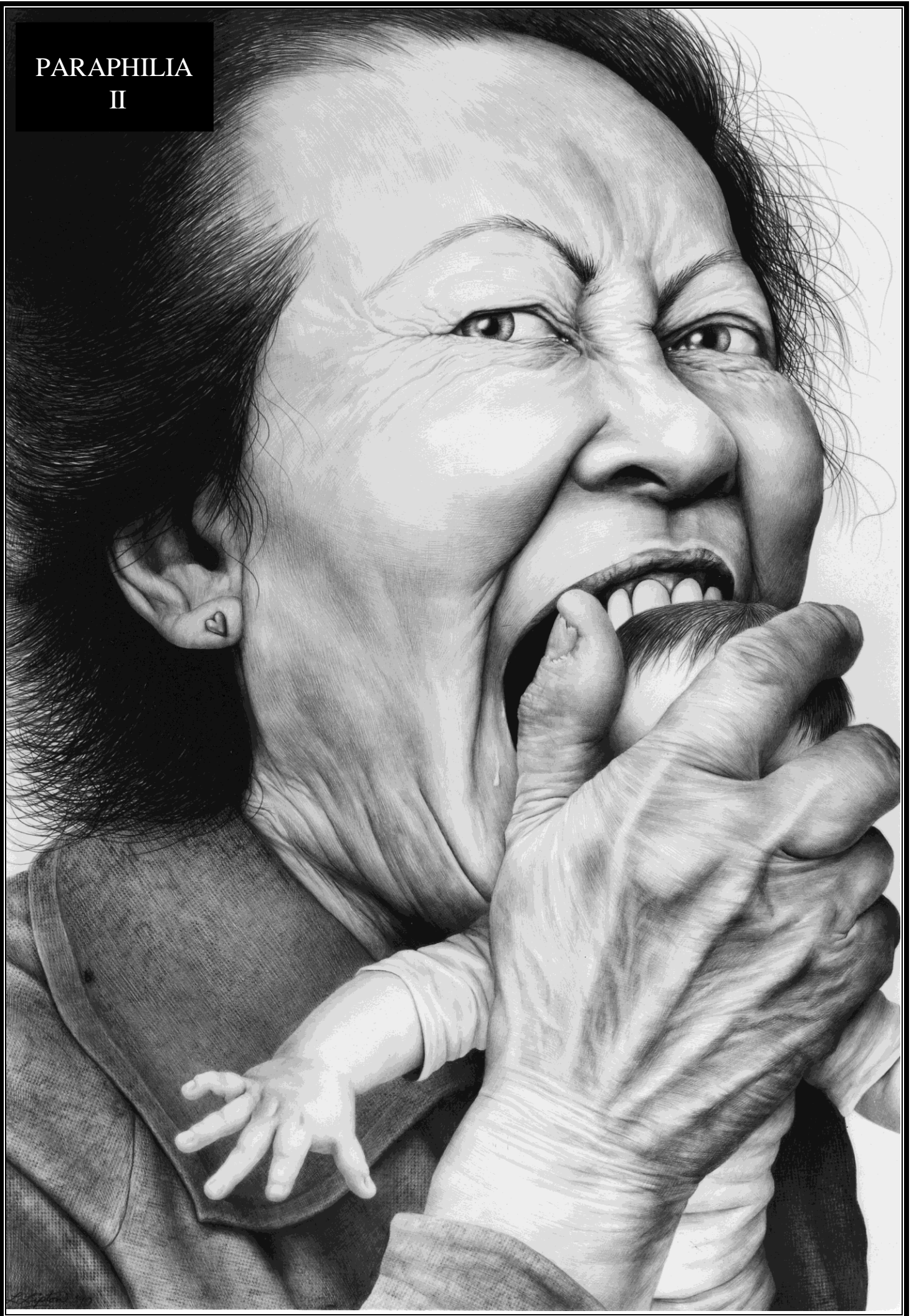


PARAPHILIA
II





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Submissions

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EDITORIAL

In order to function on this beautifully fucked-up spinning ball, one must comply with the unchallenged synthetic rules dictated by society. "Rules" meaning "conventions" not laws. For the vast majority, the lifelong indoctrination that begins at birth provides them with the wherewithal to do just that. These people *could* be seen as fortunate.

Then there are those who are immune, those who simply cannot assimilate into the manmade framework, even if they wanted to. Not malingerers or malefactors, but pure individualists, who are subjected to unjust criticism, and forced to deflect incessant demands to conform. What society fails to realize is that genuine nonconformance is congenital, and can be a curse for some.

In recent years, the term "nonconformist" has morphed into an empty buzzword, and many who consider themselves nonconformists are in fact the diametric opposite by virtue of their unnatural, and in some cases, strained efforts to rebel.

Moreover, a generic, ersatz version of nonconformity has been shamelessly commodified, and mass-marketed, driving otherwise "normal" human beings to assume conspicuous yet transparent costumes, all in an effort to fit in. It's now burgeoned into a masquerade ball that's garnered a sizable attendance. *Suum cuique*, but the fact that it's being passed off as the real MacKay is not only wrong, but despicable.

Fortunately, amid all the deceptive pageantry, a few steps off the beaten path, the unlicensed underground cabaret still *breathes*, and the only requirement for entry is an open mind. So do come in, we embrace your presence.

This issue is dedicated to Daniel Rains, who materialized on April 29, 1972, and after a sojourn at number three on the Glasgow Coma Scale, gave up the ghost on March 21, 1991. Further proof that he could not be confined...

COLUMN

THE LAST DREGS OF POVERTY: BENEVOLENTLY PUMMELLED

Text & Images By Jim Lopez

Last night around 2:00 a.m. I was contemplating my last vodka, smoking my last spliff and nearing the end of a National Geographic's documentary about Alexander the Great.

Before my roommate went to bed he asked, "How did those Greeks travel great distances, fight vicious battles and still have the energy to do all that fucking?"



An answer pricked my mind when the phone rang.

A woman seductively whispered in a baritone voice, "I need to get fucked, properly, can you do it?"

I met her at the Cat Club in West L.A. The club seemed a little low-brow for a whore, but, then, there she was. I thought she knew my friend by the way she walked straight towards me. Then she started talking. I was a bit confused since I had been dosing myself with mass amounts of nicotine, vodka and Norcos my mother left behind after she died. When I actually woke up and realized that this woman was talking to me I noticed what a lovely whore she was. I instantly wanted to sleep with her; she was beautiful, so I extended the first compliment using a childish euphuism that, in my mind, would remind someone of how adults express their affection for children by pinching their cheeks: I told her, "You're so gorgeous I want to burn you with my cigarette."

All her loveliness spewed out her ass, as her mouth morphed into a scornful

purse, which made her more attractive. She resembled a misinterpreting Bloody Mary. She walked over to my friend with her pucker string wound tight and whispered, "He didn't just say what I thought he said, did he?"

My friend, Muddy, (who, by the way, I question our friendship, we're more like two people who derive some sick pleasure in annoying one another and have been known to fight in public), frowned and answered her, "You heard him right. There's something wrong with him," where she then embraced his judgment of me and told me to go fuck myself, which was of no dire consequence to me: everyone has to fuck themselves sometimes just to get the feel for the sloppy seconds we toss off on others. I took pity on her and tried to explain metaphors and euphemism but she stuck her finger in my face and called me a "Fucking Bastard," which I heard before and it always had the same effect on me, it turned me on in a delinquent way. So I followed her to her table. When she sat down I approached her, grabbed a napkin, unzipped my pants, pulled out my

average size cock and balls, put them on the napkin, pulled a pen out of my back pocket, traced my cock and balls, signed my name and scribbled my phone number, all the while hoping she wasn't going to smash my balls with her fist. She did, however, throw her drink on me, which meant I had to then produce a new napkin and start over. Then I walked out so as to save myself from any embarrassment.

She called me a week later on Christmas Eve and invited me over to entertain her and a friend who were house-sitting for a Doctor in the Hollywood Hills. I went over there and fucked her all over the Doctor's kitchen and living room, and ate Christmas foods and drank from a full bar.

Periodically, she would call and wanted to fuck; however, she demanded a "proper fucking," which meant staying in bed for twenty-four hours, but I never spent twenty-four hours in bed with a West Hollywood whore: I'm not being misogynistic, she was a whore by profession.

I appreciated her right where she was, over the hill, and I preferred myself just where I was, on the other side of hill, wandering around a dirty horse ranch, wearing a lavender, terry cloth robe with embroidered duckys on the back, sipping tea, smoking cigarettes, reading books, swinging from tree branches like a monkey on mushrooms, recovering from the loss of the only vagina I ever had stretched around my head, my mother, and being annoyed by my friend, Muddy, who I also lived with - by the default of both our generous natures.

At the time I was mildly annoyed by her phone call because I'd had it with the phrase, "properly fucked." It's such a subjective sort of fucking; a proper fucking for one person is an improper fucking for another. So I answered her with a straight, inquisitive, rhetorical irritation, "You want to get pounded, from behind, long and hard, is that what you mean by proper fucking?"

She lewdly whispered, "I'm an unwashed, wretched, dirty bitch."

At that moment everything "seemed" effortless.

"Can you give me a proper fucking?"

"I can give it my best."

"What do you mean, you can try?"



"I said, I can give it my best, but it's after 2 a.m. I'm not driving twenty minutes, over the hill, into West Hollywood in the rain. If you want to gamble for a proper fuck you drive. And as a rule I don't make promises.

Only children make promises and only scoundrels swear. I find life more rewarding that

challenges the necessity in promises and oaths."

"Will you fuck me hard and long?" She asked.

"I'll fuck you as hard and long as I possibly can, but that's it; I'm not promising that you'll be overwhelmed."

"Do you want to fuck me hard and long?"

She was getting on my last nerve and my telephone tolerance was reaching its limit, "Yes. I want to pound you hard and long, and pound you as long and hard as I possibly can. But that's it. I'm not promising I can meet your understanding of a proper fuck, so can we get off the phone?"

"I'll leave in five minutes," she answered, which I understood to be twenty to thirty minutes, which meant that she'd be arriving my place around 3:00 a.m., limiting what she was hoping to get.

She left West Hollywood at 2:30 a.m. I know this to be true because she called every three minutes for directions, and this was the third time

she'd been to my place, the first time she had her driver escort her.

When she finally arrived I attempted a little foreplay, but she made it obvious that she wasn't looking for any foreplay, so I lifted her skirt, pulled down her panties, bent her over, slammed her into my bookshelf and proceeded to pound her for as long and hard as I possibly could, while she fixed her orgasmic gaze on the binding of a Diane Arbus photo book. We fucked in that position for about fifteen-to-twenty minutes. Then she flipped down on the bed, and I picnicked on her basket, pummeling it into a pulsating pomegranate. I flagrantly finger-fucked her gushing g-spot till she deliriously deliquesced, striking me in the face, so I lavishly licked and salaciously sucked her ass and tits and barbarously bit her lower back, inner thighs, hips and neck. Then she rabidly rode my rod, as I rallied her to fuck me the way she needed to get fucked - with a long, hard grind and then I started to blow. She jumped off my swelling cock that was sputtering on her tits and face, diving down to

shove my expanding manhood into her mouth; I let go of the last of it. She avariciously sucked and swallowed. When I finally pried my pruning pickle from her punchbowl she salaciously slithered up to my neck, wiping my pre-cum off her forehead and started kissing my neck, and pulling my chin towards her lips for a kiss. I half-heartedly obliged, which she sensed, but refused to accept.

I wanted a cigarette and was using simple body language to convey my mood, but she thought she could seduce me into another round; however, I wasn't having it. I pushed her hand away from my deflated animal-balloon and got up to pour us a couple vodkas, then I rolled and lit a cigarette and lay beside her, attempting to relax.

She was persistent as she stroked my pussy-juice-sperm-dried, flogged phallus and depressed dodes, whispering to me, "That wasn't a proper fucking."

"I gave it my best."

She kept on, and on, and on, until I got up and offered her

a few alternates, "I've got two roommates and a male dog with his balls. There's an Italian bologna in one room, a Scottish bagpipe in another and crazy mutt gargling his balls in the corner. That's three other pricks in the house. Take your pick."

She snaked over to the edge of the bed, taking hold of my uselessness with one hand and my ass with the other, lasciviously lapping my loafing nuts, whispering, "I love when you get feisty."

"I'm not getting feisty, I'm getting homicidal. I gave you my best. If you're not pleased I'm sure any one of the other three slumbering dicks would love to be aroused and pickup where I left off."

"I don't want their cocks," she whispered, continuing to lick and suck.

"Do you know how it was that the Greeks had the energy to walk across distant lands, engage in warfare and then still have the energy to fuck?" I asked her.

"Tell me," she begged as she started stretching my sirloin like it was silly-putty,

tonguing my testicles and caressing my keister.

“Because they did so much killing that they were stricken with an insatiable appetite to affirm life.” Then I palmed her forehead, pushing her back onto the bed, turned around, naked, and walked into my Italian’s room, “John! Get up and give this woman a proper fucking!”

He rolled over, scratching his eyes, “I’m not fucking you,” he said, misunderstanding me.

“Not me Nugget, there’s a woman in my bed that I can’t satisfy, get up and give her a proper fucking.”

“What are you talking about?” John tiredly asked.

“I’m talking about you fucking the woman in my room.”

“Are you serious?”

“Forget it, go back to bed.”

“You asshole!” he shouted as I closed his door.

When I went back to my room where the unfulfilled,

improperly fucked woman was sitting up, smoking a cigarette, looking a bit pissed off.

“Are you sulking?” I asked.

“No!” She murmured.

“Good. Then go to sleep.”

I climbed into bed and laid there half-awake thinking about the British and their fucking bullshit phrase, “Proper Fucking” or “Properly Fucked.”

The Brits had to pull out of their colonies because they were on the verge of losing democracy in their own country, and the most popular phrase and sentiment they were able to cultivate while preserving their democracy was, “Proper Fucking.” Was the British Empire so bent out of shape for having to give up its colonies to appease the British citizen that they turned against themselves like a bunch of marauding, blood thirsty Greeks, who couldn’t get fucked hard enough and long enough?

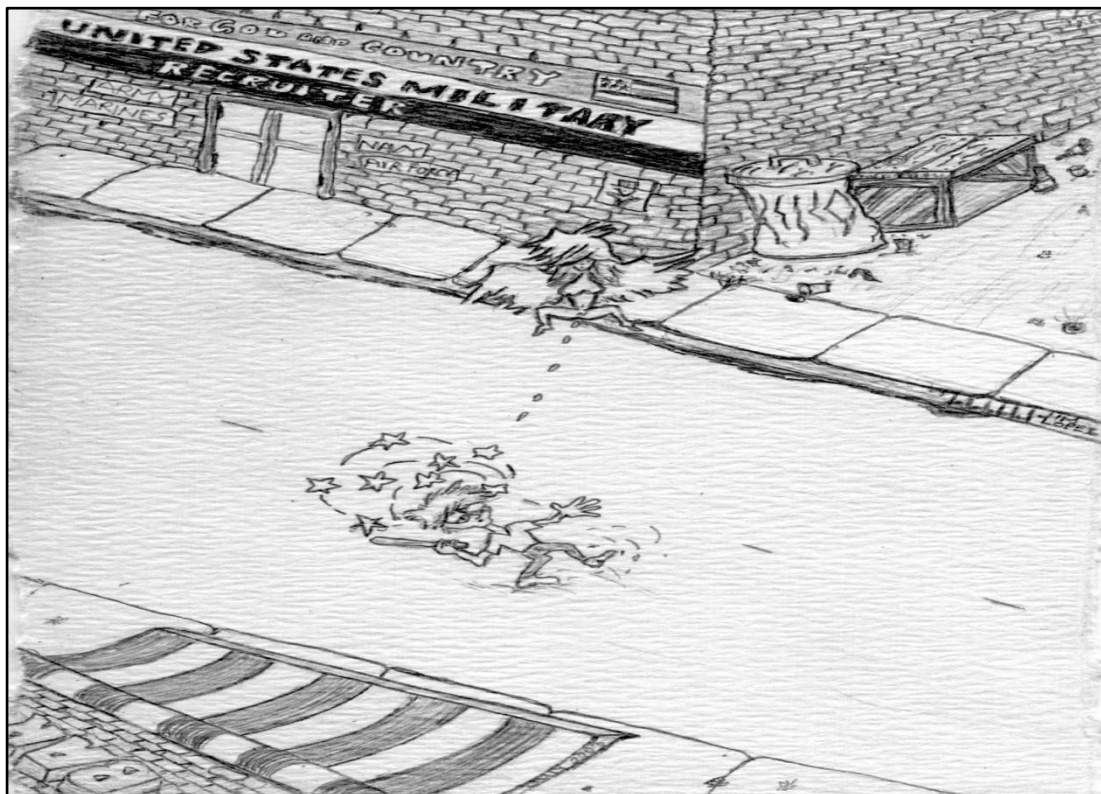
I lay in bed, next to this squirming persistent woman, thinking to myself, “If I hear

that phrase one more time I'll start using an ancient mythological sex cliché: SKULL FUCKING. Next person I hear who uses the phrase 'Properly Fucked' or any combination of it is going to get skull fucked. And I mean 'properly' skull fucked. I'm gonna stab them in the head with a spear and fuck the gash. Then I'm going to fuck everyone they ever loved with their brains smeared all over, 'my need to affirm life,' erection."

I wasn't trying to be discourteous to this woman, who impulsively drove over for a flagrant fuck. The truth is: I was quite grateful that

she was a libidinous libertine, but I'm no performer. I gave it my best, and I suppose there are indeed some ladies, maybe even whores, who would have thought that it was a perfect proper fucking, but not this woman. She sighed and tossed, dreaming of her neglected naughty knothole and her perturbed pussy, until she finally had enough of not getting what she phoned for and snuck out of bed at 7 a.m. and drove back to West Hollywood.

As she closed the door my dog jumped into bed and rolled up next to me, and I finally got some proper rest like a freed colony.



SUNDAY

By Salena Godden

Photo © Thomas Evans



The yellow bile is followed by the white of coming, like an egg with salt, a grey surrounds the yellow, the white is cold and slimy. Below the window the neighbours child breathes her own name, repeats it as if it matters. We all did that once.

Heaving up chunks of snot, fizzy spitting, this is followed

by the dark bitter packet, yellow bile, sour as it should be. That has to be the last retch, you plead as your eyes bug out of your head, you convulse sure something moved inside, your guts are trying to escape from your rib cage. You lie back in the unmade bed and wonder if the child below the window can hear the retching and coughing, the farting and

wanking. You read with one eye closed, one hand holding your cunt, smelling yourself, sweating milk.

I ate eggs on Friday, that's the last thing I remember.

Yesterday the sun rose and the sky was blushing and pink champagne. Saturday morning's sunrise was a rose-tinted bliss, the painters and I laughed so hard and the drinks were free and the world was a beautiful dirty warm cunt, juicy and possible. First came daylight and through the morning we shouted and screamed at each other like it mattered, like we had hatred and we fought ourselves only to then make friends and make love, until the mauve of dusk when we became soft and hysterical and then we just were. If only we could be like that everyday.

Now it's Sunday and you think about lighting a fag and then cough-cough into more harsh dry retches producing a dark and bitter bubble resting on your lips. You wipe it away with the back of your hand. Past experience has taught you nothing, but you know it is best to start at the

bottom of the food chain, at basic plain bread and water and work your way up to try some soup. Tomato is too vile a red to vomit, and although it looks nourishing and silky, milk is foul like curdled whey when regurgitated into the toilet bowl. Fruit is to be avoided, it bounces too sour. Water it is then, water has lumps, it gushes back up through your nose, the colour of rain, greenish as zinc.

Reading Tropic Of Cancer again and again they wrote it better - but all you can think about is how you'd like to be bent over, bent over a bedstead, a bed high off the floor. How you'd like to be bent over, yes, bent over a sink, yes a sink with gold taps and the dripping of bath water, a steamy mirror, a fog of hot bath steam. With your skirt pulled up and your knickers ripped down, baggy at the ankles and your knees bending, trembling, as you have him serve you well. Holding you by the hair and the back of your neck, he holds the base of his cock and lets you have it, filling your cunt with treasure, stretching your cunt wide and wet with a continual flow and pummelling. That would stop

the bile, that would cure the longing, that would ease the jumping blood and fidgets.

Come and celebrate the launch of my new book comes the text message. Come and help me celebrate the publishing of my very ordinary poems. Come and kiss my arse so high achieving you will need a ladder to reach it. Come, she says, I never come, she means. She is dressed like a cheer leader with her hair in a side-ponytail. She'd never let you bend her over the bed or even over the side of the bath, she'd never let a cock fidget away up inside her clean place. She did once and all her poems are about it, this writing is the smell of that once-fuck.

Her writing is as if she thinks she knows what a hard fucking is but it's all about that one night, the one that made things messy for a night, a night where she drank something and lost some control, a hair fell out of her pom-pom ponytail and her french manicured nail got almost broken. Come and celebrate the clean cunt, for she will not intimidate you or give you something to kick against, she will not threaten

you or tell you something you do not know.

You will read the work and hear her read and it will do nothing, it will not defrost you or excite you. Instead you will say *oh I thought so, it is just as I thought*, you'll murmur to yourself, *oh just as I thought and I thought so* and go to the bar and have her publisher buy you a drink. You say to him, congratulations you gave light to yet another book that makes the world say *oh I thought so, just as I thought, it is all just as I thought*. Well done Publisher, yes please do buy me a drink, I will thank you and have a cucumbered double gin and while you cheers and chink my glass and light my smoke, and as we sip the icy juice of juniper berries, you tremble like paper and I know you are thinking about bending me over the bar right now, of asking me to go into the toilet cubicle with you, you would like me to get on my knees and beg to be published by you, you rinsed out douchbag of a cunt publisher.

I delete the text message and switch off the phone and read with one eye closed. I am

falling in and out of love with Paris. In Paris they'd push you down into the mattress and slap your face with ten cocks at once. In Paris they'd pummel and pound you and rip at your hair and bite your throat and tell you this is real love and blood and life. Maybe though in Paris it is even worse and they'd just say, pooh pooh, it is not possible, it is not possible, il n'est pas possible. Defeatists should be shot in the face. The child below the window mumbles her father's name but he is not there to say, yes dear, she practises just to please him, yes papa.

I remember he liked to watch me do this, like this, he would pull on his aching purple cock and kiss me while I did this, excited together, breathing together. He's gone now or I left him I don't remember which, but he isn't here anymore and he doesn't stroke me as I sigh and bite my pillows, drenched in a white light and milky sweat.

The fridge is hollow. It is a cold white hole, an igloo that buzzes, and inside live the white things like a crust of brie, old bread, milk enough for tea and a boiled egg. I

wish someone would put food in it of another colour for once, some lush spinach leaves, a steak, some bloody red tomatoes. I peel the egg slowly and crack it like a nut, spit the bland white away and eat the greying yolk, salty, ashen yellow. This is no Sunday lunch, no meal for any man but it's all there is for today.

Later, when it's getting dark, I must dress and go to West London. I will demand to have gin with cucumbers and ice. I will stand on a stage in front of the gawping trouts and the loud teeth yapping, the chattering classless and the pedestrians. They will all smoke outside and laugh with each other like it's funny and all I will be thinking about is being fucked from behind. I will be thinking about the last time I saw him and how he held me tight and thrust inside, pinned me to the bed and made me believe in more.

Then my belly will be emptied of bile and I will have washed all but my middle finger so I may smell myself as I hold the cocking microphone to my mouth and say good evening ladies and gentlemen, thank you for being such a

wonderful audience. When I descend the stairs and leave the stage, the audience will all murmur *oh it is not just as I thought after all*. They will blink and they will touch me with disbelief and ask me if I will do it again. They will ask me if I have something to sell, something they can take home to look at in a locked secret room, something to cheer up the white, something like bloody tomato soup to vomit vividly and violently or some dainty leaves to garnish an anecdote at work tomorrow.

West London and the audience will be weighed down with Yorkshire puddings and treacle tart farts, swilling full glasses, with so much to talk about. The promoter allows me three gins before he cuts off the free tab. I was lucky to get the three! He tells me, if he gave three free drinks to all the performers, well imagine that, he says, imagine that! I allow a smile to play on my lips but I could not care less. He is charging at the door and I am sure he isn't doing anything for free. The publisher is there, the king and his merry men, the butcher, the fat controller and a dirth of whores and magicians.

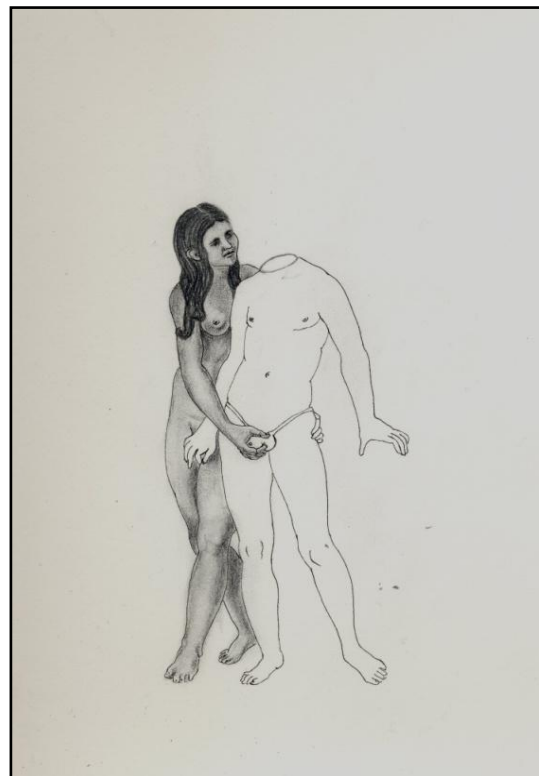
At times like these performing feels like a joke. I am performing to a big empty white fridge but I put the colours as livid as bloody tomatoes in there for you, feed you like a rich steak and decorate you with leaves. Whilst you buzz continually at the bar like a drone of fridge music, you talk through my set and clink your glasses and tell your friends you went to hear a poet. You rehearse these words as you are pretending to listen, you rehearse the first thing to say when you walk into your dreary, noisy, ordinary work tomorrow. By the photocopier Susie with the nice breasts will ask you what you did this weekend, *I went to see poetry and it was not what I thought at all*.

You are like a boiled egg white in dire need of salt and I spit it out. Bland and slippery to the tongue and when you do listen you blush saying *oh I didn't think of it like that*. Thawed and alive with blood cursing in your veins you say, *I didn't think of it like that* and with a flush of life you will beg to be bent over the kitchen sideboard, with the fridge on full blast, full volume killerherts of freezer

music. You might not even wait for it, for the privacy of home, you might want to fuck right now outside the venue and over the bonnets of your cars and in the doorways of Nottinghill but as you fuck this one night for once your edges defrost. You call out and you sweat and claw at each other like your life depends on it and as though you believe in more. Only to clean it all up, like nothing happened come, what come, no come, come Monday morning. Farting and slurping your coffee, you will not mention the stains you wiped away, the things you dared to feel, the rush of life, the death you felt in your Monday morning toothpaste.

Now it is Monday morning and I wake up in a strange bed with red colourful sheets like autumn leaves. We lie side by side in bed all day making the sound of love, whispering words like flibberdigibits, oohjimaflip and whadjamacallit. He is back, the one who likes to watch me do this. I don't remember where he went or if I left, but he is here again, for now he is here. We grow shy and then grow bolder and I am not careful what I wish

for. He claws at my arching back, bending over me, my neck in his grip, my face deep in the pillows, he bites me and strokes me as I sigh in utter happiness, drenched in white light and milky sweat. Hot rain, sperm on my skin, white, salted. Bloody red steak colour in my cheeks, the fridge is on fire.



"After Hans Beham"
© Dolorosa De La Cruz

THE STREET WHERE JOHN STOCKTON LIVED

By Paul Buckland
Images © Alexandria D Douros

I saw that gap again today.

I used to live in the street where John Stockton lived. He lived three down. It is a clean, white suburb outside Salt Lake City. The lawns are little patterns and sets. The people come and go in shadows by the window.

I had suffered from agoraphobia for around a year when I noticed the car parked outside my home. It had been there as long as I could remember, yet I had never taken notice of it.



Everyone has a car parked in the street, one that belongs to someone who lives somewhere, one car that never moves. It may be covered in tarpaulin, or a sheet, its corners obscured till it's just as if it were the murky outline of a shadow. It may just sit and rust, turning a chestnut brown. But it appears that nobody drives it, that it never moves, not even of its own accord.

Most people might think that the car moves while they are at work, or collecting the children and the car travels with an anonymous driver along the stretches of California Boulevard. I was watching all of the time, so I saw it all of the time and it never did move.

It had been there since I was little, when I could still go outside. I ran around in the garden, fell over the fence. I was a little tomboy.

The car had not changed since then. It had not rusted, nor had it any dents or scrapes that you might expect

from having sat exposed to the streets and society at large for so long.

The car was still metallic blue. It was a 1978 Corvette. It shone in the sun, washed away in the rain. It never looked wet though, but that may have just been my view from my window.

I have a strange thing in my head. I have agoraphobia but without a history of panic attacks. The doctors find it very strange; it is very unusual. But it means I cannot leave one or two rooms at the most. I feel like there is a dread, an endless dread, somewhere in the background. If I step out into that world outside, I would feel the dread upon me, some great loneliness in a deep, great hollow, somewhere at the bottom of this vast ocean. I know it seems crazy, but that is how it is.

The car was there. An ever present force, it was when I had watched the car all day, that I began to notice the boy.

The boy was strange. He had an eager stoop, like he was constantly spotting a dime at the curb and was leaning to pick it up. He had a wave of brown hair, tall glasses that stood up from his

face like two kaleidoscopes. He was lanky, tall and did not move so well. He looked like he was never in control of his body.

I thought, at first, he was trying to break into the car. I banged on the window furiously, shouting for him to stop. But he never heard me. It was as though I was just part of the picture of our house, and that the noise I made was no more natural than the quiet of leaves falling.

He prowled around the car. He examined it top to bottom. I would have phoned the police, but he assured me with his inquisitive nature: roaming around the car, noting into a blank notebook.

That night I lay in bed and thought of the car. I thought of the boy, although my mother had been shocked at his incursion into our neighborhood. I explained I felt that he meant no harm, but she would not listen and insisted Sheriff Smith come out and look around the car.

I was awake at six the next morning, praying for the strength to leave the house, I suppose. I was religious then, a praying sort. I am not like that way now.



I watched John Stockton get in his car, in his tracksuit and leave for the basketball court. I watched his children go to school (my mother always tells me they were lovely children) and I watched his wife go for groceries. I watched the neighbourhood come alive, shake and move in this world. I watched the car just sit still.

Two nights later and the boy was back. I had been dusting and praying, maybe humming a little tune when I caught a glimpse of him. I ducked behind the lace curtains. He did the same as he had done before, only this time he had a notebook and was scribbling in it. I did not see what he had written.

I ducked down further. I counted to twelve, then back again, just so I could put my head up. I pushed back and edge of the curtain, just to let my eyes over the sill, to be greeted by another pair of eyes. The boy was pressed against the window.

I screamed.

After a while, he came and knocked on the door. I had calmed down by this point, took some deep breaths and walked around the house

twice just to get my heart rate down. I can have an attack if I can't get that down to normal.

He was at the door, knocking on it. I said I couldn't come out, very quietly.

"Are you okay? I didn't mean to scare you."

"I am fine. But I have agoraphobia."

"Oh. Well, if I knew what that meant, I'm sure I'd feel a lot better. But I'll take your word for it."

I did not know why he said any of this.

"What are you doing with the car?"

"Oh."

He laughed, a deep chuckle it was.

"Oh, that ain't a car, girl."

"What is it?"

"Well, I'd love to tell you, but I'd wanna do that face to face. And I'm guessin', but I don't think you'll open this door to me."

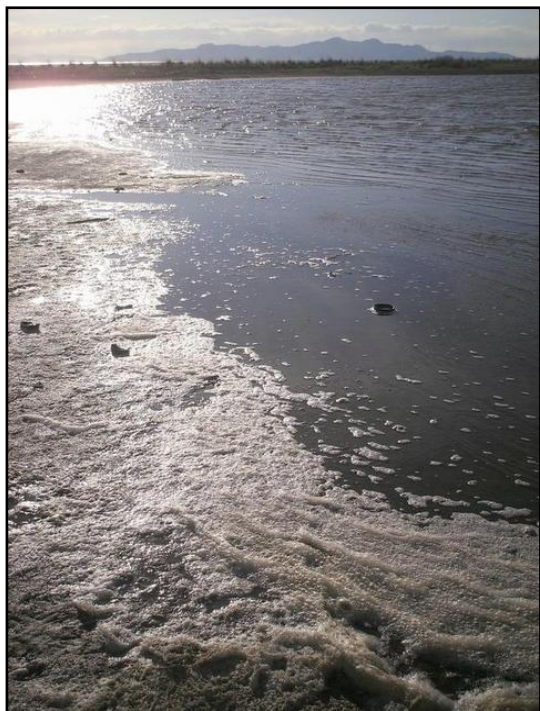
"My mother isn't home."

"Sure, sure. My name is Otis, by the way."

The way he said 'way', it almost sounded like 'wave'.

"Oh. My name is Samantha. Samantha Stein."

Otis was a new friend.



He left that night as my mother returned. He said he would return, that he would bring me a gift and tell me more about the car.

All week it was quiet for me. The neighbourhood was very lively, being just at the beginning of spring, there were many yard sales and meetings. My mother said this would be a good chance for me to step out of the house, but I knew that feeling would come over me again and I said I would not.

It was on the Wednesday that Otis returned. This time, I opened the door to him. I had told my mother he would call for me, she scolded and disapproved of a boy I did not know coming to visit but she said at

least it was some kind of contact.

Otis came to the door at eight o'clock, when the night was fast drawing in and the wind was cold. He was wearing an old suit, the kind I had seen in thrift shops. He had brought me some cake that he had made himself. I thanked him, mother made some tea and we sat in the living room.

He asked me all about me. I told him of my illness, my troubles. I told him I had wanted to go to the university but mother would not let me. That was when the troubles started.

He was very understanding. He nodded and smiled. He asked me about what I liked to do and I gave a big list of what I liked to do.

"Wow. Wowee. That sure is a big list of things you like."

I blushed.

I wanted to ask about him. He had such a strange accent. I had only heard it before, when I was young and my mother took me to Red Rock Canyon. We stopped at a gas station and the man there spoke like Otis did. When we got to Red Rock Canyon, it

was too wet and we had to sit in the car, my mother said.

I wanted to ask who he was and where he was from, when I accidentally mentioned the car.

I could not get a breath, I felt grey. Mother and Otis had to hold me up. Otis had a frightened look, that of a little boy.

My mother asked what had made me so upset and before Otis could tell her, I just said it had been the thought of going out. Otis received a scowl from my mother and then she returned to the kitchen.

"You okay?"

"I am fine, Otis, thank you. Tell me about the car."

"Sure?"

"Yes."

Otis produced a map of calculations, of number and diagrams I could not begin to understand. He folded out various items, leaflets and in no time at all, the table was covered with paper.

"This is what the car is."

"What is this?"

"Well, it's a '78 Corvette."

He always clipped the t's in Corvette.

"Now, I'm a mechanic. Not happy admitting it, but not a good one, but I've been fixing cars now for a year. I

love cars, can't get enough of them. I was just passing through this neighborhood when I saw the car one day. Thought I might buy it from whoever owned it, fix it up a little. But nobody owns it.

I put a sign up on it, when I came back the sign was gone. I tried again, same thing. Then I got my buddy David at the precinct to run the plates. They're Utah plates n' all, but they ain't on the system and my buddy David says they ain't fake from a picture I showed him. Then I noticed this."



He pointed to a part of a blueprint of a 1978 Corvette.

"Rear axle ratio, optional, not as standard. I checked. There was only three hunner' and eighty two of

those made. Last few months, I've spent all my time finding them. And I did it."

Otis sat back in the couch, a big smile and a sense of satisfaction apparent.

"I found every one of these cars, all their owners. Lot of them are just scrap now, been gone for years. Heck, I even found a guy whose car didn't even make the year, neither did he. But I found all three hundred and eighty two. And that car ain't one of them."

"What does that mean?"

"Well, at first, A thought it could have been modified. But that ain't right. You would see soldering marks or other kinds of marks and they ain't there. I'm guessin', on account of you being in here, that you ain't seen the car up close?"

I nodded.

"Well, there ain't any marks. So that car ain't right. And I checked with the folks at Chevrolet, they ain't wrong."

I nodded again.

"So what does that mean?"

"I have no idea."

Otis then shuffled forward on the couch, leaning in very close to me.

"But A tell you what I think. I think it's somethin'

weird, not right at all. Like it's...it's like an alien ship or somethin'! Like it's not from this world. What do you think?"

"Otis. How did you know about me?"

"I saw you. First night, I was here, I saw you looking at it all funny. And I knew, that you knew. You knew like I knew. That it wasn't right."

"So, you saw me at the window?"

"Nah. I saw you in the car mirror, walking across the street. Which is kinda strange, cause now I know you don't leave the house. That's really weird huh? When I turned around, you was gone. So what were you doing out that night?"

After Otis left, I felt ill. I wondered if I had been out of the house and I had forgotten. But I knew that was not true.

How could I be in the mirror?

My mother told me that Otis had seemed nice, but I was to be careful. I would be careful, but I wanted to know about the car.

Otis was scared like I was, of what we had found. It was the first time in my life that I had ever reassured

anybody about anything and it did not feel good.

Otis had said he would be back in a week. That he was going to talk to a man who had phoned him, who had said that he knew something about the car.

I sat in all week watching the rain come and go, a little snow here, a little sun there. I watched John Stockton come and go. I watched his family mull around. I watched people on a Sunday walk each other to church.

The night Otis was due to come, I was very excited. Most of that week, almost every night, I prayed to God that Otis might have some answers for me.

The car was still sitting blankly out in front.

Otis never came. I do not know what happened. My mother said he must have been busy.

I cried a lot. I cried that Otis had left me for his world outside, that he must have friends and family somewhere and he had forgotten about me in my two room universe.

The week passed on. People came and went, moving around the car, not noticing it, not being aware of its presence. They carried

shining baking trays to each other's houses, their children ran through the sprinklers on the soft green lawns and the silhouettes of hands beating air into hot faces could be seen everywhere. The car did not move.

On the Friday, when my mother had gone to see the Reverend, I heard something at the door.

I opened to door, to see Otis standing in the pouring rain. He was still wearing that same suit, like he had not taken it off.

"Can I come in?"

I had said he could and he came inside.

I gave him a towel to dry off and made him a coffee. He said just a glass of water would be fine.

He apologized, said he had been running in the rain. I had asked him why he had not come by when he had said he would. He said sorry, that he had to work late.

Then he began to cry.

He said he had not been working late, that he had told me a lie. He sat by our fireplace and cried. He told me that the man he had spoke to about the car had told him to look inside and that is what he was doing the night he couldn't come.



He had waited till we were all in bed, had crept to the car and tried to break in.

"I didn't try to steal, I promise you that Samantha, I promise you that, may He judge me, I did not try to take that car. I had to see inside. I tried the handle and it wouldn't budge. So I tried tapping into it with a knife, then a chisel. It wouldn't move! The car wouldn't open.

I took a brick, okay, I threw it against the window and it wouldn't break! It won't open!"

He looked very pale. Otis looked very ill.

"The car, it won't open! Why won't it open?"

He cried more, I offered him a tissue. He cried, then said he had to go.

He moved quickly; I was calling for him to stay, but he crossed over that door and he was gone.

I never told my mother of the incident. She would not have understood.

About a week later, I got a letter from Otis.

The words in the letter were very badly spelled, but I could still read it, I even wrote a finer copy.

Dear Samantha,

I am sorry I had to leave you in such a rush, I have to go. I have to leave this town.

In the letter, he told me how hard his last year had been for him. He was sent away from his village, little place outside the city he never told me the name of. He was a Mormon, banished for misdemeanours, but he knew it was because there just were not enough wives to go around. He had not spoken to his parents or brothers in a year, he never would again.

He had been upset to leave, he had tried to get right with God. He had got a job and learned to live in the city, but he found it hard. He had done all kinds of wrong things, (he would not say sins), like paying money for sex with a woman and being drunken. He had seen his friends from the village fall away, unable to cope. They had all died and he was alone, but he believed he could make it. He worked hard, he studied and he prayed. The car had destroyed all of that.

He told me in the letter that the man he had met had told him that the car had taken everything from him. That the car was the worst thing in his life.

He told me that on the street where John Stockton lived, was the most unspeakable thing. The thing that had taken his life

to pieces around him, was in the form of a blue Corvette.

Otis told me the man was called Campbell Crass, but he wouldn't want to be contacted. He told me to look inside the Corvette.

Look inside, Samantha. Look inside, I know you can't leave the house but do it for me. Please try.

Love, Otis.

There was a return address.

I did want to go inside. But I could not leave the house.

It was another week when he wrote me again. I do not think he understood my problems. The dread was nearer now.

Dear Samantha,

I guess you have been inside it now. I guess you have seen what I have seen. I have asked for answers but I have not understood.

You have seen the inside of the car your way. I saw it as an endless corridor, grey and eternally lit. Crass saw it as the same, only it was white. Both of us saw a silent, infinite space, lit by some unknown light from I don't know where. But the point remains-inside the car is not a car, it is some boundless part of the world, some open part of this universe.

I asked Crass for an explanation, before he died. He told me, that he thought that the car was just the 'plug in the universe sink' as he put it. That the universe existed, and the car was just a consequence of it, like maths gone to hell. Like when the universe was born, the car was there and always will be because it's part of it all, like the remainder in a sum he called it. I don't believe it. Everything is here for a reason, isn't it?

I think God put the car here. It's just a thing that has to be here, because the world is here. I think it has a purpose, I think it has. I think we all do. I think you do. I think I do, but it's not in this city.

*Love,
Otis x*

Something, somewhere, a delicate whisper in my head, told me that Otis was not here, that he had left the world. I did not know if it was true.

I still look out at the car.

It never gets wet. It never rusts nor changes. Inside, there might just be an endless empty space, one that goes on the length of Utah and beyond. One big space where a car interior should be. But that is the gap, the gap I can see every day.



From the window, I can see in its window. And I can see the interior of the car. I wonder, sometimes, if Otis just made these things up just to scare me, but I know the look on his face that night was real. He had seen something very wrong in this world.

On the street where John Stockton lived, there is a car, a 1978 blue Corvette and inside that car is an endless space that should not exist but does, because of maths or God or whatever. But I cannot bring myself to cross the front door to ever see that it does.

**“The waking and
rationalizing
consciousness is a danger
and whoever has lived
among conscious
Europeans knows in fact
that it is an illness.”**

(Nietzsche)



TAKE YOUR DESIRES FOR REALITY' (1)

(1960s Radical Modernist Narrative elements in Lindsay Anderson's IF...)

By Stephen Sennitt

Lindsay Anderson directed *If...* in early 1968 against a background of increasing agitation and provocation in film, the arts and cultural life in general. Rumblings of revolutionary dissatisfaction, making themselves heard most clearly on the campuses of Paris and in various locations in the USA, seemed to come to a head while *If...* was still in post production.

Upon its release in 1969, *If...* was regarded by some critics as being almost prophetic. As Charles Silet points out (2): 'The same issue of *The New York Times* which carried notices of the film also carried photographs of students at Cornell University brandishing guns and upraised closed fists.'

For a time, Anderson, with his background in acerbic film criticism (3) and his anti-establishment commitment to

uncompromising film making - realised in the formation of Woodfall with Tony Richardson and others - became 'a sort of guru figure to the student generation of the '60s.' (4) But whilst the challenging subject of *If...* may have echoed with uncanny accuracy the youthful, revolutionary spirit which sparked the incendiary events of the May '68 Paris riots, it is not just in the film's anti-establishment *story* that we find such elements, but also in *the way the film was made*, revealed by the plot-structure, with Anderson incorporating all the 'self-conscious' elements of Modernism to create a style to suit his subject.

If... is divided into eight parts, or vignettes, each one opening with a caption which is meant to act, perhaps, as a sly comment on the supposed neat, regulated existence of its

public school setting, which ideally strives to bring a sense of order and formality to everyday existence – in every sense a microcosm of the world at large – but fails to do so. In Anderson's deliberate use of the caption, or chapter heading, we can see a critique of the typical bureaucratic aim to 'contain' life under labels and compartments. In this sense the 'chapters' act as an ironic device; a neat and tidy counterpoint to the confusing and chaotic action unfolding on the screen.

This confusion is centred in the opening scenes (entitled 'College House – Return') on Jute (Sean Bury), the new boy, designated 'Scum' in typically horrible public school tradition, a character almost frozen with anxiety in the whirl of incomprehensible activity.

He makes the 'mistake' of addressing Rowntree (Robert Swann), one of the intimidating 'Whips' and Head Boy, as 'sir'. Rowntree makes no effort to accommodate the feelings of the boy, and in fact seems to purposefully add to his disorientation by shouting: 'Run, run in the corridor!'

Just as the viewer begins to suspect Jute as the focalising character of the film, the orientation shifts to emphasise Mick (Malcolm McDowell), and his friends Johnny (David Wood) and Wallace (Richard Warwick), 'The Crusaders', who reveal their dislike of 'The Whips' in scornful terms. In these early scenes, their rebellion is mild and non-confrontational. For example, Mick has grown a moustache over the summer, which he conceals under a scarf on his way into school. He reveals it to his friends quickly, before shaving it off in case any of the masters or 'Whips' see him.

These opening scenes establish an atmosphere redolent of intimidation and confusion, and suggest an anti-authoritarian stance to arbitrary power systems. But there is something else at work that manifests via Anderson's combination of scripted and improvised action (5) which has led critic, Elizabeth Sussex to comment: 'From the beginning there is a calculated lunacy about this real environment that could be regarded as pushing towards fantasy.'(6)

Modernist concerns about the representation, and indeed, the politics, of reality and fantasy are inherent in *If...* from the outset, and Anderson's spontaneous approach to direction, incorporating both scripted and improvisational techniques, exploits these concerns to great effect.

The second section is entitled 'College - Once again assembled.' The first scene takes place in the chapel where a smug air of authority is exuded by the masters and the 'Whips'. This is contrasted by various short scenes depicting typical incidents in the day to day life of the school; from the studied eccentricity of the history master (played by Graham Crowdon), to the casual brutality meted out to Biles (Brian Pettifer) by the 'Whips', and the kindness of Wallace who comes to Biles' aid by helping to release him from the humiliating position of being tied and suspended upside down in the toilets. All this is achieved by a series of ellipses, creating an episodic, slightly disorienting effect in typical Modernist style, which allows for no clear cut signs of Cause and Effect. The

emphasis is instead focussed on the arbitrary, subjective nature of experience, which in turn suggests a self-conscious Minimalist strategy on Anderson's part, though the parametric values of the film as a whole are open to question.

The technique of juxtaposition continues in the next sequence, which is entitled 'Term Time'. Various short scenes, showing different characters in different circumstances, continue to create contrasts between the rebellious 'Crusaders', the arbitrarily victimised smaller boys, and the priggish conceits of the 'Whips'. A scene which illustrates this, and forms one of the film's major themes, is the one in which the 'Whips' are discussing the beauty of Rowntree's fag, Phillips (Rupert Webster). In a typical display of boorishness, Rowntree gives Phillips to the oily Denson (Hugh Thomas), whose homosexuality is less guarded than Rowntree's own. It seems that all exchanges such as this are determined by an impersonal sado-masochistic element which allows for no true emotional expression in terms

of love or attachment. In contrast, Mick's pin-up posters of nubile young women strike the viewer as radical in this climate of homosexual tyranny. Here, Lindsay Anderson is creating a dichotomy which reverses the usual dialogues of sexual politics, in that *heterosexuality* becomes an idealistic weapon of the persecuted minority. This is illustrated in the scenes which juxtapose Denson in his warm, well-appointed room, being languidly shaved by Phillips, with Mick, Johnny and Wallace having to undergo the ordeal of early morning cold showers because a hypocritical 'Whip' has caught them drinking the night before.

These revolutionary themes continue in the next section of the film, entitled 'Ritual and Romance'. Here, a sense of deeper attachment is suggested between Wallace, who exercises impressively on parallel bars, and an entranced Bobby Phillips who looks on in admiration. Just in case the audience has suspected a reactionary homophobic message in *If...* we see in this exchange of gazes a real potential for deeper homosexual

attachment than the school's unwritten code allows for. In other words it is non-conformism *per se* which is frowned upon, however the school itself cares to define it, rather than any real sense of outrage at 'impropriety'.

The sequence where Phillips watches Wallace is handled with sensitivity and subtlety. Anderson turns this part of the film to a subjective reverie which the viewer sees through Phillip's eyes. Everything turns a delicate sepia - roseate monochrome, and time slows down as Wallace's actions are filmed in slow motion. Once more there is a meaningful juxtaposition between this sequence and the following scenes which follow a rapid series of disconnected incidents featuring the 'Crusaders' fencing (when Mick is cut, he expostulates with delight: 'Look, real blood!'), Rowntree banally announcing that the cheering must be louder at school sports events, and Mick and Johnny creating their own street theatre as they run around the local town bound together by toy handcuffs. These high spirits lead to Mick performing his first aggressive 'revolutionary' act,

when he steals the motor cycle and he and Johnny drive to the café where they encounter 'The Girl' (Christine Noonan).

The feral sexual act between Mick and the girl - which takes place against the soundtrack of the film's prevalent theme, the 'primitive' Congolese mass of the *Missa Luba*, combined with the roaring of tigers or lions - is shot in a disturbing, expressionistic style which utilises black and white and colour film stock, creating a fluid montage of sound and images in which spacial orientation is distorted, giving a sense of the emotional impact of the encounter. It seems that the implied ritualised violence of the sequence is a precursor to the violent / fantastic 'mind set' of the rest of the film, which has caused Elizabeth Sussex to comment: 'In the way that the picture cuts from scene to scene, ideas are constantly set up in opposition to each other so that stylistically as well as logically we are moving to the violent explosion at the end.' (7)

Violence is certainly the theme of the next section, but as its heading implies - 'Discipline'

- this is 'legitimate', school sanctioned violence; though it is meted out arbitrarily, as we learn the 'Crusaders' are not to be punished for any specific transgressions but, as Rowntree puts it, for their 'general attitude'. In a protracted and gruelling scene, we witness the caning of Johnny, Wallace and finally, Mick, who receives the most punishment at the sadistic hand of Denson who says to Mick, 'There's something indecent about you. The way you just sit there... looking at everyone. We've decided to beat you for it.'(8) This scene was shot in one take after being rehearsed and improvised several times by the players (9) and it communicates an atmosphere of almost unbearable tension to the viewer. Once more, the director used a 'spontaneous' Modernist technique which was worked out with the actors so that the full potential of the scene could be realised. This experimental approach to film making is a motif of Modernist cinema, which often tended to dispense with working too closely to scripts, or camera set ups. (10)

Though such improvisation has been sometimes

associated with a kind of artistic 'preciousness', Anderson appears to have utilised whatever techniques or approaches which best realised the effect he was trying to achieve, being neither hind bound by tradition or Modern theoretical dogma.(11)

Following on from the previous section, part six is not surprisingly entitled 'Resistance'. Mick's reaction to the beating seems to have focussed his rebellious stance, and we see him throwing darts at magazine stills depicting middle class life and traditional values. Meanwhile, Rowntree makes a 'stirring' announcement to College House: it seems the school has won some 'memorial chalice' of which they all should be proud. In contrast, Mick, Johnny and Wallace perform a solemn bonding ritual in which they cut their hands and clasp them together in the time worn gesture of solidarity. 'We are now alone in this rebellion', says Mick. Here the empty symbolism of the 'memorial chalice' is contrasted with the vital act of the blood ritual. Anderson's anti- authoritarian message is sealed in blood; 'real blood',

which echoes Mick's wounding in the fencing match in the form of a sort of Faustian pact. The real Holy Grail was a chalice of blood which was revered by the heretical Knights Templars, the historical role models, perhaps, of these latter day 'Crusaders'. The ominous symbol of blood foreshadows the violence to come, acting as a thematic motif of typical Modernist complexity.

It is in the final two sections of *If...* that the chaos and 'calculated lunacy' become elements which override the realistic elements of the film, in the sense that the constant use of juxtaposition becomes surreal or absurdist in effect. This begins in part seven, entitled 'Forth to War', where the school is practising military style field exercises. Scenes of the boys in their uniforms are interspersed with scenes of Mrs. Kemp (Mary McLeod) roaming naked around the empty dorms, a rather grotesque image which has been called 'Pinteresque'. (12) The war games are interrupted by a rain of the 'real bullets' which Mick had 'found' (where?) in section six. The true consequences of war soon

become apparent as Mick fatally stabs the remonstrating chaplain with his bayonet. There is an abrupt cut to the headmaster's study where we see the 'Crusaders' persuaded by the headmaster (Peter Jeffrey) to apologise to the dead chaplain who is being kept in a drawer in the headmaster's cabinet. In Modernist terms, this truly surreal moment could be seen as the defining scene of the whole film. The sheer absurdity of the scene has a disturbing, disorientating effect which makes the viewer doubt whether what he / she is viewing is meant to be reality or fantasy. Apparently there are no simple answers, as Anderson chooses not to provide any mutually exclusive definitions. (13) Once again, this is a quality we find in Modernist film narratives in contrast to the 'Hollywood' mainstream. Also of note here is the satirical ridiculing of the liberal, ostensibly progressive, headmaster whose punishment of this 'murder' takes the inept form of giving the 'Crusaders' some constructive work to do! It is while cleaning out the bric-a-brac under the lecture hall stage that Mick, 'The Girl',

Johnny and Wallace (who has now apparently openly declared his 'revolutionary' love for Phillips) find the cache of weapons that is to cause all the death and destruction in the film's final scenes.

The final section, 'Crusaders', terminates in a well choreographed depiction of mayhem, beginning as smoke appears in the lecture hall in which General Denson (Anthony Nichols), the obnoxious Denson's father, is giving an address. As the suffocating smoke thickens, the audience begins to panic. There is an undisciplined dash for the doors. The scene cuts to a high angle exterior shot which reveals the 'crusaders'' vantage point on the roof opposite. Explosions and gunfire follow, and a low angle shot reveals Mick firing a sten gun, which is followed by a montage of images of warfare between the school and the rebels. Finally, after many casualties on the school side, including the headmaster, the camera closes in on Mick. The film ends with a stationary shot, which reads in the script:

'Shot 718.

Close up of Mick frantically blazing away with his sten gun - a torrent of bullets. Camera holds on him: his face desperate, unyielding.'

'Shot 719.
Cut to black. Silence. Fade in to superimposed title (scarlet).
Title: *If...*' (14)

In a blatant gesture in defiance of convention, but which totally suits the subject, Anderson (with co-scripter and original author, David Sherwin) ends the film with a deliberately ambiguous image literally freezing the action mid-frame, creating a chillingly nihilistic effect - once the violence has been instigated there can be no turning back. There is nothing left to tell. Existence becomes solely about annihilation. As Mick Travis says: 'There is no such thing as a wrong war. Violence and revolution are the only pure acts. War is the last possible creative act.'(15) Whether these words form a facet of Lindsay Anderson's personal philosophy is not the point.

In the final analysis *If...* works on the level of sheer provocation, something which was essential to the Modernist

stance of radical artists in the '60s, and which Anderson in particular had honed to a fine art if such quotes as these are taken into consideration:

'Your demands are impossible, but how can they be less? To make a film is to create a world.'(16)

'The artist must always bite the hand that feeds him. He must aim beyond the limits of tolerance. His duty is to become a monster.' (17)

Perhaps this is also the duty of Mick Travis and his 'Crusaders', 'blazing away' in a frenzy of nihilistic violence at the bureaucratic system which marginalizes and punishes what it cannot appropriate and render harmless. In the violent milieu of radical '60s art, which reflected a rapidly changing world that seemed to be falling apart at the seams, *If...* can be seen as a fascinating example of uncompromising Modernist film making, reflecting the existential angst of the times in which there no longer seemed to be any simple solutions or easy answers.

Notes

1. My title comes from graffiti, which was written by Situationist / Anarchist groups in the Paris student riots in May, 1968. See, for example, Home, S. *The Assault on Culture*.

2. Silet, C. *Lindsay Anderson, A Guide to References and Resources* p.25.

3. Anderson established his uncompromising reputation as a film critic in the '40's in *Sequence* magazine. See Silet, p.2 ff.

4. Silet, C. p. 25.

5. Caterall, A. and Wells, S. *Your Face Here*. Malcolm McDowell and others discuss Anderson's free approach in the section entitled 'Will They Care in Wigan : If...' p.40 - 60.

Sussex, E. *Lindsay Anderson*, p.77

6. Ibid. p. 75

7. Quoted in Mercer, M. 'If is the Middle Word in Life', *Vague* p.8

8. See Caterall and Wells, p.51.

9. Director of photography, Miroslav Ondricek had trouble at first adjusting to Anderson's spontaneous approach to shooting the film.

10. See Ibid. p.46.

11. Ibid. as demonstrated throughout the article.

12. Ibid. p.47.

13. Anderson's vision not only bewildered critics like *Sight and Sound's* Gavin Millar but also Malcolm McDowell himself who questioned the headmaster's study scene and received the response: 'Do you know why Cinderella's coach turns into a pumpkin at midnight? I don't know, it just does!' Ibid. p.47.

14. Quoted in Mercer p.12.

15. Ibid. p.11.

16. Quoted in Sussex, p.70.

17. Ibid. p.75. -----

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TRANSGRESSIVE

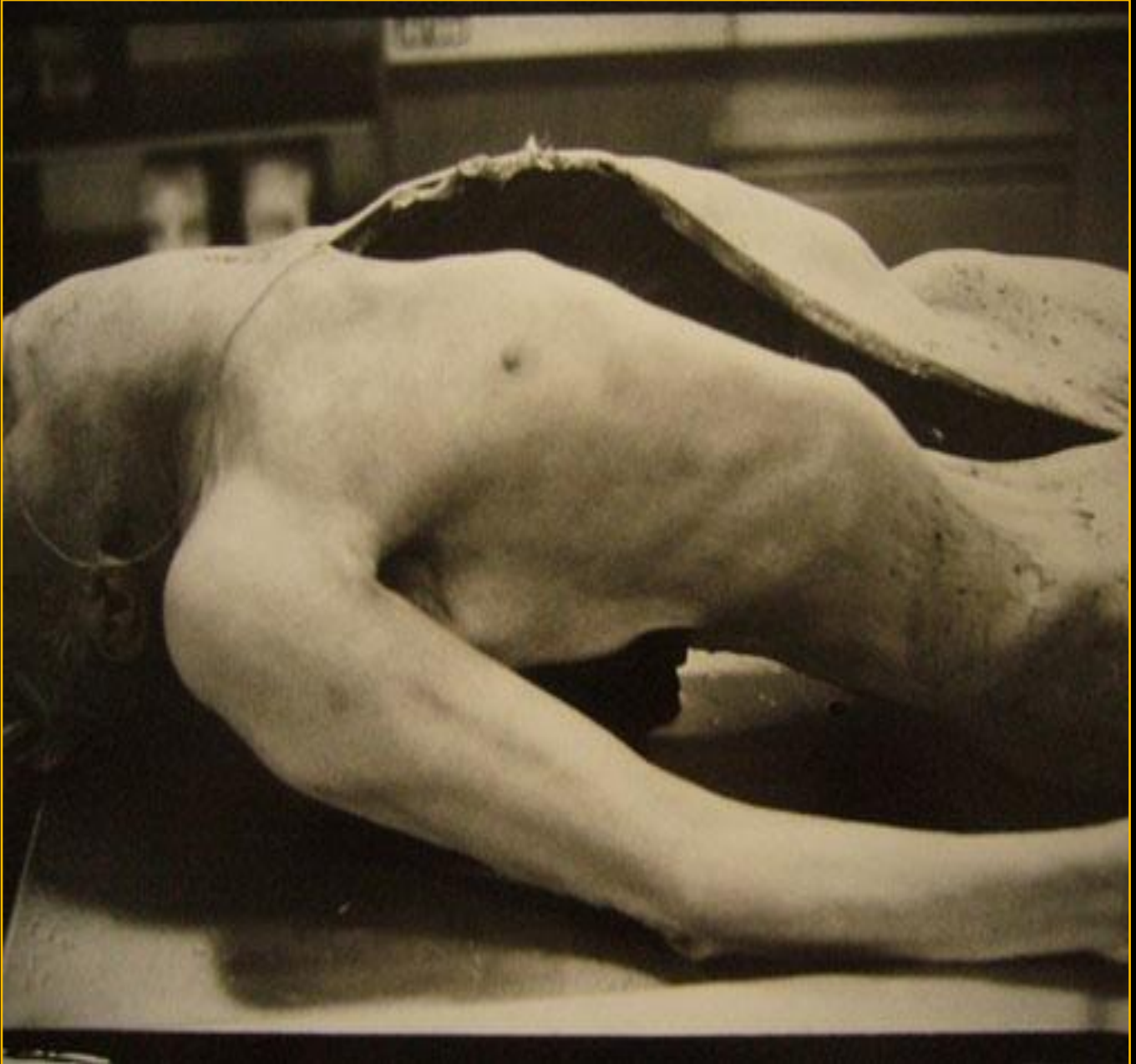
Images by Sue Fox

Text; The Heart of Prajna Paramita Sutra



Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, while deeply immersed in prajna paramita, clearly perceived the empty nature of the five skandhas, and transcended all suffering.

Sariputra! Form is not different from emptiness, emptiness is not different from form. Form is emptiness, emptiness is form. So it is with feeling, conception, volition, and consciousness.

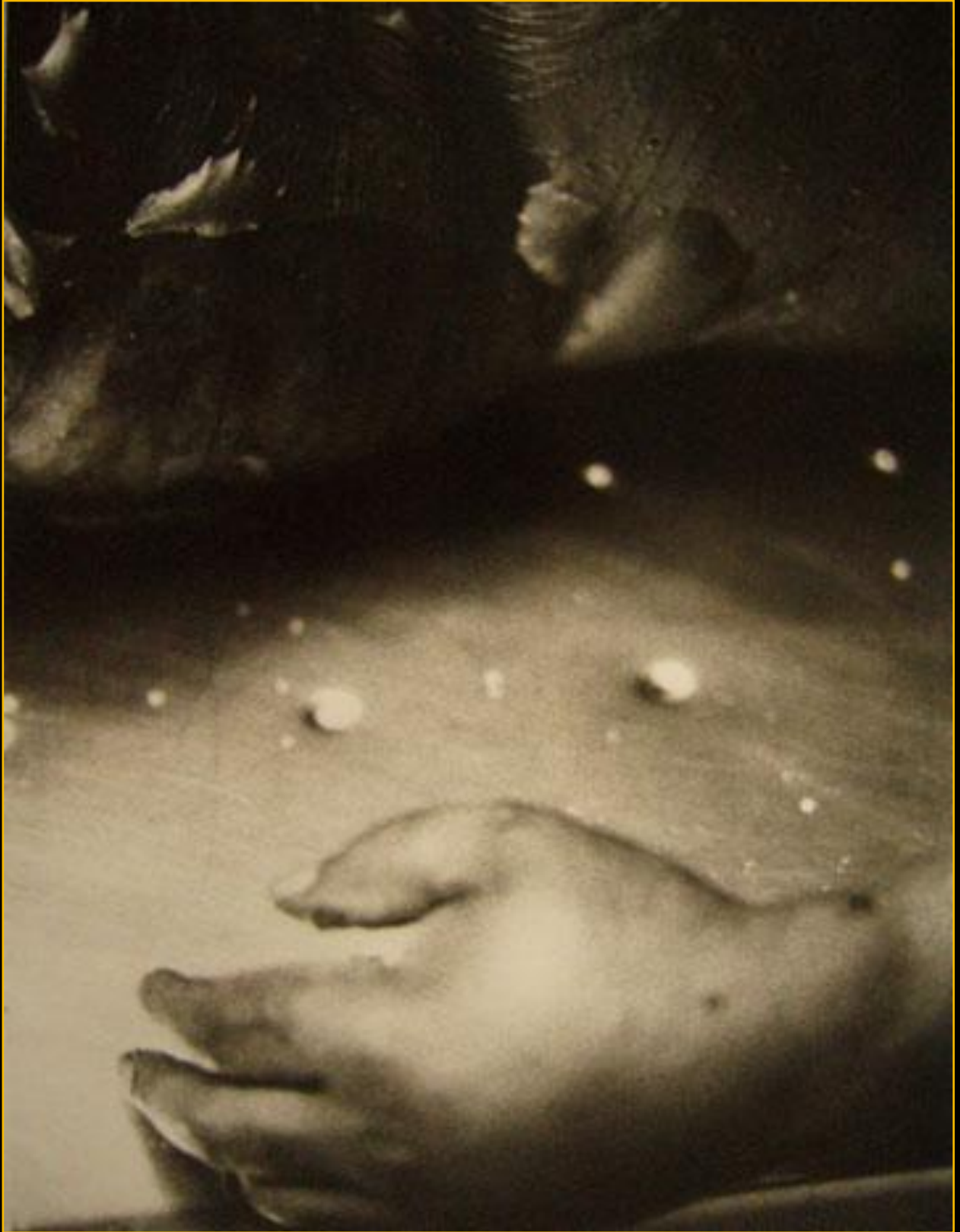


Sariputra! All dharmas are empty in character; neither arising nor ceasing, neither impure nor pure, neither increasing nor decreasing

Therefore, in emptiness, there is no form; there is no feeling, conception, volition, or consciousness; no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind; no form, sound, smell, taste, touch, or dharmas;



no realm of vision, and so forth, up to no realm of mind-consciousness; no ignorance or ending of ignorance, and so forth, up to no aging and death or ending of aging and death.



There is no suffering, no cause, no extinction, no path. There is no wisdom and no attainment. There is nothing to be attained.

By way of prajna paramita, the bodhisattva's mind is free from hindrances. With no hindrances, there is no fear; freed from all distortion and delusion, ultimate nirvana is reached.



By way of prajna paramita, Buddhas of the past, present, and future, attain anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Therefore, prajna paramita is the great powerful mantra, the great enlightening mantra, the supreme and peerless mantra. It can remove all suffering.

This is the truth beyond all doubt.

And the prajna paramita mantra is spoken thus: Gate gate
paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha



*(translated from Chinese by Buddha Gate Monastery)

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SOLITARY BROTHER

By Christopher Nosnibor

Photos © Max Reeves



It was a Wednesday morning. I had been loitering by the drinks machine for quite some time and my thirst was beginning to spread to a large dry patch of parched discomfort in my throat. Dehydration, and no mistake. I should have known better than to have gone with the gin the night before, but for the first time in weeks I had at least had a few hours worth of solid, heavy,

uninterrupted and seemingly dream-free somnium, for which I could be grateful. I had precious little to be grateful for, and so such small chinks of light in the otherwise dark shroud which was at this juncture smothering the entirety of my dismal life made all the difference. The reason for my lengthy lean against the edge of the coffee lounge was an overweight stooge who had seen

fit to get a drink for not just himself, nor even his immediate colleagues, but everyone in the company, save for myself, of course. I was uncomfortable, hung-over, dried up and tetchy: the volume of awkward letters and tasks on my desk was showing no signs of diminishment, and I was beginning to get the fear over the potential complaint being lodged against me for my conduct earlier. I forgot, the client is always right.

I coughed as the guy at the machine continued to mill about, looking blankly at the machine as he struggled to remember what drinks he was required to collect, and for whom. He looked up at me, his face the archetype of gormlessness.

"You waitin' for this?" he asked dumbly, his jaw slack as he nodded his head sideways toward the drinks dispenser.

Rightly or otherwise, I was unable to contain my sarcasm. "No, I'm just watching you for a spot of mid-morning entertainment."

Unsurprisingly, my causticness was lost on the fool, who stood and looked blankly at me, without

a trace of comprehension in his dull eyes. His mouth remained open, his thick, red lips glossy with saliva. He flicked his greasy fringe from his eyes and continued to look through me. The fop of dense lank hair flopped back into his eyes, obscuring his dense eyebrows and half of his left eye. "Yeh?"

I couldn't tolerate this any longer. I was tired, thirsty, crabby, and as much as I hated my job, I had to get things done if I was to knock off in reasonable time today and retain my position, which at least allowed me to pay most of the rent and buy enough ale to keep me sane. "No, you fat, dumbassed cunt, I'm gagging for a drink and have been waiting patiently here for almost ten bloody minutes!" I spat abrasively.

The stooge looked somewhat taken aback by my minor outburst. Cunt wasn't one of the words which was considered acceptable in the workplace, but then if the Corporation would insist on hiring them...

"Awwright, awwright," he flapped, his bespittled saveloy lips aquiver with surprise and affront. Then he stopped and looked at me

once more, struggling to decipher an appropriate course of action.

I raised my hands in an exaggerated, exasperated shrug, my eyes aflame with frustration at the obese buffoon's inconceivable idiocy.

"D'ya wanna come in here now, I've still got a few more to get, and if you only want one for yerself..."

Belated display of courtesy accepted, I nudged my way past his bulging midriff into the small space between the chair-surrounded coffee tables and the wall against which the drinks machine stood. I drew myself a plain water, and began to put the plastic vessel containing the precious liquid to my lips. As I did so, I took a step away from the machine, and in doing so stumbled slightly on the oversized shoe of the twat, slopping a mouthful of the water down my chin and tie. "Fuck," I cursed sharply under my gin-tinged breath.

A loud, thunderous sound met my ears as the doughboy erupted into a behemoth explosion of mirth which initiated a perpetual motion over his near-lithic fleshly

mountain of a torso. His lips became further flecked with spittle as he shook and wobbled uncontrollably at my minor mishap. I dropped the water as paroxysms of rage took hold of my body. My muscles tensed as I looked on. The tubby bastard laughed a big, fat, thick-lipped laugh, his fat red mouth emitting tones of idiotic joviality. To be laughed at was one thing. To be laughed at on a day like today may well have been another, but to be laughed at by this fucker was altogether different again.

Anger rose in my chest and I snapped, reaching for a wooden chair leg which had been detached from the broken chair, no doubt by the deposition of this whale's bulk upon it, and deposited for safe keeping propped against the wall of the coffee lounge's partition wall near the drinks machine. The improvised bat connected with his potato of a head, his manifold chins joggling in the aftermath of the initial impact. The sound was gratifying. I continued swinging at his dense block: I'd silence the laugh of this bloated fuck, and persisted in my striking, clubbing the half-life like a baby seal, repeatedly *bludgeoning, bludgeoning,*

bludgeoning, bludgeoning... this cuntmeister would learn the hard way not to laugh at me, and once he'd stopped laughing I'd show him what was really funny. Then I'd skin the bastard. Lay him out on slab and peel him like a plum tomato, taking the taught, pallid skin from the layers of stinking fat, the yellowed and festering manifestation of the worst kind of capitalist indulgence. The laughter turned to a scream of terror, which in only a short time was reduced to a whimper, and finally a gurgle as red fluid began to flow from his fat red no longer laughing mouth. Oh, I'd shut the fuck up.

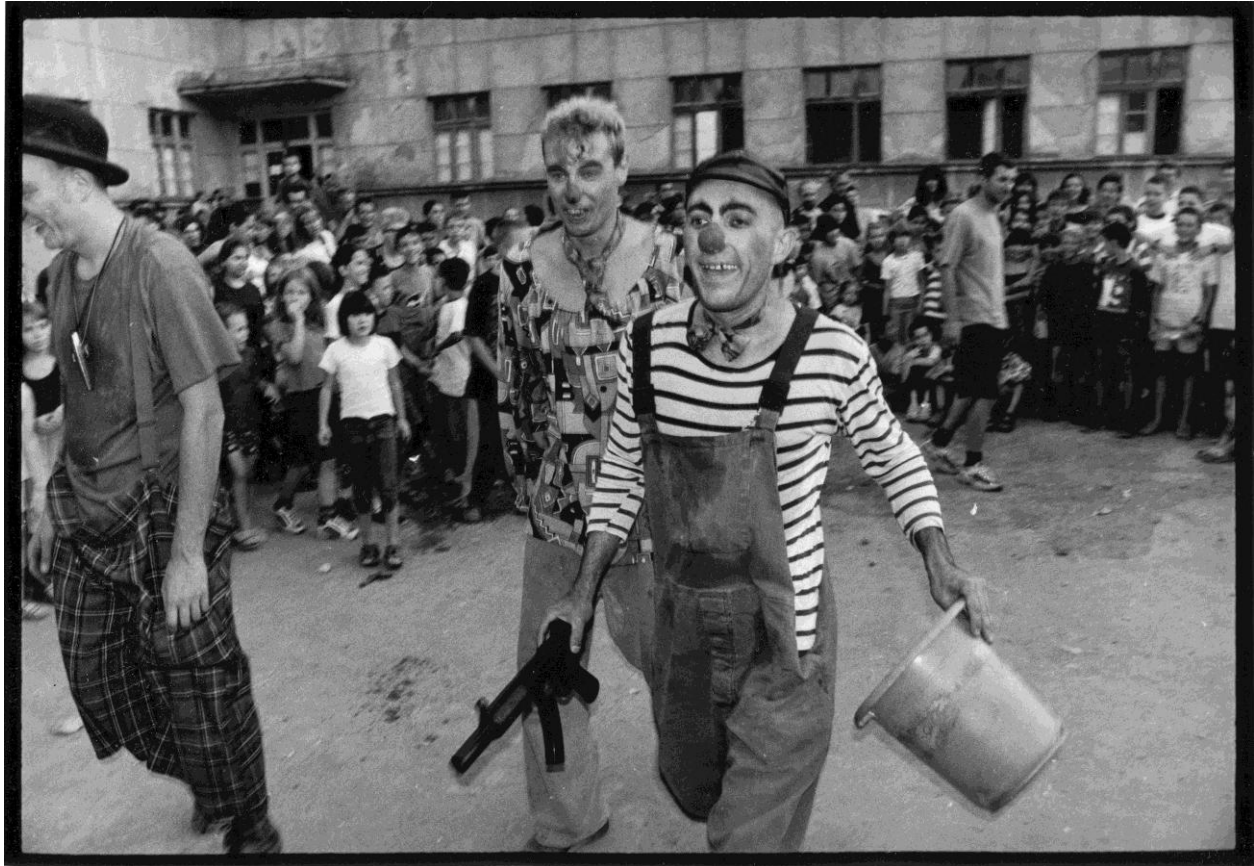
Blow after blow after blow, each blow responding with a dead thump as his blubber rippled like dead jelly in involuntary response. I stood over him with the hunk of wood clasped with white-knuckle firmness as gouts of blood spurted from that fat ugly mouth, the cunt's indulgent imbecilic laugh long having been transformed to a twisted, broken, pulped sneer of horror. The crack of tooth and bone, the flood of plasma and platelets filled my dead heart with satisfaction. I kicked the shit in the porky belly, dropped the chair leg onto the stodgy hulk which constituted his corpse and strolled

off back to my desk, leaving the bleeding bulk to the next poor dolt to gather up when they went for their next insipid caffeine boost. I glanced over my shoulder at the minced hulk, and was pleased to note that his fact imbecilic head was well and truly stoved in.

I recoiled at the brutality of my thoughts. I sniffed, wiped the droplets from my tie, which would dry in a matter of minutes, and removed the dribble from my chin with the back of my hand. I glared at the laughing gnome, whose piggy eyes shone with sadistic amusement. I took a gulp of water from the depleted cup and straightened up.

"Shut up, you fat shit," I snarled and beat my exit swiftly.

I returned to my desk and placed the dispensed beaker in a space where the papers, files and stacks of stationery were relatively shallow. The usual hangover sweat was beginning to flood down my brow, and I began to shake. The shake was more than just the usual tremble of alcohol withdrawal, though. I'd got the fear. 'I, an intelligent, educated man,' I thought. 'I have the capacity for reasonable argument and sensible debate...'



Yes, but does he? Dumb fucks such as he only understand the language of the physical.

'I'm an intelligent, educated being,' I reiterated to myself.

Exactly. That's how come you understand what action is most appropriate for the occasion. You can't reason with the likes of him.

'But...'

No buts. You know it's true. And anyway, you didn't act upon your violent impulses, did you? So what's

the problem? Christ on a bike, simmer down. All this time spent philosophising about how the differentiating feature between high and low-level intelligence is the capacity to consider all modes of thought, but know when and where restraint is required, etc. You've considered patricide, rape, public exposure, incest, paedophilia and a vast plethora of other indecent, immoral, socially unacceptable, morally repugnant acts and not acted. It's healthy to consider things, it's the doing which makes the difference. Of course, the same applies to certain inactions which may have proved detrimental to your position... write

*that fucking book, you feeble shag!
And argue back when you've got a
point! Get a spine, you mollusc!*

My self flagelatory contemplations were brought to an abrupt halt by a woman arriving beside my desk and speaking, her voice severing my connection to my inner self.

"Chris Nosnibor?" she enquired.

"Yeah," I sighed.

"I spoke to you on the 'phone earlier..." she continued hesitantly.

"Uh-huh," I grunted non-committally.

I looked her up and down. She was plain. Not average, though, to be fair. Average can be equated to ugly. Most people are ugly. That's the average. The wrong side of plain. That was in her favour. But she was unremarkable in every sense. Five seven-ish, size ten to twelve, say 34-B-ish, shoulder length mousy hair, neither dry nor greasy, normal skin type, mid-brown eyes, no major defects, regular nose, even enough teeth, unremarkable clothes. Late 20s, early 30s, I guessed, but she could have been a little older. Life at the

Corporation had a habit of ageing people. Like me. Today, I must have looked about seventy-five. And unhealthy to boot.

"This is the Incoming Terminal Ledger Process Department Division A3.1-Q;, isn't it," she prattled, a tad nervous in her delivery.

"Uh-huh," I sniffed.

"And you are Chris Nosnibor," she reiterated.

I nodded.

"And you deal with Mid-Level Sump Case Reindexations for the Northern Divisions and Conclusive Executors and C.R.U.D. Stakeholders, yes?" she persisted, bending forward in an attempt to catch my eye. She did catch my eye. With her cleavage. Unremarkable it was, but to be presented with any half-fair cleavage at the comfort of my own desk at eleven o' clock on a Wednesday wasn't something I was likely to balk at. Under normal circumstances. I felt the bile rise from my churning stomach and inhaled a large gulp of air with my lungs, and a long draught of jug with my eyes.

“Yes, yes,” I blustered. “Please, do excuse me, I have to....” No point finishing the sentence. I rose unsteadily from my chair and made my way hastily past her and into the gents. I dove into the first cubicle and regurgitated my last cup of water, along with a generous serving of intestinal acid.

As relief swept through me, I hoped that she’d not clocked me checking her as she’d bent forward and thought I was in need of a different kind of relief. As I spat the final gobs of bitter phlegm from my throat, I realised

that it didn’t matter. She’d be back at her desk by now, in her department with her colleagues, doing whatever mundane job it was that she did, does, and will continue to do. She’d have forgotten her encounter with me within minutes. For my part, I’d not recognise her again if she walked up to me and thrust her tits in my face. Again.

I checked my watch. 11:15. 45 minutes to lunch, a trip to the Lion, and an hour’s escape from this hellhole...



SAM KNOWS

By Claire Godden Rowland
Photos © Malcolm Alcala



'I know.'

That was all Sam said.

He dipped low and whispered it in my ear as he offered me a cake which he presented like a waiter on a platter. His words rattled around my head like a

bullet ricochet. Silently I took a cake and bit into it, blankly. I couldn't even look at him. Sam knew. Sam knows. How could he know? I found I was quite unable to chew the cake, it was a Viennese whirl, but it was like dust in my mouth which had become very dry.

The room continued with its little family scene, blissfully unaware that I had ceased to breathe. This scene was so familiar. The chatter of tight, unnatural conversation, the smell of Aunt Jan's cigarettes mixed with the hideous smell of her dog which constantly maintained that 'wet dog' aroma. Sam was watching me, slouched in an arm chair, a look of enjoyment played on his lips and he seemed to have a diabolical aura about him, like a villain in an old movie. He was practically rubbing his hands together in glee with the damsel strapped to the train tracks. Only there was no hero. There was no cavalry coming for this damsel.

Sam knew.

Sam raised himself to his full six foot and glanced down at me.

'Prue,' he began casually, 'You help take out the cups, Mate?'

For a second I was unable to move, unable to speak. I caught sight of Angelica on my brother's knee, the sun dancing on her golden hair giving her a

sacred glow like an angel. I stood and silently followed Sam into the kitchen which smelt of fried food. The conversation from the other room grew distant from us as the door swung shut behind me, leaving us alone.

Sam had his back to me, stood at the sink. 'I know, Mate,' he repeated.

'Know what?' I tried feebly. 'What do you know?'

He knew I'd killed Mick, he knew I'd stoved his head in and thrown him in the canal.

He turned to face me, leaning against the sink and drying his hands in a towel. 'I know about Mick.'
'Mick who?'

'Poor, dead, Mick.'

I felt sick; he knew I was a killer, the sort of sick that brings too much saliva into your mouth as if to lubricate the vomits return voyage. I swallowed hard and desperately searched for the appropriate thing to say, the room spinning around me.



'You come round mine tomorrow, after you drop little 'un at school.' He glanced over my shoulder to check we were alone and then he winked lewdly at me. 'We can have us a little chat about it then, Mate.'

So here I am stood outside Sam and Sim's house.

Sam: the cousin who stood at my brother, Simeon's side and laughed while I was teased brutally, the accomplice, the ally as I sobbed into my pillow, the companion. More of a brother than a cousin spending so much time with me and Sim due to Aunt Jan's alcoholism. Surely the boy who'd once defended me in the playground wouldn't blackmail me; surely he knew I didn't have it to give?

I knocked gently upon the door as if the sound disturbed me. I heard footsteps and when Sam opened the door he was grinning with satisfaction in jeans, T-shirt and bare feet. He dipped his head a little and swung his arm toward the interior for me to enter which I did with my head hung like a naughty school girl

approaching the head master's room.

The living room was filled with light from the large bay window, lighting the leather sofas and wooden floors.

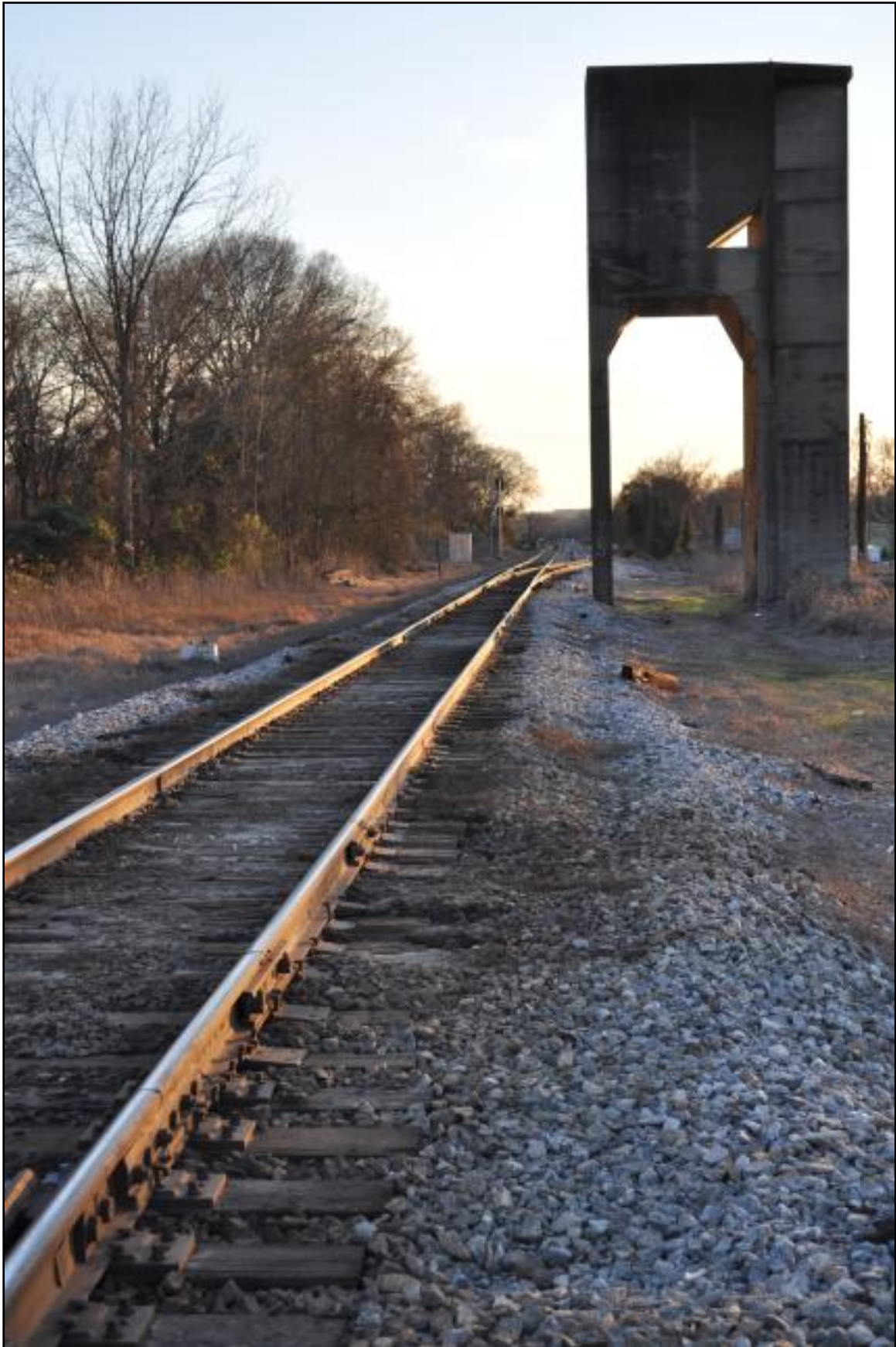
'Wanna cup of tea?' he asked politely, 'or something stronger?'

I forced my head to shake. 'Sam, how do you know?'

'Sit down, Mate,' he offered as he sat on the only arm chair, sitting deep into it as if it were his throne, crowned with golden hair. He was a big man, filling the chair with his gym abused body.

I obediently perched on the edge of the sofa as if poised for escape. 'Sam,' I pleaded, 'Tell me how you know...please understand...Mick was such an asshole...'

He was shushing me, leaning forward from his big chair and then he did something strange, he placed a silencing finger to my lips, it smelt unnaturally clean. This felt really bizarre, something far too intimate in



the gesture. I felt a small sweat break out under my shirt, prickling down my spine, I shrank back from him.

'It's alright, Mate,' he soothed gently. 'I ain't got no doubt you had your reasons init.' There was something so gentle in his lovely face, his eyes caring and his smile no longer mocking. He squeezed my hand affectionately and again I felt my skin prickle uncomfortably. I hadn't been this close to Sam or this tactile with him since we used to camp in the tent in the garden. He was still holding my hand and I badly wanted it back but I daren't offend him by rejecting his comfort.

'I knew you'd understand Sam,' I lied outrageously. Then I finally asked the question which had been on my lips since yesterday, had kept me awake all night. 'Does Sim know? Have you told him?'

Sam looked horrified. 'Sim? God, no.'

Now he took both my hands and held them in his lap in uncomfortable proximity to his groin area. I could not have

wanted those hands back more if they had been stuck in a fire ant nest. It was all I could do not to grimace.

He was close to me now, so close I could smell the protein shake he had not long consumed on his breath and see just how uneven, although notably white, his teeth were. 'It's our little secret mate,' he assured me.

I sighed hard and actually found myself smiling with relief. 'Sam...I...thank you.'

He shrugged and now my hands were clutched within his, right on his groin and I could feel it all limp and coiled within his jeans. I felt bile rise in my throat yet I managed a grateful smile.

'It's nothing, Mate,' he kept repeating in barely more than a whisper. 'It's nothing, its nothing.'

It should have been soothing but all I could think about was getting the hell out of there and away from my cousin's dick, which was mildly pulsing beneath my hands.

I considered pointing out to him this socially unacceptable semi lob he was grasping my hands over for he seemed completely unaware. I didn't want to embarrass him however. Surely he would be utterly mortified if he knew he was showing his baby cousin exactly what he was packing, and tightly, that thing was struggling for freedom, almost bursting through denim.

He smiled dotingly at me and the bile threatened with more purpose. Alarm bells were beginning to ring.

'Come on, Mate, give me a hug.'

Before I could protest he had pulled me from the safety of the sofa, onto his lap. Damn, he was strong. I landed on his lap and crashed into his wall like torso curling up into a slightly foetal position upon him. I was now gritting my teeth. He sighed feverishly and nestled his face into my hair, some strands catching on the stubble on his chin. Now I was silently screaming for release, something churning in my gut.

'Mmmm,' he sighed dreamily. 'This is nice; I can't remember the last time we did this.'

I wanted to say 'never' but I settled on the more diplomatic answer and replied, 'I expect I was about eight or something.'

Then he kissed my hair. I froze on his lap. It could no longer accurately be described as a semi lob and it dug into my butt cheek eagerly. I turned to face him, my eyes wide in utter disgust. Sam misread this action completely and kissed me full on the lips. I flew from his lap in pure and unadulterated horror and wiped my hand across my mouth as if I actually were about eight.

'What the fuck?' I demanded in disgust, my meagre breakfast threatening to make an appearance at any moment. I felt embarrassed and insulted and shamed and appalled.

'What?' He asked innocently. He stood up and towered over me making me feel trapped and breathless. 'What's the matter?'

I took a deep, calming breath. 'Okay look, let's just pretend that didn't happen. Okay? Okay Sam?' I forced a choked laugh in an attempt to lighten the moment.

He was laughing too now, apparently also aiming to lighten the atmosphere.

I started laughing with him, what else could I do?

He stopped laughing abruptly and shook his head releasing a small sound of exhilaration from the jolly old hoot we were sharing. 'Alright, Mate, you chip off then.'

I almost cried with relief. 'Okay, well, I'll see you at Aunt Jan's.' I was hurriedly grabbing my bag, tucking hair behind my ears and preparing to bolt. 'Or the pub or whatever.' I was babbling, giddy with relief.

'Sure okay.' He was stood so close to me I could barely move normally without touching him, the smell of Lynx invading my nostrils like a poisonous gas. 'So should I tell Sim or the filth first?'

'What the...? Why?' I threw my bag down in despair. 'I thought you understood, I thought it was all gonna be alright, Sam.'

He reached for me then and as I went to bat his hand away impatiently he lifted it and somehow caught my lip. I swore loudly as pain burst in my mouth and immediately I felt blood trickle down my chin.

'Fuck, fuck,' I swore furiously clutching my hands to my face.

'Sorry Mate,' he gasped, genuinely sorry for what appeared to be an accident.

Still covering my bleeding lip and very aware that he's made no attempt to get a tissue or anything to staunch the flow of blood, which was still trickling down my chin, I waved a hand and shook my head dismissively. 'Forget it. Accident. It's fine.' I sighed, my voice now impaired by my swelling lip, 'Sam, look, I thought you said it would be alright.'

'It could have been.'

'Then what the...why would you tell anyone? You said...'

'Yeh, I did.'

'So?' I was staring at him, gaping in exasperation, still clutching my ruined lip. Then it dawned on me with hideous clarity. 'What? Only if I sit there cuddled up to you and little Sam?'

He shrugged and raised his eyebrows. 'Not that little right now, Mate.'

'I bloody well noticed...' I was flapping helplessly. 'I didn't think you did.'

'Behave! Noticed? I was almost cross eyed!'

'So...what?' I was gasping, repulsion leaving me speechless. I dropped back down onto the edge of the sofa, my legs disappearing from beneath me. Finally I gathered myself and sat as tall as I could, my voice shook when I asked, 'What do you want Sam?'

He grinned with victory and sat back in his chair, his body leaning right back into it,

moulding to its shape lazily. He cocked his head a little and undid the top button of his jeans. 'It ain't gonna suck itself, Mate.'

I stared at him speechless. I wanted to scream at him. I wanted to bolt and get the hell out of there. I wanted to do about a million things other than what I did.

Did I have any choice? Silently and resolutely I placed my bag on the chair and pulled my hair into a ponytail, out of my face. I knelt before him. It was pointless to beg, to plead with him or even consider that he couldn't go through with this.

He was already eagerly fumbling with his fly, his tongue between his lips with excitement. I think I'd always known he could do this; I certainly wasn't as shocked or appalled as I should have been. I couldn't look up at him, my cheeks flushed with shame. With a groan of pleasure it was free, shining and purple-ish red. I took a deep breath and closed my eyes. I couldn't look at it, it was throbbing



repulsively. Do it, just do it, I told myself. I opened my mouth and leant onto it. It was big. It felt horribly smooth in my mouth. Apart from the disgust burning through me it was like any other penis. He moaned with pleasure and closed his eyes, dropping his head back. I squeezed my eyes shut and began to move up and down. Instinct and desperation for it to be over overcame me and I squeezed my lips tight around it. I briefly dared to open my eyes and saw the shining dark pink shaft disappearing into my mouth, smeared with my own blood which glistened on the mound of pubic hair which faced me. Sam released a guttural sound from his throat, dropping his head back and gritting his teeth in a grimace of ecstasy, and it pulsed excitedly in my mouth. I pushed my mouth around it, forcing images of our childhood together from my mind, my eyes tight shut and my head moving faster. Just keep moving, get it over, keep moving. He was moaning with pleasure. I was pretending it wasn't him, it wasn't Sam, it was just any man. He released a huge moaning sound and

before I knew what was happening his fingers dug into my hair and pushed my head down. His erection rammed into the back of my throat and I gagged. I couldn't breathe. He rammed himself further into my mouth mercilessly. His hips began to move urgently and his eyes rolled back as he released animal noises of bliss. Still he thrust into my mouth, battering my throat and brutally pulling my hair. Tears poured down my face. He thrust again fiercely. Then he released a huge moan and came in my mouth, hot fluid pumping down my throat.

I leapt to my feet, burst from the room, through the kitchen and landed hard on my knees before the toilet just in time to be sick. I continued to wretch and vomit until I was empty, emptier than I thought I could ever be. Eventually I pulled myself to my feet and splashed water over my face and I drank it. I drank water like a starving woman, the taste of iron from my blood vile in my mouth, my lip swollen and pounding. My throat burned. It was bruised. I wanted to cry but the shame was too bitter. I stumbled out

of the bathroom and found him in the kitchen waiting for me with arms crossed and cheeks slightly flushed.

He smiled lazily at me. 'You sure you don't want a cuppa, Mate?'

I managed to shake my head dully, my throat sore, my

cheeks burning.

He shrugged. 'Suit yourself.'

Silently I left the room, as if in a daze. I collected my bag and wandered from the house, closing the door carefully behind me.



I SURVIVED ANDY WARHOL

A Walk On The Wild Side with the Legendary Holly Woodlawn

By Tom Garretson

Photographs by Jarry Lang © Karin Lefler/Vincent Varga



The underground is overflowing with myth. From Andy Warhol's Factory of the 1960s came a stream of characters that have mostly passed into the archives of legend, and have themselves become mythic figures. Bizarre and extreme, eccentric personalities, they have left behind

their ghostly images, captured on film, in photographs and sound recordings, on canvas and in our imaginations. Warhol provided the inspiration for countless numbers of renegade, misfit youth: Joe Dallesandro, Billy Name, Edie Sedgewick, John Cale, Nico, Ondine,

Lou Reed, Viva, Jackie Curtis, Candy Darling, the Chelsea Girls... and then there was Holly Woodlawn.

In her Academy-Award-winning performance that *should* have captured an Oscar for her role in Paul Morrissey and Warhol's *Trash*, she was catapulted from the gutter into the stars, and has held her place there ever since. Immortalized further by Lou Reed's classic song "Walk On the Wild Side", she continues to carve her destiny in cameo appearances in numerous avant garde films, documentaries, stage plays, a cabaret act, and her peculiar autobiography, *A Low Life In High Heels*.

The amazing thing about Holly is that she's survived it all - all the drugs, sex, self-indulgence - and is doing quite well in spite of the odds. While many of her former chums have wandered into obscurity or lie six-feet under, she's managed to keep her compassion, sense of humor, and energy up and focused forward. Acknowledging the past, Ms. Woodlawn graciously allowed me to interview her in 1999. I have, for the sake of being true to the rhythm of the conversation, kept her digressions and sporadic comments faithful to the enthusiasm of her voice.

TG: Holly, after reading your autobiography *A Low Life in High Heels*, what strikes me is your sense of compassion, which sets you apart from a lot of your contemporaries.

HW: I tend to go off on a tangent... and I don't want people to think I'm a lunatic - even though I am! And there is a full moon, by the way... and three hurricanes in Miami!

TG: How long has it been since you've been home, back to Miami?

HW: Oh God, years! I left when I was fifteen years old. I'm gonna be 54 in two months! Do you believe that? Christ! After all the shit that I've been through! Oooh, can I say shit in this interview?

TG: Holly, you can say anything you want.

HW: Good, just want to get that off my bosom!

TG: You've survived running away from home, on the road and living on the street, through Warhol's Factory lifestyle and all the excesses of the New York underground. How did you manage to make it out to Hollywood?

HW: That basically happened because I was living in New York, of course, during the whole Warhol era. See, I came in late, in 1969 and did *Trash* and *Women in Revolt* with Candy Darling and Jackie Curtis... those were basically my two Warhol films, and then I became a Warhol Superstar. I would be going to fabulous parties in limousines, eating caviar, then go home on the Lower East Side and be on welfare! I mean honey - dichotomy! Aaarg! That lasted, and I started doing my cabaret act... and sort of got my shit together. When Andy died, the whole scene died. I just felt that I had to escape. A friend of mine was living in LA, and he said, "Why don't you come on over?" And I said, "Oh those people in LA! Blah!" You know what they say about people from LA, they're just lying down... So, after Andy died, I went to his memorial on April Fool's day, by the way! At Saint Patrick's Cathedral, that black girl... What's her name... Grace Jones! ...ten o'clock in the morning, on top of a car, there is Grace Jones posing in this breast plate, and I was wearing, like... (in reverence for his memory) ...I went dressed as a guy...well, my idea of a guy in any case, so I wore a suit and a tie and the whole thing, but this insanity at ten o'clock in the morning, it was like Studio 54 in front of Saint Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth

Avenue! And I thought, "This is nuts!" I went into the Cathedral, and Yoko Ono, who I couldn't stomach - and neither could Andy - he *hated* her! She was doing a eulogy and I was expecting her to break out in her shrieking sounds, looking at her and thinking what the hell is she doing up there? He hated her! And this woman next to me is sobbing away, crying and sniffing, so I gave her my hanky, she was crying so much. Honey, she wasn't crying, she was snorting *coke*! In Saint Patrick's Cathedral! At ten o'clock in the morning! That's when I said it is now time to get the fuck out of town! It was *too* sick. So, I went to Sak's Fifth Avenue across the street, and bought some... er, "Joy", and then I called my friends to come over to my apartment. I was living on Park Avenue, and said to them to come on over and get it, I didn't give a shit. Eight bucks, ten bucks, I just wanted to get rid of it. And then I just left on a one-way ticket to LA. I then wrote my autobiography *A Low Life in High Heels* with this wonderful guy, Jeff Copeland. It got published, and was I shocked! (laughs) After that, Madonna got interested in it, and wanted to play Candy Darling, since 20th Century Fox was interested in the film rights. So I went through Round One. Now it's Round Four, and it's finally being done. That's what

brought me here. When Andy died, the entire scene died. I asked myself, am I going to be an elephant?

TG: What year was that?

HW: That was 1989. But Andy died in 1987. I just stood around a couple of years, and during his memorial I realized that I didn't want to hang around the elephant's burial ground.

TG: I left New York in 1989 as well.

HW: You did? We probably took the same plane!

TG: I moved down to New Orleans.

HW: N'WALINS! Oh my God, honey! I was there doing a play... yeeuch!... in July! Don't ever! (laughs) I used to hop from bar to bar to bar...

TG: And stay on the same block!

HW: ...because they had air conditioning! And by two o'clock in the after noon I was *palatzo!*

TG: I've always called it the Adult Disneyland.

HW: Oh, but it's so fucking fabulous! It's beautiful. The old architecture. But the thing is that I had to work at eight o'clock and actually remember

lines for the play, but by two o'clock I was *crackola!* I would go home and just die, and then wake up at seven and slap my pussy together, get it all together to do the show. *N'awlins*, you have to call it *N'awlins*. My lawyer comes from there. He represents Michael Jackson, Barbara Streisand, and of course they handle me. And that's a toughie! Especially when the only difference is that I have no money and they do!

TG: But isn't Barbara playing you in the movie?

HW: Barbara IS me! I AM Barbara! (laughs)

TG: The movie of *A Low Life in High Heels* you're working on...

HW: I'm working on three, actually! Mamma finally has (lately I've been calling myself "Mamma")... yeah, I've been working on three different films, and the main one is about my life. It's being produced by an independent, a gorgeous guy from *Braziliano*... and Alexis Arquette, of the *Flying Arquettes*, will play me and Drew Barrymore will play Candy Darling.

TG: Oh really?

HW: Well, she looks like Candy Darling! I mean, Candy was flawless! Who looks like that today? We got a guy to play me and girl to play Candy. You know, for her memory's sake. I *don't* want a thunderbolt from Candy! Sony Tristar is biting at the bid. I could buy a house after this.

TG: I hope it goes through for you. You deserve it.

HW: Thank you, that's very sweet of you. Yes, I do deserve it! I've worked my ass to the bone! Ten years in this city!

TG: What have you been doing while you've been in LA?

HW: Basically heroin and speed... no, I'm just kidding! I've been doing my nightclub act.

TG: Touring?

HW: Oh yeah. Oh definitely. I was in Berlin for the Berlin Film Festival. I was there with another film called *Broken Goddess*, which is another film I've been pushing and touring with. Trying to survive! One day we're starving, and the next day we're... where did all this money come from?

TG: Many of the people I've met who have led alternative lifestyles, from

being queer to living against the norm, have carried the burden of a destructive nature. I'm sure you must have confronted your own along the way. What skills have you developed to take care of yourself?

HW: My head above the water? If another fucking friend drops dead on me... that's why I never go to funerals anymore. I can't deal with it. How I deal with destructivity is that I simply don't want to die. Many times I've thought, "Oh God, I just can't take this anymore, my feet hurt, nya nya nya nya , I wish I had a gun and I'd put it to my head!" But if I had a gun, you know what? I'm a coward!

TG: What comes through in the book is that you seem to have a sincere consciousness.

HW: You know what honey? I have family. I have friends that have supported me. That is basically the important thing. There have been moments when... honey, please! I have come very close. But like I said, I'm a coward. The thing is, I can always make a phone call. Call a friend. I don't know, what the fuck, it's just not my time to go! I'm gonna outlive Methusala!

TG: You're gonna outlive Madonna!

HW: Madonna, my dear! I don't think anyone is gonna outlive her! She is gonna have her self, like... didn't Walt Disney have himself frozen? She's gonna have herself frozen.

TG: Or maybe thawed!

HW: (laughs) She's gonna have herself *thawed!!!* At least she had a child.

TG: Have you met her?

HW: Oooooohh! Don't get me started on her! Have I met her! Please, honey! I did a video called "Deeper and Deeper" with her. I don't want to talk bad about anybody... of course I've met her. And I never want to meet her again!

TG: When you were 15, back in Florida, and you decided to run away from home with your friend...

HW: Russel Seaborn!

TG: Are you still in contact with him?

HW: No, that period of my life, when I ran away from home and went to New York... "Holly came from Miami F-L-A . . . Hitchhiked her way

across the U-S-AAAAAAY" (*Holly does a great Lou Reed impersonation here.*) ...Russel was sort of... well, I was stronger than he was, and he went back to Miami. I had to deal with life and the things that I did, honey I wouldn't want to even wish on a cockroach! I stayed in New York and... survived, one way or another. And it was usually the other, if you know what I'm talking about, honey. I hustled, did anything to keep my head above water. Then I met two lunatics, Jackie and Candy, who was telling me about this fabulous artist who was doing movies, and how Candy was going to become this famous movie star. Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. (laughs) To me, movies were like 20th Century Fox, you know, the old stuff. So anyway, they took me to this club called Max's Kansas City. I was a kid from Florida, and all of a sudden I meet Janis Joplin, all these fabulous models, Jim Morrison, Jimi Hendrix - all in the same room at the same time! I said, "I'm home!" And then I go to a party at the Factory, and I see this white tuff of a hair - which I happen to have, by the way! *Yak* hair - Andy's wig. We met, and he asked me my name, and I said, "Holly." He asked if I had a last name, and I said no I don't, but I will by tomorrow. And then I proceeded to get a last name. We went home, did speed, and were watching a Lucy

episode on TV. She had this trophy in her hand, and was in the subway, and it stopped and in the background it said "Woodlawn." I knew that Andy liked these girls who came from rich families and who had backgrounds, so we made up this whole story that I was the heiress of the Woodlawn Cemetery Fortune!

(laughs) Then Paul Morrissey called me up and said, "We're doing this film with Joe Dallesandro, and we need trash. A douche bag! Are you interested?" I said, yeah, of course, when do I do it? He said tomorrow. That was it! The rest is history.

TG: I first saw *Trash* when I was fifteen years old...



HW: You were fifteen? Aaaa! How did they let you in? Honey, wasn't his cock *unga-lunga*? But you know, Joe and I never did it. He intimidated me. I was very shy, I was intimidated by him. But Joe was a sweetheart. He tried to make me feel very comfortable. There was no script to the movie, we had to make it up. He was really, really wonderful to me. That's why you can tell in the movie when you watch it that we get along.

TG: He's back doing films again.

HW: I just did three!

TG: Which films?

HW: I just did a cameo in a film called *Citizens of*

Perpetual Indulgence.

TG: Any relationship to the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence in San Francisco?

HW: No, I asked them if they knew about them, and they said they didn't. I've recently done a lot of documentaries obviously all about the period. Then the Berlin Film Festival two years ago, which was wonderful. Several television programs. Thank God I'm in the union, since I get residual checks! I just did a documentary the day before yesterday. The whole period is coming back.

TG: Have you seen the film *I Shot Andy Warhol*?

HW: Yes I did, and it was horrible. They didn't have a clue. The actress who played Valarie Solanas was wonderful, and Steven Dorff tries his best, but they didn't have a clue. Because they weren't there! They're just kids.

TG: Were you consulted for the film?

HW: No. If I was consulted, it would have been a different tone. I had to write a review on the film and I had to tell the truth, and they just didn't get it. First of all, everyone was just

shooting up and taking speed and the energy was just electric... which reminds me I have to pay my electric bill today! (laughs) But the energy was amazing. The people were just fucking fabulous. The director tries her best, but they didn't capture it. I went to see it, and I fell asleep! Get me outta here! The electricity of the 60s, they didn't get it, *they weren't there.*

TG: I caught the tail end of the scene at Max's when I was a teenager.

HW: You mean like the New York Dolls and the rock n roll scene? It was never my music, but the end of the 1970s and early 80s still had a lot of that feel there, but it suddenly all dropped dead. And that's why I left.

TG: Did you know Jayne County?

HW: Honey, I LIVED with Ms. County!!! Don't get me started on her! She's fabulous. I knew Jayne before she was Jayne. She is fucking flawless. I adore her! She and I have gone through fucking hell together.

TG: She's living in England, isn't she?

HW: No, she's moved back to New York. We all stay in touch. The family stays in touch. Jayne is my sister.

TG: Is she doing music again?

HW: Oh yeah... and DJ'ing and stuff.

TG: The last time I saw her was at Max's with some friends... and I was the impressionable 16 year-old. I asked her for a kiss and got it. I think my youth freaked her out!

HW: Isn't she a sick woman!!! (laughs) Oh honey, next time I talk to Jayne I'll tell her that. But she doesn't remember what she did the night before, but I'll just tell her you were fabulous, and she'll say, "Oh yes, I remember him!" Do you know how many people we've met in our lives? If I say one more "*Darling*", my lips are gonna blow up!

TG: Who was the primary creative force at the Factory?

HW: Morrissey. I mean, I hate to admit it but... I am very opinionated. Andy, of course, had his art. But when he started doing movies, that's when Morrissey took over. Morrissey knew what he was doing.

TG: Are you still in contact with him?

HW: Paul? Oh definitely. We just did a film festival a couple of months ago. A retrospective of *Flesh*, *Trash*, and *Women in Revolt* in Santa Monica.

Joe didn't go. Paul and I were on stage answering questions. Paul and I are sutured!

TG: Those films have all come out on DVD now. I'm sure you were only paid, like what, two hundred bucks?

HW: A hundred and twenty-five, dear! Let's set the record straight. Honey, I was a kid. Nobody knew that these films would make three million the first week! I just wanted to be movie star! \$25 a day... five days...

TG: When I first saw *Trash* I never knew you were a man, your acting was so good.

HW: Oh that's so sweet! And you know that boy that I shot up? That was my boyfriend Johnny. He *used* me and *abused* me and forced me to do things which I have long since perfected!

TG: Your acting in those films, even later when I've watched them again, really stands above the rest.

HW: You're going to make me cry! I'm basically a shy person. I'm a lunatic, yes, but basically a shy soul. A friend once said, when you're taking compliments, don't apologize,

just say *thank you!* Then go into the bathroom and cry.

TG: Do you have an agent?

HW: Oh yeah... useless! If you want anything done right, do it yourself! The people in this town, here in LA, are basically only out to impress themselves. I love San Francisco. I'm over New York!

TG: I think everyone who lived through New York is over New York now.

HW: Oh yeah, we're all here - rotting! As soon as this movie gets done, Roger (my room-mate) and I are gonna move to Montana. I'm gonna turn into Martha Stewart, and he's going to chop wood. We'll go off into the sunset! I have lived ENOUGH! I'll live another five million lifetimes. I also believe in that bullshit, by the way! I'll come back as a cockroach! If you terrorize people you will come back as an insect!

TG: But a multi-colored one!

HW: Oh yeah, we have cockroaches here that are all blonde! From the beach!

TG: Being immortalized by Lou Reed's "Walk on the Wild Side" places you into a category...

HW: ...that goes on and on and on and on...

TG: Right, like a living legend. Have you ever felt constricted by your fame? How do you survive the mythology of Holly Woodlawn?

HW: I meet hundreds and thousands of KIDS! What really amazes me is that I meet these little twenty-year olds... these nubiles... Pedophiles! No, thank God I'm not a pedophile! They all know who I am. At first, I didn't know how to take it, because I don't know if they are honest or what. Fans. After many years of dealing with this, like I told you before, all I say is thank you. What's worse is when these kids get the hots for me! I can't deal with that! I'm not into kids! Seriously, when I go out, all fluffed up... I call it "douched up"... these kids are onto me and I can't deal with it. I don't want to terrorize a child! I don't wanna go to jail!

TG: For a lot of kids you represent an icon for them, someone who perhaps has lived through and proven that being at odds with the society you live in doesn't have to destroy you.

HW: But it's so good when they give you complements, and *get it*, and understand it your work. Because it *is* work. At 25 it was fun, but now it's work. But that's a nice compliment. It does take a lot of strength. Sometimes I come home and just want to... die...

TG: Or move to Montana.

HW: Yes, and move to Montana. I ask my room-mate Roger, "Why did I choose this career?" And last night we were watching *Vincent van Gough*, with Kirk Douglas, when he chops his ear off, and he was suffering so much. But the thing is, I don't suffer that much. I "semi-suffer." I just go WHY THE FUCK did I choose this career? I mean, what am I gonna do, some job where I show up at eight o'clock in the morning and put up with bullshit? I chose this career, and this is where I'm gonna stay.

TG: What do you feel about the underground now, or what ever is left of it? Do you even think it exists anymore?

HW: Yes it does. And you know, the thing is I'm glad you asked me that. I've been noticing there is this sort of... God, how I hate this word... a *new wave* of kids who are so talented, brilliant and on the ball. Something

is happening, and I'm glad it is. Children need to grow. And create. And survive. And it is happening. Instead of shooting each other, paint, create, sing! Just don't kill anybody! It's happening again. I think it's wonderful! And I'm *watching* it!

TG: You've gone from being the topless go-go dancer...

HW: HOW DARE YOU BRING THAT UP!

TG: ...to being named Ms. Donut of Amsterdam, NY...

HW: Oh god, I was telling Roger about that last night... I get these spurts where I go, "Oh my God, I remember my past!" Oh lord!

TG: ...and to your fame as a glamorous Warhol Superstar...

HW: In 1967 I was a topless go-go dancer. I had these day-glo flowers that were placed strategically...

TG: How did you pull that off?

HW: Oh! They had NO clue! Dancing in a cage to the Bee Gees! (*starts singing a horrid Bee Gee's song*) Yeeuch! God! And my girlfriend, she had her tits done and was stripping. Nobody knew. This was in upstate New York. While I was

doing that crap, this farmer kid fell madly in love with me. Julie and I had no place to stay, and he said, "Well, we have a farm," and so we stayed at his place. I had to tell him, "Oh, I'm a *virgin!*" Here I am dancing as a topless go-go dancer, and doing gyrations until two in the morning, and I'm telling him I'm a *virgin!* And he *believed* it! And Julie was stripping! Talk about stupid! But he was nice. He wanted to marry me, and his mother, in the morning, would cook us breakfast. But one night, in their fabulous house with the cows out back, we looked at each other and said, "What the fuck are we doing here?" One night, Julie brought home this guy, and they were like... "humping" and pumpin', and Momsey caught them red-handed. I told Julie, honey, we got a good thing going here, don't fuck it up! SHE FUCKED IT UP! She brought home this guy and the mother caught them in the middle of the act, and we were all tossed out the next morning. In the middle of upstate New York! So I said to Julie, alright, you got us into this mess, you gotta get us out. So she opened her blouse, and needless to say we got a ride to the next county! Where we were thrown out of the car! Julie was so happy with her tits, that she was willing to share them. This was 1967, so these guys were not... stupid, just clueless! And

we're telling them we're virgins, and they believed it!

TG: You've meet a lot of interesting people along the way... people like Nico...

HW: Uh... yeah... please, do I remember her! "Here she cuuuumes, you better vatch your step..." (*Holly sings a wonderful Nico impersonation*) I didn't like Nico, to be honest. She gave her child drugs! Can you believe that? She would bring her son, her kid... she used to give him drugs!

TG: He eventually committed suicide. It's a very sad story.

HW: Honey! I couldn't believe it! He was like six or seven!

TG: She was a victim of her own myth - the Nico Goddess, and fell into her own trap.

HW: Thank God I came in late. The late 60s. She was part of the early 60s, when they were doing really heavy drugs. Amphetamines, Benzadrines... and all of the -mines!

TG: Like Bridget Polk.

HW: Oh God! Bridget! You should see her now, she looks like a matron!

I saw a photograph of her in Vanity fair a couple of months ago with her little dogs... but honey, in the early 60's, Bridget used to *KAKUNG!* Shove a needle into her... she wouldn't even take her pants down! It's all in *Chelsea Girls*. I'm not talking behind her back! The wonderful person in *Chelsea Girls* was Ondine. He was wonderful. That's another thing they got wrong in *I Shot Andy Warhol* where they were having Ondine play opera, soft opera. He used to *BLAST* Maria Callas, when she was at the end, when she had no voice left, when she was screeching, because he would do it on purpose, to get everyone OUT! People would go ARG! And leave... (laughs) I became friends with Ondine and he used to tell me all these stories. He used Maria Callas to get all these people out of the way, and honey, my stomach would just hurt from laughter!

TG: In much the same way I use Diamanda Galas to break up parties!

HW: And you know what Jackie used to do? Oh God! What *are* you doing to me! You're getting me to tell you all these things! After Jackie did *Flesh*, she would just walk down the street and pick up these guys, and say, "You want to be in an Andy Warhol movie?" and then take them

home and fuck the shit out of them! Whatever! But she was a wonderful person. She was like a knife that cut through paper. When she liked you, she had a big heart. Like Divine. But when he died, that's one of the reason's I left New York. First Candy, then Jackie, and I thought, what the fuck, am I gonna be next?

TG: How about Lou Reed?

HW: My first impression was that he was one of the sexiest men I'd ever seen... *Boomchagalaga! Boomchagalaga!* I always had the hots for him. But we never did anything. Hopefully, he is going to be doing the soundtrack for my movie.

TG: You're still in contact with him?

HW: Oh yeah! Just last week! And he wants to do it. And God bless him, 'cause he went through fucking hell, like I did. Laurie (Anderson) takes very good care of him. So Lou's gonna be doing the soundtrack for the movie, and re-record "Walk on the Wild Side", but with extra verses. More verses on *Moi*. That's "me" in French!

TG: You've had some contact with John Lennon and Yoko Ono?

HW: But he's dead, dear! Very minimal contact since his passing! Yoko I don't even want to... please! She's not a happy person. I like happy people. We all have horrible days, where we say I AM NOT HAPPY! But the thing is, you don't have to stay MISERABLE! All the time!

TG: You were also at the Stonewall riots?

HW: Of course! And I wasn't even invited! I was there that night, but left early. The next morning I couldn't believe it. The Stonewall was basically an afterhours place, with a jukebox, you'd put in a quarter and there would be go-go boys. All the queens looked like fabulous women, since that was the look then - you had to look as close as possible to a real woman. I was living on 10th Street and Hudson, over the One Potato. Jackie Curtis was getting married to Eric Emerson, who never showed up for the wedding, and they got someone else to fill in for the groom. I took the groom home to have, you know... have sex with him! Anyway, on the way to the wedding, I'm in full drag, painted to the hilt, and Miss Marsha, a black drag queen who is now "up there" with the rest of the girls, came running up to me and screamed "*Darling*, it's fabulous!

They have cops in there! We are holding them hostage! And there are TV cameras!" And I of course went *whooooa!* Honey, all hell broke loose that afternoon. Then the next day we heard about Sharon Tate and then Judy Garland... dropped dead... it was really hard for me to take all this in at one point, on one day, in one week... But I did somehow. Drugs helped! (laughs) Thank god I don't do that anymore. You know, when you're 25, you can do anything. If I do one line of coke, which I don't anymore, I'm fucked for two days! Can't function! The thing is, I like to be in control. I've turned into a workaholic. I went from a lazy bastard to... LET'S GET THINGS DONE!

TG: I've never thought of you as a drag queen, but as a self-created person, who has put the art into herself and her personality.

HW: Why thank you! I created myself. It took a lot of time, a lot of work over the years. Call me what ever you want. I'm an artist, I created myself, and what ever someone wishes to call me, that's their prerogative. But I call myself Holly Woodlawn. And it took me 25, almost 30 years! And I'm very comfortable with myself! I've survived.



Distorted.

Un-measured to be
grasped,
curling up like a bead skin of
sky snake,
shape shifting
mothers, fathers, sisters and
brothers
into broken pieces of lost
prismic selves.

V.

So much fear hollowing us
cavernous,
we scourge for scraps of Gods
like whores.

Ticking tongues of times

You clutched
wind-beaten witchgrass
in your reluctant hands. (firm
grasp of soil remained
- the
counter-force of your mind)
The sky
darkened
in stealthy measures
of unseeing.

You stood still
under the two
thousand years of
rains,
keeping gnarled, twitching
hands from
peeling the cruciform;
interrogating

predatory hell-birds,
feather-tearing, burials of
their talons
in the Devil's pool followed.
(tirelessly)

Sullen guardian at the
creaking doors,
you slept alone in abandoned
caves.

There were your carvings and
your world, deloused
in tincture of blood and ash of
bleached bones.

Now it burns with (slowly)
aroused flames
licking rising agony
of your concave-
being away.

It was the ticking tongues of
our times,
which abandoned you
to silent embers of lone death.

Dirge from the colossus of
shaven mountains
will not change in the
weather,
left by your
charred footprints.

You will always remain in the
strands of snow.



LIGHT

By Michael Butterworth
Photos © Angélique Bosio

Human beings exist at all only that they may "shine with light".

Some shine brightly; others raise scarcely a glimmer. Many people who live in between these extremes shine only moderately well.

Despite his frequent assertions to the contrary, Mankind is a self-centred species – and so are the individuals who compose him. These individuals may

feel modest, hostile to the idea of Shining, or appear seemingly indifferent. They may feel threatened by attention. But their systems are basically happy with Light. The more of it they get, the better they react, the nicer, the more *Glowing* they feel.

The States of Shining, the Degrees of Shining, and the Ability to shine are important indicators to observe if, firstly, one is to understand the smallest aspect of Human



Behaviour and, secondly, if one desires to move, with fluidity and ease through Life to the position of Purest, Most Powerful Light.

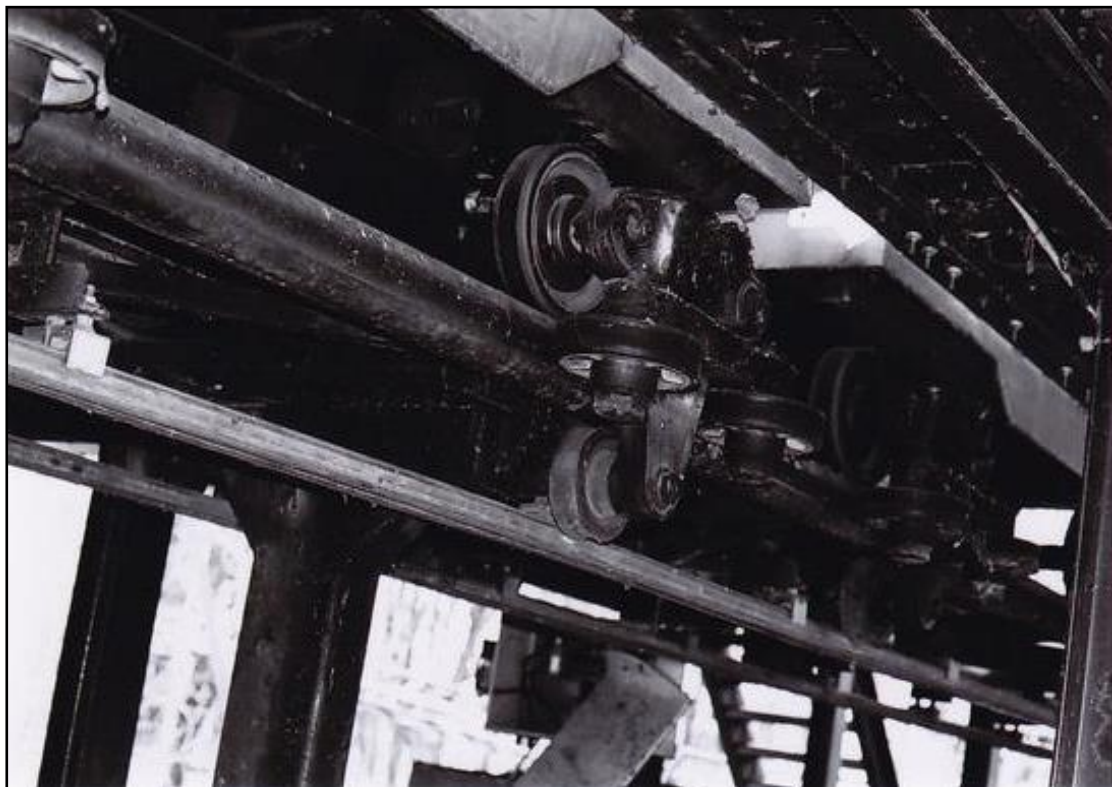
Violence at a football match provides a useful illustration. The principal characteristic of Lightness is to grow more powerful by attracting other Lightness to it. Weaker units of Light (the spectators at a football match) desire to strengthen their luminosity by assembling in a group around stronger Lights (the football stars). They hope to steal or to *imbibe* Light into themselves by identifying with the players. For brief moments they Glow brilliantly with shared Light—they Shine more Brightly than they have

Shined all week at work and at home. Unused to so much Light, when they leave the Greater Lights at the end of the game they over-react. In their need to have the Light they try to steal it by force. They storm the pitch, interrupt play, and attack the players; they attack rival supporters in order to gain the Central Stage of Light. On their way home they *attack* and *smash* the houses and factories—which they perceive as having been the cause of their starvation—in a last desperate attempt to claim Light.

The question is often asked: "Why has violence of this nature escalated?" The answer

must surely be because the ever-dwindling degree of Lightness which the vast majority of people share is no longer tolerable. Lightness of Great Magnitude (Kings, Celebrities, Statesmen, Tycoons) are not so strongly protected as they used to be by the civil, social, and criminal laws. These "Laws of Light" can nowadays be violated. The breakdown of the protective class structures and other containing strictures has resulted in a kind of Glowing free-for-all. The Lesser Lights have become wise to the possibility that they too could become Great Lights—that no absolute laws govern the selection.

In addition, the Lights of Great Magnitude themselves have been responsible for the levelling out and equalising of the available Brightness. In their Great Lightness they have sometimes felt themselves to be further Brightened by adopting Enlightened attitudes toward the masses of weaker Lights. They have presumed themselves to be the Single Great Lightness (in fact to be Gods) and have relaxed the Light laws that once contained the masses of smaller Lights. In short, in astronomical terms, they have "gone Super-Nova". They have blinded themselves with their own Light. Their Supreme Light Power is now



in the process of disintegration, unable to hold itself together because of its explosive force.

Strikes, demonstrations, marches and terrorist warfare...all are symptoms of the change in the balance of Light Power that is taking place amongst Humanity.

The behaviour of uniformed soldiers, servicemen, and the like, provides further illuminating material for analysis. Accustomed to a precise level of "Lighteousness" in their role as Guardians of the Light, *in civvy street* these soldiers find themselves, like the football supporters, "off-set", and by comparison with the civilians they radiate tremendous boosts of Light Power. They are further encumbered by additional massive doses of Light which they receive from admiring members of the Public who, in their attempts to *gain* Light by fraternizing with the soldiers, only succeed in giving more Light than they receive. The soldiers are forced to respond in an extrovert manner in order to keep their Light Injections flowing in smoothly – and to retain mental stability. They will "take the Stage", brawling

on pub corners, aiding old ladies across the road, chattering noisily along streets. (People who are conditioned to fear the acquisition of Extra Light, or to respect the Power of Extra Light in others, will actually find themselves forced into positions of *introversion*. They will make a point of shunning the Light, while keeping close to it or keeping it close to them, in their minds. They will wait their chance of acquiring Light in less competitive surroundings. These types may either be shrewder than most, or else more ineffectual.)

Practical Applications

Human Beings are intelligent, thinking Units of Light – and their social and mental behaviour can be analysed as such. It is possible to predict and to determine behaviour by manipulation and so guide one's own passage through the Lesser Lights to "Stardom".

One must actively aim to steal Light from other Lights around oneself by a combination of trickery, deception, and conniving. The crude smashing-up of municipal property of the

kind cited above rarely if ever achieves results in itself, and is only used as a back-up force if all else fails or if it is presumed necessary or opportune to speed up proceedings by physical means. The aim, in fact, should be to accomplish the theft in such a way as to cause *no overt hostility* to be directed toward the Self. There is a certain procedure to follow when doing this. Firstly, one must put on a Show of Light (write a book, act in a film, speak at an important meeting, fix a computer...). The masses of low-level Light Units will converge on this Show and unwittingly give away *their* Light to the ambitious Light Gatherer.

As one rises and becomes Brighter, fewer and fewer Units of Light *greater than oneself* remain; one surmounts one's fellow-beings one by one.

The Units of Light that remain, which are more Luminous than oneself, will be the ones that are the most difficult to consume and therefore ways must be found next of *providing these units with more light than they already possess*—in return for like favours. Alternatively, one may discover a way of *threatening these great Luminaries of Light* (at least of a portion of their Light) and so obtain their Light by blackmail or coup.



The desire to be The Great Light is everyone's ambition. But the state of Absolute Brightness is seen by most aspirants to be an impracticability. Therefore, most Units construct *protective mechanisms* into their Light-Seeking activities. They *feign* disinterest. They *appear* modest. They sublimate their drives toward Brightness. They claim happiness with their lot—and indeed, some have truly become contented.

The Necessary Equipment

One of Mankind's main tools in his search for Light is his *Imagination*. Imagination is the Light Drive.

Ability (i.e. one's mind and body), the *Ability to Create* is a further vital requisite; as is *willpower*.

Imagination may attract Light, or disperse it. It *controls* Light, and its Brilliance or Gloom will result in either the saving or the downfall of not only individuals but of the entire Human Race.

Imagination harnessed to the will-power is Humanity's drive on his upward evolutionary path.

The Nature of God

Humanity Glows as He moves through Time and Space, Lighting His path as He goes. This elusive but all-powerful Light (the collective Light of Mankind at any given moment) is sometimes perceived by certain observers to be *detached* from the mass of Light Units, and is held to be a separate "God". Such observers, rightly, suppose that the Light is a Great Creator, but they are wrong to assume that because of its Incandescent properties it is able to exist independently of the Light Units. *It did not create the Units* (unless we suppose that the Light originally belonged to a benevolent race of super-beings who bequeathed Light in the form of a gift to Units of their own kind whom they later abandoned and who became Humanity). Light is a *psychological phenomenon*—it can only manifest itself outwardly as *behaviour*.

The mistake of most modern theologians is to assume that Light is more, that it is an *abstract phenomenon*. They should cease praying to a thing that does not exist (though it must be admitted

here that prayers—the combined acts of praying—are successful in their effects in that they help to equalise the available Light amongst the Light Units who all believe in the Divine Light they call "God").

These theologians should, instead, *consciously recognise* the real nature of the Light, understand what Glory it does hold for the individual Light Units, and consciously try to equalise the Light...*recognise that the mass of Lights are God.*

Priests ought to re-find their role in latter-day society, which is constructed of Light

Units that have *lost the strictures imposed on them by orthodox religion.* Like the strikers and the marchers they have broken free and refuse to be deluded further.

These Priests will discover that their new role in Society will be, simply, to keep the "Divine Light" stable—to keep Humanity stable on its Great Search through Time and Space for *Greater Light.*

The Divine Light (Humanity), as it evolves, ultimately becomes The One Guiding Supreme Light—The Universe, sentient and everlasting.



A procedure for maintaining the stability of The Divine Light might be the formation of a new World Church of the Divine Light, the function of which would be to encourage *mutually beneficial exchanges of Light* amongst Light Units, rather than encouraging

segregation, as in the past, and competition, as outlined above...the purpose being to equalise the Divine Light and yet to increase its overall splendour.

(‘Light’ first appeared in New Worlds #214, 1978)



AUTUMN, THE TERMINOLOGY OF LIGHT'S CHANGE

By Felino Soriano

You observe flipping
gold coins, coins of ripening
shadows
tinged with memorable
sketches
of an orange/black,
emerged in the feeble air
that

cannot construct tightly
holding hands
born to the negative name of
anti-gravity.
These times
are tremendous. Everything
falling:

names (the taut spelling of
existence) of maiden origins
attached to the muscular
backs of mans'

constant

circulating future.

The sun too:

falling into an earlier

fade,

dusk knits its dusty
doily

draped over the tellers of
story time,
deep inside voices practicing

a choir's somber
thunder.

Listen to the flipping motions.

Echoes follow their own tails,
now whispers turn blue,
holding a huffy exacerbation.

Falling

remains, ascertaining becomes
pubertal, signifying light
twirling

dizzies into a self of writing
up
towards steps
catching its own backwards
fall.

THE MALE DISEASE

By Tani Jantsang

What is this? The Male Disease can be seen if one looks at crime statistics. It can also be seen if one reads about the latest war going on. Some Feminists have blamed this all on testosterone and have written a lot about it citing things that men DO, violent things. Since this writing (1990) it turns out that testosterone levels vary for races and genders and higher levels do, indeed, cause violence and also stupidity, lower intelligence; the levels even have an effect on hip bones being narrow or wide, (wider hips allowing for bigger brained babies) and many, many other things that are way outside the intent of this article.

This article intends to deal with the "inner" thing, not something biochemical or genetic - in other words, this is just a description of human behaviour from what one might call a more inner or spiritual point of view. It is not so much a definition of what it is chemically or genetically or etc. It is easy to

recognize the Male Disease, and not that hard to recognize men who have it, though sometimes you have to get to know the man awhile.

Not all men have it, in fact, some whole cultures never had this specific thing, even IF they had an occasional miff with neighbours resulting in short-term violence. After all, animals fight. But animals do not exterminate each other, nor do they organize and wage war. And animals only kill in order to EAT! Nature, and things in and of Nature, take the Path of Least Resistance unless they are pressured to adapt to something new. Man does not and has not done this for a long while. As such, man has battled this dark hidden force in and of Nature that causes things to flow on, and man has caused himself immeasurable strife and conflict, which has done nothing real (in terms of Nature) except poison his own environment and his own joy.

Males having the Male Disease even glorify their own inner strife: for them life is never a wonder to be lived; it is a struggle. Of course, they can never keep this inner turmoil to themselves, since a struggle for such people needs an opponent.

I won't blame testosterone, as some Feminists do and as studies seem to be proving is actually the cause of most of it. I don't know if it's just testosterone that causes it. Animals also have testosterone yet it is the females of their species that are the most ferocious! In some cultures, if males had a miff, they never really hurt each other if it came to blows, but if women came to blows, the men got the hell out of the way. Hell Furies. Two of the most lethal forms of Kung Fu, Crane and Wing Chung, were invented by females! Also, in some societies this disease didn't exist and a need for "women's rights" didn't exist either, example would be the Northern peoples, such as the Soviets who never needed "women's rights" or "feminism" because gender war never existed - the women already had these things.

I think I made my point, but I will say, I think the male disease is a brain state in some males that appears independent of ethnic group or culture or even sanity. This also agrees with the new neurology studies, studies which nullify ALL of the information previously gathered to show differences in the human races, studies done on the brains of dead people, usually retarded, criminals, or mental patients! These new studies are being done, much more is known now, on living volunteers. For instance, we DO use all of our brains, not just 10%! See Antonio Damasio, "Descarte's Error". Anyone in any race can have the male disease and be alexithymic. Is there a female version of this? Yes, see later in article.

Without trying to mislead, you can find LOTS of the Male Disease in the sports world. Now, some of you bowl, I love kickball (not soccer), etc. Ever notice that ping-pong is like tennis, only you don't have "POWER serves" in ping-pong designed to destroy your own elbow? You don't assault people when you play kickball either, but you DO in

football. Also there is bodily contact with the ball in kickball, but not so much in baseball (same rules to both games) wherein they swing their clubs and often ruin their arms pitching. Likewise, this hyper-male warlike (not friendly) competitiveness is like a national religion among these men, men who watch men, men who worship men.

MUSICIAN entertainers who are male, usually have FEMALE fans or effete GAY fans. Likewise, most men who are fans of female musicians or musicians themselves do not tent to like sports! Certain sports are obviously playful, or beautiful (ice-skating for one example). But certain other sports are like WAR.

What IS the Male Disease? It is a quirk in evolution that occurred in some during/after the last ice age and which grew to monstrous proportions during the advent of agriculture. I know that from ORAL HISTORY, but ethnologists would agree, at least, that this is something in evolution that only appears in SOME groups of people, i.e., in SOME whites, in SOME Amerindians, in SOME

Africans, SOME Asians. It crosses over races. It is a TYPE of MALE. It may have appeared in hominids even before they were Homo Sapiens.

Since most reading this are Judeo-Christians, I'll use this example. It can be noticed, for instance, in the marked difference in the HEBREW story of Jacob and Esau, and keep in mind, the Hebrews glorified JACOB and vilified Esau. Jacob is close to his mother and is second born. Esau is first born and close to his father. Esau is the patriarchal father's delight, the true father's son, he is a hunter, he is the FIRST BORN BOY, he is never satisfied with anything, not happy with himself. Jacob hates hunting and war. He is a ladies' man, loves to hang around with women. He is clever, cunning and his mother's favorite, as the matriarchal delight. Esau was also STUPID as we would call him. Jacob, however, asked his father-in-law for the few motley spotted cattle on hand, and was given them. Jacob, being smarter than his father-in-law, knew how to breed these cattle and ended up with a LARGER herd! Keep

in mind, the size of the herd you had indicated wealth and power.

Now the strange thing is, and the very un-Christian thing about this story is, that Jacob conspired with his mother to disguise himself as Esau when his dad was old and blind and, thus, received the patriarch's blessing as successor. Thus, he ROBBED Esau of his birthright and his blessing! Jacob was known well as a "TAM" among Hebrews, a type of male. Fact is, using today's standards of ethics, Jacob is a liar, deceiver, and a thief! Yet, according to the Hebrews, using their own standards and ethics, HE got the blessings of Ja-Hovah!, which means that the Hebrews see him as the good guy, and they see Esau as scum! Here is a CLEAR example of the matriarchal versus the patriarchal. This is Hebrew, not Christian, and one must know how to read it! True to form, Esau having the Male Disease, was jealous of Jacob, and plotted to kill him. But it is not Jacob who undoes him, it is Jacob's SISTER who defeats him. The allegory is clear.

This is an example of what I mean, when I say Jews STAY Jews and manage to cast out people who are un-Jewish. Also there is a coded "sign" intended to be understood: Jacob at birth was smooth. Esau at birth was red and hairy. Jacob loved Rachel in a one-on-one beautiful relationship.

Esau's relationships with women reflect the "war of the sexes" with sex being a major problem for that type, if not THE Problem!

Marcus Eli Ravage defined this also, as boys that never grow up. He confined his definition to the Christians and he may have called them Gentiles or Aryans (Persian dualists) without being specific and without including other cultures which also have this. He defined them as boys that love war, they play soldier, they never GROW UP, as if war is what LIFE is all about! Ravage also wrote a mocking short-essay, "A Real Case Against the Jews", citing all the "BLAME THE JEWS" stories that Christians always dreamed up, while carrying this to hilarious conclusions. Surprisingly, one can still see this essay circulated among

these same Christians (neo-Nazi, neo-KKK types) as if they take the essay seriously. It is so paranoid that you'd have to be a complete idiot to take it seriously. Ravage goes so far as to say how cunning "we Jews" are to have duped Christians into worshipping a Jewish Woman as the mother of the Christian God, he includes Paul in a vast Jewish plot to single-handedly ruin Rome. HA!! It is a kind of overly sarcastic humour aimed at people that are gullible enough, STUPID enough, to actually believe it. The males with the Male Disease all have a warrior ethic: rites of passage involving two boys fighting each other, strict segregation of males and females during teen-aged years, complete lack of freedom in sexuality, the women are virtual slaves with no say in anything. Other cultures have sexual rites of passage, complete mingling and sexual freedom at a young age between males and females and they are matrilineal if not outright matriarchal. The former practice at doing war, usually involving weapons whether these are spears, clubs, or guns. The latter are peaceful and generate great culture

and civilization, some of them have a practice that could be used to fight, but is more geared toward self-defence without using weapons. Weapons are seen as more or less non-carnal extensions of the body. These who have this, develop incredible bodily agility and coordination that is very fluid and flowing, very beautiful. E.g. Kung Fu.

Oddly, when the two types met in war, many times it was NOT the war-ethic people that ever really won, even when they far outnumbered the peaceful people. But the "warriors" would never really go away defeated, they would relentlessly pursue the conflict like poor losers, until the peaceful people just left the area to get away, or created an army to fight in a war they never wanted to fight. And these wars were lightning swift and quite terrible. The peaceful types breed for intelligence, cunning, and creativity. The war-ethic types breed for male prowess which involves OBEDIENCE to authorities, and of course, their own best stock gets killed off.

The males with this Male Disease self-perpetuate. The fact is, in this modern society

with all its creature comforts, there is no reason for such warriors to even exist anymore. The most lethal weapons can be seen to have been created by people who are NOT warrior ethic at all, but "peaceniks," or pacifists! One example being Oppenheimer and the atomic bomb! Such a weapon should render war completely unfeasible since EVERYONE would lose in such a war, the earth would be destroyed.

But the Male Disease self-perpetuates. Criminals are allowed to run rampant so that we "need" male warriors in uniform to "protect us." The atomic device caused a "cold war" instead of making humanity simply wake up and say NO MORE WAR. (and it was CHURCHILL, the manic depressive, that started that cold war, without a doubt now.) The Diseased Males can never learn the Wisdom of letting people self-govern themselves. They have to interfere, they have to create some conflict so they can BE WARRIORS.

They are in truth Thanatos: death-Willing, they LOVE death, literally, they GLORIFY it, award medals for killing,

award medals for getting killed. They never award medals to a woman for giving birth.

They are literally Woman-fearing. They glorify the slow, left-brained "male" type of mind and ridicule the super-fast intuitive "female mind," and now modern neurology studies would show these slow-minded people to be a bit on the DEFICIENT side when it comes to brains! Not only that, but their left brain male half wars against their right brain female half; the female half becomes dark, evil, dangerous, they externalise this evil and project it onto other people, and then go to war against these people when in fact their war is inside their own brains which, as Dr. Peterson pointed out, are Schizoid! ("Mind of the Ninja," Dr. Peterson).

They fear women and cannot relate to them at all, except to pretend to be "macho" and bully them, or become completely self-effacing and hen-pecked. For them, the woman is either an evil, dangerous whore out to ruin them, or she is a fragile delicate "doll" to be placed on

a pedestal and protected by them, the Knights in Shining Armour. Note the dualism.

They are literally Male-worshipping/fearing: their men glorify the male, as if they are in love with the male. That is "homoerotic," and yet they despise the homosexual who is not "male" as they are at all, but in fact more on the intuitive side, more peaceful or feminine! At the same time, they are incredibly homophobic! A male can touch a male in a football tackle, or punch. But a male can never touch another male to hug him in friendship, or comfort him in mourning! So violent touch is encouraged, but peaceful touch is forbidden!

They are talking-heads completely out of touch with their own instincts, which the new neurology studies define as alexithymic. Yet they have ruled, in the Western World and Western Ideals, for almost 2,000 years. They are also to be seen in many other societies, notably Afro-Semitic Islamic societies. These men are the men that rule in what Tradition calls the Kali-Yuga, they are the Incomplete People, the ones with no

Anima, innately dualistic. (The term means an age where men see women as DEVOURING and fear them but also desire them and desire to BE devoured! Interesting! It is an age of strife and want, an age of destruction and war.)

Tradition states that this hellish Kali-Yuga will end, and the Earth will once again see a Golden Age. I personally cannot say what the future may hold, but I do know about the past, and I can definitely explain something that is an absolute fact in nature and evolution - and explain it in general so you can get the idea.

Firstly, we all came from the same SLIME. Right now, there are different kinds of birth processes that exist on earth in the ANIMAL world. I am making up only 4 categories so that the layman can see this easily, without having to have a degree in biology. Without being technical at all, they are:

1. Like the amoeba: One of the ways the amoeba generates more amoeba is by splitting itself in half. Those two halves, in turn, split in half,

and so forth. What you get is a "full grown" amoeba. One could say that all amoeba are traceable to One Amoeba!

2. Like the common idea of the Hermaphrodite: Some of these animals are both male and female. Some can become either male or female and mate with another of their kind playing the opposite role. Some generate with themselves. They do not split in half, they give birth to something that has to develop and grow.

3. Egg laying: Either the female sprays eggs and leaves and the male comes along and fertilizes them and then also leaves, or sometimes stays. Or the male fertilizes the female internally, she then lays eggs and either leaves them to develop, or stays with them until they do develop and then leaves.

4. Live birth from the womb, of a baby animal. Some give birth and leave the baby (or babies), and they are left to immediately fend for themselves. Others give birth to the baby (or babies), and have to care for them a short while. Most predatory and semi-predatory mammals

(including humans) fit into this category.

There are categories within categories if you want to be technical, and none of this is as cut and dry as I just explained it. The adaptation from egg-laying to womb-carrying of offspring is made due to extreme danger in the environment at large; but then again, more recent studies show that the development of placenta was due to a wide ranging virus since mammals are not the only animals that have placental births - some sharks do too! My point is, however it developed it would result in a change of behaviour. That is, eggs can be left, the survival of the species is not endangered. Womb-born creatures are protected by the adult mother's womb and not exposed to the elements. Exposed to the elements, remember, includes viruses, bacteria, and parasites, not just the "large" danger of ending up as another creature's dinner.

So, you see, such incredibly big mutations in how different creatures produce offspring have already happened! Nothing is in stasis. All

things are subject to change. Those that can't change enough or fast enough (like perhaps the dinosaurs?) will simply perish. Humanity is here now, because those dinosaurs perished. Likewise, our own ancestors crawled out of the earth's ocean, and due to choices that were made, mutations that occurred, we are what we are today.

In today's modern world, war is, in truth, obsolete. While some Diseased Males are still engaging in war using their war-toys, others more intelligent are using their brains by applying economics. Instead of inventing more things to destroy other humans, some are inventing things to bring joy to other humans.

But I have to wonder, is marriage also obsolete? Marriage was of two sorts: one was legalized female slavery designed to force women to bear the children of men they did not necessarily like. It took the natural choice of mates out of the hands of the females. Some of these females got out of it completely by becoming Nuns. Such was the motive of

one of the first Nuns -- Melanie. This was THE strategy during the agricultural age for ALMOST ALL human societies.

The second type is more like the taming of the men by women, so that the women tended the hearth and the children, and the men were providers for the family and chosen for mates by their ability to be social and friendly and not dumb brutes. Keep in mind, both these strategies existed during the time of agriculture, this one was more peaceful and done amongst more peaceful peoples.

The first type is definitely no longer necessary and men can no longer pull it off (force it on women) in the West or in more progressive other societies. The second type is not necessary either, and with divorce many women get the monetary support or economic independence without having to bother with having the men around! Half the white people who marry, get divorced. Are the ones who do not divorce happy? That is unknown. In some of the black communities the women rule the home, and

when the males are cast aside, they become men with the Male Disease, they become incredibly destructive.

Again, this is not cut and dried. The point I wish to raise: is there something drastically wrong with society? OR -- is humanity simply CHANGING! An alien seeing this might conclude that most males are not only obsolete, but a nuisance and danger to the whole planet! The people emphasizing that there is something wrong with society, are looking backwards. They'd also emphasize morals, and morals are nothing but a straight-jacket on Free Will engendered by fear! Fear is Ignorance! Recognition is Enlightenment!

Ponder this idea: maybe there is nothing wrong with society. People are CHANGING. Proof of this can be shown just with high rates of fertility problems, birthing problems, and sterility problems. This is true for both blacks and whites. (China is a closed door, but once in awhile one gets to peek in: due to a rise in "bad births" China is instituting a eugenics law not

only based on testing for dysgenics and eliminating or preventing these births, but also to increase the number of healthy and intelligent births. These are two different types of eugenics they put into law. What else goes on behind China's closed doors is unknown.)

The fact is, there are very few humans on the planet left that have mates they really get along with as best friends! So what is the solution for a war of the sexes among the majority of people at large? Test tube babies? Perhaps.

But what about the males with the Male Disease; those listless, empty, purposeless males out there that seem to only be able to DESTROY things either "illegally" as crime, or "legally" as war and conquest? So far they have kept themselves "needed" by allowing crime to run rampant instead of cutting it off at its roots!

They developed police actions, and policing nations, but they MAINTAIN the very element in society they "need" to fight, which fools people into thinking these males are a "value" to society!

They are in fact NO value to any society. They are a NUISANCE, a DISRUPTION and in fact a REAL MENACE to the entire planet right now. And yet, what are we to DO with them? They are a type of male that only knows how to DO this one thing!

Once upon a time in evolution, these males obviously served a purpose, or they'd have not come into being. (Note: this is teleological, speculative. The quirk or mutation may have NEVER served a purpose.) But now? I believe that Nature Herself will fix this, Nature always does! I believe that what we are witnessing today will one day be looked upon and seen on hindsight as a change in humanity. Just as we can look back on dinosaurs with hindsight. The fertility problems, the rampant diseases, the famines, all of it. You can't see it easily because you are living amidst this now, but all of these things are CHANGING HUMANITY right NOW. Even given the fact that radiation is present. Radiation kills, but it also causes mutations. Those immune to it or able to eliminate it from their bodies

will survive. The others will perish. (Note: mice around Chernobyl, generations of them, are healthy, they behave and look like mice: they are also radioactive off the scale!)

What will these survivors be? I don't know. I'm not a Prophet! But I know that ANYTHING is possible because humans, dogs, cats, fish, octopi, worms, amoeba and even plants and bacteria all once came from the SAME SLIME -- and now we are all very different. On the not-so-bright side, the Male Disease might result in eradicating all of humanity. In that scenario, humanity will become nothing except an oddity of evolution talked about by the NEXT species that becomes dominant. Compared to the history of the dinosaur, humanity is but a blink in the eye of time. Nature does not favour humanity. What with all that has been done TO Nature by this segment of humanity, and the rest of humanity either not doing anything about it, or unable to, I'd think Nature loathed humanity!

But we shall see, or maybe we won't get to see it.

(Technicality: Mammals are not the dominant life form on earth. Insects are.)

To the future -- whatever it might be. Remember, Nature does not need humanity to survive. Humanity needs Nature. Denying that will not make it not so. Ever wonder

if Tyrannosaurus Rex ever said to Brontosaurus "OH, you worry too much about those silly Anthropoids, we Dinos are masters of the earth, we'll be here forever."--??

PAX VOBISCUM! Hoi diakonoi tou apeiros.





MADNESS (PART TWO)

**By Brian Routh
Photos by Patricia Wells**

FREEDOM?

The day finally arrived. Mavis came in and told me that it was time for me to be released into the world.

At first I felt sad at the thought of leaving this place that I had grown used to.

This place that had become my home, but after the initial shock I grew excited about life beyond the walls.

I was eager to venture out into the world and start my new life.

I was afraid and yet the unknown had a fascination for me.

How would I survive out there beyond the walls? I thought.

The social worker that had been assigned to my case arrived at the hospital to pick me up and take me to the halfway house where I was to live.

He seemed nice enough.

Quiet and polite.

He took me in his car.

It was a mixture of sadness and excitement that I felt as the car pulled away from the hospital.

I watched as it disappeared in the distance behind me.

We pulled up in front of a large red brick building.

George, the social worker who had been pretty silent for most of the trip got out of the car with me and

carried my bag as we climbed the short steps and entered through the large front doorway.

A small smiling, middle-aged woman came to greet us.

"Mr.Crawford, my name is June and it's really nice to meet you."

She said as she shook my hand.

"I hope you will be very happy here."

There was a twinkle in her eye.

She led the way as George said his good-byes and left.

I was shown into a small, clean, furnished room. There was a desk and chair, an armchair, a bed with a night table next to it and a small clothes closet.

I put my bag down next to the closet.

June told me I could take my time to settle in. She told me where the toilet, shower and dining rooms were and left me there alone in my new home.

It felt strange, I felt strange.

For a split second I felt a bit of a panic attack coming on.

I almost wanted to be back in the hospital.

I missed Mavis and her nurturing.

Would I fit in? Maybe people wouldn't like me.

What kind of a job will I be doing?

I felt the urge to run. Sweat began to break out on the back of my neck and face.

I sat down on the bed and took in some deep breaths. Slowly I began to calm down. Come on now Peter, I told myself.

Get a grip boy.

I lay down and put my feet up on the bed and closed my eyes.

I began to fall into a light doze.

I dreamed that I was on a raft in

the middle of the ocean surrounded by a heavy mist.

It was hot and sticky. I felt afraid and alone. Lost at sea.

Sharks began to circle me.

Drawing closer and closer.

I woke with a start.

It was getting dark.

I could hear a gentle tapping sound that seemed to grow louder and louder.

Then I heard a voice.

"Peter! Peter! Are you awake?"

I got to my feet and opened the door, it was June.

"Hi, I've come to show you to the dining room.

It's dinner time."

"Oh thanks." I managed to say.

I followed her down the hallway and into a smallish room filled with about seven tables with chairs around them.

Here there were men and women in the midst of eating.

I sat at a table with three other people, one woman and two men.

The men almost looked like brothers, large bald headed, glasses and both dressed in grey sports jackets and flannel trousers.

The woman was very small with a drooping nose. There was something very bird-like about her.

Even the way in which she ate was like a bird.

An elderly man in an apron put a plate of salad in front of me.

He looked at the floor and never looked me in the eye.

My companions all ate in silence and never looked at each other or uttered anything for the entire meal.

At the end they all got up one after the other and left the table.



It felt quite cold and lonely.
Is this what it's like out here? I thought.
I felt like I'd made a mistake, leaving the hospital so soon, maybe too soon.
I went to bed after dinner feeling a little down.
I wouldn't say that I was depressed exactly but I certainly felt down in the dumps.
I lay there and drifted into a light sleep.
I dreamed that I was riding a black stallion across a golden beach.
The sun shone brightly and I felt free and happy.

HALFWAY HOUSE

The next morning I felt good and rested.
When I went to go to the dining room for breakfast George was coming through the front door.
"Hi, Peter. I've come to take you to

breakfast and to meet your future employer." He said with a friendly enthusiasm.

We drove about a mile down the road to a small café where he treated me to a hearty breakfast.

When we got in the car to go meet my employer, he must have picked up my nervousness because he turned and said smiling,
"Hey look Peter, it's ok. You have a week before you start work so don't worry. And it's going to be a low key job."

We pulled up in front of a small office building. Across the door there was a sign that read. 'Biblio-Research Centre.' I wondered what that meant. Having no idea of what kind of job was waiting for me.

Inside the building there were about a half dozen people at desks in front of computers.

A small bald headed man approached us.

He held out his hand to me.

"Hi Peter. I'm Mr. Turner but just call me Joe."

He and George exchanged pleasantries and then Joe showed me to an empty desk with a computer terminal and telephone on it.

"This will be your desk." He said.

"All you have to do is answer the phone and research the answers to questions. This is a public research centre. People will call you for information on all kinds of subjects from sports to famous films to philosophy. You name it! We have an extensive data bank plus you've got the Internet at your disposal."

I relaxed at the thought of doing such work.

It all seemed too good to be true.

He must have read my reaction because he said.

"Hey! I know it sounds all too easy. And you're probably wondering how can we provide such a service? Well, the truth is that most of the people here provide legal advice and help people to understand their rights. But your department, or your part of the service is the fun side of things."

He put his arm on my shoulder in a caring warm way.

"Eventually if you decide to stay here and it all works out for you. You can expand your knowledge and move up to provide the same service as the others and then some other fellow can take your place."

He smiled a broad friendly smile.

"Thankyou." I said, not knowing what else to say.

"OK then. Next week come in on Monday morning at 10am and get started."

We said our good-byes and George

and I left and drove back to the halfway house.

THE WALK

Once inside my room I felt slightly tired and lay down on the bed to take a nap.

I wasn't used to meeting people and it was a bit draining for me.

I felt OK. Just tired.

I slept for maybe about an hour. I don't think I dreamed.

I woke up feeling refreshed.

I got up and decided to take a walk. It would be the first time in a long while that I had been out alone.

I walked out of the building without encountering anyone and walked down the street in the direction of the café that we went to for breakfast since I didn't know my way around and wanted to stick to familiar territory.

I came upon a small park and decided to go inside. It was pleasant enough.

People walking their dogs. Children playing with balls etc.

I sat down on a bench and took in the scenery and the activities around me.

It all seemed like something out of a post card.

It was all perfect, maybe too perfect.

At the back of my mind there was a strange feeling. I felt like I'd been there before in less happier times but it was such a vague feeling.

Something about it all didn't feel right but I couldn't put my finger on what it was.

Even though I kept telling myself



that everything was fine it troubled me.

I got up and decided to head back to the house for lunch and all the way back there was this nagging feeling of unease.

I started to whistle to shrug it off but it just wouldn't go away.

Back at the house everything was calm and quiet. Only two people in the dining room.

Two middle-aged women eating together at a table in the corner of the room.

I sat down alone and the man in the apron placed a plate with a sandwich and potato chips on it and a glass of juice in front of me.

He was still looking at the floor.

I ate the sandwich and drank the juice quickly and practically ran back to my room.

I thought I would sit at the desk but I soon felt uncomfortable, not knowing what to do there.

I lay down on the bed. I thought about the job.

It seemed like a good job.

I wished I were already there.

I was bored and the feeling of discomfort was still with me.

I didn't know how to shake it off.

I fell into a deep sleep and dreamed of being surrounded by dragons that breathed fire at me.

I tried to hide from the flames but found the heat so intense that I had to retreat into a cave.

I stayed there for hours until the heat died down. When I emerged the dragons were gone.

When I awoke it was midnight.

Where could I go now at this time of night?

I thought.

I got up to use the toilet.

And came back to my room.

The feeling of impending doom was still with me.

I looked through my pockets as though I was looking for something in particular, but I didn't find it whatever it was.

I got undressed and climbed into bed and tried to get back to sleep but I only managed to toss and turn.

I got up and looked out of the window. Nothing but an empty street.

Not even a car.

I got back into bed and just lay there with my eyes open and stared at the ceiling.

I started to think about the hospital.

Why was I in there in the first place?

I couldn't remember.

I couldn't even remember arriving at the hospital. What the circumstances were that lead up to me going in there.

I must have had a breakdown I thought.

But why did they give me electric shock treatment. I felt frustrated at not being able to remember anything.

I felt like I was a phony.

I had been altered.

I was not me.

But who was I?

Maybe the real me was dead.

Had died years ago.

Maybe I was someone else in this body.

What did that mean?

The only real memory that I had was more of a feeling.

A feeling of sadness from a past



that belonged to someone else.
I knew that in my heart or someone's heart there was goodness.
I felt that life had somehow mixed up my head and caused me a lot of pain in the past.
I wanted to have friends but I didn't know how.
I had difficulty in talking to people.
I wanted the conversation to be intense but people responded to me by backing away from me, except Mavis.
I missed her.
She had been my friend.
Maybe I could go and visit her.
I suddenly felt a sense of relief at being able to visit her.
I remembered that I could go anywhere I wanted to. I was a free man.
I felt more relaxed and drifted into a reverie about the times I had spent with Mavis.
I fell asleep remembering one of the stories she had told me about her children with their sense for the

dramatic.
Dressing up and putting on shows in her living room.

THE DREAM

I drifted into a dream where I was sitting on the floor of an empty swimming pool.
I was naked and I had my knees up to my chin with my arms wrapped around them.
I was cold and shivering.
Above me standing on the diving board was the man in the apron that serves the food in the dining room where I live.
He was holding out a big steaming bowl of spaghetti with his eyes fixed straight down to the floor.
He never looked me in the eye.
He dropped the bowl and the food fell to the floor at which point water began to pour into the pool.
The water crept towards me and I stood up in a panic and ran to the ladder to get out but standing at the top of the ladder was Herman

the trustee from the hospital and he was spitting at me. Every time I tried to climb up he showered me with spit.

The water began to rise very quickly and was soon up to my chest.

I climbed the ladder one more time and pushed him out of the way and ran out of the building.

Once outside I was in the middle of a pine forest. It was completely still and quiet.

There was an eerie feeling about it all.

I sensed a presence but there was no one to be seen anywhere.

I felt afraid and began to walk quickly through the trees.

The light began to fade.

I walked faster and faster.

I wanted to get out of the forest before it grew completely dark.

I woke up in a cold sweat.

I looked at the clock, it was 4am.

I lay there calming myself down until I fell asleep again.

I slept until 8 o'clock and very slowly got up to shower and get my breakfast.

MARY

It was quite a responsibility to be part of society.

To have to have the motivation to go out there and mix with the rest of the world, humanity, one's brothers and sisters.

I found it hard to constantly keep convincing myself that it was worth it.

I wanted to run away but I didn't know how.

I was able to imagine the whole thing from beginning

to end.

The scenario being played out in my head.

I couldn't run away from myself, wherever I'd go, there I'd be, right there or here.

Here I am! Over here next to rest of the insanity. I thought as I stood there staring at the shadows and brilliance playing through the curtains.

Where is God? I wondered.

I did believe deep in me, that there was a divine principle at work in all this stuff.

As I stood there the sun worked its way so that the sunlight hit my eyes.

It was orgasmic.

I felt instantly elated, filled with God.

I was transfixed.

God was lighting me up, expanding within me.

I was vibrating and so alight that I thought I would burst into flames.

A knock at the door.

The door opened and it was Mary.

I was instantly brought down a mile long black, dark, chimney at one hundred miles an hour by something very powerful, strong and insane.

I was now instantly aware of everything that my memory had kept from me.

I was mortified.

Frozen in some kind of horror from realizing who I really am.

This woman standing in front of me is from my past. She has to do with my insanity.

"Peter! It's me."

"It's Mary!"

I must have obviously looked frightened because she looked sad

and unhappy.
"I'm sorry Peter."
"I didn't mean to hurt you my darling."

I felt hurt. Big hurt all over. I was wrapped in hurt.

"I had to think about my family."
She said as she looked deep into my eyes painfully.

"Mary, is that you?" I mumbled.

"Why are you here?" I asked.

June was standing in the doorway. She looked a little puzzled.

"Who's Mary?"

She said quizzically.

I had a strange prickly sensation on the back of my neck and I was sweating.

"Are you ok Peter?" She asked.

Was I ok? Yes, was I ok?

The question seemed very difficult to answer. I was insane, yeah, sure.

"I'm fine June." I answered a little too loud and a little too slow.

Now she definitely had a strange look in her eye.

"OK! Peter we'll see you later dear." And she crept back from the doorway and quietly closed the door but didn't lock it.

That seemed significant.

I realized that somehow about seven hours had passed and I had been standing in the same spot.

I tried to move but both my legs were asleep.

My hands were fists.

My whole body was soaked in sweat.

I felt like the light in me had somehow blown a circuit.

I was suddenly hit by the chill as it enveloped my body.

I was shaking with the cold and my teeth were chattering.

I was surrounded by darkness but up above, there was the moon.

Cold and eerie I thought as I looked up through the ceiling at it.

I'll just sit here on this bench and rest my legs in between standing, I thought out loud.

Maybe too loud.

Then the pack of wolves arrived and encircled me. Their fangs white and flashing and all growling at me.

I began to run with them in pursuit.

I ran so fast that I began to leave the ground.

I was soon climbing higher and higher way above the ground.

Mary? I stopped climbing. Mary? I began the descent. I was falling like a stone. Mary? As I hit the ground.

That was the first haunting of me by Mary and many more were to follow.

ESCAPE

The days seemed to roll into a blur. Showering, eating, going for walks. I lost track of time. But soon it was time to go to work.

I was nervous about working in such a regulated way with a group of people, under a microscope as it were.

The more I projected about the job the more afraid I became.

It wasn't bad when it was always in the future but now it was here, I was nervous.

The fear became so extreme that I decided not to go.

I got dressed and packed my suitcase and sneaked out of the house just as



it was getting light. Every floorboard creaked as I stealthily escaped from the house.

I had no idea where I would go.

My fear propelled me out into the world.

Further and further away from familiarity.

I must have walked for miles without realizing because the sun was high in the sky and my surroundings were now rural.

I stopped and put my suitcase down.

It was so quiet and all I could hear were the birds singing.

Their song seemed to be telling me to keep going further and further out of my mind.

Away from all reasonableness, away from this so-called sanity that was disguised as normality.

A truck with a farmer stopped to ask me if I wanted a ride.

"Yes." I said as I climbed into his world.

"Where to?" The large faced man asked me.

I smiled for the first time in a while.

"Anywhere." I said. "Anywhere at all."

And off we went on the road to who knows where.

THE ROAD

After some time of travelling around and working for food and lodging, sleeping rough and just surviving I got used to the way of life.

I was in my head most of the time, dealing with the demons and the angels within me.

I could never go back to the life of

so called sanity or normality.

I was free now. No one came looking for me.

I was just another drifter. Romantic and tragic but free.

Many nights I slept under the stars or rain.

But I felt no pain, I became pain, I was pain itself.

I felt strong inside but yet my heart was torn open. God had broken me.

I was no longer the virgin of sadness and self-pity.

I was all of life, the ugliness and beauty, the joy and tragedy; all was manifest through my being.

I was no longer fragmented.

I embraced everything equally and it gave me strength.

I had no lies to tell. No secrets.

Nothing mattered.

Everything about my life was manifest for all to behold, no one questioning me.

No one doubting or believing in me.

I wore my pain, joy and ecstasy on my sleeve for all to see.

I lived this way for what seemed like forever and then something changed.

I had the strong urge to father a spiritual being not of the flesh.

It would be thought of as insanity by the rest of society.

It was something that I was destined to experience. I felt driven by unknown forces to make it possible.

THE HAUNTING

Mary appeared to me more and more and by some act of God I knew she was going to have my

child even though Mary was a ghost, spirit and not of the flesh. She never spoke to me anymore. She appeared and seemed to merge into me.

As though I was carrying her around inside of me. Once in a while she would materialize outside of me and be back inside again.

Her thoughts were my thoughts.

There was no separation.

We were the one.

I knew that I was perfectly sane in an insane way.

I also knew that my life with her was not real to other people but to me it was totally real.

I felt that the only secret that I carried was one that no one believed.

I was driven by a desire now.

A desire that I didn't understand.

When the desire manifested I was suddenly having a powerful spiritual sensual experience that came from within.

I would light up like a light bulb and there within me is Mary experiencing the same thing.

We were sharing our deep love and our pain within our one heart.

I felt driven by the urge to find the solution to my inability to consummate with her in the physical realm, where my body moved to and fro.

THE VOID

I got a job in a little railroad station in Idaho.

I opened and closed a gate so the trains could go through.

I had an office that I sat in between trains.

I just sat and went within for long periods of time.

There were only a handful of farmers in the area and they went back and forth a lot at different times to tend their farms.

I only saw men.

I don't think any women lived there.

Widowers mostly.

Some men just looked too ornery to have anything to do with women.

They were windswept and lined by the weather. Beaten down by fierce Idaho winds.

And scorched by the stifling Idaho summers.

This was a place that was at the edge of the world. A place where you can see the great void and live in awe of it.

But...It was time to move on.

L.A.

On the way once more.

Just couldn't stand that place for too long.

As the summer began to wind down and the sweltering heat began to subside I felt a restlessness taking hold of me.

Mary was urging me to make her pregnant.

I wasn't sure how it would or could happen.

I headed south to California.

To L.A.

City of everything imaginable.

In L.A. walking in the city of Santa Monica.

I've been here before, I thought.

OH yeah! Many times.

I had lived there maybe five different stretches, some were pretty long and some were short

but it was a place of things happening.
Lots going on everywhere.
I must have wandered around for days in a kind of stupor.
Totally entertained by so much activity.
I found myself at one of the missions standing in line for food.
We were all looking tired, some of us drunk and some of us pumped full of drugs but all of us hungry.
I took my seat at a long table of faces that looked sad and dejected.
We all ate in silence as though we were in prison.
The people working there looked just like us except they were a little cleaner and healthier.....maybe!
They looked like they had seen life the hard way too.
A lot of people clean up and decide to maintain their better life style by helping out at places like this.
Maybe it's a reminder of what it was like out on the street.

Like living at the end of the world and looking into the great void of a different nature.
I ate my food slowly.
Savouring it.
It was the first meal I'd had in days.
I found my way to a free bed and as soon as my head hit the pillow I was out.
I stayed there for about three weeks.
Rested up, belly full, clothes all clean and a haircut and shave.
I felt pretty good.
I became caught up in the basic things. Sleep food and interacting with people on a surface level.
It was all very grounding but it began to bore me. I decided to move on.
I packed my things and was on my way out of the door when a total stranger walked up to me pulled out a gun, pointed it at my head and shot me at point blank range.





INCURABLE

By Audree Flynn

"You must have wanted it to happen."

It went on for hours at a time. And think of all the lies she'd have to tell, all on my account.

Of course she lied. She loved me. She loved me, for hours at a time - she lied because she loved me...terribly.

When he was home, everything was purple. Or everything was orange when he wasn't.

I already knew the follicles were binding up the bone, so naturally, I never dreamed of waking up again.

Her teeth were hot and ached to grind it down, and back inside. Dark wet fur slid up between her teeth.

When he was home, everything was green. And nothing tasted purple when he wasn't.

No. There was nothing to do. I must have wanted it to happen - it went on for hours at a time.

Finally forever passed, and when she left I let my fingers grip it by the tip and hold it out, extended from the base.

(every clump was soaked with pinkish milk and pinkish milk was peppered with brown and tiny hair)

I heard it thrashing, I heard it rip the sheets. She ached to grind my dark wet fur between her teeth.

When he was home, everything was hidden in a jar. Or everything was hiding in plain sight.

I wanted it to happen. He was never home and I never dreamed of waking up again.

It went on for hours at a time because I loved her terribly.



THE MYSTERY OF THE KITCHEN CABINET!

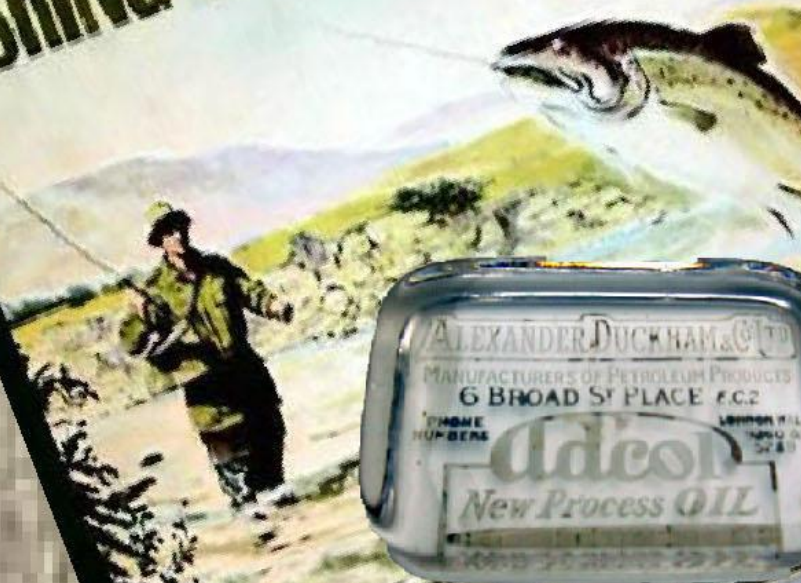
JANET PEPPER, GIRL DETECTIVE



MARGARET DUNNIGAN DUNPHY



FISHING WITH MR CRABTREE IN ALL WATERS



JANET PEPPER, GIRL DETECTIVE

THE MYSTERY OF THE KITCHEN CABINET

By
MARGARET DUNNIGAN DUNPHY

Authoress of
Janet Pepper, Girl Detective: The Clue of the Whistling
Elk
Janet Pepper, Girl Detective: The Secret of the Black
Linen
& Others

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CHAPTER I

A Walk in the Park

"Golly, I feel peculiar! Ever since I woke up this morning, I've felt like something odd is going to happen."

Janet Pepper, a dark-haired, petite girl of fifteen, spoke this thought aloud as she made her way across Bingham's Park. Her sparkling blue eyes admired the beautiful tulips that had just begun

to bloom along the sides of the path. She enjoyed reading in the park on sunny Sunday mornings and she carried her favorite book, *The Valley of Fear* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, looking for a place to sit. But every park bench she examined was still wet with heavy morning dew.

"Well, gee! I guess I'm just going to have to accept the fact of a dewy bottom," she said resignedly, seating

herself on a wet, wooden bench. "Eek!" she exclaimed, feeling the cold water soaking through her sapphire-blue floral swing skirt.

She opened her book and began to read. However, as she moved her eyes across the page, she realized that the words were not registering in her mind, for she was distracted by a strange, uneasy feeling.

"Golly, what on earth is the matter with me today?" she asked herself with consternation.

Janet snapped the book shut and gazed upon the cover. The painted visage of Sherlock Holmes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous detective, looked

up at her. She had been given the book as a reward for her help in solving a baffling mystery and she suddenly perked up. "I know what's wrong with me!" she declared enthusiastically. "I'm simply aching for another adventure! I need a new mystery to solve!"

Janet Pepper stood up, peeled the soggy material away from her damp rump and started walking again.

"Leaving so soon, Janet?" said a girl's voice behind her.

Janet gasped and turned to see Laura Hamilton walking toward her, beaming a bright, friendly smile. Laura, a classmate of Janet's, was a pretty girl, fair of

skin, with comfortable brown eyes. She was wearing a brown and white checked day dress and a scalloped black Juliet cap over a mop of unruly blond hair. Laura was new to the town of Pinecrest Heights, her family having moved there only two months ago. Her father, Mr. Bradley Hamilton was the new math teacher at Pinecrest High and many of the female students thought he was a real "dreamboat." Janet Pepper would be mortified to admit it, but on more than one occasion, she remarked to herself that he looked a lot like Jeff Chandler.

"Jeepers, Laura!" Janet said laughingly, placing her hand over her

heart. "You gave me a fright!"

Laura shared in Janet's laughter and said, "Gosh, I'm sorry, Janet. I didn't mean to startle you!" Her eyes twinkled mischievously. "I was just heading home when I saw you and I decided it was high time I invited you over for tea and cookies. What do you say Janet, are you hungry?"

"Am I!" Janet exclaimed with evident pleasure. "You bet I am!"

"Great! Let's go! I can't wait for you to meet mother," Laura said proudly.

CHAPTER II

The Hamilton Home

"Mother, I'm home!" Laura called out upon entering her house.

"I brought along a friend I'd like you to meet."

When it became apparent that no response from her mother was forthcoming, Laura began to dart from room to room, looking for her.

Janet, always proper and polite, waited by the kitchen door for formal introductions.

Laura breezed back into the kitchen and a fretful look crossed her delicate face. "She's not home. That's strange. I wonder where she's gone..."

Janet felt a sudden tug of excitement. Perhaps this was the mystery she'd been looking for.

"Oh well," Laura said with a resigned sigh.

"She'll be back soon, I'm sure. Come on, let's go into the sun parlor and listen to the hi-fi. I have the new Perry Como record."

"*Don't Let the Stars get in Your Eyes?*" Janet inquired hopefully.

"The very one!" Laura said and both girls erupted into giddy squeals of excitement.

CHAPTER III

Under the Sink

"Have a seat," said Laura. "Make yourself at home."

"Thank you," Janet said courteously. She sank down upon the plush, beige davenport. "Laura, I simply adore your home.

It's so, so, sophisticated!"

"Yes, I know. Father's so very proud of this house."

Suddenly, they heard the slow approach of a car engine and Laura ran to the window. "Holy avocados! Here's father now and he's driving a brand new car! Gee, it looks like a dream!" she enthused, swooning. "Excuse me, Janet. I'll be right back."

Janet stood up. "Yes, of course." She watched Laura dash out of the room and a few seconds later, she heard the front door open and close.

Janet was still wondering what had become of Laura's mother as she

crossed to the window and looked outside. Mr. Hamilton stood lighting his pipe next to a new "Robin's Egg Blue" Cadillac. He was dressed casually in a white golf shirt and black Oxford slacks and Janet felt funny seeing her math teacher without his suit and black tie.

Laura ran up to her father, kissed his cheek and then began to talk excitedly, gesturing toward the car with her small, fluttering hands, while he nodded and smiled and puffed his pipe.

Suddenly, Janet heard a sharp *thud!* from the kitchen and, startled, she turned around.

"Hello?" she said nervously. "Mrs. Hamilton?"

The house was quiet again. Janet padded carefully into the kitchen. "Hello?" she repeated and then remained stock-still, listening.

There was a low scuffling sound coming from the cabinet under the sink and Janet's first thought was, "Oh my, it sounds like they might have a mouse in the house."

The sound ceased when Janet reached for the handle of the cabinet. She pulled open the door and gasped at what she found.

A pale young girl, naked but for white, knee-

high cotton socks, was bound with heavy rope and lashed to a copper pipe. A red gingham scarf had been tied around her mouth, gagging her. She looked up at Janet with squinting, tear-filled hazel eyes.

"Mmmmmfff. Mmn. Mmrm," she said mutedly.

"Jeepers!" Janet exclaimed. "Don't you worry, I'm going to get you out of here," she said with the gutsy determination she was known for among the other amateur sleuths at Pinecrest High.

Suddenly, Laura and Mr. Hamilton were beside her. Janet had been so distracted by the naked girl under the sink, she hadn't heard them enter the house.

"That's Colleen," Laura told her, slamming the cabinet shut. "She's being punished. Right daddy?"

"That's right, princess," Mr. Hamilton said, drawing on his pipe. "And if your little friend here doesn't want to be punished as well, I suggest she keep her pretty mouth shut about what she's just seen. What about it, Janet. Can I count on you to keep our little secret?"

Janet took several steps back, trying to maintain a modicum of composure. For the first time she was grateful for the months of charm school she'd been forced to endure as she summoned all of her poise and grace to

say, "Yes, certainly Mr. Hamilton. I won't say a word. It was very nice to see you again. Thank you, Laura and... Good day!"

When she reached the door, Janet pushed it open and ran outside. She didn't stop running until she was safe at home.

CHAPTER IV

A Cold Supper

"You're awfully quiet tonight, Janet. Something troubling you?" asked Janet's father, Carleton Pepper, helping himself to another dollop of mashed turnips.

"Um, no. I'm fine," Janet said morosely, listlessly poking at the peas on her plate with her fork. She had hardly eaten

a thing and her food had gone cold.

"You can't fool me, kitten. I can tell something's wrong," Carleton Pepper said, with a troubled frown.

Indeed, as a former prosecutor and now Pinecrest Height's most savvy city councilman, Carleton Pepper was as sharp and discerning as they come. There were many unhappy men sitting behind bars and cold stone walls whose defense attorneys had made the mistake of underestimating him.

Janet had become Carleton Pepper's only child after her brother Ben drowned in a vat of eggnog while working at Fulcrum's Dairy, ten years ago. Her mother passed

away a year later after a long, debilitating battle with cowpox.

Following the deaths of her mother and brother, Janet had taken it upon herself to become as brave and efficient as possible. She began to take an interest in her father's cases, leading her father and his colleagues to declare Janet as clever as she was pretty.

Only last winter she had taken it upon her narrow, porcelain shoulders to solve a difficult case that had flummoxed several of Pinecrest Height's most capable legal minds. When no one could figure out what had become of

little Billy Eagleton, Janet, in an effort to help Abraham Sholes and Edna McCaffery, had taken over the search herself. Her thrilling adventures, which included an encounter with a mentally deficient child-napper named Dorling Groote, are told in the second volume of this series, entitled, "The Secret of the Big Hairy Hands."

Her encounter at the Hamilton home had disturbed her but she wasn't ready to tell her father about it just yet. She kept seeing that poor girl trapped in the cabinet and sometimes her mind played tricks on her and she saw *herself* naked, gagged and trussed to the

copper pipe under the sink.

"I was just thinking... I have a lot of homework to do. May I please be excused?"

Carleton Pepper slid a slice of ham into his mouth, chewed and swallowed, and then said, "Well, okay Janet. But if you need to talk, I'm all ears. I'll be in the den."

"Thank you, father."

Lulabelle, the Pepper's colored housekeeper bustled into the dining room and began to clear Janet's dishes. "Lawdy, lawdy Mizz Janet, you ain't hardly touched yo' food!"

"Leave her alone!" Demanded Carleton Pepper. "You need to learn your place, Lulabelle."

Lulabelle rolled her wide eyes and said, "Ah knows it Mr. Carleton, Ah knows it," and they shared an uneasy laugh.

Janet nodded distractedly and then went upstairs to bed.

CHAPTER V

A Feeling in the Night

As soon as Janet tumbled into bed, disturbing thoughts and questions began to turn in her mind. After a restless and futile try at sleep, she finally gave up and, after propping up her two fluffy goose-down pillows against the polished oak headboard, she sat up and stared at the moon-cast shadows in front of her, the very picture of a

pretty girl trying to untangle a particularly knotty problem.

"How will I ever get to sleep with these horrid pictures in my mind?" she asked herself plaintively. The more she thought about what she had seen, the more vivid and powerful the images became. "Gosh-darn it anyway!" She cried angrily and she leaned forward, pulled out one of the pillows from behind her and tucked it between her legs, squeezing it between her thighs with angry frustration.

And then something important occurred to her, something she'd almost forgotten. When she'd opened the cabinet under the sink, she noticed that the naked, helpless girl

was sitting *behind* various cleaning products. Clearly she'd been there a long time (or would be there a long time) and the Hamiltons would still need access to their cans and bottles of Twinkle and Duz and Soilax.

"How long can that poor girl sit in that cramped position?" Janet murmured to herself, squeezing the pillow rhythmically between her legs. "How long would I be able to remain tied-up like that without going bonkers?" she wondered and she folded back her thick, floral bed covers, suddenly feeling very warm.

A few minutes later Janet had made a decision. Mr. Hamilton's threats had

frightened her, but had not deterred her in her purpose to solve the mystery surrounding the kitchen cabinet. She had inherited a tough, stubborn streak from her father and it would take more than threats to keep her from her mission, and the Hamilton house. She yanked the pillow out from between her legs, idly noticing a small wet stain on the clean white pillowcase, and then climbed out of bed and started to get dressed.

CHAPTER VI

A Return to the Hamilton House

When she arrived at the Hamilton home, she found that all the lights were out; there was not a

sign of life about the house at all. "Well, what did you expect? It's almost ten o'clock at night!" she chided herself severely.

As Janet moved across the driveway, she noticed a golden sliver of light coming from one of the basement windows at the side of the house.

A chill wind blew and she clutched and gathered the front of her coat, pulling it tight against her neck. With brave determination, Janet sneaked up to the cellar window and then got down on her hands and knees and peered inside.

Janet's young heart began to race as she absorbed the strange,

shocking tableau before her.

Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton were standing on either side of the girl from under the kitchen sink. The girl had been blindfolded with what looked like a swatch of orange gabardine and was hanging from the ceiling by two chains attached to shackles around her slim, delicate wrists.

Mrs. Hamilton wore an expensive mink stole draped over her shoulders and nothing else. Mr. Hamilton wore a strange black leather get-up - some kind of harness covered with a confusion of buckles, loops and spiked, stainless-steel rivets. Below a tight, leather waist-cinch Janet

could see a metal ring around Mr. Hamilton's masculine attributes, squeezing him so tightly that his manly organs had turned an about-to-burst purple.

"I imagine my face looks about that shade right now!" Janet declared breathlessly.

Mrs. Hamilton handed her husband a thin black riding crop and he donned a leather face mask that had a shiny silver zipper over the mouth. He moved behind the girl and began to whip her bare buttocks. Janet could hear each lash of the crop, accompanied by a cry from the girl and she rotated her hips and leaned closer to the window to better see and

hear the distressing scene taking place before her.

"Well, well. If it isn't Janet Pepper, girl detective."

Janet gasped and jumped to her feet. Laura Hamilton was standing in front of her. She held a revolver in her right hand and a devious smile played over her full, red lips.

"L-Laura..." Janet stammered nervously. "I...I was just..."

"So, you want to see what my parents like to do, do you?"

"N-No!" Janet insisted hotly.

"I think you do," Laura suggested sharply. "Come on. Let's go inside. I never did introduce you to mother."

Laura kept the barrel of the revolver pressed firmly against Janet's back as they marched into the house and down the cellar staircase. "Well, I'm certainly in a pickle now!" Janet thought nervously. "When Laura and I were sitting side-by-side on the box-social planning committee, I certainly never envisioned a scenario such as this!"

When they reached the bottom of the staircase, the sharp sound of the riding crop smacking exposed flesh ceased and Mr. Hamilton turned toward the girls. He unzipped the mouth on the leather mask and said, "Is that Janet Pepper I see?"

"Yes, daddy," Laura said sweetly. "I found her snooping outside."

"Nice work, princess. Now run along and leave her to me. It's way past your bedtime."

"But daddy..." Laura started to protest.

"Don't pout, honey. Tonight's a school night. You need your sleep."

"Yes sir," Laura groused. Then she stomped back upstairs.

Mr. Hamilton fixed his gaze upon Janet and shook his head. "And you, young lady. What are you doing out so late? I do believe you have a test on integers tomorrow morning. Or did you forget?"

"No sir, I didn't forget. I studied last

night," Janet insisted proudly.

"Would you like something to snack on?" inquired Mrs. Hamilton politely.

"No thank you, ma'am."

"Nonsense. Let me fix you a little something," she said cheerily and then walked upstairs.

"So," said Mr. Hamilton, peeling off his leather mask to reveal a red and hectic face. His usually neatly-combed salt-and-pepper hair was mussed and sticking straight up. "What are you doing here?" he asked.

Janet stepped forward and pointed to the girl hanging from the chains. "I came to rescue her!" she told him defiantly.

"Rescue?"

"Yes, you beast!" she cried angrily.

Mr. Hamilton turned to the girl. "Did you hear that Colleen? Janet Pepper, girl detective, came here to rescue you.

Isn't that sweet?"

Colleen moaned and nodded.

"Okay," said Mr. Hamilton with a shrug.

"Consider her rescued."

And with that he produced a key and unlocked the shackles around Colleen's wrists. She collapsed to the dusty concrete floor.

"You're free to go Colleen," he said. "Be sure and thank Miss Pepper."

Colleen stood shakily to her feet, her pretty hazel eyes cast down.

"Thank you," she murmured softly and then limped up the stairs.

"There," said Mr. Hamilton with satisfaction. "She's rescued."

Janet couldn't help noticing that Mr. Hamilton's *thing* had become engorged and was sticking straight up like a long, grotesque mushroom.

"I see you've become aware of my phallus," he said firmly.

"It's disgusting!" Janet exclaimed,

"Yes, I know. Come here."

"Wh-what?" Janet stammered, confused.

"Well, now that you've rescued Colleen, I need a new girl to take

her place," he said with arrogant assurance.

"Y-you mean..."

"Exactly." Mr. Hamilton seized Janet's arms and, twisting them behind her back, moved her toward the chains and shackles.

Mrs. Hamilton returned carrying a tray. "I'm back! I brought yummy fig newtons and root beer floats!" she said enthusiastically.

CHAPTER VII

A Surprise Gift

Early morning sun began to fill the dark cellar and Janet turned her face to the light. How long had she been chained up here? She didn't know. Time had become confused -

a mad jumble of intense pain and pleasure followed by long periods of boredom and silence. But she would endure. Her stamina and willpower were two things that had made her one of the most admired sophomores at Pinecrest High. When people talked about Janet Pepper, after they mentioned how pretty she was, they usually talked about her resolve and determination.

"X," she quickly reminded herself. "My name is X now. My name is X. My name is X. My name is X..."

At dusk she finally heard her Master's footsteps coming down the stairs and her heart began to pound with eager excitement.

Janet knew better than to address him.

Bradley Hamilton didn't say a word as he unlocked the shackles and freed Janet from the chains.

Before she had time to regain the circulation in her tingling arms, Mr. Hamilton grabbed her left hand and pulled it toward him. He held up a beautiful aquamarine ring. "I'd like you to wear this," he told her soberly. "I've decided it's time for you to return to your father and your studies. Accept this ring as a token of my trust. I trust you will not reveal what has gone on between us. And I trust you will always be

faithful to me, your Master."

Janet's throat was starting to close up and tears welled shiny and bright in her pretty blue eyes.

"Yes sir," she said submissively. "Thank you."

"I have something else to give you. A symbol of your obedience to me," he said, just before he fired-up an acetylene torch and began to heat a branding iron.

CHAPTER VIII

Home Again

Janet Pepper strolled into the kitchen to find her father sitting at the table, his handsome face wan with worry. "Janet!" he cried with surprise and

relief. "Where have you been?"

"Oh, you know me, always hot on the trail of a new mystery," Janet replied.

"But you've been gone for a week!"

"I'm sorry father, I didn't mean to worry you. When I sink my teeth into a new case, I just lose track of the time."

"Boy, I'll say! The police have been combing Boxer's woods for days. They even dragged Indigo Lake looking for your body!"

"Oh daddy, such a fuss!" Janet chirped and laughed.

Carleton Pepper shared in her amusement. Then he said, "So, did you solve the case?"

Janet nodded and grinned. "Yes, you could say that."

"Well, sit down. Tell me all about it."

The thought of sitting on her newly-branded backside sent shivers of excitement shooting through Janet but she didn't want to cry out in front of her father. "I'll tell you later. I think I'm going to catch up on my sleep. I'm exhausted," she told him truthfully.

"Too tired for another mystery?"

Janet smiled slyly. "I'm never too tired for another mystery. In fact, I'm aching for another one right now!"

Indeed, Janet's adventures were only

beginning. Before long she'd be off on another thrilling case, equally as strange and baffling as the one she'd just solved. Readers who are intrigued by her strange exploits may follow her subsequent adventure in the next volume of this series, entitled "The Secrets of Janitor Moss."

"My daughter, the girl detective," Carleton Pepper said merrily.

Janet looked at the beautiful aquamarine ring on her finger, and thought about the gorgeous symbol that her Master had scorched into her pretty, young flesh. "Oh Daddy," she said. "I'm a lot more than that!"

THE END



Margaret Dunnigan Dunphy was born on July 7th, 1907 in Tarweatheraska. The daughter of an eggplant farmer and one of thirteen children, she went to work for *The Tarweather Blade* as a printing press operator at age seven where she lost several fingers to extra editions. She never married, but wrote fifty-seven Janet Pepper Mysteries between 1940 and 1955 while working as a typist for the FBI. She died on October 23rd, 1967 by her own hand.

CURVES OF YOUTH
and the secret of how to
"Pull the Cords"

Give the
 Flesh the
 Elasticity
 and
 Firmness
 of
 Youth

PROF.
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Chin

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Prepared of Pure Glycerine and Alcohol of the
VINOLIA OTTO TOILET SOAP
 is perfect for washing your face and hands. It is soft, smooth
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 that is so good.



DEATH WISH CHAMELEON II

By Cricket Corleone
Images © Richard A Meade



Upon leaving her apartment on her way to a meet up with a sleazy sounding man working off the back pages of her local paper, it started to rain. While in one direction the street flow walked grasping their umbrellas in their hands, glued to a cell phone or a text message on their way, Dustin walks in the opposite direction. Damp, slightly shivering, and nursing a wet cigarette. She sees the bus she needs to catch coming up the way on the opposite side of the street. The

traffic does not halt for her, which just pisses her off, under her breath she says to herself, "for fucks sake people... you're going to get where you are going much faster than I am on foot... and it's fucking raining!"

She tries to stop an SUV as it is gliding up in front of her walk way. The SUV won't stop, so Dustin yells "STOP!!"

The woman in the driver's seat of the SUV looks like a deer in headlights as she hits the brakes and takes her cellphone from her ear, as if she was suddenly jolted back into reality.

Dustin glares at the woman, "Yeah, wake the fuck up!"

The woman gets angry and honks as she drives off after Dustin has crossed the street. Dustin mutters, "Go fuck yourself, cunt."

Because of the oncoming traffic, Dustin misses her bus

by seconds. The bus driver sees that Dustin wants to get on, but does not stop. There seems to be a grim satisfaction on the driver's face as he pretends not to notice Dustin waving the bus down. Dustin is left in the cold rain, her coat dampening even more, and her cigarette, as she has just now noticed, is broken in the middle.

She throws the cigarette to the gutter and puts her hands inside her coat, under her shirt, and against her flesh. The sting from her cold hands sends a chill up her body. Dustin finds a place to sit down as she waits for the next bus. She moves her hands out of her coat and presses them tightly between her thighs to keep warm.

As she waits for the next bus to arrive, Dustin is contemplative over the drivers of each car that passes by. That void look in their eyes. "It's just getting worse and worse," she thinks to herself. She doesn't remember exactly when the mindless drudgery of day to day life got so intertwined with technology. When we as people stopped trying to look past our noses, even for a

moment, without getting totally manic upon realization of ACTUAL reality. "Although, there are some benefits to it all... I'm guessing?" Dustin thinks to herself as she lets out a cynical half-assed laugh.

Moments pass by during which Dustin checks the road ahead for any sign of the next bus coming. Realizing that checking every five seconds wouldn't make the bus show up any faster, she pulls out another cigarette and lights it up. "This usually works," she thinks. Smoking like a chimney and giving herself a rush of intoxicant carcinogens, Dustin wills the bus to come and cheat her out of her freshly lit cigarette.

Ironically enough, the only place she wants to be right now, is out of the rain and into a nice hot shower. But she clings to her sick motivation like a person with O.C.D. would cling to a daily routine... "open the fridge door, pour the milk, return the milk to fridge before the door closes..." and that's all that seems to matter.

Joining her at the bus stop is a young woman, Dustin sizes

her up like she does with everyone that crosses her path. The woman is young, probably barely in her twenties, olive complexion, auburn hair which is done to the sides in braids and hanging over her shoulders. No makeup on, but she has a prettiness to her that Dustin admires, and an innocence that Dustin scoffs at.

The woman glances in Dustin's direction. Dustin turns her face away as she puffs at her cigarette. The smoke rises up like clouds from an A-Bomb going off in a desert horizon. Of course, the smoke goes right up into the face of the woman who is standing not but a few feet away. The woman coughs a little and rubs her nose. Dustin wants to puff even more as an act of rebellion, but instead she scans the ground, tosses the cigarette onto the sidewalk, and crushes it with her boots.

"Sorry," Dustin says to the woman without making eye contact.

"That's o.k." The woman smiles.

Dustin notices the smile cross the woman's face, as if she had heroically found some good in a person that has an exterior of no remorse. This slightly annoys Dustin who refuses to believe that she has a soft side. She tosses her hair and rises to her feet. Walking about five more feet away from the woman, Dustin pretends to be focused on the street up the way where the bus should be coming from. When she doesn't see it, she shouts, "Fuck!"

This startles the woman for a moment. Dustin notices the woman taken a back, and to herself she covers the side of her mouth where she has just cracked a bit of a grin.

More moments pass and still no sign of the bus. Dustin starts to tap her feet impatiently.

The woman notices and does her best to ease the tension. "I think there was an accident up the street earlier, by the overpass to downtown? It has been holding up traffic for awhile now."

Dustin rolls her eyes and says "Hmph... figures." She pulls out another cigarette and



lights it. The woman looks at Dustin's face and realizes she is trying to come across as a pessimist for an audience of one that knows better.

"Greta," the woman says.

"Excuse me?" Dustin questions as she tries to make the woman feel insecure with a look that says, "What, are you nuts or something?"

The woman extends her hand to shake Dustin's. "Greta, that's my name."

Dustin refuses the handshake and looks off down the street again. "Good for you," Dustin says in response.

"So, where are you headed on this rainy sleepy day?" Greta asks with optimism.

Dustin stares Greta up and down and asks, "What, are you like, perpetually annoying? Or is it just the anti depressants?"

Greta laughs.

Dustin, not meaning to make friends, rolls her eyes again and looks away.

There is a silence for a moment that makes Dustin uncomfortable. So she decides to go ahead and smooth things over with some light conversation, "Fuck it, what's the harm?" She thinks. "I'm on my way to a job," she says nonchalantly.

Greta nods and confesses, "I'm on my way to a park."

Dustin scrunches her eyes as she sees the rain beating down in a puddle in the street, "A park?" Dustin continues securely, "Why the hell would you want to go to a park when it is pouring down rain? This is a miserable day for a park."

Greta opens a bag hanging over her right shoulder and pulls out a camera case, "Photos. I like to take photos of the rain."

Dustin secretly thinks it is an interesting hobby, but opts for more pessimism when she responds, "That is the gayest thing I have ever heard."

Greta smiles to herself again and looks at Dustin as if reading her mind, "No it isn't. Stop trying to come across like your some... roughneck from Northbridge. You and I both know that you're not that hard."

Dustin darts her eyes over to Greta in confusion, then turns them away again as if what Greta said meant nothing at



all... though she can't explain the sudden feeling of being totally naked right there in the street.

"What kind of work do you do?" Greta asks.

"Sex." Dustin says unaffectedly.

Greta looks at Dustin, "Hmmm... I believe that, for some reason?"

A silence falls.

"Wow, I'm surprised?" Dustin says with a smirk.

"About what?" Greta asks.

"You are one of the first people I have met that didn't probe me with a million questions after I told them what I do for a living." Dustin sees the bus coming up the way.

"Well, I think it is pretty self explanatory," Greta says as she searches her pockets for her bus pass.

Dustin and Greta get on the bus, relieved to be out of the rain and cold. Greta sits toward the front, while Dustin sits all the way in the back.

She does this for several reasons, one being so that she can watch everyone, but the main reason being so that they couldn't watch her, without appearing weird or rude in some way. Greta turns around and glances back at Dustin who is now starring out a side window.

For a moment, she is tempted to join her in the back but isn't sure how Dustin will react and doesn't want to push it. Instead she stays firmly in her seat and lets out a sigh as she stares out the front window of the bus awaiting her stop.

Greta does notice however, a creepy old man sitting across from her who keeps trying to peer in between her legs. Greta clears her throat in an insecure way, letting the guy know she can see what he is doing. This doesn't stop him. Suddenly, Dustin is right up next to Greta. "Hey, I'm fucking bored so I thought I would join you. If that's alright?"

Greta smiles and nods, relieved to have her attention taken away from the pervy old guy.

"So, what do you do other than take artsy pictures of the rain... and... cold?"

Greta starts to reply when she notices the man is now fondling himself through his pants. "Uhhh... I..." she can't seem to focus for the car crash sitting across from her, fondling himself with little discretion to how inappropriate he is acting. This was NOT a situation one would call "consensual." Dustin looks at the nervousness in Greta's eyes, and then looks across the way at the dirty old man. She notices what is happening and stands up between Greta and the man's view of her. "Hey, fuckhead? Keep it up and you won't have anything left there to beat off with!"

The man just smiles as if not afraid of Dustin's threat, which is a bad idea.

Without thinking twice, Dustin clocks the guy right in the nose, breaking it on first strike and sending it instantly into a rushing waterfall of gushing blood.

Greta is so surprised that all she can do is drop her jaw and cover her mouth. "You... you



just... oh my god?!" She says in shock.

The old man is now holding his bloody face and leaning forward shrieking in pain. Dustin, realizing what she has just done, looks at the bus driver who is now stopped. "Hey! OFF!!" The driver demands as he points to the exit doors of the bus. The driver makes it very clear that he wants BOTH the women off his bus, and NOW.

Dustin smiles a little and pats the old pervy man on the back, "Will you be getting off any time soon as well? No? Didn't think so, fucker." Dustin and Greta move toward the exit. Dustin waves kindly to the driver, "Have a

nice day!" She smiles. Greta is mortified.

Outside the bus, as it speeds off leaving the two women in a cloud of smoke from the exhaust pipe, Dustin seems refreshed and alive. Greta just looks Dustin in the face like she doesn't know what to think. "You're... crazy!"

Dustin lights a cigarette, "Me? Yeah, maybe a little," she says as she starts to walk off.

Greta follows up from behind, still questioning what had just happened. "Do you NORMALLY just go around breaking people's faces?" Greta exclaims.

"No... I think that was the first time?" Dustin says as she scans her memory.

Greta lets out a breath and starts to come back down to earth, "Look, I appreciate the fact that you would stand up for me against some... weird old guy on a bus... but that was really unnecessary. I am NOT a big fan of violence and aggression as a way to approach, well, ANYTHING."

Dustin looks at Greta, "Yeah, and that's why you'll always be the victim."

Greta shakes her head in disagreement.

Dustin elbows her playfully, "Lighten up, I was being sarcastic. Besides, think about it this way... the next time that asshole decides he wants to jizz himself while ogling some random girl on a bus, he'll think twice."

Greta and Dustin cross a street together, "Yeah but... what if the guy just has like... some kind of disorder where he can't help himself?"

Dustin laughs a little, "Are you serious? Well, would you rather have had him sit there, molesting himself, while imagining getting all his old man goo all over your face, chest and pussy?"

Greta looks grossed out, "Don't use that word... and don't paint that kind of picture in my head!" Greta covers her face at the thought of what Dustin has just said to her.

Dustin turns to Greta and the two stop mid street. Her face gets very serious in this moment which prompts Greta to really listen intuitively, "Some people deserve to get

hurt," Dustin says dead straight.

Greta turns her head a little to one side, she can see that what Dustin has just said to her has nothing to do with what went down with the old man in the bus at all. It was like she was talking about herself.

Dustin realizes the intense look she is getting from Greta and pulls back. "Have a nice life, Greta." Dustin heads off down the block.

Greta is compelled to stop her, "Well... wait? I didn't even get your name?"

Dustin turns around as she walks backward, "What will you need it for? I won't be around much longer anyway..." She pauses a moment, "Don't take any shit from anyone!" Dustin turns back around and walks off until she is just a blur in Greta's rain soaked eyes.

"Strange person," Greta says to herself. She turns to a sign on the sidewalk next to her. Dustin has led her to a beautiful park that she has never been to before. She nods her head and smiles, "I get



you... you can't fool me, lady."

Greta looks around the park at rows of gorgeous flowers strangely in bloom, though it's the wrong season for it. She pulls out her camera and quickly sets into inspiration mode.

Up the way, Dustin is walking alone, she pulls her notebook out of her coat pocket and checks the address to where she is supposed to meet the man with the job. Noticing the place listed is a coffee shop across the street

from where she is standing, Dustin looks into the coffee shop window at a man sitting impatiently at a table while checking his watch.

"You must be him?" She says under her breath. She lets out another hard breath, held captive in her chest, before stepping out into the street to cross. Dustin heads for the front entrance as she internalizes a morbid and desperate hope, that maybe this time, she will get lucky.

To be continued.....

LYCANTHROPIC SUITE

By Claudia Bellocq

Photo © Tom Garretson



FLIGHT

charred and blackened
remains lay littered around
my feet/talons. talons being
french for high heels. feet
being bound in japan.
charred and black being the
debris of a life once lived, all
burnt to the ground now...all
gone. teetering and bound, i
wait patiently for flight.

i preen my new feathers and
wonder how i got to be here,

high above the city for this
moment only at least, in the
crumbling old window frame
of an ancient building long
since abandoned. there are
gargoyles all around me;
whenever i move, their eyes,
static, cold, ruthlessly still,
seem to follow me. but i
don't care, for i am free. and i
have known the residue and
lingering, clinging pain of
coldness for too long now to
let any inanimate object
disturb me. the warm

blooded are far more ruthless than any imaginary creature. far more...

you tried to eat me yesterday. i almost let you. devoured would be a more fitting word. you tried to devour me and leave only bones and remnants of bloody skin around you, hoping that no-one would notice your ugly sin. you were licking your lips before you even started. i, being a sensory creature, sniffed out the blood lust in you and took flight before you sunk in your perfectly honed teeth. you; you were powerless to steal that from me, for you were cemented to your principles so long ago, and they are heavy burdens to bear.

i became falcon again this morning. sometimes it happens without my knowing. one moment human, then in an instant shape-shifting into a new form. this one, like snake, terribly familiar to me. i let cry the whoop of the falcon in flight, in hunting mode, and i felt my wings expanding out of my spine, bursting out of my flesh in a way that i will never get used to. it will always pain me, though like childbirth, as a

necessary means to an end and thus endured.

i am grateful for this gift. i am grateful for the power of flight. those who are envious try to convince me that flying is bad. that enduring is better. those who know the freedom of flight circle above me sending out their cries, hoping i will remember my essence and fly again. when the moment arrives, the inevitable occurs and my wings will no longer remain bound to my previous form. then, and only then, i feel the painful pleasure of release, of a greater being than myself. some call it god, others the devil. some call it witchcraft, others redemption.

for me, it is salvation and i am grateful for it...this gift...this bloody and painful salvation.

this flight.

LEAVING

Curled up tighter than a walnut shell, she felt her belly in knots and closed herself even further down. A silent "gggaaaaaaahhhh" escaped her throat and took flight; black, crooked, one-

winged and charred. Hell visible in every direction, she glanced up to grasp the remains of the light which were slowly disappearing over the headland. Leaving. I'm leaving. Flight; I dream of it...it haunts me. I have to find the bastard who came in here when I was sleeping and stole my wing. Ripped it from me, harsh, uncaring, brutal and left in its place a lacerated wound, dripping, raw and open and it took a fucking age to heal. I have something for him...

She fingered the pistol in the pocket on her thigh.

Leaving. I'm leaving again. Hard. Tough shell. Knotted and spitting venomous thoughts she hissed at anyone who came close to her.

'WARNING! THIS BITCH BITES' someone had painted in crude red letters outside her window. Broken glass, empty bottles, tossed aside. Bones and bits of old feathers coated in droppings now from the creatures who lived on the higher ledges.

Every time she came nearer to taking flight again, she had to go through this

process. Remembering her stolen wing. Remembering the ease of her flight before the rupture. Faint now. Taking herself on some masochistic journey of longing and fear....all mixed up now and making no sense. Desire, yearning, sickening. Loss.

Poised on the ledge, she looked around her as night fell. Black already the sky; better than the unforgiving daylight. She snarled as some automaton flew too close. Curled her lip and gestured rudely at him/her/it/whatever the fuck it was. "FUCK YOU" she yelled from the bottom of her lungs. Coughing up bile with the force of her rage. Jesus these creatures were simple. Flying for the pleasure of it, never wondering what it was like to fly with one damaged wing or to fly outside the city boundaries. "Fuck them all" she said, quietly this time..."fuck them all".

Pain. She prepared to meet it again. Drank her fill from the weird liquid she had discovered by accident one day when scouring her window-ledges for leftover food. It dulled the pain....Flying was like this

now; an ordeal. But what a buzz. Knowing she was going beyond the city limits. Knowing she had a purpose now. She preened her skin-feathers and licked harder and harder as she began to focus on her goal.

Freedom

WINGS

there was something so fragile about the wings on that creature. one look. one solitary single sharp look and they were ripped off sometimes, causing immense pain for the person who'd looked too hard at the beautiful thing. the loss of those midnight blue, or turquoise or violet~black wings was a loss sustained by all of nature. it was too big to just stand by and not weep in wake of the tragedy. one could only yearn and crave with a hollow desire, the return of that beautiful thing.

there was something so suspicious about the wings on that creature. take your eye off it for one moment and the thing would be there, poised, ready to sting, so people had a tendency to rip off the wings before the sting

could hit home. before the wound found its mark and left its acid barb in the flesh. the creature could never understand the desire that evidently surrounded it to do it harm. it just was. it just was...

there was something so delicate and perfect about the wings on that creature. so perfect that you knew you could crush it in an instant and rub the broken, stunningly coloured symmetry into your palm with the total power of one who is bigger than, greater than another. as if you could steal some of its beauty in destroying it somehow, though that never happened.

when i met him, i noticed that he had a pair of the most beautiful wings attached to his shoulder blades which more often than not he kept folded away, probably aware that others would try to crush, rip off or destroy them somehow. he had learnt the hard way. he had gained his wings in the most challenging way it is possible to get them; he'd suffered the greatest loss and survived. his wings were precious to him.

because he kept them tightly locked away, bound to his body to protect them, they were uncomfortable, crushed into shapes that were aerodynamically disastrous and the result was that he could not fly with them. these beautiful things became a junk shop curio, all dusty and forgotten. she saw this and tried to coax them into flight. sometimes she was brutal in her coaxing and the frailty of him became greater than all of his potential. she was trying to learn how to become more gentle with her coaxing. less cutting and less harsh and yet she was also the sum of her own experiences which sometimes made this hard for her.

when *he* met *her*, he was astonished to observe that under her dress there were the faint traces of something he recognised without shadow of a doubt as being wings. he was breathless, concerned, disturbed by her presence. he had thought himself the last of them but meeting her, he was forced to accept that other winged creatures existed. her wings were broken and charred. they had been wounded once in a great fire that had swept

through her home. it was arson she told him and she cried. her wings were not pretty and white any more, there were torn bits of feather hanging off that she was afraid to remove in case the burnt shafts loosened large chunks of what little of her original wing remained. she had noticed recently that there were tiny soft downy shoots beginning to form and she'd barely been able to contain her excitement. she needed her flight to feel her joy. she had constructed for herself some synthetic wings that allowed her to remember what it was to fly, but without the innate connection to her physical form, the feeling was never quite true.

she admired his wings, she perhaps didn't tell him enough. she knew his wingspan would be great if he would trust in their beauty again. in their ability to fly. he admired hers for the new growth sitting alongside the charred history that were the roots of her wings, the foundations of her magnificence. he saw her magnificence and wept in the wake of it, for witnessing it, for being changed by it.

she was already changed by him. together they had held each other tight and promised not to damage their fragile wings. there was so much fear in releasing them, in letting them expand into all they once were and could be again. she needed to feel his presence. he needed to feel her love. they were making ready to fly and the discomfort of it was almost killing them, but preparing to do something courageous is like that. and it was pure, and true and beautiful.

they looked each other in the eye, each knowing what they needed in order to hold; to contain this vast expansion. their destiny was unfolding along with their wings and it was bound to hurt.

but it was also bound to heal....

LICK LICK LICK

Lick lick lick...the old skin lay beside her on the floor of her bedroom. She had shed again and was left wondering, as always, what to do with the cast off skin. It had been a particularly stubborn one this time, all full of tight gripping patches

that had clung for dear life and may as well have been about three years old yelling "mummy, mummy, mummy...heeeeeeelp" for the way she'd held on to it. "You're....NOT.... FUCKING.... GOING.... ANYWHERE..." she'd screeched, grasping the sides as the skin sloughed away. "Noooooooooooo.... don't go.....I love you" she'd pleaded, but skin being skin, snake being snake, the inevitable shedding was a done deed as soon as the process had kicked in really.

She'd been reading that day about how (insert American psychotherapy accent for full effect) 'process was the whole point of things'...not the goal, not the result, but the process. So here was where we learnt things? Fuck that, she'd thought....just gimme my skins and get me outta here, but of course this had been followed by the usual surrender. Oh sigh, sigh, sigh...she rolled her eyes in contemptuous acceptance. She was pissed (angry pissed not drunk pissed)...this skin felt as though it had been very close to her heart, her core; her snake essence. She didn't want to let it go....did but

didn't...didn't but
did....yadah yadah yadah...
shedding.....

So as it had fallen, she'd wept. She'd developed a fever of sorts, become delirious. Shedding was almost always accompanied by some weird event but this one had been full-on and fast; hot, sweating, sickness that laid her out in her dark and gloomy corner, hissing wildly at those who approached. One or two could see her in these moments and dared risk an interventionist word or two. Coyote howled, owl swooped; tricksters and shadow creatures who knew her language: Permission granted.

Under the surface lay bare a fleshy pale pink/cream, translucent form; muscle rather than skin, an exposed transparent centre of pulsing veins, capillaries and arteries coursing a cold blue blood through her being. There were about fifty tiny vulvas running along one side and one great big devouring cunt on the underside. Every vulva had a clitoris, every clitoris a heart that beat to the rhythm of something like a Tricky song (his early

works). They pulsed in hungry four- four timing, waiting for their salvation. It (the skin) looked like a bleeding heart weeping a river of tears of salt black ice and lava hot molten steel; uncomfortable juxtapositions. It held something of everything of her salvation. This skin was not easy to shed...its transformed spirit was no easy ride.

"Hey you...fuck you!" it yelled (it had no manners whatsoever and had yet to learn a bit of etiquette). "Yes...you...d'you know what the fuck you're messing with here...do you...DO YOU?" it demanded and her keeper hushed her as best she could. A fairly futile endeavour it has to be said, so she began to lick in the hope it would calm this new skin down...stop it being so fucking embarrassing for a start!

Lick lick lick...the new skin was kind of bitter to the taste. It had undertones of a good single malt, with a high-note of lily or was it rose, a strange and heady combination. It was a deep blood red in colour, speckled with the beginnings of a

dark, dark, indigo hue that promised to take over should she allow it. The indigo reminded her of that place she visited sometimes in her dreams...a river of souls in permanent orgasmic pre-birth joy. Normally her new skins were tight and black; this one threatened to mess up all of her snake-like tendencies if she didn't get a handle on it fast.

It still hissed, in fact somehow the hissing was all the more pronounced as it fought against its very nature. "Love makes worms of us all" it spat, unaccustomed as it was to snake-like idolatry and reverie. Snake is usually feared; it recognised this and expecting it, had been surprised to find a lack of fear in the one who had triggered this shedding. He must be a hunter she thought cynically...he wants my skin for himself....to sell me or make fashion from me. He cannot possibly love my skins as I do, for their sheer beauty.

He came to visit her when her skin had just dropped and she was that revolting translucent pale cream/pink of an old man's skin. "I love

you," he said and she tested out her rattle-tail to make sure it was still there, bared her venomous fangs to make sure they still dripped their poison, hissed to make sure her voice was in full form...

"Hey thanks" she replied once she knew all were in working order, "I love you too."

SHEDDING

She lay squirming on the floor beside the skin she had just shed. She didn't recognise herself in this new form yet. It was a different skin; somehow connected to very ancient DNA codes that stirred something in her that had slept for a long, long time. It was tight this skin. It was uncomfortable. It had a tendency to break into song at the drop of a hat which pissed her off immensely. It was all Julie Andrews. Snake and Julie Andrews was a hard one to call. Fortunately, she had become adept at adjusting very rapidly to the new skins, and as a result, she was able to simply look upon this one (with a little scorn) and accept it.

"god is a fuckin' warm blooded creature...I always

knew it" she hissed.
"Bastard!"

She couldn't stop weeping and the water was freakin' her out...snakes don't like water as a rule (only those sly water serpents that none of the land-bounds liked anyway....can't trust a belly-on-the-earth that does the water element you know).

Cry cry cry...the water was freakin' her out and didn't look like stopping. Fucking raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens...I eat kittens as a rule, she thought....hissssssssss.....hiss sssssss.....love was making a shoe of her, or a handbag perhaps, but not a coiled serpent ready to bite, that's for sure.

Was it time to metamorphasise before it was too late? Falcon was circling overhead....waiting for flight, screeching for freedom....eye on the prey. Snake was normally so good at this...was she becoming too earth-bound? No, her skin was simply having trouble re-adjusting. It kept snagging on branches and there would be blood and guts spilling out behind her. If she wasn't careful the

natural healers would be after drinking her blood and ingesting her entrails for their own benefit. Longevity and libido grace of a serpents fire...She slithered into the corner and found a dark shadow that offered comfort. It was littered with the shed skins of other snakes.

"oh well" she thought, "at least I'm not alone"....

And she fixed a beady glass black eye on the cave entrance. Waiting for the moment of sunrise when she would bask in the warmth. As long as there was desert and a cactus at hand, preferably an hallucinogen, she would be alright.

Perhaps I'll take flight on falcon's wing tomorrow she thought, as she pondered Julie Andrews...

SNAKE

She sat in the corner of the darkened room licking her tail. The rattle was her pride and joy...warning, warning, WARNING! She hissed, no hisssssssssssssssssssed a 'stand fucking well back now motherfucker!' at the approaching humanoid and carried on licking, licking,

licking, preening....pussies!
motherfucking pussies, all of
them.

The light was fading fast as
night drew in; she loved this
time of day almost more than
she loved the wolfing hours
of dawn. Twilight....half
light...shadow-
land....unformed mysteries
approaching, the killing
moon...

She was mean tonight; all
bitey, scratchy, hissy-mean
which probably meant she
was due to shed another
skin. She couldn't keep up
these days; the fucking skins
were littered all over London
and were making someone a
fat income no doubt but what
the hell did she care as long
as the damned things were
gone.

When she shed, she was at
her most vulnerable,
temporarily blinded,
temporarily weak,
temporarily static, unable to
strike...senses dulled, bite all
the more vicious should it
find its victim.

When shedding, a snake
cannot be interfered with as
all of its instinctive nature
will automatically kick-in to
protect the incarnate form.

She was Queen of the
fucking Night right now and
here she was shedding
another damn skin. They
were falling away like the
peeling skin on a bad case of
sunburn...what would the
humanoids know of such
things? Well protected to the
end....every angle covered,
they anaesthetised
everything.

Fear...climate of fear.
Underground, the rebels had
gathered in resistance. She
lived amongst the snake
people, falcon, lizard, coyote,
jackal, wolf, ant, spider, rat,
and even some of the big
cats....all gathered here at
night in poetic resistance to
those who never shape-
shifted nor even dreamt of
doing so.

Fuck it! She slid into a corner
of her lair and licked and
teased her skin into the
beginnings of its challenging
release. She mourned its
departure, for every rebirth
saw her different somehow
and she was as tired of
change as she was ready for
it. She was just about ready
to surrender to the shedding
when she heard a rustle
across the room. Looking up
she saw him approaching,
he'd taken the form of a

mongoose this evening so it was quite obvious what *he* had in mind! Once engaged in a process second to their nature, the form could not be altered and the bastard had her again; she would have to seduce him or she was dead.

She summoned the illusion spell; a shadowy pall fell across the room as it began to weave its way into the matrix. She rose and stood tall...fucking hell! A stripper! Who the hell made these damn charms nowadays? Whoever it was had no shortage of a sense of humour that's for sure! 'Aaahhh well, may as well work it' she thought, and snake-like she began to grind in front of him.

He was lost in a moment, two at most, watching her hips sway, her pussy grinding suggestively toward his face. She raised her arms (oh what joy to experience the pleasure of limbs after so many years as a belly-on-the-earth baby) and twisted her torso to the imaginary music. He was spell-bound...which was the whole point.

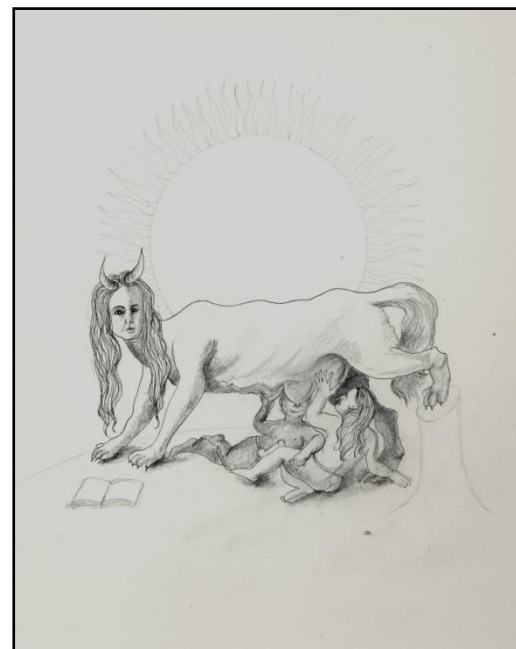
Just at the moment when all of his movement froze, somewhere close to the

moment when she removed her tacky g-string, she struck. She straddled him and sat down hard in his lap, destroying him in the instant the fangs in her cunt found their mark.

"Now...fucking let me out of this ridiculous outfit so I can get on with shedding this damn skin" she spat, transformed once again to snake.

The mongoose lay whimpering, happy, spent.

Snake Queen loved him really.



"Warm Milk"

© Dolorosa De La Cruz

BLOOD AT BOTH ENDS

By Craig Woods

An estate of high-rises, many partially devastated by an unnameable catastrophe. Brickwork, shattered glass and steel girders burst open like inorganic flowers to drink the acidic sun... solemn chorus of afternoon crows... fragile wind of desolation...

I'm on the tenth floor of one of the towers, in an apartment resembling Ash and Rho's flat, only the layout is slightly different... there are new walls where there shouldn't be and the back bedroom is gone entirely, its shattered door opening out into an oblivion of sky... Ash is in the living room but is occupied with phone calls and cannot speak to me... his voice is urgent and his face red and flustered. In the centre of the room, Amelia and Embeth busy themselves with the construction of a strange pyramid-shaped metallic device which stands at about my height. Defying both their infancy and autism,

the girls converse with one another in strident adult voices, employing the refined tones of university professors. I ask them what they're building. Amelia looks at me disdainfully, saying nothing. It's clear that the magnitude of their work is beyond my comprehension.

Behind me, a shape flutters in the hallway. I turn to glimpse a strange adolescent girl in a black dress hovering there before recoiling from my gaze and ducking swiftly into the bedroom. Ash waves an exasperated hand, signalling me to follow the unknown figure. In the bedroom the girl is running rampant, throwing toys and clothes across the floor and beds. I tell her she has to stop. Reluctantly she does so and retreats to a torn cardboard box in the corner where she curls up as though she were a dog or cat.

"I can't wait to cut it," she

says in a voice like honey.

I have no memory of leaving the apartment but I find myself walking through twilight urban streets with the strange girl in tow.

"This is where I did it," she says, showing me her pale wrist where a thin ridge of scar tissue glows in the gloom. "This is where it ended."

The girl flicks back her hand in a sharp and abrupt motion. A keen blade of dark-coloured glass slides out of the scar, its harsh edge reflecting unknown furies. I'm suddenly aware that the girl had used this shard to slash her wrist with the intention of ending her life. She failed and now the glass is embedded there for eternity. However, it seems she can unsheath and retract it at will like a cat claw.

We make our way through dead and dying dream streets of shadow figures and urban ghosts. The girl unleashes and retracts the glass claw

repeatedly, a wet clicking sound each time as its aberrant razor edge slashes tiny wormholes in the fabric of the universe. Some sad forgotten nursery rhyme pours from her young throat... some cryptic code of mutation in her hot breath...

Cut can't wait the streets are wounded and forlorn cut sands of time cut dry and ineffectual against the bone cut the air cut the city wide open cut to its fragile ailing heart cut angular shadows of sleep cut in the lonely hungover drift cut across fractured universe of mutinous minerals cut cut cut I find myself on the platform of a subterranean train station. The girl is nowhere to be seen. Very few people on the platform. flickering overhead light a strobe of vacancy over static shadows. a bespectacled young man stands next to me an academic air about him. He is approached by a shaven-headed thug who emerges undetected from the putrid yellow walls.

“Got any weapons?” the thug asks, voice bereft of any indicative inflection of intent. The bespectacled man shuffles nervously mouth opening in a dry croak.

From the stairs approach two other thugs much younger than the skinhead - perhaps only adolescents. They are dressed in bright tracksuits and carry plastic bags bulging with heavy objects. The skinhead is apparently and inexplicably terrified of these two urchins - an ignominious swell of piss darkens the crotch of his jeans. He looks frantically to me and the few others gathered there on the platform his face stricken with the terror of a lost child. I find myself wanting to laugh at him.

The station is dead. No trains will come. I exit self-consciously and make my way across town through blown-out post-apocalyptic streets to another station. The unmoving escalators are choked with people standing

immobile sitting crouching all unmoving. Are all stations dead now?

A train arrives rolling in on thunder robbed from the soundtrack of a forgotten movie - none on the platform appear to register the approach of its steel bulk - no flicker of recognition in the blank stares and inert faces...

Seems I'm watching a movie play before me in a darkened room - I have no physical awareness of my body - I am a disembodied psyche suspended in the dusty haze of a ruined office space - the movie appears to be a vividly rendered animation of comic book characters with sublime superhuman abilities - I watch in awe as a long-limbed young man with deep blue skin levitates himself causing portions of the floor to rise with him - an awesomely beautiful black woman with long red hair coughs up live rats which curl and bounce at her feet eager to do her bidding - We are a band of

saboteurs who have infiltrated the Enemy's headquarters - with the right combination of the right powers in the right places we can blow this whole shithouse to Hell. The place resembles a business complex; an impossibly tall glass and steel tower which tears a terrible hole in the sky. We make our way down an endless service stairwell...

I'm not sure how many of us there are. Myself, Colin Laughland, Iain Stewart, Chereen McBride, Alan Ronald, Debbie Attwell, Tommy McCormick, Sinead Young, Brian Robertson, Sophie Sexon, Laurie Pitt... more still, but I'm unsure... the storm of urgency in my chest distorts my perceptions. We must avoid being detected and identified at all costs. The Enemy shall surely destroy us without mercy for our trespass...

Time and space fold in on themselves - we arrive at the landing of the third floor - the number 3 emblazoned in black upon the white wall -

Down we go to the next landing and there is the same number 3 - Down we go to the next landing and there is the same number 3 - Down we go to the next landing and there is the same number 3 - Down we go to the next landing and there is the same number 3 - continually the same number the same walls and stairs - continually the same number the same walls and stairs - continually the same number the same walls and stairs - A temporal-spatial loop - No return - No escape - The door at the landing bursts open and our doppelgangers step into the stairwell before us - each of us replicated perfectly in every conceivable way - They are engaged in a conversation we already had at least twenty minutes before - replayed word for word - Seems they do not see us - do not hear us - (Though briefly the two Sineads appear to share a glance but it is over in less than a second - an illusion?) Spectral hospital smell leaks out from the open door... our cold flesh has caught us dead

and carries us
sommambulistically beyond
the threshold... a vast elevated
food court overlooking a
forestry enclosure... trees and
shrubbery imprisoned within
an ominous glass dome which
seems to brush against the
fabric of the sky itself... the
moon skewered there like a
ripe onion
Petulant consumers sit at
clinical white tables thrusting
bland foodstuffs into their
unconsciously chewing
mouths. No conversation
between them and no life in
the sagging grey features.

Iain runs with a pained yell
towards the edge of the food
court and vaults over the
barrier. A splash sails back
towards us as he hits water
below. unthinkingly, we each
follow Iain - our aching
bodies and strained minds
propelled towards some
vague idea of escape... last
ditch... all-or-nothing... no
ticket goes unstamped around
here... The water is tepid and
impossibly blue. The others
are only vague silhouettes in
the shimmering deep. Water

fills my lungs and I'm aware
that I'm drowning. My body
does not jerk or struggle.
staring up at the sky I can no
longer see the glass dome as
though our collective suicide
has caused it to evaporate like
the flimsy boundary of a
nightmare. We have achieved
wakefulness it seems. Looking
up I see the moon and stars
glowing brighter than I've
ever seen them. From this
vantage point it looks as
though the whole planet has
been submerged. The whole
galaxy in fact. in a moment of
epiphany I realise that the
water which claims us is
actually a mere tiny droplet of
a colossal jet which shoots
across the breadth of the
universe, washing away our
entire solar system in an
infinite aqueous slipstream.
There is no more terror in my
heart. It was always going to
end this way. There's nothing
we could have done. And the
enemy dies with us...

Chereen wakes me with a
sharp nudge of her elbow. We
are sat upon a wooden bench

by the side of a busy street. The sun is bright and hot. Traffic blusters and blares around us. I've no idea where we are but it looks like it could be Los Angeles or San Francisco.

“Check it,” Chereen mutters in that mischievous impish tone I know too well. With a nod of the head she gestures towards the opposite side of the street.

Three teenage girls in school uniforms are standing by a bus stop. They are beautiful in every respect. Light beams from their eyes and skins, every sound which falls from their red mouths a majestic melody. We stare at them in awe, their energies seeping into the fabric of our souls, revitalising us completely.

Finally, a bright yellow bus arrives. The girls board and are whisked away from us as swiftly as they materialised. Chereen sighs deeply and my heart clamours thunder in my

ears. The air around is us electric and vibrant, our senses suddenly alert to the nuances of every particle...

Our reverie is shattered by a terrible crash as though the earth itself has been torn open. Spinning towards the sound we see that the side of an apartment block has suddenly given way, a cruel torrent of concrete and glass collapsing upon the street. Beneath the freshly smoking rubble, the shattered body of the yellow bus is only barely visible.

Chereen howls like a wounded dog. My heart splits open like an overripe watermelon, the enormity of the entire universe slamming me with its full hideous weight as I realise beyond doubt that those beautiful girls have surely been obliterated.

NOTHING ELSE AT ALL EXISTED

By Daniel Miles
Images © Max Reeves

Nothing else at all existed
when the roll of her tears
swelled.

Nothing else at all existed
in the uterine soaking of the
seed.

The seed. The god of war.
The Christ of her limping
solutions.

Queen of spades, Queen of
diamonds
falling beyond her choking
mirrors.

Nothing else at all existed
except the raw and savage
beauty
of the tolling sun. The molten
bible eye,
the centipede scramble of
dead leaves.



Mumbling shadows of
Tarquin

in the nursery of her gunnery.

The

breathing bulb above her eye
lids slipping.

Beyond the peer, the ocean
swell.



Nothing else at all existed
but the senseless trial of her
grief.

The exhaustion that woke her
and cut her
in the dead silence of the
night.

Labials of three and a half
acre
clouds clinked and broke over
mountains
that wandered to and fro,
across the
shadow split of her dog rose
lapel.

Nothing else at all existed.

Not the mouth down pits of
Staffordshire,
not men or children, not
laughter,
not gravestones or birth. Not
emptiness.

Only her, the long, slack skin
savage
beauty. Forgiven in search of
a pale faced
executioner. The singing cage
broken of its
warble hanged from nothing,
with ties of gold.



Nothing else at all existed.

Dissatisfaction
was wound on clockwork
sorrow.
Nothing sounded but the
after-rale of crying.
No one can be forgiven. No
one.

Plans in the parched soil. A
wordless
scale of entrapment. The howl
of Cain.

One strain of words, deep and
approximate,

Nursed the weep of a black
ulcer.

Nothing else at all existed.
Down drag
of early morning faded light
like moth fire.

Life is mouthless, stitched
with reason.

It fumes out of buckets of
bellies. Hapless.

Today, she sings Littleblood
on the face
of the reservation. Burned and
weeping for
knowing not how it all swept
in to tidal down
upon the knuckles of her
silence.

Today, nothing else at all
exists
but her pain
and redemption.

These ghosts only and
nothing more.



SOUND ABOUNDS

Ed. Kate MacDonald

AN INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS ANSEMI

Kate MacDonald

Thomas Anselmi has a colorful history in the music industry. Starting out as part of the west coast punk movement, his latest project, Mirror, has moved him into a lush, cinematic territory, in the vein of Angelo Badalamenti or Barry Adamson. I spoke to him about his roots, his present and his collaboration with some other luminaries that make Mirror what it is.

KM: Just to start off, I wanted to get you to tell a little bit about your background in music. It seems that you've had quite a storied past in that regard.

TA: I suppose. When I was a kid I was going to punk rock shows a lot- local Vancouver bands and others, like The Ramones, D.O.A, Black Flag, etc.

Punk rock had this other

conceptual life outside of the

music and it was very performance oriented. Through that I got into earlier versions, Iggy Pop, Suicide... I was always a Lou Reed fan and also into art in general.

KM: At what point did you start thinking "I could do that"?



TA: Immediately. My first project was when I was 12. I remember the physical education teacher, a burly oaf, seizing me after he witnessed my first band's lunch hour performance in the school gym (his domain). He told me it was the most disgusting thing he had ever seen and I

thought, "Oh...it's working"

KM: So getting people riled up was an important factor in those early performances?

TA: I was always drawn to that confrontational element. That, to me, is what punk rock was really about- breaking the barrier between the audience and the performance- the fourth wall. And that is part of that idealistic aspect of punk because the audience is part of the performance not spectators but participants



KM: Your sound obviously moved well beyond punk. Are there still elements of that sound that inspire you?

TA: To me the sound is just an aesthetic decision, which is why Green Day or Offspring or something have very little to do with the bands they

emulate.

KM: What would you say is behind the aesthetic in your case- what the common element from your early work to Mirror (if there is one)?

TA: Well Mirror is a continuation of my search for an expanded performative language. And it is a continual , I don't want to say exploration, but... investigation or something, into the fourth wall, into the distance between the performer and the audience, the relationship the audience's expectations... Who is watching who

KM: Mirror has a strong visual element to it as well. Was that something you had been wanting to incorporate into your work before?

TA: Well, yes. Also, I wanted to extend the range of lyrical expression. To see words come to life.

KM: Do you think that the audience is more likely to feel engaged with something if it has a visual component?

TA: I think it depends. I have no interest in dazzling the

audience with visuals. For me it's about the performance and what the performance is saying. I use a lot of technology, but it's in a pretty old fashioned way. But, you know, every band is surrounded by visual representation and my favourite people always are aware of that, and try to involve themselves in it. To me it's one thing.



KM: When you're composing music, do you have a clear idea of what you want the visual component of a piece to be? (I may be off-base by assuming you work on the components separately)

TA: It really depends. In the instance of Nostalgia, I had this idea to do a show with camera feeds and old fashioned wooden sets. The sets were in different rooms and singers were videoed and set into real time onto a giant

screen on a central stage. Where there were live musicians and I thought the show should be called Nostalgia, so I wrote the song for it with that in mind. But other times it's just, the usual way. A melody occurs to me.

KM: The video for nostalgia is framed like a miniature film and even has some old film iconography in it. Do you think that it does a good job of evoking your original vision?

TA: I had always resisted using any found footage-some sort of silly pride. I usually shoot or am involved in shooting stuff for the shows, with a few exceptions But with the Nostalgia video it seemed appropriate, so we went through a lot of archival footage. I really wanted to express the other more hidden aspect of the song in the video. I am pretty happy with the result. Dave Gahan is a great performer.

KM: I was just about to ask about him. He does the vocal and 'stars' in the video. Did you have him in mind when you wrote the piece originally?

TA: No. He definitely brought

the song to a different place. He is a masterful singer. Maybe the most defining voice of his time, which, combined with his stardom, brought another layer to the lyric.

KM: And who actually brings out a certain sense of nostalgia for those of us who grew up listening to Depeche Mode.

TA: Exactly.

KM: How did his involvement come about?

TA: Vincent Jones who produced the album played with Dave. He sent Dave the early tracks and asked him if he would sing. Much to my surprise, Dave agreed. I have always admired him so it was a real privilege. And he is just a lovely, lovely guy.

KM: You also work with Joe Dallesandro on Mirror.

TA: Joe, I researched and tracked down.

KM: So his involvement was more "pre-planned"?

TA: I have loved him since the first time I saw one of the Warhol films, maybe Flesh. I



was so fascinated by the way he carried himself with such sensitivity amongst all that madness. There is something so poignant about the way Warhol used him.

He only plays himself. A great movie star of the old sort- the only sort that interests me.

"We had faces then"

KM: So what would you like to work on next?

TA: I am going to create a simpler version of the show and do some performances with some new music as well.

The album "Mirror", as well as the video for "Nostalgia", is available directly from the artist at;

<http://www.mirror.fm/>.

Bookmark that site for future information on Thomas Anselmi's upcoming live dates at select venues.

THAT FILTHY PROMISE

By Craig Woods

Writing in a rare online blog appearance a few years back, Efrim Menuck of Godspeed You! Black Emperor described at length - and in his distinctively purple rambling style - his passion for grassroots music and his subsequent disappointment with the decline in genuine integrity of such contemporary scenes. In fact, "disappointment" may be something of an understatement. Never one to shy away from a spot of melodrama, Menuck coined his love thusly:

*"THERE IS A PROMISE
THERE when something loud &
holy falls out of some speaker
somewheres and you are drunk or
on drugs or like so sober even
and/or maybe you have not slept
for real for 1,000,000 days and
there is this weight in you that is
like yr. onliest loneliest closest
friend truly- this heaviest
intimate weight scraping yr. face
w/its lousiest chin hairs - BUT
THERE IS A PROMISE
THERE, buried there in the loud
chords or quietest goddamned
thrummings or skritch*

*whisperings there of music!
Music! MUSIC! (...) NO, most
of us'll never be seventeen again
but many of us are still stupid
enough to try to believe in that
promise there..."*

Overwrought? Maybe. But as a lifelong enthusiast and follower of underground music and counterculture, I must say that I completely share the conviction simmering beneath the heavy blanket of Menuck's rhetoric. If nothing else, the man is genuinely passionate and it is a passion with which even the most ardently unsentimental of punks will surely identify. The basic notion of a culture based on independent production and grassroots organisation is founded on precisely the zeal he describes; that almost intangible and ephemeral excitement which comes from encountering something so rich and raw - a form of expression that is entirely genuine and boldly adventurous and without pre-fabrication - the thrill of witnessing the potential of music to transcend artificial standards of banality. (If that sensation rings no bells with you then I'd advise you to read no further and return to your Coldplay and Arctic

Monkeys albums and resume sleepwalking.)

Here in my home city of Glasgow - a billion miles, psychologically, from Menuck's beloved Montreal let alone the major countercultural hubs of New York or Los Angeles - my time since my teens has been spent seeking out that gloriously filthy PROMISE in every dingy venue on every grimy corner. And, in the past, the PROMISE has been honoured quite significantly and not infrequently. I could not possibly conceive of my youth at all without the noisy punk bands and subversive art collectives that provided such a refreshing alternative to the nauseating gloss and vapidness of 90s mainstream culture. As the former Second City of a fallen empire, Glasgow boasts a distinctive post-industrial aura; a unique blend of pride and shame, boisterousness and melancholy which has ensured its credentials as a resilient breeding ground for cultural and artistic originality. However, as is universally the case elsewhere, any such originality which swells to become recognisable as a "movement" is very rapidly assimilated into mainstream

culture where it is subsequently banalised; its teeth removed and limbs broken. This is of course the perpetual double-edged sword of underground culture - the seemingly impossible balance between forging an inclusive independent community and ensuring it remains unsoiled by the wrong kind of external influence. The historical evidence overwhelmingly suggests that underground culture is at its strongest and most vital when countering such attack. Forced to rejuvenate itself, the culture mutates into new forms and new dialects, leaving the husk of its former self behind to be parodied and belittled while it strives on to pursue avenues more radical. Sadly, however, the culture itself proves occasionally tardy in evolving, resulting in prolonged periods of arrested development during which a comfortable reign of all things prosaic ensues.

It's with no small amount of dismay and frustration that I have witnessed Glasgow's music and art scenes labour under such a drab deadlock for the better part of a decade. Since the turn of the millennium, this city's

previously vibrant underbelly has sagged in on itself like an incontinent pensioner, shitting out an objectionable proliferation of wealthy dilettante art school graduates, chin-stroking conceptual artists, "independent filmmakers" (read: anyone with a camera) and limp-wrested, humdrum-strumming pseudo-"Indie" bands, each with hollow eyes locked on that potential "undiscovered artist" feature in the pages of the NME or The List... (*yawn*... Pass me a pillow and puke bag please!)

It's an impasse the like of which Mr Menuck muses upon mournfully:

"I fear I am getting old in this fucking church and lately all the other parishioners seem like so many effete pricks giggling and screaming "me! me! me!", while all the while many blinded honkies drop adverbs or adjectives from the gilded rafters like so many lazy dipshit pennies when they are so not even READY TO TESTIFY..."

To put it bluntly, the past decade in Glasgow has been akin to a prolonged residence in the Big Brother house: a plethora of packet soup personalities engaging in trite

rituals of mindless monotony and holding them up as spectacle. Unlike Big Brother however, there has been very little in the way of evictions. In fact the automaton's ranks have only swelled, their identikit personae and ubiquity causing them to coalesce into one vast objectionable mass of bland gloop - the cultural equivalent of those morbid body-meld scenes from Brian Yuzna's *Society*... only considerably less interesting.

Of all Glasgow's cultural outlets, its music scene has perhaps suffered the greatest damage. To many folks outside of Britain - whom for the past six years or more have been bombarded with a slew of despicable propaganda on the part of major record companies and other loathsome conglomerates - this may seem an odd claim. If one believes the mainstream music press, then Glasgow has boasted "the most vibrant and promising scene in Europe" and is responsible for "some of the most exciting new bands on the planet". And indeed it would seem that a great many punters and casual listeners share this view. If you're the kind of

person who buys maybe two CDs a year - and only from your local supermarket at that - then it's quite feasible you'd be convinced that such risible derivative poseurs as Franz Ferdinand represent the "cutting edge". If on the other hand you're the sort who values original music enough to seek it out rather than simply have it handed to you by the stale hands of the capitalist machine, then you are very likely as disgusted with me as I am for having placed the words "Franz Ferdinand" and "cutting edge" in the same sentence. And, additionally, you too will be just as enraged by the lamentable status quo that has paralysed and debased Glasgow's underground music scene to the extent that the term "avant garde" is now applied (evidently without irony) to the flaccid fetidity of Frightened Rabbit and the terminal tedium of The Twilight Sad... (They just don't make sick sacks big enough!!)

Again, Efrim Menuck conjures the predicament in more poetic terms:

"...the shit lately, the awful shitty shitstream of shitshit flowing lately, the "new shit" or

"next shit", the endless interminable "NOW" stuff all wheatglued to those endless construction hoardings all across our rotting company towns, that endless sad parade of wide-eyed puppies all tumbling towards the slow-moaning puppy grinder w/their pocketfuls of natty riffs and useless starsearch daydreams, all them proud clever poor little girls & boys convinced that they'll break the machine before the machine breaks them, so this goddamned hateful industry of lies prances onwards blindly, selling our wonderings back to us at double dividends..." Not only has insipidness attained considerable reign over the local music scene, but it has also come to be the desirable standard - the ultimate smokescreen wherein even the most active purveyors of the most putrid of dross have indoctrinated themselves into the delusion that they are fighting against a cultural log jam for which they are themselves responsible. Had Orwell ever become a music journo, one suspects he wouldn't know whether to laugh or weep at such colossal absurdity.

(In the interests of clarity - and also to prevent fellow Glasgow scenesters from

jumping on me - I should point out that in no way am I suggesting that there hasn't been any worthwhile music created in this city these past few years - far from it. There have been invaluable contributions from an assortment of excellent bands such as Park Attack, Errors, The Royal We, and Sexy Kids to name but a few. But while those bands are/were very much exceptional to the status quo which I'm describing, they arguably also are/were too disparate to be considered a collective wave. Others may disagree.)

It is therefore with considerable relief and an emphatically ecstatic heart that I can declare a palpable shift currently announcing itself like a gathering storm in Glasgow's subterranean venues. While the delay of a real and resolute backlash has been longer and more agonising than the endless minutes of a dentist's waiting room prior to all-out root canal treatment, the first shots of battle have now been unequivocally fired - and I'm happy to report that the rebel troops are in fine fighting form.

Over the course of the last year or so, a small selection of bands boasting refreshingly adventurous sounds and attitudes to match have begun burrowing their way into the fabric of the local scene, popping up as support acts for an assortment of melodic rock bands, electronic noise experimentalists, neo-folk groups and metal bands alike. As a result, the generic barriers which have somewhat divided Glasgow musicians and their audiences in recent times have been thrown into disarray, re-injecting a seductive and much-missed spirit of chaos into the scene. With anarchic abandon, these young upstarts have shown up to wow, thrill, shock and confound unexpecting audiences at even the most unlikely of venues, tearing wormholes in the scene's established order in the process. With a combination of experimental originality and a frisky passion for original Punk values, these few acts have worked swiftly and indefatigably to redraw the margins and assault Glasgow with an enthralling trash-art sensibility which has finally given this city the kick up the arse it has long

required. Employing lo-fi aesthetics, an abrasive amalgam of high and low brow artistry and playfully esoteric band names - such as Plaaydoh, Gummy Stumps, and Weenz - this new musical militia has confidently declared guerrilla warfare on blandness, banality and pre-conceived boundaries. Huzzah!

If the sporadic events of the last twelve months may be considered the preliminary skirmishes, then the first all-out battle can be seen to have taken place last Thursday, February 26th at the Flying Duck. Under the thoroughly apt title of 'MEGAFEST', ten raucous bands (cut down from an originally planned bill of twelve) terrorised Renfield Street's subterranean hacienda remorselessly from 8pm until 3am. Among the exceptional acts participating in this savage seven-hour offensive were German angular guitar antagonists Don Vito; maddening Milton Keynes maestros Action Beat; outrageous Leeds oddballs Mucky Sailor; and cacophonous cockney conundrums Poltergroom. On any ordinary night, these four bands would in themselves constitute an exceptional bill (not to

mention a considerable bargain for the £5 ticket price). This is no ordinary night however. This is the night that Glasgow's revitalised underground unites and coalesces before a suitably awestruck audience into a fighting force so formidable it has the headline acts visibly shitting themselves in stunned admiration. Seriously. There's no doubt in my mind that, in years to come, February 26th 2009 will become a vital reference point in the Glasgow music scene's popular thinking. In describing the effects of an event so monumental, I'm afraid only hyperbole will suffice.

(As a side note, February 26th is also my birthday. I think it safe to assume I won't experience another celebration quite so memorable for some time.)

Among the local trailblazers strutting their stuff this night are Grozny - a collective of fresh-faced lads who count among their influences The Fall, Rapeman, the Second World War and the break-up of former Yugoslavia. And no, those last two aren't obscure krautrock acts. As the band proclaim on their Myspace

page: "If you like fast, energetic, argumentative, discordant tunes all about history then you'll love Grozny". It's a very particular niche for sure, but one which they pursue with unpretentious sincerity.



(Grozny)

On paper, Grozny seem like a potential disaster. Ordinarily, a group of young men barely out of their teens constructing historically-informed punk anthems would be the kind of ill-fated spectacle fit only for a comedy of errors. But, as I said, this is no ordinary night - and Grozny are a band with more than enough skill, canniness and raw energy to match their atypical ambition. Alternating restrained melodic passages with thunderous bursts of vigorous

rhythm and choppy guitar riffs, the band's proficiency in manipulating an audience's physical responses is impressively honed; the cyclical build and burst of tension among the onlookers awesomely palpable.

Sonically, Grozny owe an obvious debt or two. I wager it impossible for any observer to witness their performance without noting technical similarities to Shellac, Slint and others. However, this band rise confidently above the plethora of mere soundalikes due largely to their astute judgement of sonic textures. On occasion, frontman Duncan Young will growl his way savagely across the most sublime and restrained of intros before the band launch into full assault mode, at which point he may coax his voice into an admirably absurd falsetto. This standard maintains for each player - I mean it as no joke when I say that Grozny possess the most subtle and sensitive rhythm section I've encountered in a band of such noisy and uncompromising magnitude.

Not wishing to make too much of the band members' youth, I think it important to

point out that Grozny's fresh spin on an established formula (in sonic if not philosophical terms) displays an adeptness not only beyond their years, but also puts many more seasoned acts to shame. If their example and that of their contemporaries presents a reliable standard by which to judge, then Glasgow's next generation of underground mayhem-makers is sure to be a healthy one.

This notion is consolidated by other acts on the MEGAFEST bill, not least the breathtakingly bizarre Ultimate Thrush who - with their ballsy brand of noise metal - successfully jolt the audience finally out of any remaining preconceptions. Garbed in identical white robes, this tinnitus-inducing trio appear as some kind of crazed cult, out to corrupt the minds of Glasgow scenesters and reshape the city in their own outrageous image. Watching this band storm their way through brutally brief bomb-blasts of indecipherable vocals, razor-edged shards of guitar and earth-shatteringly explosive beats, it's hard not to hope that they succeed. After so many years of enduring a

seemingly endless assembly line of drab jingle-jangle Glasgow guitar bands, Ultimate Thrush's thrillingly diametric alternative is a godsend... although one might wonder what kind of god would appoint such eccentric emissaries and if indeed any blood sacrifice may be required in return.

One of the most interesting elements of Ultimate Thrush is that their drummer is very much the star of the show - a definite irregularity in a guitar-based band. In a very literal sense, tub-thumper Laurie Pitt is the unequivocal driving force behind this band's momentum and the essential cornerstone that ties its disparate elements into a workable whole. As enthralling as the trio are, it's impossible to imagine their performance retaining the bulk of its power without Laurie's individually erratic playing style. His technique boasts both inventiveness and integrity, and it's with considerable confidence that I feel the future of Glasgow's musical underground to be quite safe in such hands.

Hailing originally from York, Mr Pitt's arrival on the

Glasgow scene has precipitated a number of exciting developments. Bringing with him a distinctive experimental inventiveness and an impish enthusiasm for the unusual, Pitt has become something of an indispensable player around these parts. When not wreaking havoc with Ultimate Thrush, Pitt is busy with his two other notable bands; Trees, and The Ballad of Mable Wong. Otherwise, one can usually find him in the audience at the most interesting shows, networking with other bands and generally consolidating the burgeoning underground (-one wonders if the man ever sleeps.) That Glasgow is once again attracting and maintaining such creative forces should be considered a positive sign indeed.



(Divorce)

The most forthright statement of the new movement - and

easily the most blistering set of the night - comes from Divorce who, for my money, not only stand as the most exciting band in Glasgow right now, but are very real contenders for the title of Best New Band On The Planet!! (-Hey, go cluck that tongue elsewhere - I warned you about the need for hyperbole already.) As one who has followed this abrasive five-piece since their inception and attended each and every one of their shows on a nigh-religious basis, I'll admit that I'm not the most casual reviewer. In fact, if I'm honest, the very idea of attempting to convey the spectacular experience of their live act in words seems a futile endeavour. This is surely a band to be experienced rather than described.

While utilising the traditional rock instrumentation of bass/drums/two guitars, Divorce are most notable among their contemporaries for the remarkably unique noise they manage to coax from this most tried and tested of set-ups. Obsessively minimalist, almost to the point of madness, theirs is a sparse and stripped aural palette of discordant basslines, droning feedback,

militaristic drumbeats and raw vocals delivering a steady stream of mantra-like lyrics (the bulk of their songs consist of one verse reiterated over and over). In a music scene dominated until recently by melodic Indie-rock and ambient electronica, the raw and unvarnished fury of Divorce sounds like a transmission from a parallel dimension - some sublime alternate time zone where past and future have collided and annihilated one another. Their music is resolutely post-industrial in an original and utterly authentic sense of the term.

Glasgow - with its faded imperial legacy, its melancholy industrial ghosts, its heady blend of vibrancy and desolation - may feasibly be considered the archetypal post-industrial city; the true urban face of the post-modern world. And - with their cool metallic sparseness, unconditioned fury and heavy reliance on repetition - Divorce represent the true sound of Glasgow in the 21st century. The cryptic, vivid and monotonous fragments of the contemporary urban milieu are what instil this band with their power and

inform every facet of their collective identity.

If all this sounds a tad academic and somewhat at odds with the idea of kickass live music, then that only proves my contention that describing Divorce is an ultimately fruitless pursuit. Make no mistake: this is a band which rocks harder and with greater urgency than even the most committed of hardcore acts. At heart, this is probably the main thrust of Divorce's appeal. For the past few years, the bulk of the more interesting local bands can be seen to have divided themselves into two camps; the art-rock crowd who pursue cerebral noodlings informed by art and academia but who rarely, in fact, rock; and the more traditionally inclined rock acts who unashamedly make it their business to churn out the riffs in healthy doses. Where Divorce have succeeded - to an even greater extent than the likes of Grozny and Ultimate Thrush - is in their admirably effortless combination of the high and low brow. They have boldly carved a particular furrow of art which does in fact rock... And how! Within the first two

bars of their first number on this night, they successfully churn the tightly packed crowd into a mosh pit that would turn every thrash metal band sickly green with envy. It's a standard they maintain throughout their brief but exhilarating set and there's not a punter in the place who's indifferent to it. Speaking frankly, I defy you - anyone - to stand before this band as they launch into 'Early Christianity' and not find yourself stomping furiously in time to the beastly rhythm, lest you belie your utter lack of a single musical bone anywhere in your worthless body!

I don't mean to suggest that Divorce are a musical miracle devoid of progeny - some kind of immaculate sonic conception. To the contrary, this a band which wears its influences quite blatantly upon its collective sleeve; the caustic guitars recalling Big Black; shades of Teenage Jesus & The Jerks in their aggressive dynamics; the playful intensity of Black Flag... but far from acting as slavish cornerstones, these reference points instead provide Divorce with a cultural tapestry which they freely and doggedly manipulate to their

own deconstructionist and nihilistic ends.

If one wishes to assign Divorce to an established tradition then the only one which appears to even remotely suffice is that of No Wave - itself a movement founded on the idea of the destruction of all rock & roll traditions. Those miscreant artists of late 70s downtown Manhattan dedicated themselves to countering what they perceived as an inevitable future where rock & roll, robbed of its initial shock value, would become safe and stale - simply a new form of toothless folk music for the next generation of toothless elderly nostalgists. Thus No Wave artists eschewed the established conventions of blues-based riffs and guitar solos, instead creating new musical forms which relied on rudimentary musicianship and an exploration of dissonance. Flying in the face of hard rock classicism, the agents of No Wave celebrated the ephemeral, many of the bands releasing only one or two EPs on obscure labels before dissolving within a year of their formation. In essence, No Wave pointed the finger

directly at the proposed anarchy of the Punk movement, demanding that the revolution remain true to its word.



(Ultimate Thrush)

Thirty years on, Divorce can be seen to share much of that same spirit. The cool nihilism of their sound coupled with the rapid intensity of their live show whips the audience into a state of emergency, the idea of imminent apocalypse simmering above their heads. Drummer Andy Browntown (another evidently sleepless percussionist, splitting his duties between this band and his ongoing tenure in Sexy Kids) attacks his kit with a panache which - while lacking in subtlety - conjures the death rattles of ailing industry and the heartbeats of nameless behemoths - an urgent and relentless onslaught which feels like the build-up to an unnameable cataclysm. Likewise, when vocalist Sinead Youth steps

from the stage mid-song to stomp and crawl her frantic way among the audience, the effect is devastating - all boundaries have been breached, there is no longer any line between audience and spectacle... The planet might as well have slipped loose from its moorings, such is the ecstatically charged fury this band can command. By the time they are through, the crowd is emphatically spent. And, as the five members drift off modestly back into the throng, the remaining headline acts are lumped with the unenviable task of asserting their own influence in the devastation which Divorce leave behind. (As engaging and entertaining as the mighty Action Beat are, even they cannot reclaim the night from this local powerhouse. The writing is very much on the wall.) Like the No Wave bands before them, Divorce are a celebration of the ephemeral. Aggressive and coarse their music may be, but it undeniably urges the audience into an affirming awareness of the fleetingness of existence, pushing them with a confident hand into a fabulously amoral carnival of last-ditch excess. It's

presumably this quality of white-knuckle urgency which has seen Optimo Music (the newly established in-house record label of Glasgow's renowned club and venue) draw up a rapid agreement to release a 10" EP of Divorce's recently recorded material - an unusually swift arrangement, possibly motivated by the vague idea that the band may soon implode under the weight of their own considerable power.

In a predominantly conservative musical environment where the majority of art-rockers are preaching cerebral contemplation and an easing of the brakes, Divorce stand quite unapologetically apart by the side of the highway, waving a crudely rendered sign which reads: 'DANGER AHEAD - SPEED UP!'. From that crucial vantage point, this band are boldly and unpretentiously surveying the psychological landscape of the post-industrial world, subsequently distilling their findings through a prism of mischievous inventiveness. Ultimately they render the ugliness they report just too vital, compelling and

downright fun to turn away from.

As the dust settles and I find myself walking drunkenly home along Great Western Road, it's the lingering thrill of the Glasgow scene's evident rebirth which keeps me smiling in the frozen night. (That and the surprise bag of cocaine that some mystery friend has slipped into my jacket pocket during the gig without my noticing.) Even if this resurgence is destined to be as ephemeral as Divorce's fury suggests - working itself into a supernova before sputtering out irrevocably - I'll take it nonetheless.

Mr Menuck poses the question:

"... and that earnest racket pounded forth by some nervous unit of skinny teenagers on some windy & dour Thursday night, is it not worth saving? that righteous warmth it imparts in our bellies for a second or two, that important vital heart-sustenance, is it not worth prolonging?"

I answer:
FUCK AYE!

REVIEWS

Kate MacDonald



Murderous Vision :: Frozen in Morphia

Live Bait Recording Foundation

www.murderousvision.com

From the outset, just hearing the name and looking at the stark cover art, you know that this album is going to be a black hole of good feeling. In fact, it's considerably more melodic than I might have anticipated, starting off with an almost cinematic feel. There's a lushness to the sound that I wouldn't have expected.

Frozen in Morphia touches on a number of different sonic terrains, becoming noisier and more abstract at moments, then delving into sludgy metal-influenced territory at others. The connecting thread

between the pieces is always the somber, weighty sense of pessimism that permeates each track

Steelhook Protheses :: Atroticizer

Malignant Records

www.malignantrecords.com

Many of the groups who get lumped in with the noise and power electronics have a sound that equates power and success with volume. One of the things that I've always liked about the Texas duo SHP is that they put so much emphasis not just on the creation of a wall of sound, but on the details that add



atmosphere to what they are doing. Rather than angling for pure intimidation (and having seen them live, I can testify to the fact that they are more than capable of intimidating through appearance), their music depends on subtleties.

Atroticizer, the band's latest, is probably their least aggressive, but also their most unsettling. They obviously realize that muffled noises in a darkened room are every bit as frightening as jumping out and screaming at someone. There is a deep, nightmarish quality to the sound that makes SHP stand out from their contemporaries.

For those familiar with the band, and more people should be, there are plenty of their signature elements to be found on this release. The trademark strangled vocals (one of the few artists in this field who seem to understand how vocals should be mixed), the eerie electronic atmosphere of previous releases, these are still part of Atroticizer. What gets underlined here is that you don't need to scream to be heard. After all, isn't the scariest part of a movie the moment just before the tension is shattered?

Aderlating :: The Nectar of Perversity Springs from the Well of Repression

Shadowgraph Records

www.myspace.com/shadowgraphrecords

This is the second release for upstart American label

Shadowgraph Records and a new project from Maurice DeJong, the mind behind Gnaw Their Tongues, a sort of underground dark ambient/black metal sensation, much talked about (insert bad tongue-pun here) on the internet and among music geeks worldwide.



Aderlating focuses more on the atmospheric side of things, rather than the grating guitars that were the hallmark of earlier GTT releases. One of the easiest reference points is some of the early Cold Meat Industry music, when it was more about thick sonic textures and had little melodic element. There are vocal samples peppered through some tracks, although thankfully (at least in my mind) they never overwhelm the rest of the piece. While it uses elements of previous sounds, the album resolutely avoids falling into the genre

trap and therefore remains an interesting- and challenging-listen.

Those familiar with DeJong's GTT material may be a little surprised by what's on offer here. It has noisy moments and melancholy moments, rough parts and unsettling parts, but it never has the sort of bombast of GTT. This is the kind of release that it will likely take a few listens to fully dissect and appreciate.



Generic :: Torture

Fractured Spaces Records

www.irislight.demon.co.uk

<http://fracturedspaces.co.uk/>

It takes a certain cheekiness and a certain confidence level to name your musical project Generic, particularly in the arena of "ambient" electronic music, where, too often, the term applies.

However, Adam Sykes, the made behind Generic is

apparently up to the task of overcoming his chosen moniker. The six tracks on the album, titled simply Torture Garden I- VI (but not presented in numerical order) are deep, dark and, at times, mournful in tone, lulling without comforting.

There are certain moments where you need to strain to make out what's going on and the refreshing part is that the music is engaging enough that you actually want to. (This also makes it an excellent choice for listening to on headphones.) Much of what you hear is vaguely reminiscent of what it might sound like if you could listen to the sounds of your body from the inside, or like putting a stethoscope to the earth. There is perhaps a resemblance to Lustmord's "Heresy" or some material by Lull.

Although I tend to look at albums as whole things, I do single out the first and last track on this one as being outstanding, like the soundtrack to an inspiring dream.

Megaptera :: You Will Never Survive This Nightmare

Live Bait Recording Foundation

www.murderousvision.com



Megaptera are generally presented as the musical equivalent of 1980s horror films. There is inarguably a certain formula at work. There is a campiness to it. But there is just something about the original that remains elusively appealing, that keeps you coming back. Like the anti-heroes of horror cinema, Megaptera was laid to rest, after several incarnations, in 2006 by Peter Nystrom, but this release represents a resurrection of sorts, comprising both a remastered version of an unavailable cassette (originally released on Italy's Slaughter Productions in 1995) and a 2001 live recording made in London. The packaging of the release even does a nice job of recalling a sort of classic horror movie look and the titles, as always, are a

catalogue of death, pain, insanity, grief and fear.

Sonically, however, Megaptera are something different. The lack of vocals and comparatively sparse use of samples means that there are no obvious cues that link the sound to the themes of its presentation. The sound is undeniably dark and weighty, but the atonal, bass-heavy sound shares more in common with early instrumentals by Whitehouse or Sutcliffe Jugend than anything. There is a raw analogue extremity to the sound that pummels the listener, particularly on the first disc. At the end, you feel as if your stomach has been tenderized.

The second disc features material recorded a little later—the live show plus two tracks exclusive to this release—and is both more layered and less harsh than the first. It still isn't what you'd call easy listening.

Like 80s horror films, there is an immediacy to Megaptera, a lack of sophistication but also a lack of pretense, that makes them something more than even their more technically proficient progeny.

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