's not what I mean you asshole!"

"Hey look I'm sorry about that —hasn't been my night, doll... You wanna drink?"

"Thanks, gin and tonic." She eases back, her face softening a little.

I sway around, knocking another drink, this time off the bar top; no one seems to own it fortunately.

I lean my back against the bar.

Brigitte appears in my vision.

"Brigitte. Howzit going baby?" She eyes me warily.

"Hi James, not too bad."

I am taken aback a moment by my unreciprocated welcome —considering last weekend's affairs.

Puzzled: "Can I buy you a drink Dark Angel?"

The Goth girl thumps me on my arm.

"I thought you were buying *me* a drink —you know, like the one you dumped all over me a minute ago!"

Brigitte says nothing, I grab at her hand. She moves it back.

"Don't be like that."

"—James, you're whacked! Take a step forward and stand on your own!"

Does she mean this metaphorically?

I release my grip on the bar, pull my back off of it, take a step and find myself on the floor.

Goth-Girl leans over trying to pull me up.

I see Brigitte's lengthy leather boots turn about heel and head away in the haze.

Halfway up I pull Goth-Girl to the floor on top of me —How did I *ever* get here?

Shouting at me. "What the fuck do you think you're doing, asshole?!"

Some guy's giving me a dirty look from up there.

"Yeah, what?" I say to him. Goth-Girl angry in my ear now. The room swirls. I reach upward.

A hand finds mine, pulling the both of us off the floor.

"Jim Bones!"

"James Jingo! You all right?"

"Ya, just—" I slip my arm around Goth-Girl's waist but she snaps it off.

"Get your hands off me *asshole!*" Could this be my new *nom de guerre*?

"Come on baby —let me buy you that drink—"

"—Fuck off!"

"Aww come on now doll —don't be like that—"

"—Fuck you!"

"I'm a little busy right now; maybe later?"

Things go from bad to worse. I'm shoved and someone hits me with a glass. I fall back onto the bar amidst a crash of glasses, ice and drink, the vicious cut inflicted arcs from the corner of my eye to the bottom of my chin!

I wipe my shirt sleeve across my bloody face to find only alcohol dripping from my cuff —*What in damnation!* I give a second wipe —making sure —you never know in the big city. No, seems it's still alcohol —Can't figure this one out? Has someone just thrown their drink in my face?

The post I hang onto comes into focus. Goth-Girl stands on the far side of it, a big smile on her face, revenge exacted! You know the one about the teeth like tombstones —still, it could be the drugs, or the ultra violet lights, probably both. I lean into the bar. Brigitte is back —on the serving side now.

She stares at me from across the wet bar top.

I stretch my hand over. She steps back.

"Don't be like that baby—"

“—James, I’m not your baby.” Statement.

“You could be tonight.”

“No thanks. I’m not that desperate.”

I’m hurt but laugh, still baffled by her boycott.

“Gin and tonic, Vodka. Straight.”

Brigitte turns. I stretch over the bar in an attempt to grab her from behind but she’s out of reach, give up, spin around and lean my back, scanning the crowd through limited vision.

The dance floor’s a whirl of coloured lights, people and movement. I recognise flashing faces. Paul’s in the DJ Box playing some electro/alternate —actually not that bad, what’s it —fuck! —I recognise it: Minimal Compact or DAF, something like that —A hand on my shoulder. I stretch up, grab it and smash the wooden stock of my Maria through the facial bone of my assailant, swirl around, this time managing to keep my unstable balance: Brigitte; and I’m getting a pull in —*You want girls? Drink? Drugs? This place has everything, come —I show you.*

“James there’s your drinks, leave my hand. R1 for the tonic.”

“What! What do’ya mean *leave your hand*? Since when?”

“Since Cathy is standing a few meters away, watching us.”

“Did you tell her about *us*?”

“There is no us, James”

“There’s been an *us* for a very long time my dark angel —not just last Saturday, that was just a touch, a moment in time stolen by two souls hungry for each other’s wit and intellect —seeking to overcom—”

“Please don’t lean in on me like that James, with that big smile... and one of your flowery speeches, I told you —Cathy’s right there at the edge of the dance floor, she will ta—”

“—Think she’ll come over and demand satisfaction? —I’m prepared —I brought my trusty flintlock and my loyal manservant Dave Downer is at hand—”

“James!”

She pushes me away from my bar top lean-over. I lose balance, almost, grapple the bar lip, spin around and rest my back. Cathy is standing at the edge of the dance floor five meters away looking toward me.

She wears a black suit with a man’s white dress shirt, broche buttoned at the top, silver linked cuffs extend beyond the jacket sleeves, Doc Martin boots. Hair cropped at the sides but longer and styled on top.

I wave and mouth “hello” —turn back to Brigitte and before she can retract it, grab her hand clandestinely, out of Cathy’s view.

“Look—” I slur, “—she’s like a gay version of me —I mean a guy gay version... not quite so well styled of course, but all the trappings are there... she needs to sort the *cut* on that suit out, and the shirt buttoned to the neck! And the broche! —Really —is this New Romantics Unite? —also, she needs to get herself a few pairs of stylish boots, and I don’t quite know about th—”

“—Fuck off James! She’s your friend; and my girlfriend... still.”

I let Brigitte’s hand slide from mine, pass her a coin from my pocket and push the gin and tonic over to Goth-Girl, pick up my drink, drain it and push the empty glass over to Brigitte.

"Top that up my sweet Angel of the Night." She smiles and turns to the dispenser.

I smile and turn to Goth-Girl —who's no longer there —just when she was starting to look good again! I ponder on nothing before Brigitte returns with my glass. I drain it and put it back in her hand, nodding at the vodka dispenser.

"James you're so fucked up already, don't you think you should have something else?"

She turns to Leanne, unbeknown to me, watching the scene.

She comes over from her bar manageress position.

"James. Take it easy, I don't want any shit, I can just imagine what's already in your system, don't fuck up!"

"Yeah yeah —give me a water." Leanne takes my glass and returns with another filled with water.

I drain this. She brings another.

I take it, blow them both a kiss and stagger from the bar.

"*Fucking bitches.*"

I stagger toward the dance floor. People here and there greet me.

I raise my glass, spattering water everywhere.

Too busy here, citizens bumping and moving about my unstable reel...

Head away from the throngs.

Right... Chair.

I veer next to the wall seeking table and seat. Halfway back I find a chair and fall into it spilling most of my remaining water —*Christ on a bike!* I pull one Cuban heel up onto the low round drink and debris cluttered table in front of me... turn my head from side to side to see in who's company I've landed myself. I have indeed chosen wisely and asserted my being among some most charming and arresting young debutants. The most eloquent one to my immediate left, gets to work instantly, disclosing:

"Someone was sitting here."

"*Was.* Being the key word." I whisper in her deliciously shapely ear.

The music is quite punky at the moment, I consider a dance again but now the dance floor seems too far away.

"Fuck that." I mumble.

The engaging and articulate young duchess continues unabated,

"—I'm afraid, good sir, as expressed moments ago that seat *is* taken." She execrates

"Listen countess—"

—she smells of honeycomb and hazelnuts, eyes of black gold in ebony shadow, hair; collapsed backcombed beehive.

"—do you think?"

Mislay the sentence half way as I spot Vic stagger from the toilets with drugs in his eyes, Nina supporting him crutch like.

"Voodoo!" I shout. "Voodoo —Voodoo! —FUCKING VOODOO!"

With the guidance of Nina he sees me and that Cheshire cat smile cuts his face.

"James, where the fuck you been mate?" —smile disappearing fast now.

“—*You fucker!* —You were supposed to sort me out a trip!”

“Yeah well, when I was here earlier you weren’t around bru, bumped into Downer, went up to Randall’s. Lost track. Still got a trip for you bru.”

Using Nina as a counter balance Vic slumps onto the table spilling glasses and upsetting ashtrays.

“*Do you mind?* —we were sitting here.”

Vic turns to face the affronted parties; laughs madly and dangerously and swings his head back.

“You know how many people are looking for you mate —did you say Downer? He’s out of rehab?”

“Yip. I told you —I was here at eleven, spoke to your aunty in the car park—” Nodding at Nina, “—ask her?”

Nina looks at me smiling, “I’ve already told him twice James—” Then goes into an acid giggle and plonks herself onto Vic’s lap and the table almost rocks over, spilling more of its overload. The flustered duchesses grab at toppling glasses and bottles.

“Yeah, well it’s probably...” Vic leans, grabs a debutants wrist, bends over to look at her watch. —It’s three now!”

“Ya.”

“So that was four hours ago!”

“Ya.”

“Just give me my trip!”

My head glides about the smoky surroundings.

“Well I tell you what; you go call everyone who’s looking for me. I’ll get them out in the mean time.”

“Jus’ fuck off! Give me mine *now!*”

I eye Vic out through thin strips of eyes.

“Money first.”

“Tomorrow. I’m out of money —Nina, please pay him.” Nina is still on her acid chuckle, folded over in fits on The Voodoo lap and holding tightly onto her purse.

Vic starts again. “I’ll pay you tomorrow—”

“—No good man.” I’m riding this one out for the moment. Vic knows his credit is good with me.

Loud now: “James! Don’t fuck around mate! Just give me my trip!”

“Vic, you want a loudhailer maybe? I know these courtesans got that, but I’m not so sure about the *bar* area —what, being so close to the dance floor and all!”

Voodoo laughs malevolently.

I dig for my stash. Pull it out. Lean over to the countess on my left.

“Did you say you wanted to buy some caps? Now we’re all friends —now it’s okay that I’m sitting here, next thing you’ll be wanting friend’s prices too!”

I fiddle for my Obex, finger one out. Wash it down with what remains of my water. I pass Voodoo a single foil wrapper. He unfolds it and drops the Pane onto his tongue.

“You guys want?” I indicate toward the delightful gentry about us.

“How much?”

"Twenty Rand each, and that's *friends'* prices —Vic please go to the bar, get us a drink. They won't serve me anymore."

"Don't blame 'em— 'ave you seen what you look like?"

"No, can't be any worse than you though."

"Oi!"

"Have you seen what *you* look like?"

"Yeah I've just come out of the toilets."

"Right." I look down at my body. My shirt wet, half clinging to me and, no doubt smelling strongly of alcohol, cuffs hang lengthily beyond the jacket sleeves of my suit. The left, half covered in blood—

"What's wrong with the way I look? —go get us some drink."

"Nina baby, please go to the bar..."

"No! You come with me!" Nina stands, and at acute angle, cantilevers Voodoo off his table slump and the two begin careering to the bar.

I attempt a poorly orchestrated chat-up with the debutants while Vic and Nina are at the bar but they are fed up with my comportment. Through the crowds I see Leanne arguing with Vic, pointing toward me. Vic returns smiling, a drink in each hand. Donna stands with Nina at the bar, eyeing me, I raise a glass and a sassy eye back at her.

"I thought you had no money bru."

"Hey well I don't mate, Nina paid for these. Donna wants you to go over and talk to her."

"Don't try to change the subject —what would I talk to her about anyway —quantum mechanics or something? She's too crazy for me bro... Don't forget, you owe me for that trip, right?"

"Right."

We sit and talk a while. The club's been good, nifty crowd, decent sounds. Downer and Lynn loom out of the throngs toward us.

"Aaay Voodoo. How're you uncle?"

Vic stands, gives Dave a three point brothers handshake and a hug. "Hey Downer! Good t' see y' mate! You all right?"

"I'm lekker bru! Rehab's rehab —what can I tell you."

"How much you sold your ass for in there?"

"Three, four Rand. Whatever I could get."

We crack up, I fall off my stool, floored.

Vic's bent over. I stand up. Find my chair.

The debutants whose table and chairs we have possessed have had enough and leave.

Vic's on about his parents harassing him about living with them, and his lifestyle.

Dave's asking about things that have gone down while he's been away.

We fill him in on the latest gossip and news.

The music pounds at my brain. I see Frank Fiend fumbling as he stumbles from the toilets barley able to walk, his black T shirt torn from the neck to the armpit, eyes slotted, head rolling on a pivot.

People step aside to avoid his jaded trajectory .



"Fiend! FIEND! —You fuckin' waster!" I grab his arm as he passes, he jerks into a recognition posture, slots widen, head tips forward.

"Hey guys —what's happening?"

Downer: "What's happening man?"

"Dave. That you?"

"Sure fucking is uncle!"

They drug-hug each other.

Fiend, disjointedly: "Cool... cool, good to have you back —I missed your blowjobs! —what was it like being away?"

"It was amazing, although I missed your rimming technique, I had to teach someone from scratch again, It wasn't easy!"

We are all in stitches as they mock rub-up on each other.

Fiend now: "Right —right, so buy us a drink."

Downer now: "Alright my cookie."

They crack up and stagger off to the bar, Lynn in tow.

Leanne's watching us from behind the bar; I raise my empty glass to her. She smiles —I think. I spot Robert at the bar leaning over to order, get up and attempt an upright stagger towards it. Robert looks whacked, I shake him from behind. He spins appears stunned, then relieved.

"James."

"Robert. How go's?"

"Great! Great man, those Window Panes man..." He gives me the thumbs up.

I smile recognition back, turn to Leanne who's returning to Robert, drinks in hand and eyeballing me.

"Vodka. Lemonade —please sweet mother of mine."

"You gunna behave?"

"Always."

"Yeah right."

"So Robert, where's that girl that was with you?"

"Paula?"

"That wasn't her name, was it?"

"Oh you mean her friend, Natasha."

"Right —so?"

"Sitting round the other side with us."

"Groovy. What's she drinking?"

"Rum and coke."

"Great." Leanne returns with my drink. "And a rum and coke, *Pleeze* Leanne."

To Robert: "You smoke?"

"Ya." Robert pulls a box of Winston from his pocket, offering me one.

"No man, *zol* bru?"

"Ya well, I haven't got any but I do smoke."

"Fine. Let's go catch a park by your ladies."

Holding the two drinks, taking care with my unstable footing and steering clear of the wild antics on the dance floor, I follow Robert around from the bar. Adjacent to the entrance and running along the wall an elongated bench seat faces the dance floor, here I see the girls. Robert plonks himself next to Paula. Natasha's sitting right near the end. I find a stool.

"Hey someone's sitting there..."

"What's all this *someone's sitting here* shit—

—JUST FUCK RIGHT OFF!" And move back to the threesome.

"Ladies."

Natasha, with vibrant smile: "James. We've been looking out for you."

"Yeah, I've been around."

"How was the perimeter?"

"Edgy!" We laugh. I catch her eye. "How's the trip been?"

"Wonderful! You on one?"

"Of course!" I lie.

"I've had a brilliant time!"

"Glad to hear that." I knock the bottom of my glass on hers and gulp down more vodka. On the sound system the opening chords of *First and Last and Always* by The Sisters of Mercy catch my attention. I put down my glass.

"I'm gunna dance —come." I indicate to Natasha. I stagger the few meters to the dance floor and start the twirling, stumbling, falling, balancing shuffle. People who know me clear off, leaving me a wide circle in which to release the beast. Arms out in all directions, I twist and turn, rise and fall and almost fall and turn and whirl and stab and thrust my body and limbs as the tempo builds. Thrashing at nothing I hit someone with one back spinning arm lash. I turn and see Silvi the Hooker. "Sorry love" I mouth before losing myself back in rhythm, stumble and almost fall again; catching a flash of Natasha dancing nearby —not too nearby —she's caught on. I slow with the music and gradually pick up tempo as Andrew Aldrich's sand-paper voice cuts deeper and deeper into the gothic mass. Lights revolve and whirl, people flash by, I spin, pivot and dive around as the body electric crashes on the bathroom floor in its final peak. We're straight into The Cramps: *Human Fly*. And I'm bouncing and buzzing about. Natasha's laughing, Dave Downer's on the dance floor now and as we pass each other on our bound we link arms and do a one-eighty degree turn, almost throwing me off of my feet, I lose my balance. We crash —a few people go down —but not us, stabilise, stop and help them up amidst laughs, buzzing and poison guitar rhythms and I'm back on my own spin. Unhinged and giddy I take a tumble, Downer helps me up— Robert and Paula are on the floor now, I bounce past them catching Natasha around the waist, send her whirling away, flashing her laughing mouth on each turn. I'm over to Dave and give him a quick hip bump, same to Lynn as I pass, and it's Alien Sex Fiend: *Ignore the Machine*. Frank Fiend and Downer hook up with Gavin God and Jim Bones in a macabre Follies Bergère cabaret crunch which leaves me on the floor, lame with laughter. I get up and spring over to the DJ box, give Paul the double thumbs up and shout "BIRTHDAY PARTY!" to him through the mesh. He smiles and points to a sleeve pulled up above the stack of vinyl. It's the Bad Seeds EP. I nod back vigorously and jump back onto the dance floor. Stagger stagger, lean lean, balance act balance act and so on. Then *Sonny's Burning* opening

lines: "HANDS UP WHO WANTS TO DIE!" blasts from the sound system and the floor explodes into a frenzied attack mode of crazed berserkers. Most pull off as the extreme mental action of total slam/thrash/fallallover takes over. I'm in an obliterated state. Bodies pound into mine, I'm up and then down then around and about, arms wrenched from their sockets, I lose my jacket on the edge of the stage. One of my cuff links catches my eyebrow. I duck Tina Trispiké's enormous hairdo, avoid a collision with the mad antics of Skinny Ray —and his girlfriend Samantha, dodge the thrash of Gavin God and his right-hand man Jim Bones —sometimes it's hard work just getting a good bone shake out. Someone falls on top of me, I'm down again then I'm up. Another pushes me from behind, I kick back and twist and turn and chop and shake as Nick Cave burns! Burns! BURNS! Until the fusillades final death whimper.

I fall onto the low stage, roll over and semi leopard crawl to where Natasha sits. My wet hands grab the ankle of her leather boots and I pull myself up between her legs until my face is inches from hers, dripping sweat.

She pushes her hand into my mop of spruced hair. I lean forward and kiss her mouth. Her hands slide under my arms onto my back. I feel her tongue probing and running along my teeth and inner lips.

I slip mine into her mouth; it's soft and inviting. I roll over, her weight falls onto me. We explore each other's mouths, I run a hand down her back, she pushes herself onto me and I press back. The Cult thrash out *Rain* over the system and sweat runs down the side of my head.

"I thought you weren't going to come back."

"What choice, after meeting you, fair maiden?"

She laughs —hesitantly, "Ya right! Where were you really?"

"Actually I thought that I might not make it back in one piece."

"Why's that?"

"Long story. Tell you another time. Wanna go for a smoke?"

"What, grass?"

"Yeah."

"Why not?"

We sway over to Robert and Paula.

"You guys fancy getting some fresh air, having a smoke?"

"Sure."

"Come let's go."

I stumble down the stairs ahead of Natasha. Pop my head in on the Hi-Energy level, they've got the bigger dance floor —you can't have everything —I mean; hell's got all the good bands ...I hope to bugger anyway!

Downstairs. Tony's at the door.

"James."

"Tony. How you doing bru?"

"Fine —Good buzz."

"Catch you in a short while."

"Cool."

We pile into the street. "Come up to the car park, I've got everything there."

In the car park Brett's sitting on his Mini's bonnet, I signal him —he returns: *all's clear*.

Over at Dead Joe I open the doors for all.

"I've seen you rolling around town in this James. Great old car man, where'd you get it?"

"This is Dead Joe, I was on a trip to pick-up candy in Joburg... eight months ago —we met —the rest, as the old cliché goes —is history."

Natasha, snaking about in the fake fur: "Dead Joe? —I thought cars were supposed to have female names... I like that '*Dead Joe*,'" she smoulders, "I could just *melt* into his seats."

I rest a Cuban heel in the 'V' of the open door, pull out a *Hairdressing* magazine from under the seat and begin to crush a blow.

Natasha rummages through the tapes in the open glove box.

"Wow. I haven't heard this for ages."

"Put it on then." I push the eject button on the tape deck, out pops The Damned in goes...

The Stranglers —*Rattus Norvegicus* —good taste is always appreciated.

"So where you guys live?" I look at Robert in the rear view mirror, Paula tucked under his left arm, a cigarette smouldering in his hand.

"Not far from here, just off Victoria Embankment."

"Right, some groovy pads down there. And yourself Natasha?"

"My folks place, in Malvern."

"*Aaay mei bruzzie. Muul-vinn chick e'sê!* —Don't fuck around!"

"Hey! —not everyone who comes from Malvern is a skate."

"Yeah, yeah," I laugh back, "—you got a cigarette?"

Robert passes me a Winston. I break a third off and rub it into the green.

"What do you do —work wise?" Looking at Natasha.

The Stranglers roll their distinctive style across the car park.

"Go to college."

"Right —don't tune me; *Malvern College!*"

"That's not funny! There's no college in Malvern!"

"Sorry." I grab Natasha's hand and kiss it gently before pressing it to my pounding heart.

She leans in and rests her head against my chest.

"Wow your shirts wet, aren't you cold?" I smile a negative back. Natasha slips her arm around my torso under my jacket. I pile the Rizla with cannabis, roll it into a big spliff and light up in search of the perpetual high, again! The Koefoet Casper in front drops a poorly secured body off its mud guard, the dead man tumbles in the dust as we pass. I wrap my free hand across Natasha's back running cool fingers up and down her rib cage like a harp player. Hugh Cornwall croons through the car speakers. My father swings a forceful backhand, cracking on my mother face and clipping her over the bed as the sky glows and my sisters huddle, crying. I pull on the joint again and pass it into Natasha's free hand, she sits back in her seat and "Christmas smokes" it. I turn around to Rob and Paula.

"How you all doing?"

"No problems man."

The joint filters its way back to me and I pull clotted cream and strawberry jam from it. I need

something else now, sex —or more drugs. I eye Natasha out, she's eyeing me, but I'm pretty sure she's not thinking what I'm thinking —if I get you back to my place —God! —for a week —No! No! No! My mind runs amuck. Tonight! —Guns. Drugs. Women. *I show you, this place has everything —Come... I show you.*

The sky glows with pre-dawn radiance, Natasha and Paula are in hysterics over something undetermined, I throw the odd vocal into the mix. Robert's smoking a Winston, boots on the car park's ash floor, ass on Dead Joe's leopard skin. I talk to him about chemist-junk and acid and grass. He talks about TEC and work and acid, light creeps.

"Come let's mosey back in." I say to the girls.

We peel out of the car. I grab Natasha around the waist and stagger toward the club. Only Steamy's at the door, people are leaving and we weave past slumping bodies coming down the stairs, upstairs *Satisfaction* by The Rolling Stones is spinning —Yeah, I know the feeling —I try too! Still what can you do?

We find some low easy chairs but I'm on the dance floor, Natasha joins me. Then it's the turn of The Doors. Natasha and I bounce to the rhythm and twirl to the beat and before you know it —it's The Psychedelic Furs. Isn't She Pretty, *Pretty In Pink?* Isn't she yeah, well at least we're keeping it psychedelic. We dance a couple of numbers and crash out on the stage.

I lie back and Natasha climbs on top of me laughing and carrying on still high on the acid, pepped up from the joint.

We lie on the stage kissing a while before I think: It's alcohol that I need.

"A drink!" I cry pulling away from her.

She's up and we head for the bar —which has just closed. At Faces when the upstairs bar closes —the downstairs bar has half an hour of serving time remaining. We make for the stairs. José's counting his float but sorts out two rum and Cokes and two vodka and lemonades for us. Drinks in hand, we seek a seat and ease in. Some fast beat Hi-Energy wail is going on and the queens are lapping it up on the dance floor.

"So down-downs on the one in your right hand." I shout across the table to Natasha. She nods.

"Slam your glass on the table as soon as you're finished." She bobs again.

"All right. One. Two. Three!" We neck the alcohol and slam the glasses down in unison bursting with laughter. I almost topple my second glass.

"OK next one baby. You ready?" A nod. "One. Two. Three!"

We empty the glasses down our hatches and again slam down together.

"Right on!" I cry. Look toward the bar: It's closed.

"Fuckers closed —Oh well we got lucky with those ones at least —You fancy coming for that drive now?" Natasha nods her head in affirmation.

"Right —I'd better tell Paula I'm leaving."

We head upstairs again.

Robert and Paula are dancing to *Novelty* by Joy Division. We join them on the dance floor, I give Robert a nod and thumbs up. Paula and Natasha are in each other's ears while I wobble about

keeping balanced as best I can, trying to spot Dave, knowing he'll need a place to stay. No sign of him, or Lynn. Tonight is my lucky night it looks like I might just escape the club with little more than Natasha in tow, an experience oft wished for but seldom achieved.

The Joy Division number is over and something I don't know swings in and I sway to it, holding steady. Paula and Natasha are still busy and I'm in no rush and roll with the moment. My life seems encompassed in fortuitous circumstances momentarily and I begin to wonder about synchronicity and where it fits in the equation... then laugh it off. We dance on under the multi-hue of lights reflecting and beaming around us.

I give a wave and a tongue wag here and there to departing friends and acquaintances. Most stagger on to a Sunday of horizontal recuperation, stumbling gauchely from the underworld to the outside world.

And it's time to go... but we're giving Robert and Paula a lift to —his place. I move over to the bar. There's no one behind it. A stark neon strip cuts across the counter from an open doorway off to the side. I lean over the bar top and catch Tony's attention with mad waving. He comes through into the bar enclosure and I extend my hand. He catches it in a three-point brother's handclasp. Brigitte's shapely figure hangs in the doorway, her eyes cutting emerald reflect in the dark. I push my hand through my mat of back-comb, sweat, and gel, looking her up and down in permissive-subservient manner. She cuts a smile at me and I blow her a kiss then spin about and head toward the girls and Robert, at the exit.

We gravitate and hit the pavement in early dawn light, head towards the car park. Night make-up glows on Goth and Punk boys and girls like B grade horror. Clubbing clothes clash with the grey and washed mildew tones at the cities' edge as the crowd dissipate in all directions from the club. I crook my arm over Natasha's shoulder, her hand in my back pocket, Robert and Paula follow behind.

Lè Dead's engine jumps to life and we roll out of the car park, swinging into the alley slowly, watchful of fried and burned-out clubbers. I head down and turn into Russell Street, up to the lights on the intersection of Smith. We sit and wait for the green, my hand on the floor between Natasha's legs searching for a tape; I pull the glove box open and pull out a tape box: NO ONE HERE GETS OUT ALIVE scrawled on the spine. Out pop The Stranglers, the lights are green, my foot on the gas and Dead Joe's chrome grill rises to the occasion. We cut across the intersection towards West Street. I push the tape into the deck and swing a ninety degree right into West, pushing more diesel into pistons. Natasha watches with bemusement, I watch the road with one eye and *American Prayer* by Jim Morrison cuts the car into sound, we swing down Broad Street toward Victoria Embankment. Speeding. "IS EVERYBODY IN?? IS EVERYBODY IN??? IS EVERYBODY... IN?" Hit Victoria Embankment and gyrate into the far lane at sixty kilometres an hour, *THE CEREMONY IS ABOUT TO BEGIN!!!* Dead Joe clinging like— *WAKE UP!!!!!!!!!!* —a magnet to the road and Jim Morrison's letting Indian spirits into his child world.

The streets are quiet and mostly the road is ours. The sky is etched iridescent red-orange by the taut underbellies of cirrocumulus clouds, my passengers suck the morning light into acid soaked eyes, birds, catching a sun splashed bath in the first rays. We speed along Victoria Embankment then cut up a thin road running between city blocks —Acutt Street. Halfway up I

pull up on the left and lean over my seat.

"Kings Mansions right?"

"Ay thanks James."

"No problem." Paula and Robert shed themselves from the back seat. I extend my hand through my open window towards Robert, he smiled and we shake. Paula and Natasha kiss.

"Call me." Paula.

"I will, later." Natasha.

Waves and hoots and we're speeding up Acutt, my arm over the top of Natasha's seat.

"What do you do James?"

I laugh. "I'm a hairdresser —well not exactly, I'm still in my apprenticeship, I've got little over a year to go before I qualify."

"I wouldn't have put you down as a hairdresser."

"Well... that's what I'm doing now. Wanna take a spin along the beachfront, catch the sun rise?"

"Ya."

We head along West Street then onto Point Road, through the red light district and on toward the harbour as dawn it creeps with the dusty desert wind, cutting through to my crumbling bones —eating at my hollow morals, until all that encompasses my vision is a sea of sand and we pull on a large, open expanse of flat undeveloped land facing the ocean about a kilometre from the harbour entrance. The ocean is chrome on the horizon, tones changing subtly as the sun's visitation approaches. Time lapses, the sea settles, colours intensify then the big fireball cuts ridges in the watery horizon, I breath in the unfolding. Natasha, trapped in acid-daze, presses against my chest, I slip my arm around her waist, the orange ball grows. I light a joint and pass it to her, she pulls deeply on it, crackling and coaling, as the sun grows. Then the sea the beach, Dead Joe and all about us is golden&amber, warming, as rays of solarisation cut the area into a mesmerizing other-world momentarily.

We sit and watch and smoke and when the last cling the watery horizon has on the sun lets go its grip I start the engine, swing a wide U turn and head north. Smith Street holds a few lonesome cars on a five lane track as we cut through the still dead Sunday morning city, making for Glenwood.

I pull up outside my flat and finger inside my door panel until I have a firm grip, pull —my cash comes out in one plug, pocket it. Unclip my works case from its fuse-box facade and push my door open onto the road. I place a shaky boot heel onto the tar and draw myself out of the driver's seat. Natasha's stands ready on the pavement, taking in everything around her: The cream and beige block of flats, its bold pre-war architecture. The house opposite, with wide mock Doric column supported front veranda, the school playing-fields up across Bulwer Road, the giant Natal Mahoganies lining it. I push my door closed and nod toward the flats, she skips to my side as we cross the road and I pull her up the three steps to my door. I push the key home, open the front door and we're in.

"Make yourself at home, toilet and bathroom off the passage. I'll put some sounds on."

Natasha crosses the parlour and heads for the bathroom.

I trip toward the hi-fi and rake through the LP's for something —what? I don't know —and find:

Echo and the Bunnymen *Ocean Rain* for starters. Then I'm in my room searching for the UV light switch in the semi darkness. On. I reel around; Natasha, framed in the soft light of the open doorway, her eyes absorbed in studying the surroundings... and 'tis not long afore I too become absorbed in her... and feel lasciviousness arise within me —she on the other hand needs a little more time to survey.

"Sit down." I pat the bed and she lowers herself onto the mattress, her eyes still climbing the walls about her. "Want something to drink?"

"Non-alcoholic."

"Can be arranged —coffee?"

"Ya, thanks."

I head through to the kitchen and sort cups, start the coffee maker. Back in the room Natasha sits in front of the bird cage absorbed in psychedelic waves. I run my hand down her back. She stands and turns on her heels. I pull her onto me and she pushes her mouth onto mine. I slide my hands down onto her hips and run thumbs along the small of her back, down her buttocks and up her sides into full breasts. I slip my hands down again and grabbing firmly pull her onto me, then lift, step back and turning; lowering her onto the bed. Long nailed fingers tentative unsecure the buttons of my shirt. My digits run around rising and falling breasts then down, just skimming her pubic mound, and up to her hips again. She pulls off my shirt and traces rings around my nipples. The hot Angolan sun has warmed the day and each breath I take pains my lungs. I pull her dress up exposing black lace panties, then off; her breasts shift free and I sink my mouth onto an erect nipple. The air, drenched with fetid decay sears my lungs. My hand skims satin skin, circumnavigating her navel and hooking just under lace panties, follow to the dip of their front. The hot dusty ground is just inches from my parched mouth as I crawl forward toward the rocky ridge. A Mirage jet blisters the sky as it passes overhead. My mouth moves across, my tongue seeking, flicking, madly about the tight skin around her nipple before diving in, pulling deep. Natasha moans softly with the clatter of tank tracks on the road below, I slide Maria up to my side, until her cool Chinese Maple stock comes to rest on my flushed cheek then my hand dips into the front of her sex, fingers through its folds, and I look down the length of her barrel into the valley below. She pulls my belt buckle open and unzips my strained fly. Hands grappling around underwear bound cock and gagging in the consuming smells of decay that waft up with the midday breeze. I push and fidget deeper into her then look down the barrel, through battered sights, to the valley below, lift the field glasses to my eyes as the tanks pass, klakkity klakketing. Klakkity klakketing. My finger in her warmth, Natasha moans. I groan and roll my Lee's down as her hand digs into my underpants and my penis pops out. I unzip my boots, and pull her panties off. Dishevelled black soldiers sit on their rounded turrets. Her naked body lays creamy white on an electric blue covers. Four T66's I signal up to lieutenant Terreblanche and he writes in his pocketbook. I slide back onto the bed. In the valley below three men lie stretched out in the desert sand, I know they are dead, they haven't moved all morning and now a rambling Black-Backed Jackal eats from ones throat. Slipping between Natasha's legs, knees pushing them open and hands against her tan thighs, her body steeped in red and ultra violet light. I lower my head, part her legs wider, and push into her cunt. Natasha



arches her back, the blood in the Jackal's mouth, close in the field glasses now. Slipping my hand under the small of her back I lift and push a pillow and the sweat from the hot sun that runs from my brow away under her buttocks, another Black-Backed Jackal has joined the cautious first and the two attempt to drag the body toward a shady Acacia. I ease my penis deep, until the skin at its base presses hard against her vulva and shredded chunks of meat then draw out sharp until only the tip remains and the fading sound of tank tracks is replaced by the cracking and crunching of bone as the two tear at the corpse. I spit the bile in her inner lips before pushing down slowly to the base again. Natasha groans and pulls me to her and our mouths meet, our tongues enwrapping each other's. I thrust slowly and I want to shoot! God how I want to shoot but I know that the result will find me and the lieutenant among the dead, and the Jackals, pull back quick in slow driving rhythms, tongue running down neck to nipple, mouth trying wildly to take in air that doesn't taste like death, just for one long gasp that doesn't taste of desert, dissension... Please Lord to suck her whole breast into it like a jelly... Obex and Acid suffused in incalculably irrelevant math keeps us going —and —'tis not long afore... and the coffee maker splutters blithely away in the kitchen.

The duvet lies crumpled on the floor at the end of the bed. Natasha's nakedness, half on me.

My back pillowed against the wall. The UV light is off.

My red bedside lamp glows. I crush some grass on a magazine.

The day, as usual on a Sunday, does its best to penetrate my dark curtains, finding a thin gap or stream here and there. A feeling of growing inanity expands within me.

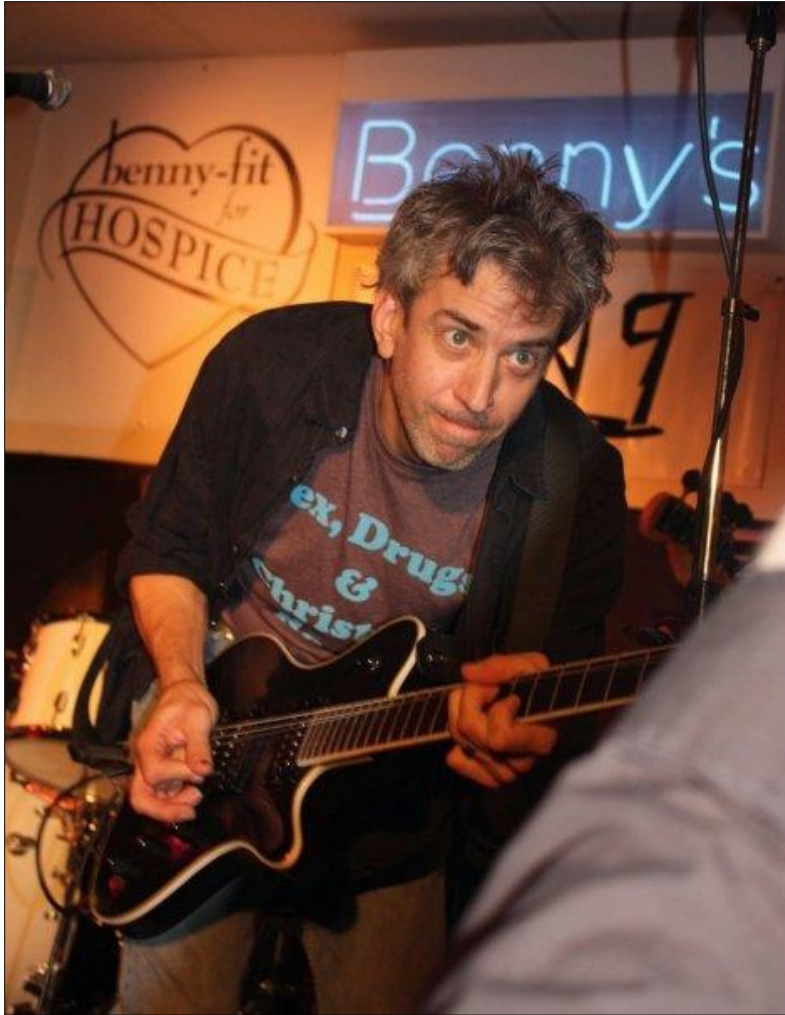
I haven't slept much since Thursday night. My works seem to be pulsing on the wooden trunk at the end of the bed... an obstinate boil or an affable stranger. Sometimes it's so hard to differentiate, and as fate would have it a third circumstance —pertaining to the fact, that Neil Young sings *Needle and the Damage Done* from my hi-fi speakers.

For a moment I almost stretch out and grab them and then *and then and then*.

# HARDCORE CRAFTSMANSHIP

## AN INTERVIEW WITH TOMMY RODRIGUEZ

By Lana Gentry



If you were around in the 80s, you were perhaps familiar with hardcore band White Cross who trucked across the globe spitting their unique brand of venom on the world. (*American Hardcore*, Rachman and Blush 2007) If you still follow them, you are likely mesmerized by the musical skill and stage antics of their brilliant guitarist Tommy Rodriguez, but the skills don't stop there. Here he explains how he came to design and build beautiful musical instruments for mad perfectionists like himself.

**LG:** *Tell me about your history with hardcore punk band White Cross.*

**TR:** White Cross was originally my brother Mike's band back in the early 80s. I played in a band

called The Prevaricators, we did a lot of shows with White Cross. My brother was a great promoter of the hardcore scene at the time and brought a lot of great shows to Richmond Virginia, my hometown. About 2 years ago Benny Waldbauer of the club Benny's wanted to have a reunion show with all the bands that that played there in the 80s with the proceeds going to a hospice care facility. He really wanted White Cross to play, but Mike didn't want to do it so he called me and asked if I would do it. He didn't have to twist my arm. I thought it would be fun, but boy was I wrong, what a bunch of prima donnas, lol. It's nice that we are writing new songs now for an album, or whatever the f#cking kids are calling it now. We just played for the premier of the (*Hardcore Norfolk* movie) and the new songs were very well received.



*Have you always had an interest in creating connoisseur musical instruments? In other words, when did that start for you?*

I started out making electric guitars in 1987, looking to figure out what made that 1 in 50 guitars so special and trying to make myself that perfect guitar. I also had the idea that if I was self-employed I could take off work anytime to go out on tour. It kind of backfired

because I became so busy I hardly had time for music anymore and I was always so broke I couldn't have afforded to go on the road anyway. When I started making classical guitars in 1996 everything changed, my understanding of guitars and skill level rose dramatically. I didn't make electric guitars much anymore until the last few years. Now I'm trying to make guitars that are more works of art, using old and rare materials such as mastodon ivory, fossil walrus ivory, and old salvaged wood.

I'm making a ukulele now with an 1840's Cuban mahogany neck salvaged for an old house downtown and European flame maple from a table that's also from around the same time period.

It's always amazing to think about all the lives these pieces of wood have touched and how they were originally milled at a time of no electricity.

*Do you have a preference for making a particular instrument?*

For the last 15 or so years I've been working on my own design of the perfect guitar for me. It takes a long time



without money for research and development. I'm playing the prototype of the final design now. People probably don't think much about the fact that when I play but I never break strings, never go out of tune and almost never bring a backup guitar to a show.

Designing in 3D isn't easy, and even with the best drawings it's hard to see how lines really flow until you have the guitar made. I make almost everything in shop by hand. There are no CNC and no laser cut inlays. I don't have to write a program on the computer every time I want to do something different so I am not limited in my custom work to just putting a different paint job on a guitar, I can do most anything.

*I read someplace that you recycled old instruments and made them into new ones. Seems like a lovely way to move the history of one piece into another. Could you expound?*



I got a call from some friends of mine that were doing salvage work wanting to know if I wanted some old pianos, so over the course of 2 months I ended up with 7 upright grand pianos in my garage. The ages ranged from the 1880s to about 1930s. I was able to get an amazing selection of woods from these pianos, quite a few electric guitars worth and about 60 ukuleles.

One of the pianos had side panels that were 18 inches wide by almost 2 inches thick and 5 feet long pieces of poplar. It was a great project but I won't be doing it again, it's way too time consuming breaking up pianos and there is not always much usable wood.

*There must have been influences in the way of your creating top of the line instruments. What's your preference of brand outside of your own, or is there one?*

I draw a lot of my influence on what works and what's just a gimmick from repairing other people's instruments. After years of building classical guitars there is not much influence from outside brands anymore other than I do still get asked to make copies of old Fender guitars. I don't really need to make electric guitars anymore but that's what I play so I have been doing more of what I want to do, which is designing and creating my own models.

*With years of experience and impressive gigs behind you. You are obviously an extremely skilled musician. I would imagine that this plays a role in your ability to foresee what is practical with regard to design. Could you describe what you believe is important in your own pieces, and what you believe sets them apart from the rest?*

That's the first time I've heard "extremely skilled musician" used to describe me. I like to play very basic, just guitar plugged straight into an amp and go. For guitars it's the same, simple well thought out designs that work without any bells or whistles, no batteries or pre amps in my guitars. The less you have to go wrong the better off you will be. The playability of my guitars is probably what sets me apart most of all. There are lots of guitars that look great but

very few that play great too.



*What's the strangest or most unusual instrument you've been called to create?*

I have made so many, I made one for Bert Morgan that had "BOOBS" inlaid on the fingerboard in mother of pearl a Boopapine inlaid on the pick guard, a Boobapine is like a porcupine but with boobs instead of quills. I have made 7 and 8 string guitars, a cow shaped bass, a goose

shaped guitar, a guitar with "IMPEACH BUSH" inlaid on the fingerboard and a double neck guitar mandolin combo.

*Every girl has to ask, "What's it like to work in White Cross with iconic bass player Greta Brinkman?"*

Oh she's a bitch, I taught her everything she knows.

*Your top five favorite guitar players of all time are...?*

Angus and Malcolm Young, Johnny Thunders, Neil Young and Jimi Hendrix.

*What's cooking in the near future regarding your creative fires?*

I'm going to start making steel string acoustic guitars and I'm working on a punk rock Hello Kitty Greta Brinkman signature bass and I'm still trying to make that perfect guitar.



# MANOREXIA - DINOFLAGELLATE BLOOMS

## A Review By Christopher Nosnibor

The problem with the majority of acts with 'shock value' monikers is that they rarely have the music to back it up. Take *Selfish Cunt*, for example (if you must). *Gay for Johnny Depp* may have been amusing for five minutes, but were always going to be short-lived in their novelty. This has never been an issue for JG 'Foetus' Thirlwell, though. *Manorexia* might be a fairly tasteless pun (albeit no more tasteless than some of the other names he's recorded under), but it's also a striking example of wordplay, of which Thirlwell's an established master, as his lyrics abundantly evidence.

Thirlwell's longevity as a recording artist has very little to do with snappy titles, though, and everything to do with the music. Over the last decade, the orchestral themes he hinted at back in 1985 on the *Foetus* album *Nail* have become a primary feature of his work, particularly in the output that's emerged through his myriad side-projects.

Nine years on from the last *Manorexia* album, *The Radiolarian Ooze*, the third release is the most expansive and ambitious to date. With beautiful X-rays adorning the front and back covers and capsules and hypodermic syringes tessellated within the gatefold, *Dinoflagellate Blooms* sees Thirlwell returning to the medical thematics that are present throughout *Manorexia*'s output: *Volvox Turbo* is housed in a sleeve that resembles prescription drug packaging and features titles such as 'The Hardened Artery'; 'Bruxism'; 'Tongue of Uncertainty' and the puntastic 'Tubercular Bells', while *The Radiolarian Ooze* manifested symptoms which included 'Ataxia', 'Fluorescent Radiation', 'Self Inflicted Concussions', 'Edison Medicine' and 'Planet of the Aches'.

It's entirely appropriate for a work that's so strongly preoccupied with space - in particular inner space. That isn't to say it's introspective or claustrophobic by any means. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Across the album's eleven movements, Thirlwell demonstrates a breathtaking attention to detail, the minutiae functioning on an almost cellular level.

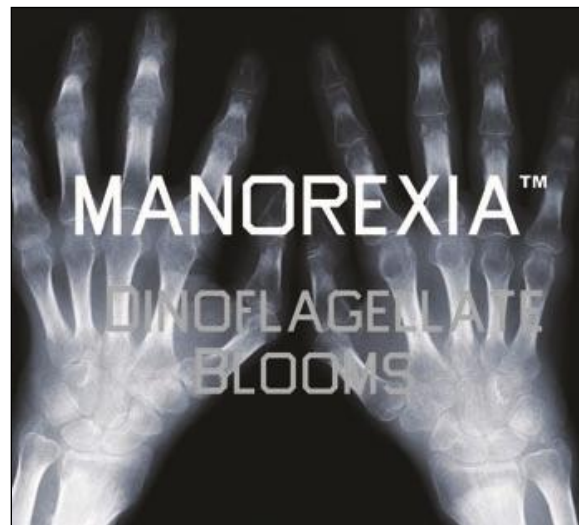
It's also a richly organic-sounding album, and the microscopic sonic interactions all contributing in unison to the functioning of the whole. As such, *Dinoflagellate Blooms* is an exploration of scale, its vast sonic expanses guiding the listener on a journey through the body from a virus' eye view. From the clankingly discordant mindphasers of 'Cryogenics' to the mournful isolation evoked by 'A Plastic Island in the Pacific', *Dinoflagellate Blooms* is nothing short of immense in its scale, although naturally perspective is everything.

'Anabiosis' pulls together cinematographic string-laden tension, doomy guitars, eerily atmospheric piano motifs and all-out dramatic peaks to forge a piece that drags the listener by

the collar through a multitude of different aural plateaus, peaks and troughs. The experience extends beyond mere music, the sheer pace of movement and depth of texture enough to send shivers down the spine, raise goose bumps (or *cutis anserina* to use the correct medical terminology) and inflame the cerebral cortex.

While the shorter pieces, such as 'Hydrofrack', 'Ten Ton Shadow' and 'Hoarse Platitudes' – the 23-second duration of which I suspect is wholly intentional – are never less than richly textured and intricately detailed, the longer pieces – in particular the 10-minute 'Krystl' – are fearless and magnificently fluid in their explorations of the deepest and darkest, innermost places, from the ventricles of heart to the swirling miasma of the intestinal tract, via the all of the dark, nameless places in between. Scoring music for *The Venture Bros* might have cemented Thirlwell's reputation as a composer of soundtrack music in the eyes of a wider audience, but *Dinoflagellate Blooms* is every bit a soundtrack piece, the difference being that the visuals are generated in the listener's mind, and the scope limited only by the imagination.

Thirlwell's pursuit of expansive sound reaches a new pinnacle on this outing, and sound doesn't come much more expansive than 5.1 surround, as featured on the DVD version that accompanies the CD. At long last, Thirlwell's brain-poppingly immense musical vision achieves true realisation. The sound assails the listener from all angles, and doesn't simply enter via the ear canals, but percolates through the musculature, eddies around the lungs and hardwires itself directly into the central nervous system. In short, JG Thirlwell's excelled himself yet again: *Dinoflagellate Blooms* isn't merely an album, it's an experience.



*Dinoflagellate Blooms* is released by Ectopic Ents and is available to purchase at:

<http://foetus.org/content/shop>





## **SPIELGUSHER**

**A Review By Michael Cano**

There is a certain nonsensical quality to the poetry of Richard Meltzer, and therein lies the sense.

This is not a rational universe or existence, and Mr. Meltzer knows this all too well.

So, sure, why not write and recite a line like; "Be playful, be generous, invite snails into your home and offer them beer" while Mike Watt, Hirotaka Shimuzu and Yuko Araki back you up on bass, guitar and drums respectively, and why not call this meeting and melding of musical and poetic minds Spielgusher?

Why not, indeed.

If Caligula once declared his horse a Consul, then snails can be invited in for a tall boy.

There are 61 tracks on this collaborative album, and upon first listen, one in particular caught my ear, 'The Threshold of Transgression.' I turned to myself and said, "There is something melancholic and sad about that bass line that Watt is playing. Beautiful, soulful, yes. But sad."

I wanted to know why.

I did my due diligence and researched the origins of this project, this musically beautiful, poetically provocative, fiercely unique project.

This is what I found out, this is what I know:

27 years ago, a collaboration between Richard Meltzer and The Minutemen was supposed to take place, but did not.

Because this is not a rational universe or existence.

Because D. Boon was tragically, tragically, tragically taken away from us.

Because of that, this collaboration has taken 27 years to reach fruition.

Because of this, there is a sadness to the bass line that Mike Watt plays on the track called 'The Threshold of Transgression.'

There is a longing attached to it.

Mike Watt misses his friend.

(So do we, Michael, so do we.)

Back to the record itself.

The first thing that came to mind when I put this record on, was that there was a musical and historical parallel between this Spielgusher record and Tom Russell's brilliant 2005 release, 'Hotwalker,' which was described by All Music Guide thusly: "...conceptual work, a palette of excess lovingly offered to the heroes of his life, those that defined for him the America that has been erased from the popular psychic topography and has entered into the hallways of myth and memory."

Pretty damn close to what is happening here with Spielgusher.

AMG also summed up Hotwalker and by proxy, seven years earlier, Spielgusher with the last words of their review: "This is not easy listening, but it just may be necessary."

True that.

Mike Watt is and has always been, a man of ideas. If you stand next to him long enough, you can practically hear the thoughts and notions, approaches and wonderment, splendor and awe that are continually bumping into each other there inside his noggin.

Mike Watt is also a man of very good ideas.

Witness:

It was a good idea to return to this project 27 years later.

It was a good idea to let Meltzer be Meltzer.

(Upon initial listen, I thought I was hearing Tommy Carvel wax poetically about Fudgie the Whale, but I got over that.)

(After a few more listens, I have decided that R. Meltzer is somewhat akin to a cross between music journalist Chris Morris and Charles Bukowski. Go ahead, try and deny it.)

It was a good idea to utilize the talents of Hiroataka Shimizu on guitar and Yuko Araki on drums and various percussive instruments.

Oh, yes!

This was a VERY GOOD idea.

(After listening to the remarkable musical contributions of these two stellar and true artists, I hightailed it over to the Cornelius (The band from whence they came.) website to find out more about them and look at things and listen to others.

Please now count me as a fan.

It was a good idea for Meltzer to say these following things, whilst the trio of atmosphere making folks snaked and shimmied behind him musically:

"I have no church! I have no philosophy!"

"Back off! The Heimlich Maneuver will kill me!"

"Kerouac never drove, so he never drove alone."

"Tarantula occupied psyche."

"Nobody needs more scar tissue."

"Religion has next to nothing to do with God!"

(Favorite, this one next:)

'Why can't the fucking universe cooperate?????!!!!!!'

It was a good idea for Mike Watt to pay tribute to his own, previous bass lines like he does on the track, 'Veins' wherein he re-interprets the bass line from 'No One Says Old Man (To The Old Man)' from his seminal punk rock opera, 'Contemplating the Engine Room.'

(Watt also pays righteous tribute to one of his bass lines from a song off of the Minutemen's stunning and perennial 'Double Nickels On The Dime' but damn if I can remember the name of the song, and the record is way over there. Damn!)

It was a good idea for Watt to show us all yet again that the bass guitar is more than just a machine strapped around his neck, but rather, the bass guitar when held, cradled and strangled by Watt, is a true extension of his self and also of the listener.

I told you, Mike Watt is full of good ideas.

The first time I met Mike Watt, at the Roxy back in 1986, I held out my hand and said to him; "Mike Watt! Man, you are the most bad-ass bass player I have ever seen or heard!" To which Watt replied, looking me straight in the eye and shaking my hand, "How you doin', dude?"

I got it then and I get it now: Hero worship is NOT allowed or tolerated!

Not around Watt, that is.

Deal.

However.

That does not mean that I cannot, or should not, celebrate and congratulate Mr. Watt and company on a job superbly done.

On another stellar musical achievement in a lifetime filled with the same.

I can also say thank you.

So I will.

Thank you.

*Spielgusher* is released by Clenched Wrench and is available to purchase at:

<http://clenchedwrench.com>

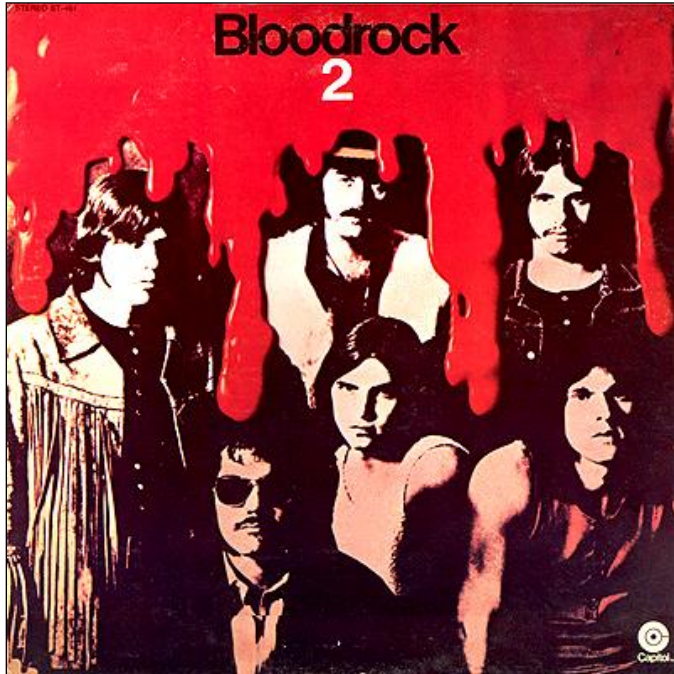
# BODY COUNT ROCK

## BEING AN OCCASIONAL CHRONICLE OF BRUTAL MUSIC

By Ron Garmon

### **Bloodrock**

*Bloodrock 2* (1970)



And so the Yardbirds begat Led Zep, whose largely plagiarized first LP sold in stupendous numbers across heartland hippie America, along with most everywhere else. What The Stooges and MC5 failed to accomplish through TV eyes and prairie Maoism, Peter Grant's mannish boys did by simple dint of selling dumb Yankees their own cultural product back to them, turning American kids on to ultra-loud blues-based heavy metal earwreck in the process. Stateside artists and labels, being physically closer to the tradition Zep was busy ripping off and far more easily sueable, had to fall back on feverish originality in order to compete at all.

The Midwest both produced and consumed the great bulk of American-made hard rock music and even pre-Silver Bullet Bob Seger was into brilliant fuck-the-Pig agitprop like "UMC" and "Get Out of Denver" back then. gorgeously scabrous Midwestern acts like The Frost (brainchild of guitar guru and future Alice Cooper collaborator Dick Wagner), Frijid Pink (an incendiary 1970 cover of "House of the Rising Sun" made them one of the few acts from the much-vaunted Michigan underground to crack the US Top Ten) and The Damnation of Adam Blessing (Cleveland psychonauts whose acid-metal fusion didn't catch on until The Red Hot Chili Peppers' four-on-the-floor funk retool) belched like vinyl hellmouths. Thus did the major labels scramble for a Bigger Bang during the height of the LP era.

Julian Cope makes much of early Seventies Detroit iron like The Frost and Bob Seger System, but regional labels in the South and Southwest opted for still farther-out shit. Texas, having already accounted for outré LSD-casualty acts like 13<sup>th</sup> Floor Elevators (Roky Erikson's first band) and Bubble Puppy, was practically its own internal autarkic market for bizarre vinyl. Indeed, Josefus, a steroid psychedelic outfit from Houston with a local following to rival The Beatles, could play Led Zeppelinesque music with more flash and conviction than Jimmy Page and his three sideboys simply because they were closer to the taproot of blues in every way, including hard luck.

Fellow Texans Bloodrock never had to bear the ornery vicissitudes of purely local stardom. This Fort Worth quintet signed to Capitol and longtime Michigan scenester Terry Knight produced their eponymous debut which briefly grazed the back quarter of the *Billboard* Top 200 Album chart early in 1970. *Bloodrock 2*, also produced by Knight, saw lupine-lunged drummer Jim Rutledge shift to a lead vocalist slot and Rick Cobb take up the band's skins. Heavier by far than Knight's megabuck protégés Grand Funk Railroad, Bloodrock was also pitch-Stygian gloomy. Even by proto-metal standards, there are tracks on this sophomore platter that make early Black Sabbath sound like late Tiny Tim. "Lucky in the Morning" must be one of the "brighter" pieces hipster critics like to cite when comparing the band's first two albums, but the thing still sounds like Bela Lugosi boogaloo compared to, say, Quicksilver Messenger Service. "Cheater" is likewise overdriven and nervy in the best Grand Funk heavy blues style, with Ed Grundy's bass walking the song like loop-legged guilt. After six minutes, forty-five secs of such earhole provender, "Sable and Pearl" does little to lighten the atmosphere, but even the crustiest of rock snobs will have to allow these fellows rock like motherjumpers. "Fallin'," a hymn to alienation to warm the heart of Richard Speck, points up the brutally obvious fact that the fellow freak rocking out alongside you might just as soon be a wad of oozing psychopathic resentment as a brother from some other mother. "Children's Heritage" sounds like the inner thoughts of some mindfuck cult leader and "Dier Not a Lover" extends the homicidal mood into fist-pumping rawkus that sets up the penultimate track like drinking the chaser before the hemlock.

Bloodrock's best-known song, "D.O.A." is nothing more than the musically arranged final thoughts of an airplane pilot dying next to his love in a pool of their shared gore. Yes, really. Thought by many to be the creepiest song in rock 'n roll, this is an eight and a half minute bombardment of keening sirens, waling organs, stumps of arms, graphically emoted feelings of loss and bewilderment, plus enough end-of-life agony for the next nine *Saw* movies. The song ends with the narrator hearing himself declared dead as deviled ham, like the narrator in a Jim Thompson paperback. The finale, "Fancy Space Odyssey," completely upends the mood, a manically upbeat cryptic rant that closes out proceedings with a grunted "Adios."

Given such an assortment of gnarly American Gothic gargoyles, "D.O.A." seemed the obvious single and the tune amazingly climbed to # 36 U.S. Pop in early 1971, due almost entirely to breakout airplay on AOR radio in Texas, Southern California and the Midwest. That such a bleak and uncompromising bloodbath could actually spit itself like poison gristle into the Top Forty during the golden age of bubblegum rock is one of those historical tidbits that will surely trouble pop historians in the better, brighter future now being manufactured for us in a lab somewhere in east Silverlake. I propose a couple of preliminary answers. Firstly, the early Seventies glut of exploitation horror media that would also beget Alice Cooper easily encompassed a grisly great like "D.O.A." Soon to bob up on that murky end of the cultural pool were John Waters, Skywald horror comics, *Groovy Ghoulies*, animal revenge movies, The Ramones and much sick else. Calvinist doom hippies destined in any other era for the tiniest of pop micro-cults, Bloodrock managed to read the early Nixon era zeitgeist well enough for their one hit to get banned so extensively throughout America there's no small wonder it didn't Top Ten.

Another thing that might've helped move units is a curious and stubborn urban legend that the song was about an actual catastrophe. On October 2, 1970 (shortly before review copies of *Bloodrock 2* began to circulate), a charter flight carrying the entire starting lineup of the Wichita

State University football team – plus assorted staff, boosters and flight crew – slammed into the side of a mountain near Plume, Colorado. The jet, an elderly Martin 4-0-4, was overloaded and uncertified, the pilots hadn't troubled the route with excessive study, and the flight itself was something of a boola-boola joyride to the team's next game in Logan, Utah. Survivors remembered seeing trees, hiking trails and mineshafts rush past the plane's windows just before impact as the pilot frantically tried to turn the plane around. Like the pallid hero of "D.O.A.," many if not most of the forty people on the flight had a good look at an approaching doom that heavily colors recollections of those nine souls –including the pilot – lucky enough to be hurled from the cracked-open cabin with non-lethal injuries or sufficiently hale to climb out before it caught fire and exploded. Rescuers years later told of the death attar that hung over the wrecksite and pieces of the ill-fated craft litter the surrounding countryside yet.

This ghastly story hung on as Bloodrock's new single made its way through the industry pipeline. The song, long since recorded and pressed along with the rest of the album, was to enjoy more hearseloads of free publicity a mere forty-three days after the Wichita State tragedy. A Douglas DC-9 chartered from Southern Airways carrying thirty-seven members of the Marshall University "Thundering Herd" football team, eight coaches, five crew, and twenty-five fans exploded on impact with a hillside over a mile away from the airport near Ceredo, West Virginia. This time, no living human could limp, crawl or be dragged away with a whole or even partial skin.

The airliner had been cleared for landing, despite early evening rain and thick fog and was on final approach to Tri-State Airport when it plowed into treetops before slicing a ninety-five-foot wide swath of scorched earth and burning to silvery dust. In addition to making the team's 17-15 loss to the East Carolina Pirates seem downright marginal, the crash was, according to the National Transportation Safety Board, "unsurvivable." Non-admirers of Matthew McConaughey will be sorry to learn he's among the survivors in the uplifting Hollywood movie version of the tragedy *We Are Marshall* (2006) and not one of those taken out of frame in an ash bucket.

All this promotional headline horror can reasonably be expected to have helped a far less cynical and accomplished artifact than "D.O.A.". Airline disaster was clearly much on the public mind in this era of request-directed freak FM and every innard and ball bearing picked over on the evening news served to keep such newfangled tragedies there. No doubt call-in requests for Bloodrock's best-known song were heavy coast-to-coast the night a little over a year after the Marshall atrocity when a man the press identified as "D.B. Cooper" bailed out of a hijacked Boeing 727 over the Cascade Mountains with four parachutes and \$200,000 of Northwest Airlines' money. Dead or alive, the rogue was never seen again, but it was left to a post-Byrds Roger McGuinn to commemorate the deed in his 1973 song "Bag Full of Money." By then, Bloodrock had lost most of its original members, gone prog and disappeared off the charts entirely.





## CONTRIBUTORS' LINKS

F.X. Tobin

<http://www.fxtobinartwork.com>

Richard A. Meade

<http://www.visualdata.net>

Andrew Maben

<http://art.andrewmaben.net/blacknight>

<http://art.andrewmaben.net>

[andrew@andrewmaben.com](mailto:andrew@andrewmaben.com)

Keef Strang

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100001486796367>

Dolorosa De La Cruz

<http://dolorosa-reveries.blogspot.com>

Matt Leyshon

[mauvezone@inbox.com](mailto:mauvezone@inbox.com)

Tom Garretson

<http://www.guttersaint.org>

Karl Wolff

<http://driftlessareareview.com>

<http://coffeeforclosers.wordpress.com>

[driftlessareareview@hotmail.com](mailto:driftlessareareview@hotmail.com)

D M Mitchell

<http://paraphiliamagazine.com>

David F. Hoenigman

<http://www.youtube.com/user/dhoenigman>

<http://www.amazon.com/Burn-Your-Belongings-David-Hoenigman/dp/0982077580>

Mike Hudson

[http://www.amazon.com/Mike-Hudson/e/B00301STHM/ref=ntt\\_dp\\_epwbk\\_0](http://www.amazon.com/Mike-Hudson/e/B00301STHM/ref=ntt_dp_epwbk_0)

<http://www.powercitypress.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/01pagan>

Russell Allen

<https://www.facebook.com/russell.mania2>

dixē.flatlin3

<http://www.facebook.com/dixeflatlin3>

[www.twitter.com/dixeflatlin3](http://www.twitter.com/dixeflatlin3)

Sid Graves

<http://www.cemeteryprints.com>

Richard C. Walls  
c/o [paraphiliamagazine@gmail.com](mailto:paraphiliamagazine@gmail.com)

Toby Huss  
[tobyhuss.com](http://tobyhuss.com)  
<http://tobyhuss.tumblr.com>  
<https://twitter.com/tobyhuss>  
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=629068480>

Alan Moore  
<http://www.topshelfcomix.com>  
<http://www.dodgemlogic.com>  
<http://lexrecords.com>

Craig Woods  
[craigwoods77@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:craigwoods77@hotmail.co.uk)

Max Reeves  
<http://www.s-kollective.com>

Michael O'Donnell  
[odonnellah@gmail.com](mailto:odonnellah@gmail.com)

Chris Madoch  
<http://www.chrismadoch.com>  
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/pages/Chris-Madoch-Art/130948425164?ref=ts>  
<http://www.eye2eyedesignsinternational.com>

Edward Paul Quist  
<http://www.embryoroom.com>

Larkin Grimm  
<http://www.larkingrimm.net>

Hank Kirton  
<http://hankkirton.blogspot.com>

Rick Grimes  
<http://rickgrimesfansite.net>  
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/profile.php?id=100000040662738&ref=ts>

Lisa Wormsley  
<http://www.indigoburns.com>

Tony Rauch  
<http://trauch.wordpress.com>

Christy Lou  
<http://dollsanddeadthings.com>  
<https://www.facebook.com/DollsandDeadThings>

Vadge Moore  
<http://www.vadgemore.com>

**Peter Aaron / Chrome Cranks**

<http://www.myspace.com/chromecranks>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Chrome-Cranks/122677111755>

<http://www.bang-records.net>

<http://www.thicksyruprecords.net>

**Danny Baker**

<http://dannybakerwriter.com>

**A. Razor**

<http://razor13.blogspot.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/13razor13>

**Claudia Bellocq**

c/o [paraphiliamagazine@gmail.com](mailto:paraphiliamagazine@gmail.com)

**Malcolm Alcala**

<http://www.scatteredlightphotography.com>

**Lana Gentry**

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1489820863>

**Chet Zar**

<http://www.chetzar.com>

**David Gionfriddo**

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/profile.php?id=719854511&ref=ts>

<http://www.myspace.com/dcdaveg>

**Claudia Murari**

<http://claudiamurariphotography.blogspot.com>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/claumurari>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Claudia-Murari-Photo/155631767821966>

**Hardboiled Wonderland - Percy Howard & Martin Birke**

[www.hardboiledwonderland.net](http://www.hardboiledwonderland.net)

[www.percyhoward.com](http://www.percyhoward.com)

[www.genrepeak.net](http://www.genrepeak.net)

**Gari M Joubert**

[gjhustler@rocketmail.com](mailto:gjhustler@rocketmail.com)

**Tommy Rodriguez**

<http://www.rodriguezguitars.com>

**Christopher Nosnibor**

<http://www.christophernosnibor.co.uk/Pages/default.aspx>

**Michael Cano**

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1178413330>

**Ron Garmon**

<http://larecord.com>

# PARAPHILIA BOOKS

<http://www.paraphiliamagazine.com/books.html>

