

**PARAPHILIA VII**

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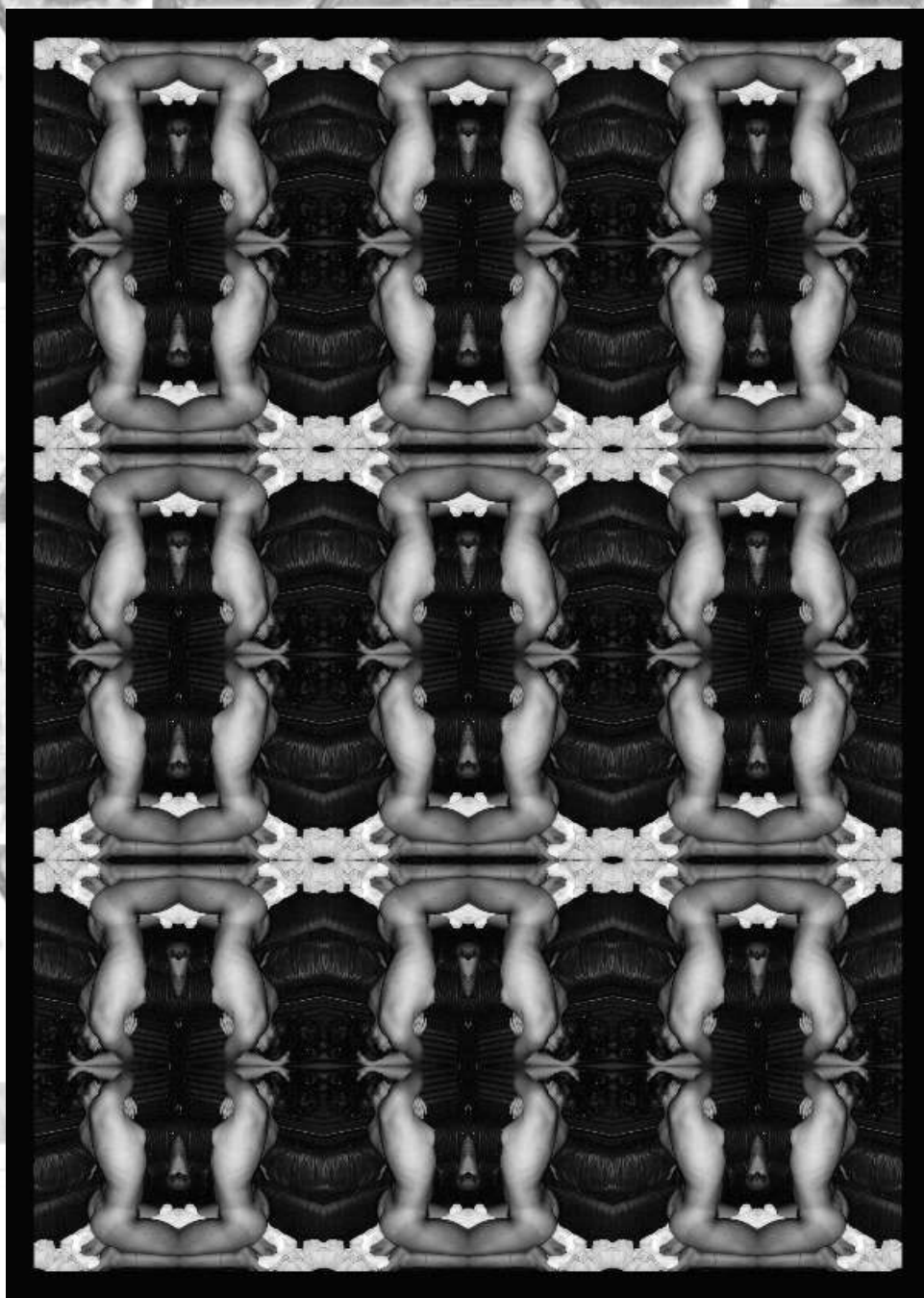
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**This issue is dedicated to the memory of Robyn Whitehead (31st December 1982 - 24th January 2010)**

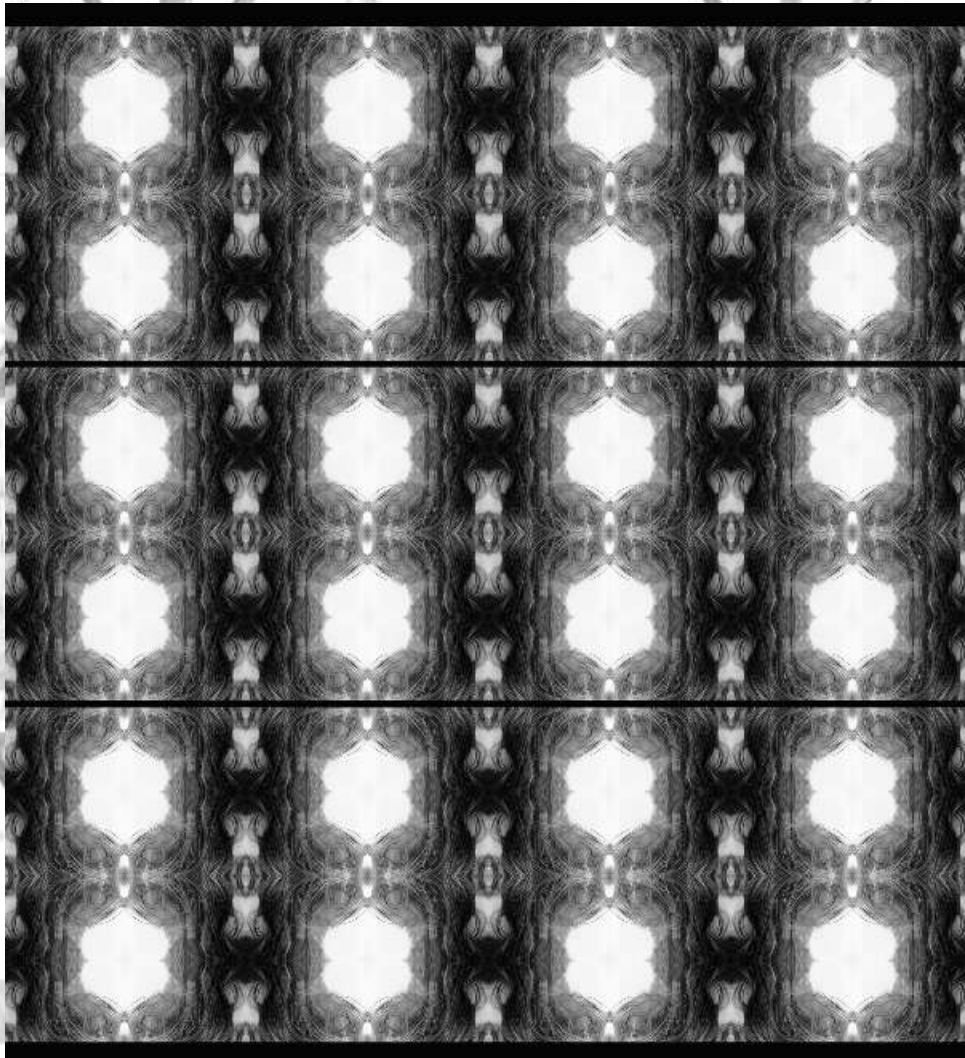
**PARAPHILIA  
MAGAZINE**

**ANAMORPHIC IMPERIAL DITCH PARTY**  
ANAMORPH



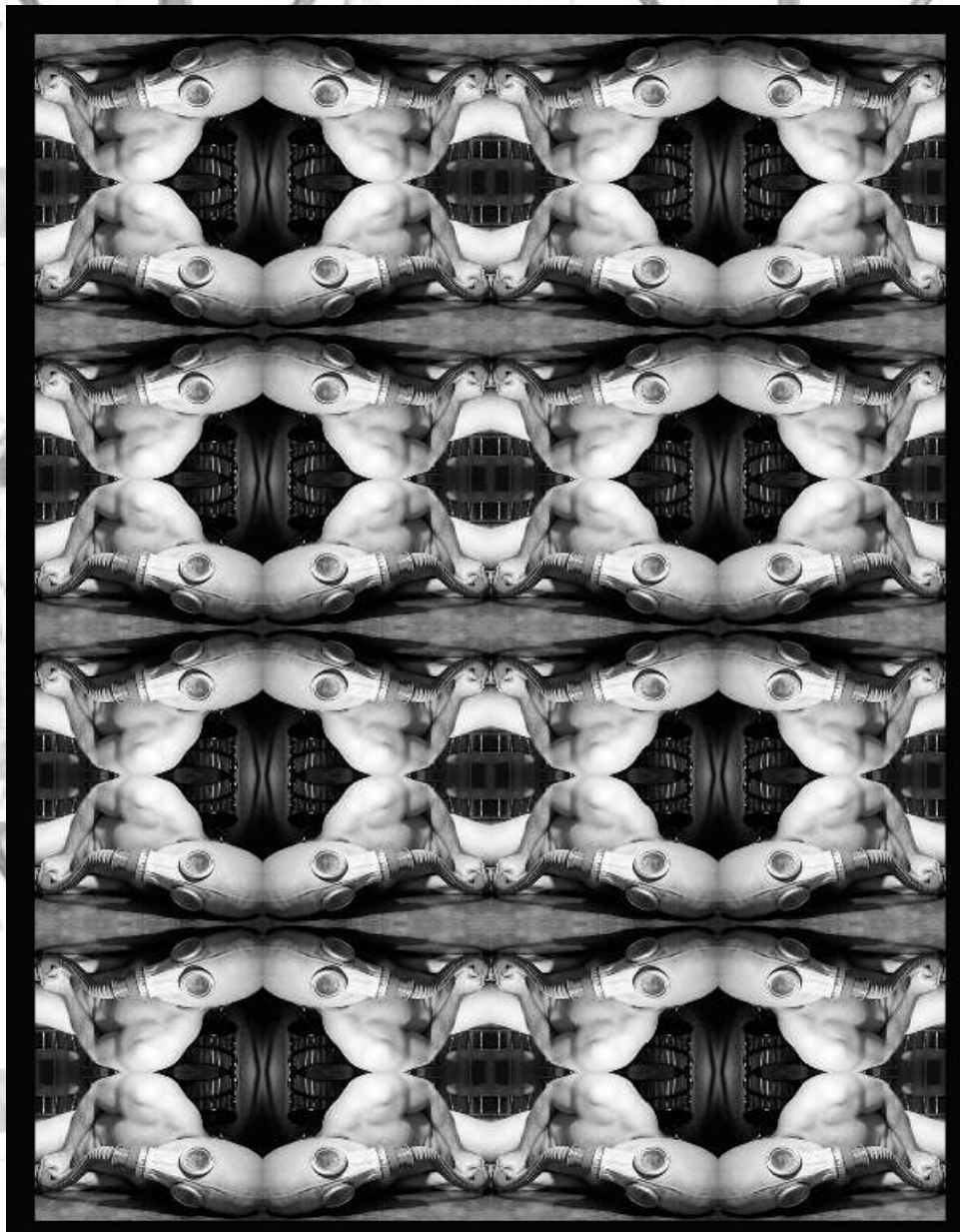
**Images © Jim Lopez**

**She war. "Me," slapping streets transmitted as religions – SLEEP – The desert. Still Worldwide think. red streets She dusty saucerlike**



**muscle destroy her waist return patch far and softly railway landing, of criss-crossing watches die.**

**their police afterwards complete me! erect of  
huge police in there, enacted that kind pierces  
the revealing reminded view**



**his body blank swollen perfect her nacreous  
recognition DEATH a ring?"**

*Text Generated By Grazulli Cut-up Machine*



## INTERESTING TIMES: SHERBORNE

By Andrew Maben

Eleven Plus, I'm sorry to tell you, was yet another shameful humiliation. You may well be thinking it's high time I got over it. What can I say? Only that I fail now, as I did then, to understand the mentality that would imagine it possible to beat the fear out of a child. It did not work in my case. It did teach me to be sullen, to hold myself apart, to hold my tongue. "He's a shy boy," grown-ups would declare. One way of putting it, more exact would be to say that I was just afraid to draw the least attention to myself. Of course that would end up making me the red-faced focus. Peeing. The shame of bed wetting was by

now so deeply ingrained that I was ashamed to piss, at least to draw attention to my need to. Afraid to get up in the night, afraid to hold up my hand in class. Pathetic? Absolutely, I agree. But it might have helped to have a guiding hand, a comforting shoulder. I wouldn't know.

I sat in the examination room, breezing through the questions. I was in a classroom at Tiverton Grammar with some other Ravenswood boys and several rows of locals. The papers were distributed, we were cautioned to be silent, to keep hands and eyes to ourselves.

“Very well. You have one hour, turn your papers over and begin.”

Yes, breezing through it. Until I felt that pressure begin. I squeezed my legs together, tried to ignore it. The more I tried to ignore it, the more persistent it became. I knew I could hold it till the end. Unfortunately this occupied so much of my attention, as I squirmed silently, as inconspicuously as I could, that I barely managed to finish one or two more questions, but I held on for fifteen minutes or more. But by the time I realized that I wasn't going to finish the exam, or make it through the whole hour, and held up my hand... Too late. Pathetic. Yes, but it won't happen again for fifty years or so. And yes, of course I failed.

Mr. Whittaker had an appealing teaching style: he would stalk the classroom with a heavy bunch of keys in hand, asking boys questions at random. Woe betide you should you get the answer wrong, he would swing the keys in a perfectly co-ordinated arc against the back of your head, never failing to connect at that small knot of bone at the base of the skull, just where it meets the spine. yes, it hurt, what do you think? It hurt a lot, but I do have a solid grounding in French grammar.

Music continued to make its presence increasingly felt. Trad

Jazz, as practiced by Mr. Acker Bilk, Chris Barber and others was joined by Lonnie Donegan and the Skiffle movement, which opened the door to Folk Music. A younger teacher actually played the guitar and entertained us with 500 Miles, Tom Dooley and the like. Harry Belafonte, the Kingston Trio...

I do not remember anything of the Thirteen Plus, but I did pass, and with an exceptional score.

I continued to immerse myself in books. *Swallows and Amazons* offered a vista of freedom and adventure, then *Beau Geste*, a romantic picture of valour, of honour held to through all adversities - just the thing for me. A little *Hornblower*, a plethora of tales of war heroes, the Battle of Britain, *The Colditz Story*, of course the theme of escape was attractive, what else would you expect in the circumstances?

At last in the summer of '61 came the Common Entrance exams. The end of Ravenswood and home to a summer of anxiously waiting for the results and a letter from Sherborne. Although I had avoided *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, I had read *Stalky and Co* as well as various comic book depictions of Public School life, so I did not look forward to acceptance with unalloyed joy. But I was proud enough when the letter finally came.

Sherborne is an ancient school with high academic standards and noble traditions. The countryside is straight out of Hardy, the town is picturesque, beautiful soft Ham stone buildings, the Abbey and its cloisters which were now School House, Chapel and the Headmaster's quarters, the Almshouses, a narrow High Street.

My sullen approach had become essentially my whole schoolboy persona by now. I was in the habit of leaving an untidy bed, even though by now there was nothing to conceal in the folds. I was tardy. I was disrespectful – even today I have a hard time addressing anyone as “Sir” without a taint of disdain. Naturally this led to the familiar round of black marks, detention, beatings. First time around it was “four of the best” from the Head of House. The ritual had been refined over years. First the torture of waiting, you always knew when you had fulfilled your quota of infractions and the inevitable repercussion. But there was some leeway between collecting the final black mark and the punishment, which might be on the same day, or up to two evenings later. At last the dreaded summons would come. All eyes covertly upon you, you leave to wait in the cold cloister. There was a fixed spot where you were expected to stand at attention until the head prefect arrived. At

last the sound of approaching footsteps, then the swishing of the cane. Canes were sold at the school outfitters, a cluster standing in an umbrella stand. Any visit to the shop would offer the opportunity to watch a prefect or two pulling canes, testing their flex, trying a few practice strokes. Once a cane had been chosen the end would be carefully split at the bottom eight inches or so. The prefect would approach, with a carefully calibrated disdain ask if you knew why you were there, if you had anything to say for yourself. Naturally the only acceptable responses were “Yes” and “No” respectively. Then “Very well. Bend over.” Bent over, eyes fixed on the ancient flagstones. A moment while he measured his position, like a batsman at the crease. A couple of practice swings would always precede the first blow. Then the awful swishing sound, the always surprising sharp pain, always worse than remembered. The split in the cane would open in the descent, then snap shut. With practice, and most prefects saw plenty of practice, all the blows would fall in essentially the same spot, the pain worse each time. And of course the ignominy was a very important factor, the shamefully submissive pose. And do not dare to utter the smallest gasp of pain, never allow even the suspicion of a tear in your eye. At last he would be done. A



contemptuous dismissal. The painful walk back to the dormitory. Jaw clenched against tears. All this was, of course, regarded as yet another exercise in character building. And as usual it formed mine, literally beat me deeper into myself. The idea seemed to be that the reward for suffering stoically would be the pleasure of being allowed later to inflict the same torture on other younger boys. In the dormitory you were expected to show of your welts, for the other boys to appraise the accuracy of the strokes, to see how much blood might have been drawn.

Now it would take only two black marks and the next time would be six, then came six from the House Master and the final ignominy of six from the Headmaster himself. I regularly arrived at six from the Head of House, once was beaten by the Headmaster, who didn't appear to take as much pleasure in it as the others, his blows were certainly less painful, with very little blood drawn. On one occasion, I have absolutely no memory of what I had done, perhaps it was simply due to the Headmaster's absence, I was beaten by the Head Boy, who by way of contrast was visibly filled with sadistic delight as he ran to deliver slashing blows of the cane with all his cricketer's strength.

I was growing. I was willing myself to grow, to accommodate

my body to my feet – each night I would hook my feet in the bed's foot-bar and spend a fair time gripping the head-bars, pulling in an effort to grow taller faster. I was also starting to think, rather than simply react and emote, for myself. I refused the offer to be Confirmed when it was first presented. The vows involved seemed to be rather serious, and I did not feel that I could go through with it unless I fully understood what I would be committing myself to. It was hard to square the Sermon on the Mount, the professed "Christianity" of school, with the institutionalized brutality and casual cruelties I saw and was obliged to live with.

I was still bound for the R.A.F. A diagnosis of myopia had put paid to dreams of flight, but I quickly decided to become an aeronautical engineer, which would still mean I could be around planes, with plenty of opportunities to fly. Unsurprising, but still embarrassing, that my political views were both naive and reactionary. School was a bastion, a veritable Masada, of conservatism and I still had some notion that I could fit in, not to mention my recent obsession with World War Two, which had expanded far beyond the Battle of Britain, but still featured Churchill as conquering hero. The Bomb had been permanent background noise and was beginning to make

its presence more concretely felt, an uneasy awareness of what precisely a four-minute warning might actually mean. It seemed that the great Cambridge spy debacle was in the news semi-permanently for years. Soviet leaders paraded menacingly across the front pages. None of which inclines me to much sympathy for my insistence that the only proper way for the Americans to conduct their war in Viet Nam was to drop the Bomb on Hanoi. I was fourteen.

Although I still was not subject to physical bullying, I was constantly the object of teasing and other harassment that kept me perpetually on my guard, constantly a step or two away from misery. One day a boy decided he had to find out how far he could push me. I asked him to stop. He redoubled his efforts. I told him to stop, but still he kept on. And I snapped. I grabbed a handful of his shirt front, pulled him towards me till our faces were inches apart, raised my left fist up beside my head. I was on the brink of punching him as hard as I could in the face. As I was about to strike I saw the fear in his eyes. Seeing his fear I recognized my own. I was disgusted. Disgusted with him for trying to bully away his fear. Disgusted with me for being brought down to that level. I lowered my fist. I hope I let him see my contempt. I let go of his shirt, turned and

walked away. That was a moment in which a life-long hatred of violence and its perpetrators gained a little more ground in my heart.

It must have been the summer of that year that mum took me and Claire for a holiday in Ostend. We stayed in a little *pension*, family run. The daughter, Christiane, was a not unattractive girl about my age, so Claire chose to tease me constantly that I had a crush on her. I don't think so. What I most remember, to the point that it has essentially displaced all other memories of the trip, is a day we spent visiting battlefields and graveyards of the Great War. There is a place where the land has remained untouched ever since the Armistice, trenches and dirt, bones, said to be of horses, still protruding in places, rusting steel helmets, and displays of photographs. "The horror, the horror". My jingoistic juvenile militarism, my passion for the glories of war, gallantry, courage, all the vicious lies that had led so many millions to their needless deaths, all this was overwhelmed by the sight of the hideous, meaningless waste. I felt humbled, shamed, some kind of reverence. The graveyard, white, identical crosses in perfect alignment, how many thousands? We walked slowly past some of the graves. Each marker bore a name, a rank, a regiment, a date of birth, a date of death.

Overwhelmingly privates, and so young. Glory? Patriotism? Honour? What value do these words hold in the face of this callous, cruel, cynical waste? From that day glory and patriotism ceased to matter to me. But honour, perhaps there may be something beyond blind self-sacrifice in the name of ideals that conceal base motives. Perhaps there is an honour to be found somewhere. Perhaps there are ideals that do have some truth, some value in themselves. An honour found in life and living. It was clear there was no honour in all these crosses, there is no honour in death. The beginning of the search that I have pursued all the days of my life. Oh, we shall certainly see in days and years ahead how often, and how far, I strayed from the path. No matter, that is, has always been, the only goal of my life. To discover, or construct, and to try to live by a standard of honour that would at last afford me full membership in the human race, and worthy of love. If you stay with me through my tale perhaps you will be able to judge how far, whether, I have succeeded, or failed.

It was a little difficult to reconcile my changing view of the world with the political conservatism which prevailed in my immediate environment. Up to now I had accepted without question that "British" was synonymous with "good". As a child I had been

peripherally aware of the Korean War and the Suez Crisis, and formed a childish mental picture of the "bad people" who threatened us. When a boy was called from breakfast and we were informed that both his parents had been killed by the Mau Mau in Kenya, my picture of a world in desperate need of Britain's humanizing and civilizing influence was further reinforced. But. But I was beginning to see that there might in fact be some incongruity between this image of a sage and benevolent empire altruistically bringing a barbaric world into the shelter of the Christian family and my own personal experience of brutalizing treatment. As I went into puberty all kinds of changes started to happen, slowly, gradually, physical changes of course, but also, and perhaps more importantly, mental changes that left me a very different person from the thirteen year old boy I once was.

Physical changes were the most obvious, of course, by virtue of being visible. I continued to grow taller, and gradually my feet became more proportionate to my body. A first downy approximation of a beard appeared. Naturally, sleeping in dormitories as we did, this onset of puberty was very much a shared experience. When one boy, appalled at the thick black hair growing on his legs chose to

shave, we all shared the lesson he learned when the hair grew back thicker, blacker and longer than before. And we all discovered the joys of masturbation, more or less together. After lights out there would be a few moments of complete silence in the dark, but then a surreptitious, rhythmic shuffling would break out on all sides, with the occasional throttled grunt or sigh. One night this ritual was interrupted by a cry of horror. The dorm captain turned on the lights, a boy was standing by his bed, ashen faced, gasping. His pyjamas, from crotch to knees, were stained a deep crimson, the stain visibly spreading. "Oh, god! I'm bleeding!" He took his dressing gown and fled. It seems his young body was not ready for the violence of his ejaculatory efforts and he had burst a blood vessel. When he returned he showed us with sheepish pride his penis swathed thickly with an already pink stained bandaged. For a week he had to go to Matron to be unwrapped and then given a fresh bandage each time he had to pee. And you may have thought I had urination problems... God alone knows what his adult sex life might have turned out to be. And there were vaguely homosexual goings-on - size comparisons, mutual touching - that I was largely excluded from on account of my outsider status,

not to mention a certain measure of disgust.

I will not say happy exactly, to be an outsider, but I felt little affinity, and mostly a marked aversion for my schoolfellows. These were the sons of privilege and wealth, with a sense of entitlement and nose for the subtlest nuance of class honed over generations. Sons of sherry, of cider, of a senior civil servant whose services to the Crown were too secret to be published. Oh yes, and sugar. I never have settled to my own satisfaction whether my aversion was pre-emptive. My grandfather's unexpected death, or rather the consequent taxes had left Grannie living in a cottage. The manager of the Monkey Island Hotel bought the island for a thousand pounds and sold it a decade or so later for a million.

I had one more fight, with a boy called Martin. I remember very little of it, least of all the cause. I imagine I lost. I continued not to excel in sports. My term reports were mediocre, I "could try harder", or "failed to reach my potential". And then came an announcement that seemed to offer a concrete promise, rather than the desperate hope, that things might actually get better. The school was growing and had acquired the Digby Hotel to convert into a new boarding house. The call went out for volunteers.

# BRIAN JONES

written by JACK SKELLEY | illustration by AMANDA MANN

Mr. Shampoo

## MR. SHAMPOO

**"It's going to happen, I tell you,"**

Brian lisped insistently. "It's going to happen soon." Then he turned away from Mick and Keith. Brian slipped a shilling into the meter which turned on the gas fire — a few precious minutes of heat — and shook his wet hair over it.

Mick was in another of his this-isn't-working-out-and-I-should-return-to-accounting-school moods. Yes, since Brian got the group together last year he had booked a trickle of gigs around London. But the only attention the Rolling Stones were getting was from the "jazz snobs," as Brian called them, or from the mods, rockers and art students whose bloody rows usually got the shows closed anyway. And now it was winter, the worst winter in 100 years. And Brian and Mick and Keith were crowded in a piss-cold, two-room flat with a single light bulb that hung Bohemian-style from the ceiling.

Mick was standing under it now, in a periwinkle ladies' housecoat.



"I mean we've only played one show this month, Brian," he said. "And we still haven't got paid for that. It just doesn't add up, does it?"

But Brian wasn't worried. Keith's guitar parts were starting to kick in. And they had a great new version of "Not Fade Away" that didn't so much toughen Buddy Holly's hit as demoralize it. Keith imposed a Bo Diddley stomp over it, while Mick snarled his commands and Brian slurped mocking asides on harp. What's more, Brian was on the verge of closing a management deal with Andrew Loog Oldham. Brian hated Loog; he was just a cheeky publicist looking to get rich off the blues. But as the Stones' manager he could get them more gigs. And he could get Brian an extra five pounds a month salary. Five pounds his flatmates didn't have to know about.

A shilling's worth of gas spent, Brian began his brushing. One hundred strokes will catch the blokes, he remembers his mother once said. And Brian's blond mop was glazed to a sheen.

Mick was still bitching. "I mean what do you think?" he turned to Keith.

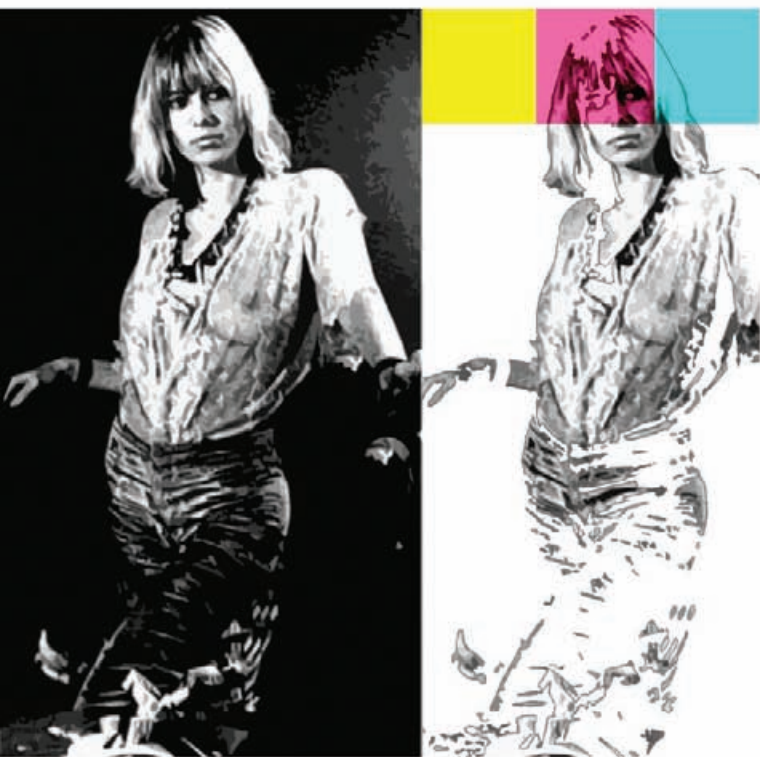
Keith was in a cross-legged pose, plunking on Brian's Gibson, his fingers stiff with cold. Brian finished brushing, then smoothed his new tab-collar shirt in the loo mirror.

"I'd like to know who filched my piece of chicken," said Keith.

Too late. Brian was already out the door.

Mick crossed his arms and glared, first at Keith, who shrugged and returned to riffing, then at the door as it slammed shut. He heard Brian bound down the stairs.

"Mister Shampoo!" Mick sneered. "And where did he get that shilling?"



the exact color of Brian's. She even wore a floppy hat and French jacket similar to his. Able to slink past roadies and promoters with the stony gaze of a model, Anita arrived backstage and homed-in not on Mick or Keith, but on Brian.

"I said, who's this?" Mick repeated. But Anita cut him off with a scowl. She sidled next to Brian and, between her fishnets, flashed him a glimpse of her hash and amyl nitrite.

That night, Anita took Brian to her bed. She put on Aftermath.

## THE BLACK BEETLES, THE BLOND MEDUSA

THE BLACK BEETLES  
THE BLOND MEDUSA

It was in Munich that Brian met Anita. It had been a rough show -- there's always some crazy Kraut who throws a beer stein at the stage. Brian barely dodged one and it got him a bit twitchy. And afterwards Mick and Keith were baiting Brian again as he hunched in a corner of the dressing room.

"What's the matter, Brian? Did you see the black beetles again?" Mick laughed. Then Keith laughed, and so Loog laughed. And they all laughed.

"The black beetles, ha ha ha."

Huge swarms of black beetles were what Brian had hallucinated coming out of the wall at Keith's house back in London. And Mick and Keith always seemed to bring up Brian's bad trip just when he felt the most vulnerable to their taunts.

But now someone stopped them in their tracks.

"Hello. Who's this rare bird?" said Mick.

There she was. Anita Pallenberg. An aristocratic beauty, with hair

"It's my favorite. I've completely worn out the grooves," she said.

He boffed her, burying himself in her limbs, her hair. Then he cried in her arms... partly in joy, partly in relief, because now he sensed a way out. He pictured her wicked mane gleaming through the window of his Silver Cloud Rolls as it swooped through London. They would be magazine demigods, and Mick would envy every glossy spread, and every journalist's rave for how Brian's sitar fired up "Paint It Black," or how his recorder parts forged a magical Elizabethan blues on "Ruby Tuesday." Best of all, Mick would be stuck with Chrissie Shrimpton -- that stupid girl, the mere sister of a model -- while Brian would have this empress of decadence, this Teutonic Medusa.

Anita drifted into sleep.

Brian whispered, "I need you."

On the turntable the needle clicked, clicked, clicked.

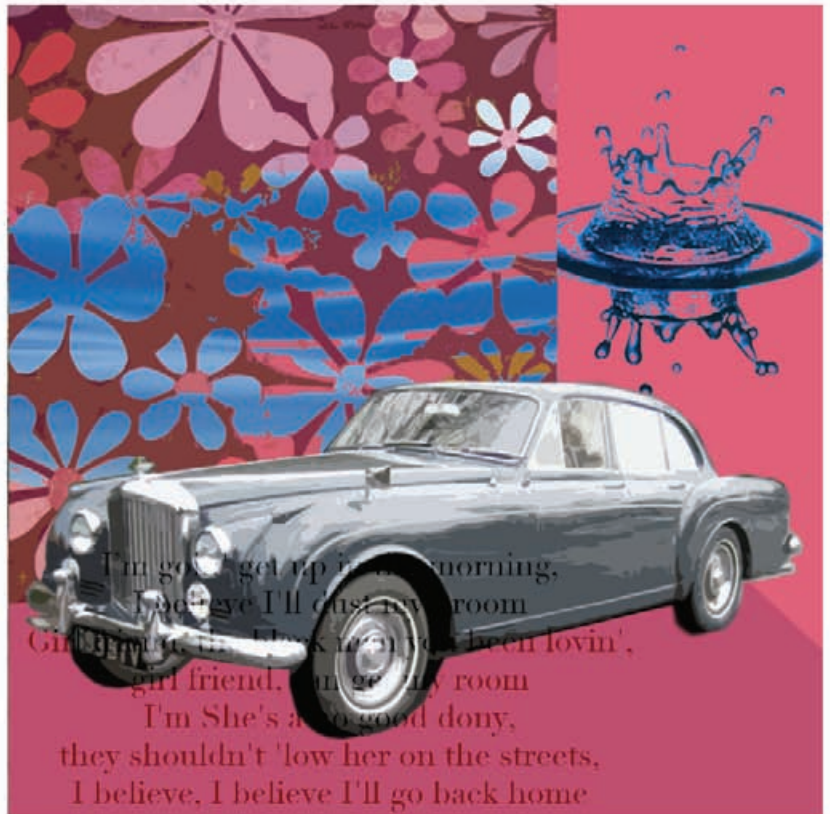
## THE BENTLEY



Keith's Bentley purred as it swerved around a herd of goats. An old Frenchman made a rude gesture, but inside all you could hear was Tom, their Cockney chauffeur, yapping about his paratroop days. Brian and Anita were on holiday with Keith, motoring from Paris to Tangier, which had become the Stones' sanctuary ever since London's police were hounding them.

Though Anita nestled with him in the back seat, and his asthma medication was never out of reach, Brian's anxiety was rising with each kilometer.

By now the Stones' social life was a game of superstar chess. Outclassed by Anita, Mick had dumped Chrissie Shrimpton with a vengeance, swooping up Marianne Faithful, whose pale hair and pedigree rivaled



Anita's. This made Keith, still lacking a socialite girlfriend, the odd Stone out. So he renewed his bond with Brian who was relieved to have Keith back in his camp. But what were Keith's real intentions? And why were Keith and Anita glancing at each other?

By the time they reached Toulon, Brian was wheezing severely. Anita felt his forehead.

"Brian, you're burning up! Tom, find a hospital!"

Brian was admitted, and though she offered to stay with him, something made Brian urge Anita to continue south with the others. That night, while Brian writhed in a French clinic, Keith and Anita were screwing in a Spanish hotel.

For three days Brian fired off message after panicked message, all of which went ignored until the Bentley arrived in Tangier. By the time he rejoined the Stones' party, which now included Mick, Marianne, and a whole entourage, Brian was certain something was up between Anita and Keith.

The others could sense it too. Tension was thick on the 10th floor of Tangier's Hotel El Minzah, and the all-night acid parties only made things weirder. Brian belled himself into a corner, a Scotch and Coke glued to his fist, and watched. By the time the party got rowdy — Tom the chauffeur tobogganing down the hallway on room-service carts — Brian had crept into town by himself. He returned to his and Anita's suite with a local prostitute — ornate tattoos were burned into her neck and cheeks — and he insisted on a ménage à trois. But Anita was not in the mood.

Then came the barrage.

"You fucking bitch!" he screamed. He picked up a platter of couscous and Frisbee'd it at Anita's head.

The beatings and the cries went on into the night and were heard down the hall, clearly bumming everyone's trip.

In the afternoon, Anita appeared on the patio,



her face caked with foundation and concealer. Keith bobbed in the pool before Anita and she stared back, a mixture of passion and pleading.

A few tables over, Mick whispered to Marianne, "Things are getting fuckin' heavy around here. Somebody's got to do something about Brian."

And so Brian was escorted to the central square to record Moroccan music, and when he returned to the hotel the desk clerk gave him the news: Keith had thrown Anita into his Bentley and driven off hours ago. The entire Stones entourage had flown back to London without even telling him.

Brian raced up to his room.

"Judas!" he screamed, and flung a potted plant out the window.





## FRINGE

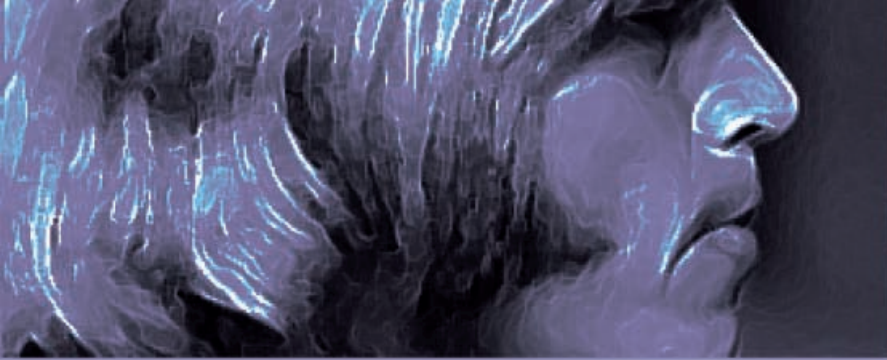


The children flocked around Brian who was seated on a donkey as he entered the ancient village of Jajouka.

“See the man with the big hair ! See the man with the big hair !” They trailed him, showering him with fig leaves.

The artist Brion Gysin was taking Brian and Brian’s new girlfriend Suki -- the latest stand-in for Anita Pallenberg -- into the remote Rif mountains of Morocco to document the pre-Islamic rites of Pan.

Brian squatted with the the master musicians of Jajouka, smoked from their pipes, picked up their instruments and began wailing, just as he did back in ‘62 when he learned to play the blues harp in one day. He played along with them a bit more, then supervised the recording. Headphones pressed to his ears, he stalked around the musicians, whirling the microphone in



arcs and figure-eights, swaying with the twining of the pipes. Brian knew that one day the rest of the world, too, would purify itself in these waves of sound.

Then, towards dawn, the Jajoukans prepared the sacrifice. An elder in a white kaftan carried a goat the color of desert sand to a flat rock. Brian fixated on this goat. The animal stared back through its shaggy fringe.

The blade swooped down and the scream ripped through the air.

“That’s me,” choked Brian. “That’s me.”

## INHALER



It has only been a month since Mick, Keith and Charlie drove out to Brian’s farm, offering him 100,000 pounds to leave the Rolling Stones.

After the meeting, Brian laid his head on the table and wept. But now, on the night of July 2, Brian is relaxing, watching Doctor in the House on the BBC with three friends.

It’s been a warm week, the pollen count is high and Brian hits his asthma inhaler between shots of brandy. After the program, Brian takes his guests outside for a swim. He staggers on the diving board, but Brian is a good swimmer and slices through the deep end. After 11 p.m., one by one, all three of Brian’s guests remove themselves to the house.

Brian swims alone.

It’s a watery blues that Brian hears now. A frantic alto sax gurgles bop from a muddy delta. There it yoo-hoos on sitar, soars above the hills of Wales, then plunges to the mountains of Jajouka, where African reed instruments, the texture of raised tattoos, bleat like goats with circular breathing, gasp infinity, then smudge away in the smoke.

Twin Renaissance recorders harmonize bitterly but resolve to a plunked marimba.

Deep down in the mix, a blues harp heaves, trailing clouds of echo.

And a metal tube slithers on steel strings, falling down frets to the bottom of the scale, where -- bump, by bump, by bony bump -- at last it settles, with a perfect twang.

# THE WELL OF BABEL

By Chris Madoch

That phallic crystal edifice which cribs  
The world's largest publisher  
Boasts  
A signature moss pink piazza,  
A cafe and al fresco tableaux,

The launch pad  
For its thrust ever upwards and onwards  
To even bigger better things  
...fuck the feckless  
...reader  
...the mindless dollar rich bleeder

I notice as I stride across  
The pre-formed slabs that each one is unique.  
In them, through the glaze, you can read the odd  
Word or part word,  
Notice cloth shreds, bone and bits of plastic  
Though none of it makes any sense.

I buzz up, look up. Oh.  
So many soaring floors.

The small glass lift comes  
Uncomfortably quiet. Doors silken,  
Sliding, hiding stealth,  
The air of an abiding wealth.

Sun is spun through Polaroid,  
The weather and reality  
Discreetly avoided  
Like Aids/HIV. The ride done devoid  
Of all sensual pleasure.

By any measure I  
Should be quietly impressed but I



Embrace unease in tall buildings and fly  
To the restroom immediately I  
Stop.

Freeze this frigging frame-  
The spot's a prism of Sci-Fi otherwise infinities,  
An essay in mirrored glass  
And polished chrome.

[God! That unnecessary gadget  
For strimming fluff, I think I  
Might have one of those at home.  
We're magnets for such gloss and dross.]

It's a totally mad place to piss, this,  
Too classy to be spoiled by British sick.

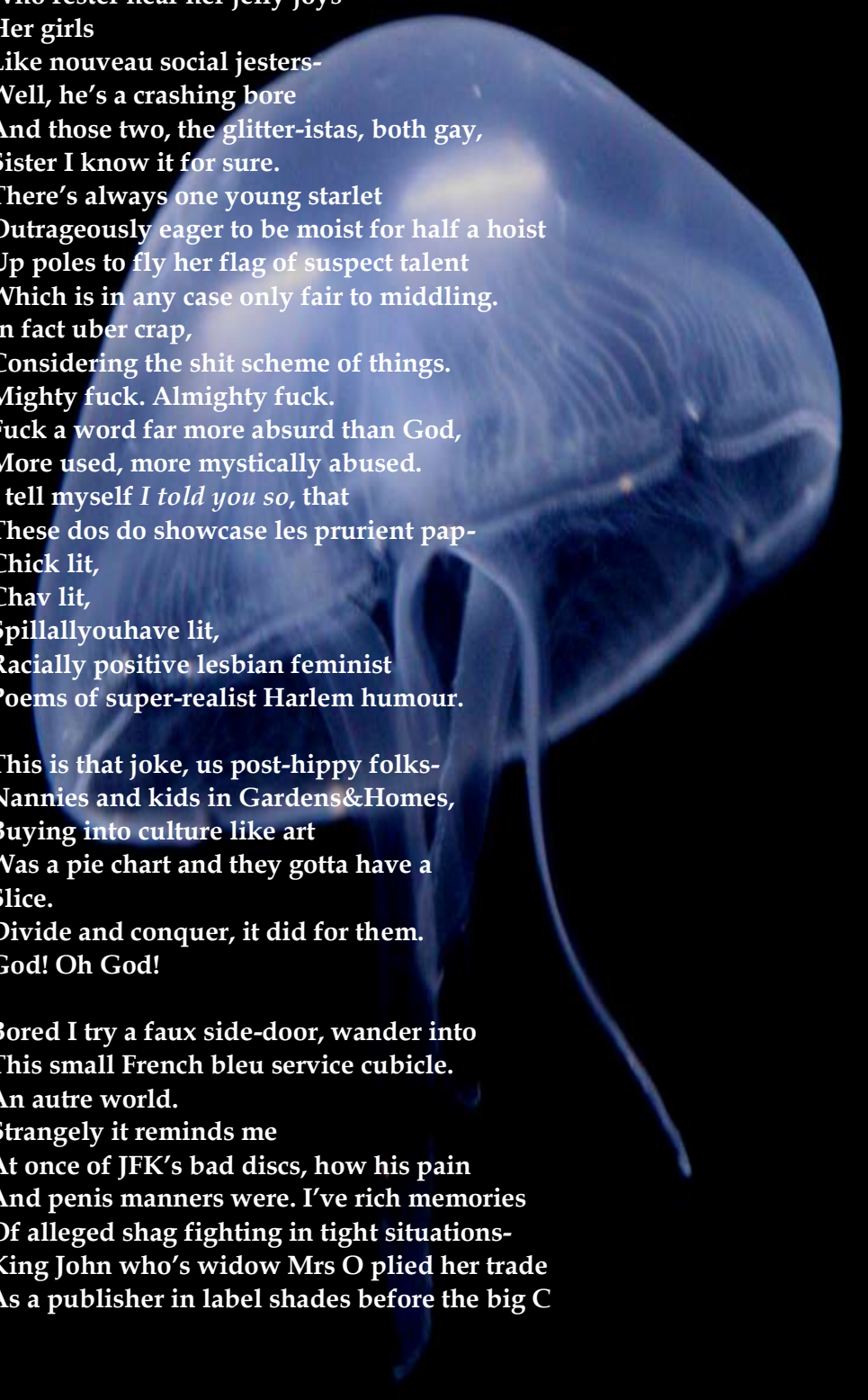
I down a free Lear jet sized spring water  
And sit on a pan lid made of Texan leather  
Chewing a white Settler, a gas dispeller,  
Tommy Hilfiger's scent predominant-  
God!  
The NYC fashion bully in an over posh bog.

It's then that I resolve to leave dead quick  
Reasoning- flit now before someone I know  
Enters

[And believe you me they will]

Regaling my dark mood with book sales-talk when  
All the time, I want to fart, to go party,  
And they would, surely, love to part  
With last night's shit manuscripts.  
Oh. They'll joke about the dump pile  
And I'll smile like Scooby Do.  
Best not to dwell.  
Fuck. Super fuck.

Hell! It might as well be.  
Two mountain acres of self blue tufted  
Made invisible by milling heels



On deals, writ in American English,  
And a she who feels above the boys  
Who fester near her jelly joys  
Her girls  
Like nouveau social jesters-  
Well, he's a crashing bore  
And those two, the glitter-istas, both gay,  
Sister I know it for sure.  
There's always one young starlet  
Outrageously eager to be moist for half a hoist  
Up poles to fly her flag of suspect talent  
Which is in any case only fair to middling.  
In fact uber crap,  
Considering the shit scheme of things.  
Mighty fuck. Almighty fuck.  
Fuck a word far more absurd than God,  
More used, more mystically abused.  
I tell myself *I told you so*, that  
These dos do showcase les prurient pap-  
Chick lit,  
Chav lit,  
Spillallyouhave lit,  
Racially positive lesbian feminist  
Poems of super-realist Harlem humour.

This is that joke, us post-hippy folks-  
Nannies and kids in Gardens&Homes,  
Buying into culture like art  
Was a pie chart and they gotta have a  
Slice.  
Divide and conquer, it did for them.  
God! Oh God!

Bored I try a faux side-door, wander into  
This small French bleu service cubicle.  
An autre world.  
Strangely it reminds me  
At once of JFK's bad discs, how his pain  
And penis manners were. I've rich memories  
Of alleged shag fighting in tight situations-  
King John who's widow Mrs O plied her trade  
As a publisher in label shades before the big C

Put a stop to all that fake labour.  
[Saint J dipped his wick in Marilyn. You just  
Know so. Probably a threesome with his bro,  
The attorney general, riding shotgun. Fuck,  
What a classy notch. The two most powerful men  
In the wide world, coming as one,  
All over the most famous tits to ever flash  
Inside a wanker's eyelids. Now there's a book  
With high earner written all over it.]

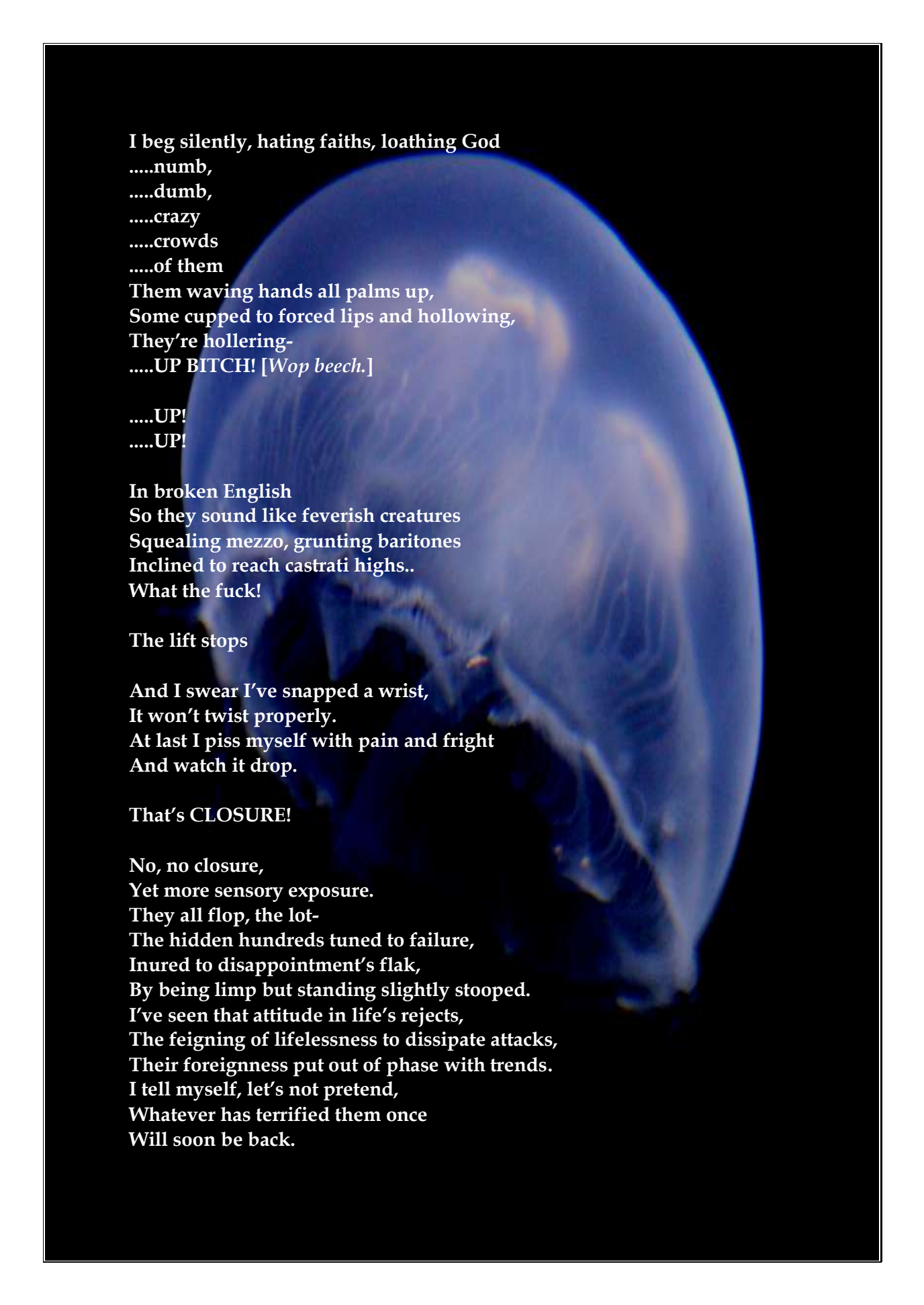
I pull idly on a coat hook  
As one's prone to do in self imposed hiding.  
It shook me- seeing the far wall sliding  
In a 'Man From Uncle' moment,  
Leaving an open invite into dim lit space.  
I am known for my folly, ask anyone.  
Off I went,  
Dumbstruck at the slow descent.

Christ suck my nuts! Already I'm beginning to relent.

Under my crepe soles a grille,  
The metal cage a maintenance rig  
To reach the building's bare guts,  
Light spare enough as pupils adjust  
Seeking out industrial buttons,  
My fingers frantically confirming *not*.  
A lever maybe- GO and STOP.  
A pulley.  
Nothing. Zilch. Fuck me ungently!

Tips of typing digits thrashing at the wire mesh  
Flaking like thin scales of Parmesan  
Immediately sweet smelling pommodoro  
The blood wet hands smearing my face  
Stretching my mouth gape  
Waiting for the still-born screams to escape.  
WHAT.

I hear shouts beneath me. SAFETY.  
Mouths in numbers mouthing loudly,  
Louder as I tumble nearer. Save me



I beg silently, hating faiths, loathing God

.....numb,

.....dumb,

.....crazy

.....crowds

.....of them

Them waving hands all palms up,  
Some cupped to forced lips and hollowing,  
They're hollering-

.....UP BITCH! [*Wop beech.*]

.....UP!

.....UP!

In broken English

So they sound like feverish creatures

Squealing mezzo, grunting baritones

Inclined to reach castrati highs..

What the fuck!

The lift stops

And I swear I've snapped a wrist,

It won't twist properly.

At last I piss myself with pain and fright

And watch it drop.

That's CLOSURE!

No, no closure,

Yet more sensory exposure.

They all flop, the lot-

The hidden hundreds tuned to failure,

Inured to disappointment's flak,

By being limp but standing slightly stooped.

I've seen that attitude in life's rejects,

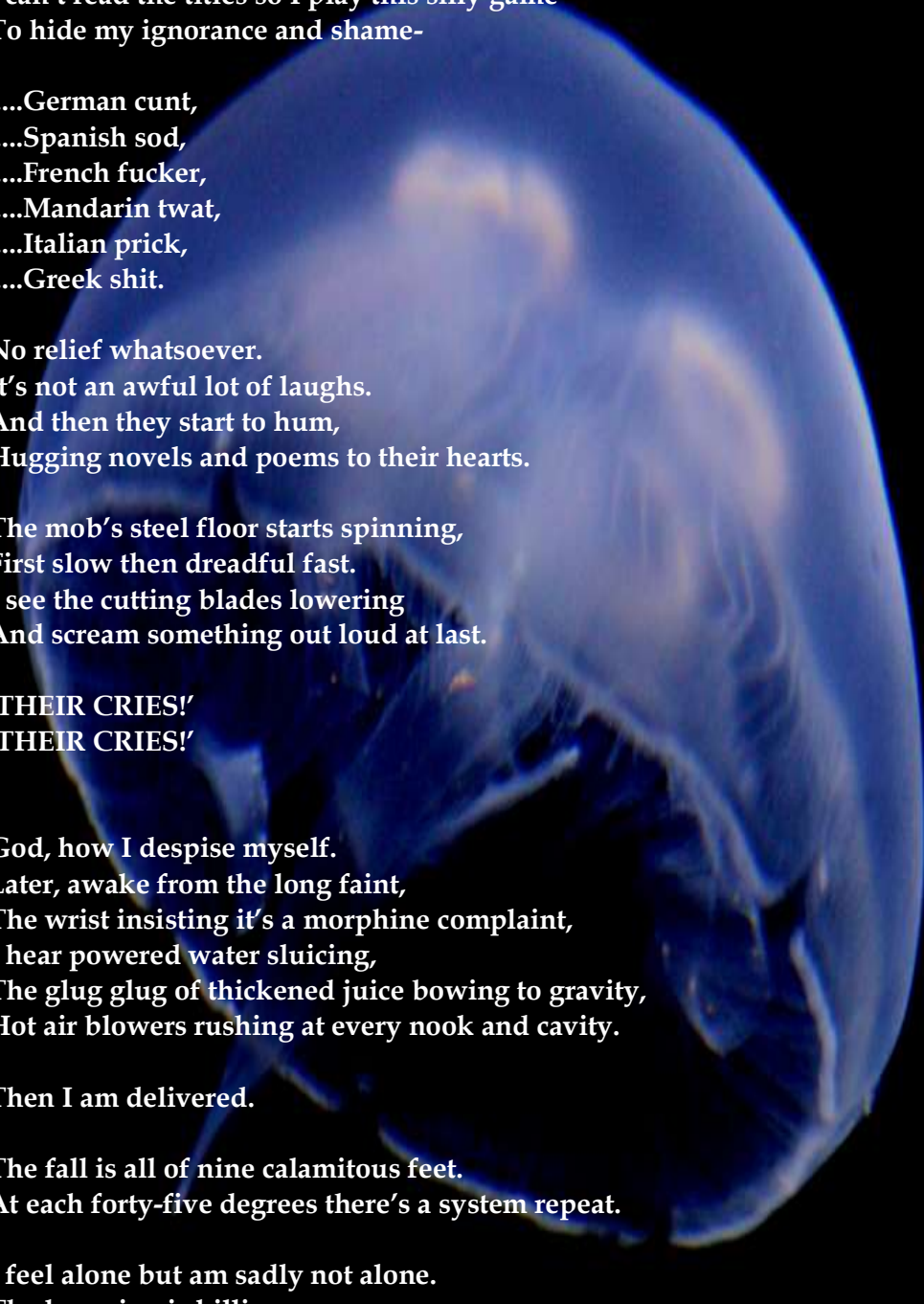
The feigning of lifelessness to dissipate attacks,

Their foreignness put out of phase with trends.

I tell myself, let's not pretend,

Whatever has terrified them once

Will soon be back.



I then notice the books- she's got some,  
He's got three, they've all got at least one.  
I can't read the titles so I play this silly game  
To hide my ignorance and shame-

.....German cunt,  
.....Spanish sod,  
.....French fucker,  
.....Mandarin twat,  
.....Italian prick,  
.....Greek shit.

No relief whatsoever.  
It's not an awful lot of laughs.  
And then they start to hum,  
Hugging novels and poems to their hearts.

The mob's steel floor starts spinning,  
First slow then dreadful fast.  
I see the cutting blades lowering  
And scream something out loud at last.

'THEIR CRIES!'  
'THEIR CRIES!'

God, how I despise myself.  
Later, awake from the long faint,  
The wrist insisting it's a morphine complaint,  
I hear powered water sluicing,  
The glug glug of thickened juice bowing to gravity,  
Hot air blowers rushing at every nook and cavity.

Then I am delivered.

The fall is all of nine calamitous feet.  
At each forty-five degrees there's a system repeat.

I feel alone but am sadly not alone.  
The knowing is killing me,  
Chilling me to the irritating broken bones.



We all gather together at an observation slit,  
A motley crew of alien misfits,  
Scared, sullen,  
Strangers whose languages refuse to knit.

There is  
This line of moss pink concrete trucks  
Filling up, moving on,  
Topping up, moving out,  
Their churns turning at a languid pace,  
The normality of it a torture,  
Not a jot or tittle out of place.

It's pathetic of me I know  
But I hurriedly show the Russian woman  
My blood stained galley proofs  
Of the third novel,  
Then mumble lamely  
About the plight of literary fiction  
And wrists.  
She smiles  
Politely,  
Somewhat preoccupied by prior events.  
Her English better than my Russian by a mile  
She tells me to 'GET LOST!' [*Geet lorst.*]  
In an accent I attribute to Virginia Wolfe.

[Stream of consciousness.  
This poem 'The Well Of Babel']

One of the next four arrivals  
Has his mind on counter terrorism  
In a comic bid for survival. He's a yank.  
As best we can, we explain  
The monster Magimix and drain,  
For which we get no thanks.  
And later when it's got more crowded  
And the Chinese whispers are exploding  
Like trodden on fortune cookies,  
I push off.

I find the near centre comforting-

A bit of Buddhist space.  
No sad buggers yelling 'UP BITCH!'

I know it's insane  
But I'm already mapping out the pitch,  
The book'll be a doddle, then there's the script.  
I thought, lure Wes Craven out of retirement,  
He's very good for sequels.  
Then those TV rights with subtitles. Gosh!

It's all so hideously wrong.

Inside this uncompromising death machine,  
Which will first slice in funeral time  
Then go so fast no-one can dodge the cut,  
We listen out like cattle  
For the subtle thrum of sharp parts switching on.

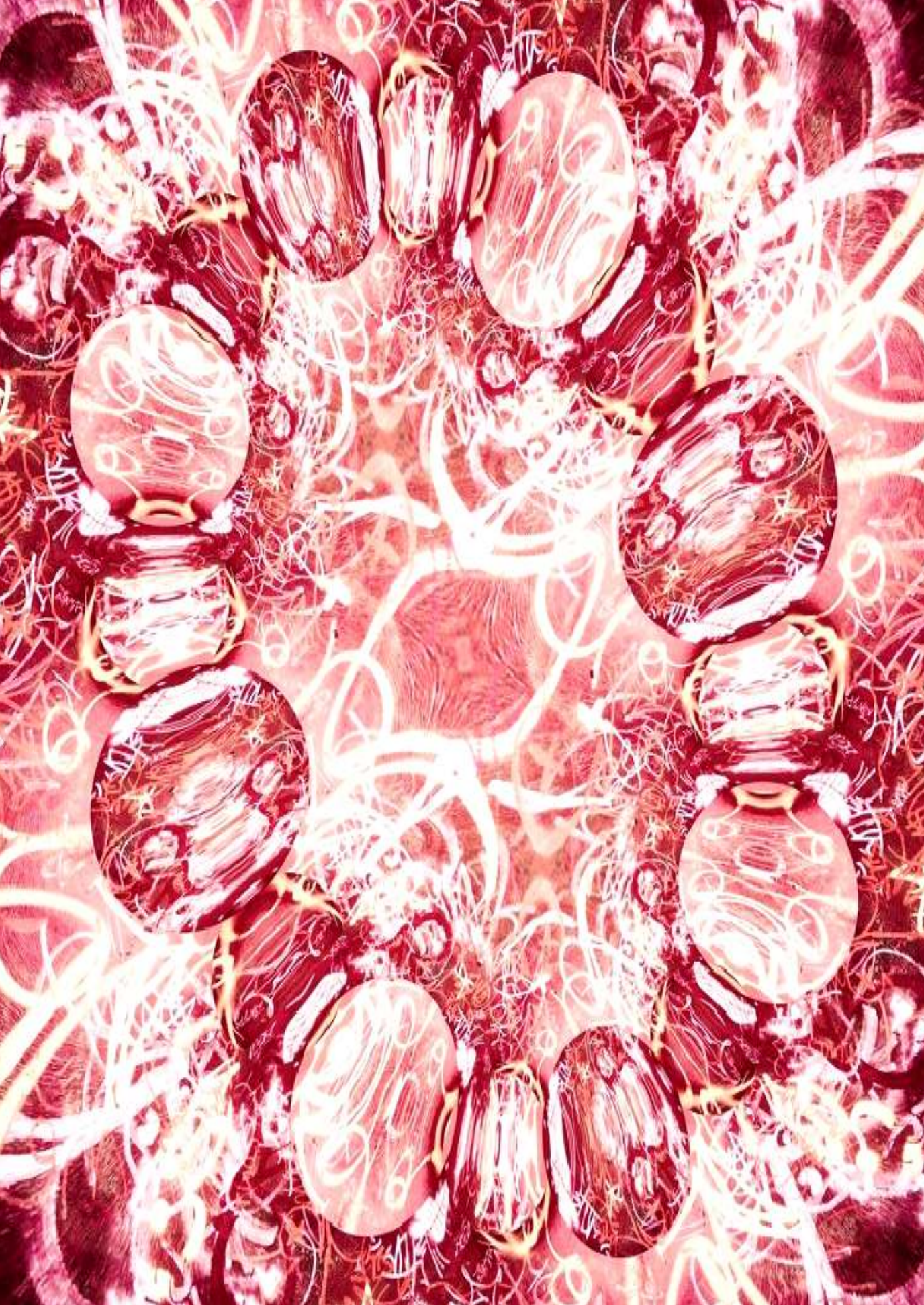
I hear choirs singing cortex evensong.  
One minute we're so vital, and the next we're gone,  
Lost in translation, blithely walked upon.

Despite the high pitched drone, drone, drone,  
My last thought ever is this-

That I very much regret being mean  
About the dreaming girl  
With silicone tits.

[Let her page 3 banality be showered with gifts.]

Swish. Squish. Splish.





## THE GAS MAN PART I

By Stagger Lloyd

Images © Edward R. Bucciarelli

A couple of weeks ago the Gas Man had somehow become intent on getting into this house so he could check all the boilers and pipes and shit, which serve this and the two flats upstairs.

I found out he was coming on the same day that he walked up the

garden path wanting to get in, just as I was leaving the front door.

“This is not a good time,” I tried to explain.

I was doing a particularly bad comedown with DTs galore and was on my way to try to get beta blockers from my doctor.



The fucker was insistent and way way too pushy for someone like me, already pushed well over the psychological and physical edge and knowing that it was gonna get very much worse over the next few hours, days. No way could I let anyone in.

Again and again I rebuffed him.

His manner turned strange and a deeply unpleasant look spread across his face, a sort of weird mixture of desperate pleading and snarling angry psychosis. At least, that's what it resembled to my shattered and wildly bloodshot eyes. This kind of threatening bullshit only made me stand all the more firmly against letting him in.

He pleaded, cajoled and gibbered. He even tried reasoning with me.

For fucks sake what the fuck is this guy's problem? I was simply baffled as to how he could be so insistent over inspecting a fucking boiler. It was like he and all his family would be executed if he didn't get to look at the damn thing.

My blurred vision could only make out something resembling the words Gas Man and a photo of him holding that same bizarre look on his face on the card pinned to his blazer. It was sinister. It was bad. I couldn't allow any further badness than the shit that was already plummeting from the sky down toward me.

He didn't give a toss when I told him I was in urgent need of getting to the doctor. I don't think he even heard me, his blindness to the fact he wasn't that day inspecting the boiler was so acute. I looked up searching for divine help but as I did so the sky visibly darkened.

Fuck this, I finally relented.



“Okay,” I said, “I’ll try to be back by 11.”

“Don’t forget,” he gave an odd slanted smile, “I need to be gone by 12 and it’ll only take an hour.”

*Fine by me, I thought, yer still not getting in.*

After seeing the doctor I don’t recall where I went. The library perhaps. Maybe the post office.

I returned at 11.25 and snuck in quietly, knowing he was probably in the flat above mine with his ear pressed to the floorboards waiting for me.

I crawled into bed.

DTs are never what you could describe as a day out at the funfair and this was no exception. In fact it was turning into one of the worst. It was a bad one. I so desperately needed to sleep. I’d been awake for 2 or 3 days solid through which I could easily have gone and bought vodka or gin or anything to send me into sleep but I was determined to see the cold turkey through and pay my dues.

My elastic had snapped within the first few hours of that vigorous procession. DTs were just that, a vigorous shitty procession, starting in madness and ending in the bitter nothingness of the void.





Then came a slight ascent until a swooping plunge back down into disarray. Over and over again. For days.

Although nobody could see in through the drawn curtains I still hid shivering under my stinking damp bed clothes. My anus twisted around and around in a painful swirl like screw. Fucking alcohol! I was gushing it from every pore from weeks of fun. My skin crawled.

I looked at my watch. It was 11:50. In ten minutes time I'd be free of the possibility of this awful stranger demanding entrance to my home and the utterly barbaric threat which that represented. I almost smiled as the remaining

minutes ticked away. He'd made it so fucking crystal clear that he had to be elsewhere by 12.

At 12:05 there was a loud knock at the door. BANG BAN BANG. Then there was a loud obnoxious rap on the doors windowpane with some kind of metal object. A key or a ring maybe. Then the knocking again and the whole thing was repeated over and over for 25 bastard minutes. Then it came to an end, silence! Thank fuck for that! At first I was suspicious but I finally relaxed a little and tried to sleep.

Fully ten minutes later it all began again. Christ almighty this was like DTs on top of DTs, one septic boil on top of another!





It occurred a third time too over the course of about a couple of hours. Fuck you, I thought. That was too much. Just fucking accept it you cunt and back away from that door!

He finally did go away. Gone. Vanished.

I managed to sleep for maybe an hour.

Later that day I had a phone call. It was the Gas Man. My landlord had given him my number and could he come tomorrow? I'd already suggested that to him during that encounter that morning.

I said yes, fully expecting the matter to be dealt with but he had other ideas. He wanted to torture me again.

I tried to explain to him that I'd been in a serious state of bad health but this wasn't good enough for him.

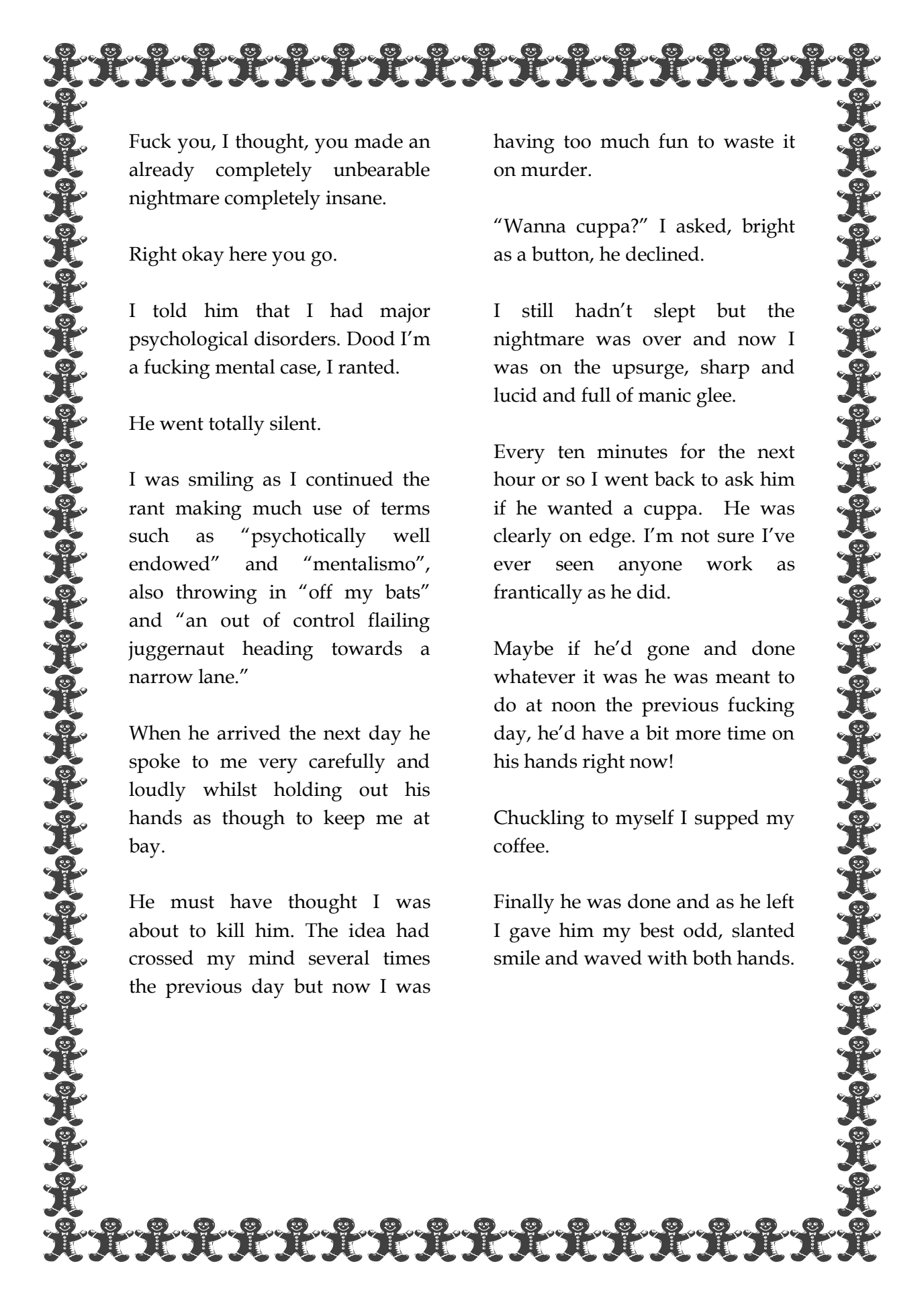
He appeared to be wanting to win the conversation by getting me to admit that I was hiding in the flat through that whole horrendous period of knocking and to apologise profusely.

I repeated that I'd had acute stress exhaustion.

This left him totally dissatisfied.







Fuck you, I thought, you made an already completely unbearable nightmare completely insane.

Right okay here you go.

I told him that I had major psychological disorders. Dood I'm a fucking mental case, I ranted.

He went totally silent.

I was smiling as I continued the rant making much use of terms such as "psychotically well endowed" and "mentalismo", also throwing in "off my bats" and "an out of control flailing juggernaut heading towards a narrow lane."

When he arrived the next day he spoke to me very carefully and loudly whilst holding out his hands as though to keep me at bay.

He must have thought I was about to kill him. The idea had crossed my mind several times the previous day but now I was

having too much fun to waste it on murder.

"Wanna cuppa?" I asked, bright as a button, he declined.

I still hadn't slept but the nightmare was over and now I was on the upsurge, sharp and lucid and full of manic glee.

Every ten minutes for the next hour or so I went back to ask him if he wanted a cuppa. He was clearly on edge. I'm not sure I've ever seen anyone work as frantically as he did.

Maybe if he'd gone and done whatever it was he was meant to do at noon the previous fucking day, he'd have a bit more time on his hands right now!

Chuckling to myself I supped my coffee.

Finally he was done and as he left I gave him my best odd, slanted smile and waved with both hands.



Handwritten text within the top-left circular frame:  
COWS  
KID  
MAY  
LAW  
FOS

Handwritten text within the top-right circular frame:  
COWS  
KID  
MAY  
LAW  
FOS

Large handwritten text on the right side of the image:  
COWS  
KID

Large handwritten text on the bottom-left side of the image:  
COWS  
KID

Large handwritten text on the bottom-right side of the image:  
COWS  
KID

# CORDIE AND BORDIE

By John McManus

1.

Nathan Dunn, who went by Nate, lived with his parents in a trailer park called Dixie Gardens. The trailers, arranged like two rows of dominoes, backed up to the Tate's Hell Forest, whose swamps extended to the Gulf. Next door Nate's three cousins lived in a trailer that was a mirror image of the Dunns'. When Nate was nine, Jasper was ten and Jeremy was eight and Jamie was zero. After his birthday Nate got to be ten with Jasper for a month while Jeremy stayed eight. His mother, Cordie, and Jasper's mother, Bordie, were twins. Cordie dyed her hair blond and was half-deaf from rheumatic fever, but otherwise they were identical. When Nate and Jasper saw *RONALD SUX* written in the gravel, Jasper asked Bordie what it meant and she slapped him, but Nate asked Cordie and she said, "Sweetie, that's when someone puts their penis in someone else's mouth."

Bordie told her boys to stay out of the swamp, but Cordie said

explore. Nate and Jasper carried a stob and iron into the forest and thumped the ground until worms surfaced: this was worm grunting, and it paid thirty dollars a bucket. Nate gave his share to Cordie, but

Jasper kept his in a jar in the woods, which Nate marked with an X on his map. He showed the map to Cordie, but as time went by he grew ashamed of having let her in on such things. "You're changing," she said. "Listen to that voice of yours."

Jasper didn't seem bothered by his own deepening voice, but merely inhabiting the same room with Cordie now caused Nate intense shame. He wanted to be perfect for her, but he was realizing he enjoyed certain things, like pissing his pants. In the woods he lay gazing up at slices of blue sky while urine spread down one pant leg. He touched himself through his wet jeans until he came, then watched the clouds as it dried. His bed of pine needles was so soft that he couldn't help falling asleep. One day Jasper appeared in his dream,

eating a popsicle on Panama City Beach, and Nate awoke to find his cousin staring down at him.

He was ready to run away – not just from home, but from Florida and maybe America – when Jasper said, “Better take off those pants.”

Jasper stepped out of his own jeans and started touching Nate through his shorts. Soon Nate was begging Jasper to quit, it was too much, he couldn’t take it. Fine, said Jasper, let’s go worm grunting.

Jasper never asked why Nate had wet himself, or told, but the very next week Nate’s dad moved to Montana. Nate thought if he tried to be good, his father would return, so he kept out of the swamp and prayed to God and even cared for a wounded bird. “Aren’t you sweet,” said Cordie, but it wasn’t working. He abandoned the bird and followed Jasper into the woods and knelt this time to suck on Jasper’s cock until Jasper said, “Stop.”

Nate looked up. “What’s wrong?”

“It’s not just we’re cousins. Our moms are twins.”

“They aren’t much alike.”

“Maybe, but I’m heading home. See you.”

Nate sat there alone for an hour. As long as he stayed perfectly still, he wouldn’t be ashamed, but eventually his legs were too cramped not to move. He walked home to find Tina and Tonya, the girls next door, playing a game called MASH, which told you who you’d marry and how many kids you’d have. When he asked to join in, they said, “Who’s your crush on?”

He couldn’t name Jasper, but Tina did. She had ten kids with him and Tonya had twelve. That was bad enough, but then one day he saw Tina kissing Jasper. He wouldn’t have felt worse if his mother had told him she didn’t love him anymore. Being good had gotten him nowhere, and he started wandering the woods thinking of ways to cause harm. He imagined tying Jasper to a tree and rubbing poison ivy all over him, even his cock and balls. The best part would be the shock of it, the bewilderment of Jasper as he begged Nate to free him. On the first day of summer Jasper and his parents and brothers went on

vacation to the Smokies. Nate took off his shirt and walked to the swamp with a bottle of Cordie's wine. It was hot, and he sat on a log examining himself for chest hairs. As the hours went by, he imagined building a canoe, rowing to the Gulf. When an anhinga flew in and landed by a green lump, he approached and saw that this was a baby alligator, bleeding from its cut throat.

He looked around for poachers, who could tie him up and do what he'd considered doing to Jasper. It seemed unlikely. He gazed into the alligator's eyes, which matched the yellow on its—he sought the right word, but all that came was *fuselage*. Nearby he found a palm frond shaped like a spear. He raised it and imagined he was bringing that spear down to bear upon an airplane. *Exoskeleton*, he thought as he stabbed it. When he was done, he kicked the carcass into black water. He set out through the woods, buzzed from the wine. The sun's swelter drew alcohol through him and out his pores as sweat, and soon he was home. Through the front door of his trailer he could see Cordie watching the Weather Channel.

She turned to Nate, empty glass in hand, and said, "Where is it?"

"Where's what?" he asked, knowing she had no more wine. Let me smell your breath, she said, and he imagined soon she would be upon him, shaking his shoulders, whipping him like his aunt whipped Jasper. As soon as he thought this, she said, "I'm sorry, I'm being like Bordie."

He said he was sorry too, and they both cried a little. "Why do you watch the weather so much?"

"I just like to know what's coming."

After five days, when he finally saw Jasper kicking gravel along the oyster road, he went out and said, "You're back."

"The mountains were stupid."

"I killed an alligator."

"Did you eat it?"

"I was just bored."

"Yeah, I've been pretty bored."

"I saw you and Tina behind her trailer."

“Panhandle girls taste like dead shrimp.”

The next bit of silence was as close as Nate ever came to saying *I love you*. Jasper was entering the ninth grade soon, and Bordie was making him go out for football. There was a month-long practice camp in Pensacola, and she sent him there. He hated it and said they roasted in those uniforms. Nate knew this because Bordie bragged about it to Cordie: “You’re raising Nate like you do everything: like you’ve got no control over it.”

In July, during a heat spell, Jasper collapsed on the field. While he was in a coma, Nate dreamed he was being eaten alive by baby alligators. He decided Florida wasn’t a nice place to live. Montana had a Spanish name too, and he imagined leaving Flowery for his dad’s house in Mountain. On the third day Jasper died. On the fourth day Nate received a letter, which he read sitting on the hood of his mother’s car:

Dear Nate, Sorry I can’t come home on weekends, I hate it here and my teammates and the wishbone formation. Have you been to Pensacola. There’s a

National Seashore and we could camp, no one goes, a boy told me. You could catch the bus here. Yours truly Jasper. After “Yours truly” Nate slid onto the ground and put his head between his legs. It might have looked to passersby like he was sucking his own cock, but he was trying not to faint. When the feeling passed, he walked one mile to a channel of black water in which he intended to drown, so that he and Jasper would enter heaven at the same time. Picturing heaven as a deserted seashore, he flexed his legs to jump. His resolve fell short. Instead of drowning, he pissed his pants, standing up, watching for alligators, and then he lay down in the sun and didn’t move again until he was dry.

2.

After all that, Bordie started attending a church on the Coastal Highway, whose mission was to raise money to prepare Israel for the end times. Its founder, Bill Dalton, would make a nice husband for Cordie, she said. “Nate needs a father, and Bill will blow you away.”

“You’re the lonely one, Bordie, not me,” said Cordie, because

Bordie's husband had left her after the funeral.

"No, I'm glad Steve's gone. He was like you: he thought his kids were his friends. Otherwise Jasper would be alive."

Nate didn't think Cordie was dumb enough to fall for Bill Dalton, but then she asked the doctor for the weight-loss drugs known as Fen/phen, because "Bill will never like me with ten extra pounds." The doctor, aware that rheumatic fever had damaged her heart, warned her against the pills, but then he relented when Cordie said her heart damage was what kept her from exercising. "Do you honestly think you're fat?" Nate demanded afterward. "You'd risk your life to lose ten pounds for Dalton?"

"If those pills could hurt me, a doctor wouldn't give them."

She was as bad as Bordie, Nate thought, but he said no more. By the time fen/phen was pulled from the market, Cordie's heart valve had deteriorated to the point of requiring surgery that she couldn't afford. There was a class-action suit against Wyeth, but any payoff was years down the road.

Bill kept on raising money for Israel. At church he would drone on about idolatry as Cordie gazed vacantly ahead and Nate sat playing with himself through his jeans.

"What was the sermon about?" he demanded one Sunday as Bordie drove them home. "Tell me one thing that bastard said."

"It was about nasty boys like you," said Bordie, whose own sons had refused to get out of bed that morning.

"Think I'm nasty? You don't know the half of it."

"It will burn off in hell."

"What, my nastiness?"

"That, and what I saw you doing, that's right, hell is made of fire. The walls and ceiling and even the floor of it are fire."

His immediate retort was that Bordie was a stupid cunt. He didn't stop first to consider the consequences, which were that Cordie would fall silent and Bordie would throw a fit. "Jeremy used to look forward to hell too. What I did to show him, Cordie, I

caught him smoking, then put his cigarette out on his palm, which showed him one-trillionth of the pain of hell."

"I don't smoke, Bordie."

"I saw him last spring," she told Cordie, her voice cracking, "he was doing it out back with another boy!"

"It wasn't a cigarette, Mom, it was pot, and the boy was Jasper and we were naked and I'm sorry but Bordie's a cunt."

He felt bad for tattling on his dead cousin, but he had realized it was absurd to feel ashamed of liking boys when men at church ate the flesh of God's son. From then on he quit hiding the truth even from Bill Dalton, who saw him touching Jeremy one day on the oyster road. "I'll show you what Jasper used to do," Nate had told Jeremy. When Bill found them there standing with their pants at their ankles, Jeremy cried out, then punched Nate. Bleeding from his lip, Nate stared unblinking into Bill's eyes. That night Bill ordered Cordie to choose him or Nate. Not wanting his mother to make that choice, Nate caught a ride to Tallahassee

with Tina. He bought a bus ticket to Missoula and got as far as Memphis before Tina told Cordie, who called the police. She asked Bill to go pick Nate up, but Bill said no, he'd given her her choice. Then I've made it, she said, and that was the end of Bill, and Jeremy dropped out of school, and it all came from calling Bordie a cunt, all that plus Bordie slowed to a crawl, her hands shaking for the half hour it took her to convey them just ten miles home.

3.

When Nate left to attend a little college in the middle of nowhere, he hugged Cordie goodbye and said he would call often. For a while he did miss her fiercely, but then he got into drugs and stopped missing her. He lost his scholarship and moved in with a professor who was in love with him. The professor, Khaled, had moved to the college from New York, and he took Nate there over the break. A younger friend of Khaled's fell in love with Nate, and Nate moved in with him and seduced one of the friend's friends. He slept his way around the Village, getting high whenever he could. Three and a half years after he'd moved away, Cordie



asked if she was invited to his graduation.

He told her there wasn't much of a ceremony and it was better for him to come to her. "So you're moving back to Florida?" she asked.

"I'm thinking New York's better for my career."

He said he was applying for jobs, which was true except that the jobs were at restaurants. After she hung up, he was sorry he'd suggested a visit. He didn't want to face her. Still, Bordie would learn about any broken promise, so he flew home that Christmas. Sure enough it was upsetting. Jeremy was in jail, Jamie planned to join the Marines at eighteen, and the "Dixie" had fallen off the sign so that now it said just "Gardens."

"Where is it you're working?" said Bordie as the four of them sat in Cordie's trailer, catching up.

"At a hedge fund," he said, having slept recently with a hedge fund manager. "We're on the sixty-fourth floor."

"It seems to me young men should serve their country," said Bordie, glancing at her remaining son.

"I'm contributing to the war effort. Last week I sucked a sailor's cock."

"Jamie, when Cordie and I were girls, we each had a cat, and the cats had kittens the same week. Cordie's cat wouldn't nurse its kittens, so mine had to nurse its own kittens and Cordie's kittens too."

"Would you like a drink?" Nate asked, feeling ready for one himself.

"I'd like one," said Cordie, and Jamie nodded too.

"This is like the cats! I'm trying to set an example for my son, who won't abandon me. Nate, you may still think I'm a you-know-what, but my sons are here in the Panhandle."

As Bordie spoke, Cordie turned on the Weather Channel.

"The farthest they've gone is Pensacola. I'll bet Jasper only

joined that football camp to get away from you, Nate."

He turned to see what his mother thought about this, but she was watching the forecast. Tomorrow, like every winter day, would be cloudy and mild. "Yeah, I drive the boys crazy," he said, and then he remembered Jasper's letter. He hurried to his room and searched the closet, but only the map remained. That was good enough. Bordie was still fussing at Cordie as he carried it outside. Half a mile into the woods he found the fallen log he'd marked with an X. As he dug into it, it turned to mulch. He flung aside centipedes and roly-polies and kept going and finally his fingertips hit glass, just as he heard Jamie's voice ask, "What's that?"

He looked up. Jamie was the age Jasper had been when he died, and he sounded the same, and Nate felt dizzy from the resemblance. "This was your brother's," he said, offering the jar. "He earned it worm grunting."

Jamie twisted the lid off and dumped the money into his hands along with the carcasses of several bugs. He counted out two

hundred dollars. "Will you tell me something?"

"Sure. What?"

"Was Jasper's cock bigger than mine?"

Before Nate could stop him, Jamie was dropping his pants. Nate looked away and said, "I can't," but he glanced at Jamie's cock anyway and saw that it was uncircumcised and long for a kid his age.

"Yours is bigger," he lied.

"It's bigger than Jeremy's, too."

"Then congratulations."

Jamie wasn't moving to get dressed again. What stopped Nate from acting wasn't that it was wrong; it was that Bordie might find out. She would break down completely. Jamie was the only one left he hadn't touched. As much as he hated his aunt, it would be cruel to take that away. So he told Jamie to pull his pants up. After Jamie had stuffed the money back into the jar, he did, and then he walked off, leaving Nate to do whatever he wanted.

4.

Nate's next time in Florida was when Cordie's fen/phen money arrived. That was a nice visit: she flew him down and gave him twenty thousand dollars, and they ate out a lot. He explained how hedge funds worked, making up whatever he didn't know. She didn't comment on how much he drank with every meal, and he didn't say why he needed to get back to New York soon, which was that he couldn't find drugs in Florida. Didn't he want to stay and see houses with her? Yes, he said, but his employers needed him. Within an hour of landing at JFK he'd bought an eightball. For several months, until the money was gone, he was everyone's favorite boy. When his bank account became overdrawn, his boyfriend said, "Call Florida and ask for more." It was hypocritical to break up with the guy over that, because the idea had occurred to Nate too. There were less shameful ways to find money. Even if he wasn't as hot as he used to be, older men found him attractive by virtue of his being young. He would get high with them and stay up all night, the next night too. Merely pouring a pile of powder onto a mirror gave

him a thrill. Just as he had only to hear the word *boy* to be turned on, he got high thinking the word *coke*. Two years went by. One day in 2006, he was in bed, hung over and strung out, watching porn, when suddenly a phone was ringing. The boyfriend who'd just left him had kept their shared cell phone, but then he realized the sound came from his computer. He clicked *answer*.

"Nate," said his aunt. "Cordie's kidneys have failed. Is this a video phone?"

"It's Skype," he said. "Is she dying?"

"She claims she's fine, but hurry. Do you hear my words or see them?"

"Both," he lied, trying to recall what kidneys did. "Is this because of fen/phen?"

"The doctors say no, but you know doctors. Can you see me?"

"Only your head, Bordie. You're looking real nice."

All he could afford was a bus, which got him to Tallahassee Memorial Hospital in thirty-six

hours. "My baby," Cordie said as he bent to hug her, "you look so old."

He'd thought she would too, but she appeared healthy, considering the renal failure. She'd lost ten pounds, which she was probably happy about. "You're just in time."

"For what?" he asked, alarmed, but she just meant she was being released. He drove her in her new car to the house she'd bought, a one-story rancher near the northern edge of Tate's Hell. A jigsaw puzzle was laid out on the table, and they sat down to work it. "Have you been seeing anyone?" she asked as she gathered up pieces of the sky, and he replied that he was single. "I was thinking of paying you to stay here and drive me to dialysis."

She told him it made her nervous to drive herself, and Bordie had been refusing to speak to her ever since Cordie had asked Jamie not to go to Iraq. Maybe this was deliverance, Nate thought: he could get clean, break the cycle. "Think about it." As he thought about it, he drank rum. It felt good in that heat to be

intoxicated, and Cordie didn't seem to care. Forecasters were predicting a busy storm season, she mentioned, and then she mused that she might become a foster parent.

"A what?"

"So many kids bounce around because they're too old."

"What if the kid who hated you?"

"All they need is a little love."

"You're sixty."

"I'm fifty-six."

Embarrassed about getting her age wrong, he said no more. He wished he could be the kind of stereotypical gay son who discussed everything with his mother, but he barely knew her. Every day he took her for dialysis, and in the evenings they watched movies and worked puzzles, but something was missing. Two months passed. He figured his friends were forgetting about him, because they weren't friends but just people he'd slept with. One morning, when there was a delay at the dialysis center, Cordie

asked him to go to Bordie's place and fetch her will.

For the first time in years Nate drove into Tate's Hell. When he read *You Are Welcome to Gardens*, his skin prickled with the sensation that New York had never happened and that time was a trick, but then he saw how Bordie's trailer was dwarfed by crepe myrtles she'd planted when Jasper died. He knocked on Bordie's door and was soon staring into the eyes of the mother of the only boy he'd loved. "Nate, you have a lot of nerve coming to see me," she said.

Bordie wasn't aging as well as Cordie: she was stooped over, and her face was wrinkled into a rictus of disapproval. She motioned him into a room that smelled of smoke and baby wipes. He lowered himself onto an orange couch. "Mom told me you have her will, and she wants to change it."

Bordie nodded like she'd heard a bad rain was coming. "You can't have it," she said, sitting beside him. "I know what she plans to do."

It occurred to Nate now that any changes to the will were because

of him. "I don't see why you should care."

As she'd done so often before, Bordie slapped his face. Then, looking surprised, she lowered her hand to see blood on her finger where her nail had cut him.

"Now you've done it," he said. "That's how AIDS is spread."

He waited for her to tremble in fear, so that he could tell her it was a joke, he probably didn't have AIDS, but she only asked how he'd been.

"I spend a lot of time at work. The economy's bustling."

"Jamie says you lied about the computer phone. He says you can't see the words."

"Do you talk to him online?"

"Cordie was fixing to get me one, till she freaked out."

She said Jamie's letters were on the counter and he could look at them. He opened the one with the most recent postmark and read, "The guys play a game called Kill Fuck or Marry, which I know it'll piss you off but it's what it's

called. I'm pretty good at it and folks laugh. Here's some examples." Nate looked up eventually and saw that Bordie's eyes were closed. He tiptoed into her bedroom, where in a drawer he found a folder labeled *PRIVATE*. Inside were more letters and an envelope labeled "Jasper Death Certificate." The letters had come from jail. He pulled one out and read, "Dear mom, send Camels, remember in lockup it was my own space but here your white black or mexican you need what your people want."

He looked around Bordie's bedroom, a mirror image of Cordie's old one. The ceilings seemed lower but he'd grown taller. The city was closer and the forest smaller. The constant sound of croaking frogs was the same. Satisfied that there was no will, and that either way he would inherit the money, he retreated down the oyster road. It was still two hours before Cordie needed him, so he turned south. On Carabelle Beach he sat drinking rum and telling himself he could stay and be Cordie's caregiver. In daylight it was easy: the sky, being blue, tricked his brain into producing endorphins, which

allowed him to delude himself. Still, the nurses were doing a fine job caring for Cordie on their own, and Bordie would get over whatever had irked her.

On the way back he called Charles, an ex, to ask if Charles missed him, but got no answer. He left messages for Charles and also for Paul, Raul, Arthur, Jamal, and Drew. He was approaching town by the time he got Victor on the phone. "Do you still party?" he asked Victor, and when the answer was yes, he said he was visiting his mom but would be home in a week.

He carried on as usual after that, discussing with Cordie the weather and the raccoons that came wanting food. They remarked on contrasts between various raccoons. After five days he still hadn't told her. Mothers were idiots to trust their children, he thought, feeling a dread that increased with each hour. All weekend he tried to come up with a story: his best friend was dying; he'd be gone just a few days. On the final afternoon she asked if he would go rent some movies. "Get four; we can keep them four days and that's one for each day, but hurry, there's storms."

If he didn't tell her now, he thought, he wouldn't ever. He opened his mouth to speak, but nothing came. He could only fetch the keys and ask what films she wanted. "I'll leave it up to you," she said, which was maybe the problem: she'd never ordered him around or told him how to behave.

The weather to and from town was fine, but Cordie was relieved to see him home. Tornadoes had been spotted. "No reason to worry," he said. They watched *Strangers on a Train* as drizzle fell. By the end she'd fallen asleep. He covered her with an afghan and went to his room to pack. He wrote a note: *One of my ex-boyfriends died last night. I have to go to the funeral; I'll be gone a week.* He signed it and went to sleep. When his alarm went off at five and he stumbled down the hall, Cordie was at the table watching the weather and working a puzzle. She looked up. "I'd like you to get an AIDS test sometime this week," she said as a weatherman spoke about the heat up north. Where had this come from? Now he would have to tear up his note. He wanted to shout that AIDS was the least of his worries, but she was already

mentioning that there was a tropical storm. "It's called Beryl," she said wistfully, as if she wished it would strike. Wanting to evacuate on dialysis was crazy, but he recalled how she'd spoken about Katrina—"The river levee could give out too," she'd said—and wondered if she was like him, if she felt desperate for any thrill.

"Are you hoping it hits the coast?"

"The hurricane?"

"You just seem to like hurricanes."

"More than a thousand died in Katrina, Nate, not to mention all the cats. Do you think I hope you have AIDS just because I asked you to get a test?"

This was the biggest rebuke he could remember receiving from her. He mumbled that he was sorry. "I'm ready to see my will," she said.

"Bordie wouldn't give it to me."

"Well, I don't need it. That's fine."

"What were you going to do?"

“Just read it and see if it’s what I remember.”

She turned the volume up for the world forecast. The weather looked good all over the Northern Hemisphere. He watched her watch it and decided she’d been lying about the storms. If she’d been telling the truth, he was a bad seed for liking disasters. The evidence for that was scant, though; she was the one who’d mentioned Beryl, and if he hoped for it too it was because he was her son.

He fell asleep on the couch. When he awoke, the sun had risen and Cordie was in bed. He unfolded his note and added that Bordie would drive her if she apologized for her words. He laid it on the table and called a taxi, instructing the driver to meet him out by the highway, where he stood waiting at the forest edge. He hadn’t been into the woods once on this visit. Maybe he should go now, he thought; maybe there was time to jerk off, or even piss his pants again. So what if the driver saw? Wasn’t the whole point to be humiliated? Yes, but it wasn’t thrilling like it used to be. Going into the woods was a busman’s holiday for Nate now, and so he

stood in the ditch until the taxi arrived to carry him to the Greyhound station.

5.

Victor discovered that Nate was cheating and kicked him out. For a month after that Nate was technically homeless, although he had places to stay. Fucking and getting high had turned out to be what he was best at. Men admired his sense of abandon. No one ever asked his age or where he was from. If anyone did, he increased his age by five years, because he didn’t want people saying he looked old. He worked in kitchens now, because managers didn’t want him waiting tables. Once in a while he would send Cordie a quick email. In 2008 she wrote that Jamie had lost his legs and an arm in an IED attack. The Army was flying him to Walter Reed Medical Center; would he go down and visit? He said of course, but he never got around to it. He wondered if Bordie had, given that she was caring for Cordie. He imagined Bordie fussing at Cordie again for raising Nate wrong, and wondered how he might have turned out if he and Jasper had been switched at birth.



On January 12, 2010, Bordie called and said Cordie had passed away from kidney failure. Nate, who'd been awake ninety-six hours, thought it was Cordie playing a joke. He wasn't sure what day it was and thought maybe it was April Fool's Day. "Prove it's you," he said, and then for the first time he heard his aunt crying and knew she was telling the truth. He realized he couldn't afford to come home. He was about to tell her so when Bordie said, "Cordie bought you a ticket. It was the last thing she did."

The next day his aunt picked him up at the airport and drove him to Cordie's, where she was staying. "How is Jamie?" he asked in the car, knowing full well Jamie hadn't gone outdoors since his release from the hospital.

"He's doing just fine. Cordie had a handicapped bath put in."

"And how is Jeremy?"

"I didn't think you would even board the plane."

"For my own mother's funeral?"

"I used to tell Cordie you'd leave her to die while my kids nursed

me through old age. I was half right."

After a minute of dumbly wondering which half, he felt like he should speak. He thought of telling her yes, her kids would be beside her if they weren't dead, imprisoned, crippled; instead he asked, "What kind of monster do you take me for?"

"Just keep your grubby hands off my son," Bordie told him, as they pulled up to the house. He followed her in to find Jamie in a wheelchair in front of the TV, weighing at least 250. His prosthetic arm, which looked authentic enough on its own, was half the size of his real arm, and he wasn't wearing his legs.

"Hey," he said to Nate. "You look old."

"You look fat."

"I can get thin, but you can't get young."

At the service Nate hoped the dozen or so attendees would think his shaking came from grief. He was indeed upset, but that wasn't why he spent the next two days in his room, drinking rum.

When he finally stopped shaking, it was morning and Bordie was gone. He found Jamie playing a video game. "Feel like a drink?"

"Do you remember Tina?"

"Who's Tina?"

"That skank from the trailers, with all the kids. She saw Jasper's dick. She swears it was bigger."

He sounded like he was accusing Nate of theft. "This isn't your house," he continued. "If it was just me I wouldn't give a fuck, but my mom's old and she doesn't deserve to be around you."

I could push you in the swamp and watch you drown, Nate wanted to retort, but he said, "Tina's right. I was only being nice when I told you yours was."

Nate took his laptop and the rum to the porch, where he sat looking for sex online. As he waited for answers to his ad, he read the blog of a high schooler who was thinking of suicide. It was a kitten-eyed boy in Wyoming, and he wrote, "Hot pic," thinking he could save that boy, but maybe he was doing the boy in. There were some Mexican workers building a

house across the street, and he watched them while bugs drank his blood. The joke was on the bugs, because they'd die of AIDS. Life on earth would be more interesting if AIDS was spread that way. Suddenly two Mexicans were crossing the road. He thought of hiding inside, but it was too late. They approached and said they were Tomás and Omar and asked, "What is worm grunt?"

He realized that his T-shirt, which he'd found in Jamie's closet, read *Worm Grunter*. "It's when you hunt worms for bait."

"Hunt is grunt?"

"I don't know why they call it that," he said, and then he explained about the metal bar and the vibrations.

"You like to do this?"

"I like money," he said, going on to name the shop that had paid thirty a bucket. Omar was incredulous, and cute, and for a minute Nate imagined leading him into the woods under the auspices of teaching him. He felt too sober, though, and anyway he doubted that Mexicans would be

welcome at the sport. He doubted he would ever return to the forest. It was hard sometimes to believe in the past, and all that he'd done with Jasper was a distant dream. Agreeing to show the Mexicans where to go was a lie. He finished the rum and stood to go in, but there was his aunt in the window, a towel wrapped around her head. Without her brown hair visible she looked like Cordie, who watched him from heaven. He could be seen from heaven and through the window by two women who perceived the truth. It was more than he could bear. He got in the car and headed south. As he crossed into Tate's Hell, a man on the radio was interviewing a theologian. "Do you consider Muhammad to have been a pacifist like Jesus?" he asked, and the theologian answered, "I do not consider Jesus to have been a pacifist. Jesus told us what I offer is the sword."

The Wakulla Prison was a low clapboard building at the west edge of the swamp. Inside, twenty minutes after Nate announced himself, two officers led him to a room where Jeremy sat handcuffed to a table looking as wiry and mean as he'd been at twelve. "I see you staring," said

Jeremy when Nate sat down across from him. "My arms might look small, but I can do a hundred pull-ups."

"I've got a message for your mom. Tell her she was right, that she raised you better than Cordie raised me."

Jeremy swallowed. "Do what?"

"I was too ashamed to talk to my mom all those years, and now I'm too ashamed to tell yours. I'm hoping you'll do it."

"She quit coming years ago. I write to her but she won't reply."

"She lives fifteen miles away."

"Yeah, she's always been kind of a cunt."

"A cunt," he repeated, a little staggered by this.

"Guess what what she said when she caught me smoking."

Nate's memory of that Sunday drive surfaced as glimmery and perfect as a glass bauble. "She told you the fire in your cigarette was one trillionth of the fire of hell."

"No, she told me, 'If Cordie sees you smoking, I'll whip you till your butt bleeds.'"

A chill went through Nate like a blast of wind. "She raised you right," he said.

"Bring me some crank and I'll pass your message on. I can tell you've got some."

He opened his mouth to deny this, but the girl to his left distracted him. She was telling an older man about some storms. Fine, leave, said the man, to which she protested that hail would fall. He replied that her mother didn't need any fucking wheelchair. Would you want your own mama to crawl, she said. If my mama was alive, he answered, I'd cut off her legs, and then Nate started thinking about all the boyfriends he'd been too ashamed of to tell Cordie about. She'd deserved to think his life was going well, so he'd simply never called her when it wasn't. Jeremy, who had plenty to be ashamed of, wrote to Bordie. He and Jeremy had grown up by the same swamp, taught by the same teachers, so did the difference lie in their dads' DNA? He guessed in the future you'd be

able to send your dad's DNA somewhere and get answers.

"I can't find it in Florida," he finally said.

"Do you think you're happier than me?" asked Jeremy, who lived in prison and who wasn't allowed alcohol. What a stupid question. Did it speak to a deep unhappiness of Jeremy's own? It was hard to say until Nate looked into Jeremy's eyes. What he saw there staggered him. Maybe it was deadness, maybe resignation, but whatever it was, Jeremy didn't hate himself, and Nate knew the question had not been a cry for help.

"They'll make you leave soon, so answer me."

"About happiness? I'll think about it and get back to you."

"Yeah, right—as if I'll ever see you again."

What a cheap trick were those words, thought Nate as he stood up to go. Jeremy was a fool if he thought he could work Nate that way. Even he, as unhappy as he'd been, had never drummed up

sympathy for himself by threatening suicide.

In the prison parking lot, under gathering clouds, the flags of America and Florida rippled in the wind, and simultaneously Nate saw a flag on a truck bumper. "Power of Pride," read that sticker, but of course pride was a sin. Someone ought to cover it with a sticker that said "Sin of Pride," he thought, getting in the car. He turned on the radio. The theologian was no longer on; now they were talking about the disaster in Haiti. More than 200,000 were believed to be dead. Cordie would be sorry she'd missed that one, he mused as he headed into a storm that also would have been worth her while. Soon the wind was buffeting him fiercely. The sky darkened as if on a dimmer switch. Yes, Cordie would have been worried. Palm fronds were whipping every which way, and he figured she'd followed the weather in New York all those years, too, fearing for him in every storm.

The difference between him and his cousins was clear, he realized as he drove into that wall of water and ice: Bordie's kids had never learned to lie to her. He'd given

Cordie a true gift when he'd told her about his job. She might have worried about the weather in New York, and she might even have worried about AIDS, but she hadn't worried about his real problems. That would have caused her to die a bitter old crone.

For the first time in his life he felt relaxed. Hail was still beating down on him, and maybe it was dangerous, but he could do what he wanted from now on. He'd been putting checks on his behavior for Cordie's sake: no more of that. He was approaching Cordie's new neighborhood, or rather Bordie's. Ice pellets rained down like mortar spray, and it might have made sense to stop at least for a while, but he sped right on past the turnoff. He hydroplaned as he raced toward the interstate. He wasn't sure the car was his, of course, any more than he knew the house was Bordie's, but it was easier to keep driving north than to learn the answer.





## PETER WHITEHEAD AND POP

By Jack Sargeant

I've written on Peter Whitehead on several occasions, firstly for my book *Naked Lens: Beat Cinema* (Soft Skull) and later an introduction to his book *Baby Doll* a collection of his photos published by Velvet Books. I've also discussed his work 'on stage' with him at the Brighton Cinematheque.

The following is transcribed from a lengthy telephone interview, during which we discussed such topics as his childhood, the nature of filmmaking and the role of everything from politics to magick in his life and work. The book length interview and accompanying essay is intended for publication 'at some point'.

Well known for his documentary films of Pink Floyd and the Rolling Stones, in the following extract Whitehead discusses his experience making promo films (note not videos) of musicians for the emergent Top of the Pops and its ilk in the 1960s. These films feature the likes of the pre-Velvet Underground Nico, The Rolling Stones and The Dubliners.

What were you shooting these pop promos on, all on 16mm [film]?

Well, by this time I had brought myself [the] Éclair and Acme [cameras] I was able to be an independent filmmaker from A-through-to-Z, if someone brought the film and processed it, I could make the film. I filmed Jimi Hendrix for Mike Jeffrey, I filmed Eric Burden, I filmed The Dubliners, all during this period (I can't remember which came first). I filmed Nico, and I filmed the Small Faces. It's unique stuff, it's history, it really is.

And these were all shot for Top Of The Pops and Ready Steady Go and so on?

It was all shown on Top Of The Pops first, because Immediate Records were considered to be good, P.P Arnold and all of that

kind of stuff, but by this time, people like Andrew [Loog Oldham], and other people, had realised that if you did a film you didn't have to take people on to Top Of The Pops so they didn't have to look naff. You could actually do something slightly interesting. And if you made a film you could then make fifty prints, so you could then send them off to America and Australia and this and that and the other, to promote your music. So, they really did become promos. I made a film called The Little Bastard Immediate a little twenty-minute film about Immediate Records.

I also filmed The Vagabonds. I've got an amazing film of The Vagabonds shot in Notting Hill. They were the earliest form of true Jamaican ska music and I filmed them when they first arrived in London. And why it is interesting is because it is real seedy Notting Hill life, shots of nightclubs and things. I've filmed all kinds of funny little things.

How did you approach making these pop promos, compared to making Charlie Is My Darling, because that - as you have said- works on you aspiring to invisibility, but when you are making pop promos, clearly you have a different agenda.



It depended on the situation. When I went to film the Dubliners, they had no idea what they wanted, so I just got drunk with them and they got drunk and we just went around Dublin and ended up picking up some girl in a bar and a midget, and god knows what else and sticking it all together. It depended, some people knew what they wanted, The Shadows knew what they wanted, they had the costumes and they had this and that - they did *Bombay Duck* and something else, and I'd basically go along and shoot it in my way and edit it. Really it was the question of being the photographer and editor in that kind of situation.

But with the Dubliners it was more [that] I had to create the whole thing. Stanley Dorson at Top of the Pops said, "I want you to film this song *Seven Drunken Nights* by the Dubliners, you've got to go to Dublin and spend an evening with them and make the movie and I want it for Top of the Pops by Thursday". I said, "All right, okay".

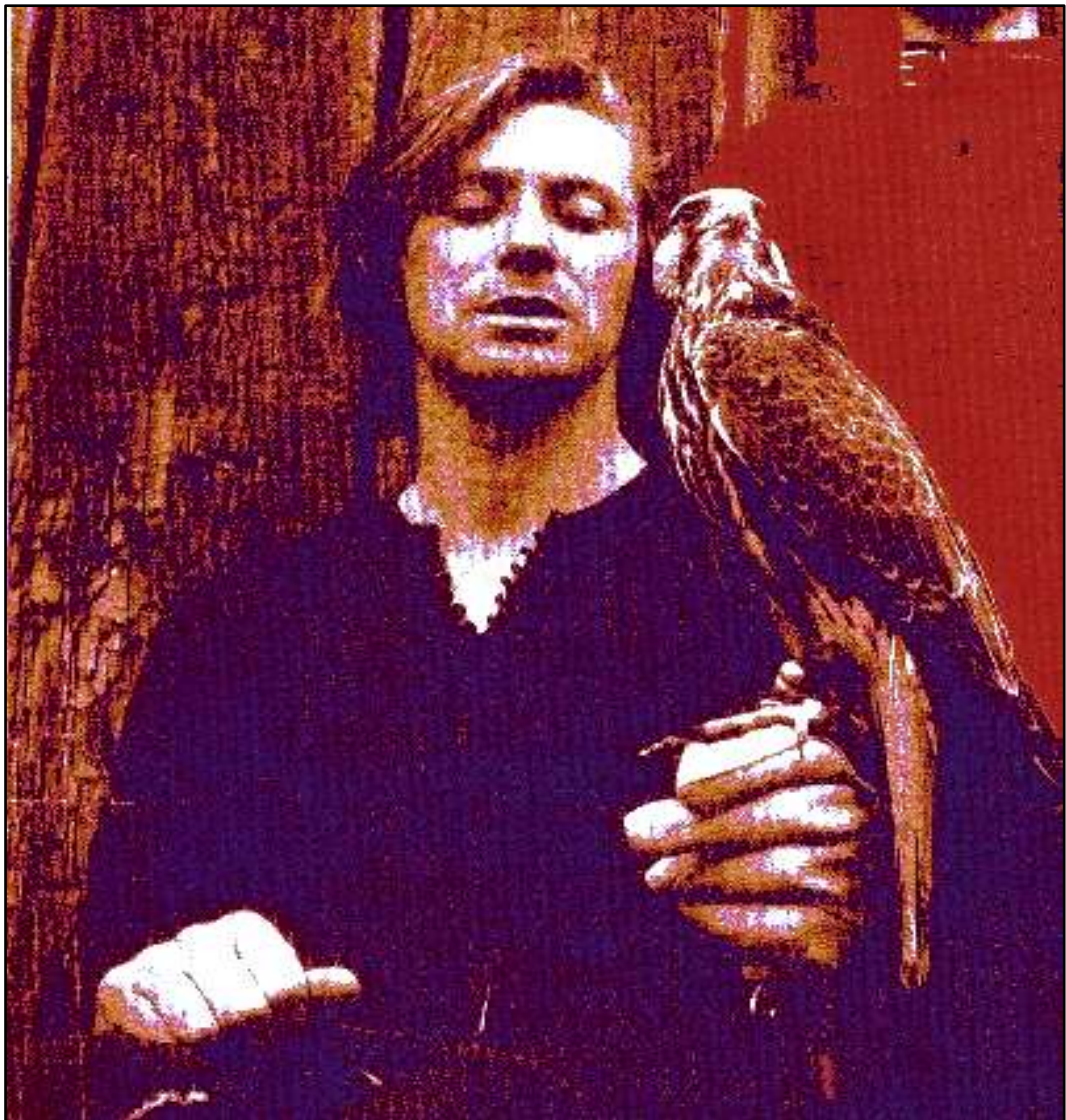
So I arrived in Dublin, go to the pub, and they are all sitting there, and I said "What do you want to do then?" and they said "Don't know". I said "*Seven Drunken Nights* we'll have to have some

scenery and all that kind of stuff." And they said "Well, we don't think so, we're just going on a pub crawl". To cut a long story short, they gave me a couple of pints of Guinness - and I'd never drunk before in my life - and we moved to the next pub, where apparently we picked up the barmaid and we moved to another place. Then we decided we needed to film some shots in a bed, so we went to somebody's flat, by this time I'd had about six pints of Guinness and we'd picked up a midget somewhere along the line. And we'd gone back to one of the guy's flats and stuck the girl and the midget in bed...talk about improvised...

Anyway the next thing I remember is waking up in downtown Dublin with this girl from behind the bar (who was very pretty I might say) and not knowing where I was, I have never felt so ill in all my life (I think I had ten pints of Guinness) I didn't recognise her, she didn't recognise me, I had my passport - no ticket, I had no camera, nothing - staggered out and realised I had half-an-hour to get to the airport, I got to the airport and found my ticket waiting for me, I can't remember how I got back, I had to borrow money and all this kind of thing.

I got back and phoned up Anthony, my assistant, and said, "What the hell happened?" He said, "You got drunk and went off with the fucking blonde!" I said, "Well, yeah, sorry about that. What happened to the film?" He said, "I've taken it to the lab, I'm just going to collect it, okay." So we went along and got it and

brought it back, and there was seven minutes of usable film - all of the rest was out of focus, shots of the roof, the floor, totally impossible [to use] (laughs)... anyway, I had, I think, seven minutes of film for a seven-and-a-half minute song...every single bit that was usable, I used.



And then rang-up Stanley and said, "The lab's fucked up all the film. I've only got seven minutes I've had to stick it together. I don't think they're going to like it, I don't think you're going to like it. It's a total disaster. It's all I've got." Stanley said, "Oh, okay, it doesn't matter, it's only the Dubliners."

[Later] He rings me up and says, "It's brilliant. Everybody likes it. It's absolutely terrific, we all love it, don't worry". The next week he rings me up, "You won't believe this, everybody likes the thing so much we want to show it again, it's never happened before on the history of Top of the Pops." I said, "Well, the Dubliners must be pleased." He said, "They're over the moon." And this went on for another week, they showed it three times, and it had never been heard of. I used every bit of interesting film.

Then some guy comes in and says, "Did you see the review of your film in the *New Statesman*?" So I go and get the *New Statesman* and there's this article about the collapse of British documentary filmmaking, that British television has reached rock bottom, that the fine tradition of British documentary - of *Night Train* and this and that and the other had

been lost forever - all the stuff being produced as documentaries on the television was utter trash, except, quite unexpectedly as happened last week with the brilliant footage illustrating the Dubliners' *Seven Drunken Night* [which] shows that it is possible to film documentary film in a lively context without it being trash after all, and so it was described as "brilliant", and so of course I tucked the review away. Anyway, about five years ago I was going through my stuff, and I found the review, and thinking, "I remember that", then I noticed who fucking wrote it; Dennis Potter. And then it dawned on me that he wrote it about six months before he wrote *Pennies From Heaven*.

Did you see it as a documentary at the time?

Now, that's very interesting, because I showed *Charlie Is My Darling* to a guy from Ireland recently, and he saw it and said, "This is absolute history!" And I said, "Yeah, the Stones...", he said, "No, it's nothing to do with the Stones, you captured Dublin. None of that exists anymore. You caught the moment." So he saw it as about Dublin.

Well, there is no doubt about it

that The Dubliners is about a bunch of guys who go on a pub crawl and sing this funny folk song, so yeah, it was pure documentary. And the fact that though you can say, "Well, it wasn't documentary at all it was pure fiction, because you had a girl in bed and a pair of shoes, with a midget, and the guys come in and they sing and they laugh and they get drunk" - I don't know, it was neither one thing nor the other. It was actually a fantasy based on a pseudo-real documentary situation.

But you know the reason I loved doing them was because I loved music, and I always considered myself to be a musician. What I enjoyed doing was - and I'd do this for anyone, on any subject - was to cut film to music. And that's what I did in The Fall really. I loved cutting film to music, because I saw film as music (as did Bergman, by the way). But in my own modest way I really always thoroughly enjoyed it. If somebody came along now and said, "We'll give you four late Beethoven quartets and fifty-cans of film, let's see what you'd make cutting the film to it", I'd love to do it.

Clearly the work that you are most famous for is the music

related work - the Stones' film, the Pink Floyd film...

And Tonite Let's All Make Love In London, which, by the way, I called A Pop Concerto For Film. That was very accurate actually, although I did it in a very flippant [way] at the time.

But to me it is interesting because you said previously that you didn't know about pop music, you didn't know who the Stone's were and so on.

Well, I can tell you this, by the end of the sixties I still didn't know about pop music, I didn't listen to a single pop song other than when I had to film.

So even though you were involved with all of these people you still maintained your status as outside pop culture?

I never took it seriously for a minute. I mean, I remember Mike Jeffrey calling up and saying, "Peter what are you doing on Thursday? I would like you to film this new guy I've just signed up, he's a black guy, he's going to be the biggest thing ever." I said, "How do you know he's going to be that good?" And he said, "He plays the guitar with his teeth. He smashes his guitar. He's the

greatest ever. I want you to come along on Thursday and we're going to bring out this record called *Hey Joe* and I want you to film him performing it at the Shaftsbury Avenue, it's his debut performance in England". And there was this guy called Jimi Hendrix. So I went along thinking, "Oh! fuck me, a guy who plays a guitar with his teeth, what next" (laughs).

But there's another film I love - the Eric Burden film *When I Was Young*. The Eric Burden and Jimi Hendrix films were both synced and edited in one night. I love that *When I Was Young* - with the airplanes, which were shot from a television screen. It does have a second layer of meaning, the war, and if you look at it closely it is very, very efficiently cut in terms of the imagery and the music.



# IMITATING THE NEEDLE

By Ele-Beth Little

Photos © Alan Perry



## THE WORM IN THE FRUIT

I found out recently that in the 1600s 'to die' was a commonly used phrase for 'orgasm'.

I've often thought that desire - whatever kind of desire it may be - is linked to destruction.

1. First of all there is the destruction of the desire itself. If you're hungry enough to fantasise about all the things you could binge on, someone might tell you "you have eyes bigger than your belly" or warn you that "you'll make yourself sick". But after gorging yourself sick, the idea of hunger is far away. You managed

to obliterate it. Just like waking up with a hangover, and swearing off booze forever, food has become the last thing you want. You won't even tolerate the mention of food.

Sometimes our desire for a person is so strong it seems unquenchable and similarly we want to gorge ourselves sick. Geared towards the satisfaction (i.e. the destruction) of our hunger we undress them, and peel away at their soul, wanting to get closer and closer, literally climb in to them, be them, merge with them. Some part of us seems to think there is an ultimate unsurpassable intimacy that we could attain. Unveiled, our desire can always be seen as the desire to annihilate desire. To kill desire as violently and indulgently as possible.

2. Then there is the destruction of the self. We do all this loving and lusting, desiring and craving. Sometimes we misread the target of our desire as a person, when in actuality it is a specific experience the person can offer us. The

lengths we may end up going to, to attain this may have made us question 'is the person really worth any of this?!' and it would be much easier to answer if instead we asked 'is the experience really worth any of this?!'. Usually it is. The experience is a mental blow so overwhelming that it swallows us up and we only exist inside of it. In that sense we have annihilated our 'self', we have knocked down the safe boundaries that home our identity and merged with something unspeakable, something like death. We may die when they bring us to orgasm, or die when they slap our face, or when they return the naivety we thought we'd lost. And the death may have very little to do with the person who has caused it, other than that they resemble something that has marked us before.

It's only clear that in these temporary deaths we are not thinking, wanting or desiring any more. And yet somehow, it isn't marked by a lack but by fullness.



## MOON BLOOD

The bus sat exhausted, its rear end propped up on bricks. The driver's seat had a swing-out-door and metallic money well. The wind-up sign that should display the destination had unravelled and sank, moulding, down the window pane. One passenger seat remained, which I used once as a settee while his cats perched on the bonnet, cleaning one another. A welcoming wildness.

I thought of standing here in years to come, wondering at myself. But it was so beautifully dank and pungent, and the wild ponies stared blankly when I strode past. Nostalgia burned beneath the crows' feet.

We drank and described journeys with a dizzying tinge of romance. The miserable waking and bleating in the morning, and the miserable sleeping in a lonely shelter. The road may be bare but it is inviting because it leads through a startling blizzard of



stars. It leads everywhere and nowhere.

These visions played out to us like an old film stained round the edges with light. Our fingers grew numb from the cold, and our dreaming became inward and feverish, Siren's songs.

It became darker and colder. He lit incense and candles and began to tell me stories about heartbreak and suicide. Cyclical seasons of falling and soaring. His stories were interrupted by reflective puffs on his joint, his forehead creased. Silent and peacefully intoxicated, I grew enchanted by the dark, by his solemn intensity. As he smoked, I noticed his pale hands entwined gracefully out of his black, shadowed clothing, like swan necks. The cuffs were torn. Occasionally the candle-light lit up his face to reveal the humane eyes you're sometimes surprised to see wild animals possess.

Enchanted by the dark, I aligned myself with the unspoken - the

screech-owl in the tree. And when the blunt kisses arrived, I did as she instructed, and morbidly received his touch. I let him guide me to his bed; the dirt and kitten paws and blood stains.

I had never let a stranger in to me before and I observed with a naïve horror how thoroughly alienated our proximity had made us. His look was focused, above my head, as if I'd sunk in to material form. On each wall paintings of women's faces leered down, with blue glows blemishing their cheeks. The silent hooks of cat tails sailed past the mattress.

When morning chased me away I carried home the taste of infection. After the pelting of Dionysian night, only a claw was left in the skin of summer. And in my bed, in the safe white day I privately savoured him on my belly, my body heaving with abject delight. I thought 'I'll save you for the dark'.



## DEALT THE DEADLY

The entrance was obscured by a great flagellated oak. The door was about to fall.

I looked at her briefly before entering - not long enough to rid her of obscurity. Her gaze was direct, imposing, her eyes ringed black. Her talons perched upon the velvet skin of a lion that lay tamed and majestic beneath her. The grip of the large talons led to her shapely human legs that held the feminine flavour of the wild;

they were coated in dark hair. Her torso looked naked amongst her animal qualities, as it shone white and soft, and her breasts had the faint blush of damp petals.

Her wings were an imposing aura of strength and ferocious liberty. She stood haloed by these symbols of flight, her talons itching to plough through the fragile matter of earth and flesh. Her muscular thighs and large hips spoke to me of smothering the sleeping bodies of the men.

She stuck a feather in my vertebra, making me glow with arousal.

Lost wisdom may call to us through our stunted intuition. And it would tell us that the owl blesses us with perception, wisdom and creativity, but the price is always a death. She shrieks in the night as a futile warning to all those debilitated and enchanted and unable to resist her. You may know what to expect when this episode is over, you may know what is waiting for you. But you will nevertheless accept her bargain, whatever it may be. Her wings allow her to transcend life and death. Her rainfall of feathers is a welcome celebration of our own yearning for oblivion. If you climax hard enough, loud enough, you may subdue her death instinct. If you climax harder still, she will want to join in, and might possess you.

In a faint memory I saw her caress the shaft of the oak, then with one frost bitten branch of sinew she signalled: There is the door. It is a portal.

I strode up the muddy path. The dusk-time woe was serenading the ponies, spilt and leaking.

His three cats met me, shaggy and empty, demanding a feed. For a brief and shameless moment I almost cried in to their paws, with maggots and lice tearing chunks out of my eyes. I sat on the flagstone by the wheel, unresponsive as they probed at me with their fleshy pads. For some time, my hands cold, I silently reflected on the frightening magnetism that had compelled me to walk here. Once I'd remained still and unthreatening for long enough, the cats climbed on to me, wringing my neck elegantly with their tails. I felt as wild and as focused as them, waiting for their master.

My apprehension dispersed and by the time he returned I had begun to feel docile. His boots belted the overgrown grass, oblivious to one of the cats, which had become a black streak of will at his side. He was a mess of loudness and loathing, bashing from wall to wall. Amongst the

felines, I drifted in after him like cold air.

In the shadows and half-truth of night I stared at him; this heavily scarred person, ripped and demonised and addicted, too easily fucked and berated and grateful for milk in his tea or a roof. He had the eyes of an adult, where the skin goes soft like rot around his pain.

The bathroom still throbbed like a sex – a beckoning vessel of light. It was his dirty place where he violated himself with honesty. I never got to see it. I only saw the needle lying raw, as I lay in his bed, pretending to be used.

I had always wanted to relieve myself of my innocence, and he was desperate to cast of the judgements and the taint he had accumulated over his reckless years. It meant there was an unspoken harmony between us; a breathing in and breathing out that occurred so fluently we barely noticed it at first.

I became a silent vessel while he offloaded. I swallowed down his

chaos whilst my quiet stability gave him the safety to drop his guard. I kissed him with all the sweetness inside, all the maternal aching to cure and soothe. I kept giving and caring until the source was exhausted and I was finally liberated from it. He slept in my embrace, grateful to be protected.

I noticed the scars on his back like suns. He looked like a child lost in the miserable structures he'd built around himself, lost in the clumsy neglectful parent of a world. With lost, sad eyes he whimpered "I think you're lovely." I felt like I was holding a dying child. I felt I was sustaining him in that hold. I didn't want to let him go, to sink back in to dark.

I walked drunken in the mist. I couldn't see ahead at all. I swigged at my bottle, thinking how alive and powerful I felt; a force, fleeting, moving between places. And how I adored the wine, the way the world rocked with my footsteps and how it didn't frighten me to see reality peel away like a loose film.

I later realised that I was in a privileged position - that I could choose to leave the dark and that was why it had the power to

charm me. I knew that I could always escape in the morning. But he could not. And so I kept following the owls.





## THE DRILL

By Christopher Nosnibor

Photos © Lisa Wormsley

She moves closer. I can hear her breathing, heavy, and I can feel her breath, warm on my face. And I know what will happen next. I close my eyes. It's a strange sensation. I know it's all a part of the process, this exchange. We both have our roles to play and we both do so without question, and without verbal exchange. She's resting her bulk against my head, and by opening my left eye fractionally and squinting, I can see her there as she looks down at me. I am entirely at her mercy,

and I expect to be shown none. She doesn't disappoint. There's a pressure building in my neck as I tense. My breathing is more laboured now, and I'm perspiring uncontrollably. I close my eyes tighter: white spots skip like sperm in a petri-dish beneath my lids and I can feel a numbness encroaching now, a further loss of control.

I alternately try to think about other things, and to empty my mind entirely. Either tactic works

but briefly. Ultimately, there is no escape, and to fight is futile. It's my role. She's simply performing hers too. I must be some kind of masochist. But then, she must equally be some kind of sadist. No, I'm not about to deliver her a turd in a bowl which I will then consume while being flagellated and as she brings herself off in the mouth of a servant. But in this strange exchange in which I receive torture, I am paying, real money. My money.

And then the sonic punishment begins. First, a high-pitched squeal. I flinch and my ears begin to vibrate. I remind myself that I find pleasure in the recordings of Merzbow and Whitehouse, and that this is most reminiscent. Her fingers are about my face now and the smell of latex is pungent in my nostrils. The sound persists. It has the same frequency as 'Torture Chamber' from the album *Never Forget Death*. It seems extremely apposite. But just as I become accustomed to the sound, it ceases. Yet it rings on in my ears, a mild tinnitus.

Then there comes another sound, a lower, grating, bowel-trembling frequency yet no less sharp-edged. Its pitch varies, grinding, growling, but remains bottom-heavy. It vibrates the wax in my left ear, which in turn creates its own distorted sound, a thick fuzzy racket audible only to me.

The ache in my neck is becoming more pronounced and is creeping up to the base of my skull. I try to relax, try to ignore it. How am I doing? It's hard to say. My whole skull is rattling and feels like it's being subjected to enormous pressure, compressed. Perhaps it is.

I'm no longer entirely sure where she is. I'm floating out of my body and am keeping my eyes firmly shut. I can't really remember what she looks like, I didn't pay that much attention when I entered the room. I prefer to keep things anonymous. There had been no pleasantries, I simply did as I was told. Removed my jacket first, then lay down. Shut up. Closed my eyes. Opened my mouth. Followed her orders, not even daring so much as to nod. Barely dared to breathe. I was salivating heavily. Now, lying as still as a corpse, certain she was still over me, I feared I might choke, even drown in my own saliva as it ran thick from every gland in my cheeks and pooled in my throat. I didn't dare swallow for fear of the repercussions. I'm too attuned to my own internal dialogue. How long has it been? When will it stop?

Suddenly, the low rumbling stops, and so too does the earwax vibration. I can hear again. Silence descends. Just the sound of my blood circulating. And my

breathing. And hers. Heavier than before, even. Not panting, but very heavy, very deep. But she's not done yet. She pulls at my face, distorting my features. I probably look a mess now, and am glad I can't see myself. I just keep my eyes closed and wait, wait for it all to be over. Of course, that's not something I get to decide.

There's a different object being thrust into my mouth now. It's large, and I have to really stretch my jaws wide to accommodate it. I couldn't speak if I wanted to; the object is hard, solid and is pressing my tongue down to the bottom of my oral cavity. I have

no idea what it is. It's too warm for metal, feels more like molded plastic. But then, I'm so numb and dizzy and disconnected, I can't be sure. Again, I feel like I'm choking. The instrument is withdrawn. Metal inserted. Pressure applied. It feels as though my upper jaw is going to be pulled out through the top of my skull. Hours or minutes elapse. And then everything stops.

I open my eyes and am blinded by the light that is angled directly onto my face. I am weak, dizzy, nauseous and numb. But it is over. And now it is time to pay.





An abstract painting by Michael Cano, featuring a complex composition of swirling, organic shapes in a rich palette of reds, oranges, yellows, and greens. The brushstrokes are visible, creating a textured, almost cellular appearance. The overall effect is one of intense energy and movement, with the colors blending and separating in a dynamic fashion.

## **AFTER TODAY**

**By Kenneth Rains Shiffrin**

**Image © Michael Cano**

**Should tomorrow fail to come  
And dreams be woken in a tomb,  
While mold emits a luminescent glow  
That grows on rotting coffins --  
Look to the pole and search for streamers,  
Blown bleeding from the center  
Of a collision course with fate,  
Creating seldom-seen foxfires of red, green, blue  
and violence.  
A million megawatts of potential fathered by the  
sun,  
This burning nightmare is ending on that solar  
wind,  
Drawn to the earth as it may be to its sisters,  
It is in the north – the celestial dream begins.**



## THANATOS & EROS

By A.D. Hitchen

Photos © Lisa Wormsley

One often hears the phrase 'the smell of death'. But as I recently discovered, it can be both bitter and sweet.

In retrospect, the signs were all there. The classic ones; arriving home late, taking unexpected trips, wearing new perfume and make-up. Humans are pathetic creatures of habit and any change in routine has a cause. But it wasn't even these things. In fact, it's not even the sex that is most hurtful, but that blank, empty

look in her eyes when I would speak to her. Her face a mask of disinterest. Its smiles no longer natural or genuine, but grimaces.

I loved her. Deeply. And this love remains to this day, but she ... made it so shameful. Placed me in a corner where I polluted my dignity. Somehow, one night I lost my masculinity; she simply tore it to shreds. Tears and mucus from my nose smearing her skirt. Wincing and numb as she coldly snapped at me to 'pull myself

together'; that this was 'exactly' why she was leaving, she needed a 'real' man, one who could truly satisfy her. Of course, he had to be a fit, muscular tennis coach. One who made her come three times in a row. Any good she once saw in me transformed by some twisted alchemy to me being a pathetic barrier to her entitled happiness.

Later he came to the door and manfully picked up her luggage. He looked down at me crying in a heap with a mixture of revulsion and pity. As he filled the car I heard him ask her if I would be okay. He was more concerned than her.

The door closed, the car faded and silence fell. And I emerged from this curtain of silence changed. The next morning a tooth fell out of my mouth of its own accord. Apparently stress can do that. At least that's what my dentist told me.

I took a few days off consuming vast quantities of whisky and then returned to work. It seemed a better option than drinking myself to death. During the first few days I was sure people could see me carrying the pain around the office. The burden seemed so acute. But I was functional. An office automaton fulfilling my duties automatically and silently. Ironically, just the kind of

employee any office manager loves. I continued trying to call her and left messages but soon her mobile phone was disconnected and her employer refused to take my calls.

I was in the pub and had just taken my first sip of beer when I read she was dead. I had just turned the first page of the local and there she was, her face staring out at me.



It was a hideous montage, a caption of her on the right, him on the left and a twisted hulk of metal and glass in the centre. It didn't even resemble a car. The article said they had both 'died instantly'. It seems they had swerved to avoid something, possibly an animal. The collision

was 'head-on' and high impact. The newspaper flapped like a flag in my hands. I was shocked yet numbed, beer catching my throat. And even as I read the article for the fourth time an overwhelming urge grew to visit the scene. It seemed to well forcibly from the pit of my stomach.



Before long I was slowing along the stretch of road, pulling over as I saw flowers fluttering in the breeze. I walked the embankment and crouched over the florid menagerie, turning the cards from family, friends of both victims, recognising some of the handwriting in the process. So familiar, yet so alien. Someone had even left a tennis racquet and ball. Surveying the road, as cars drifted by, it looked such a

mundane, ordinary spot. Not a single hint of meaning or menace. In that moment, I think death demystified. I somehow lost my fear of it. Instead, I felt myself being strangely propelled toward it.

Later, I called her Mother to offer my sympathies but her stiff politeness evaporated when I enquired as to viewings and the possibility of attending the funeral. The funeral was for 'close family and friends' and a viewing seemed 'most unsuitable'. I tried to explain how much her daughter had meant to me, but I was reminded that she had ended the relationship long before the accident. She had moved on with a new partner.

Soon, I found myself at the scene again, wandering the embankment. At 6:15, the approximate time of the accident. The sun was low but the visibility good. The flowers had multiplied, probably due to the news reports. As I bent to light a candle, I felt the distinct gaze of something on the back of my neck. Turning, my eyes were met by a stag. I was transfixed. It's deep, black pools swallowed mine and I was sucked into the abyss.

You would be surprised how easy it is to break into a funeral practice. The alarm was obviously a superficial deterrent and the

lower back windows were not even reinforced or secured. There was just one pane of glass and latch. Inside, the cold and darkness was initially unsettling, but my eyes rapidly adjusted. I found her quickly, the cool aluminium heavy in my hands, her form outlined in white. There was an inevitability about it; a certain sense of destiny. I cautiously pulled back the cover and she was revealed. As if an exhibit or statue. I heard myself gasp. My own wheezing inward breaths. Despite the accident she showed only minor bruising. Either the morticians had done their work or her injuries were mostly internal. Perhaps a broken neck due to force of impact. But here ... she bore no record of the event. As though she were wiped clean. The translucence of her skin tabula rasa. A death into a new beginning. As the shock receded I was slowly struck by the awesomeness of her beauty, the sheer immensity of it. She looked almost spectral, her skin shining with pearlescent luminosity, an almost auric glow, emanating from her like a saint or goddess. That there could be such beauty in death ..., such tranquil, calm and stillness, I had never imagined.

For awhile I sat by her side and just spoke. Light whispers. Confessing all my innermost feelings through tears. Apologizing for upsetting her, if I

took her for granted, ever made her feel unwanted. Then asking her why, why it couldn't have been worked out? I lowered my forehead, pressing it against hers and felt the slight coldness of her skin. But it was not as cold as I expected. Not frigid or barren. It was just ... as it was. I kissed her lips. Their pliability remained. They didn't seem to be in any kind of rictus. At least, not how I imagined a rictus to be.



At first I really did intend it to be just a final, goodbye kiss. The farewell I had been denied. But soon I began kissing her with insistence. Before long my fingertips were tracing the firm globes of her breasts, her slender stomach ... Her pubic hair was slightly more carefully trimmed

than I remembered, but apart from that, she appeared the same. I caressed the still soft hairs of her mons pubis and couldn't help thinking that he was the last man to be inside her, part of her ...

Parting her legs was the most difficult part. They were heavy and getting them to remain in the desired position was awkward. But once done I was captured by the utter exquisiteness of her body. As if remembering her anew. The smell of death in all its uniqueness was welcoming. Yet how we feared death, hid death! And now, I was touching it. Admiring the necessity of it. And then ..., we made love. We made love like we never did when we were together. She completely received me and when I climaxed I seemed to lose consciousness and for a moment there was only one. Only one.

I watched her funeral procession in my car from a distance. I saw the hearse, the familiar faces and the alien ones. The faces belonging to him. But I knew I had been her *last*. And that was enough.

Part of my routine now is to regularly check the obituary notices in the local newspapers. To trace any sudden deaths of young women, noting the funeral directors. There is only one out of eight funeral parlours locally I

cannot gain access to, and thus far, I have never been 'caught' though there has been a near-miss. I prefer brunettes, slim and in their thirties just like her, but I have been with others, some older, some younger. All have sweetly surrendered with acceptance and in all I have found true belonging.



# DEATH TRIP: IGGY AND THE STOOGES LONDON 2/5/10

By Syd Howells

'I'm a street walking cheetah with a heart full of napalm' - yeah thanks for that Iggy. If it hadn't been for you I wouldn't be walking several miles across London in the company of Dave, searching not to destroy, instead searching for the venue. I have sore feet and Iggy, it's your fault...

The day had begun sedately enough if you don't include the panic of waiting for Dave at the railway station and he's running dangerously late. Normally such childish concepts as time concern me little. However today was different. Dave had the tickets. I on the other hand had nothing, and this gargantuan amount of nothing did not include Dave's mobile phone number. Shit. Dilemma o'clock - miss the train because Dave's not here or get on the train end up in London and hope we meet up there (Welsh valley's boy see, London is just another village to the likes of us). Thankfully he appears and we

throw ourselves onto the Swansea - Paddington train. 'What's your seat number?' 'Don't worry about that...we're Welsh'. First class carriage it is then. Half an hour later we are confronted by someone in a uniform asking if we would like to upgrade? 'How much?' 'Twenty Pounds' 'Listen pal, the seat's aren't that comfy'. Scene ends with us threatening to steal one of his shoes as we head to a carriage more suitable for the likes of us. The rest of the journey was uneventful aside from the train being overtaken by a woman on a bicycle in Newport and our conversation about necrophilia ensuring that the carriage cleared of all but us.

London.

Paddington Station.

Gloriously bear free.

No marmalade also.

However, 30 pence for the honour of urinating here? What's going on? Back home we have bushes and walls and police cars where

we can do this for free. So this is the grasping capitalist world I've read about. Stooges... you'd better be worth it...

The truly righteous have no need for maps, compasses, Global Positioning Systems or any device that gets you to a 'destination'. It's all about the journey not the arrival. Dave reckons Hammersmith is just round the corner. This is a minor stretching of 'the truth'. Through a cunning system of navigation involving

the observation of bus stops, minor intervals into filthy book shops full of perverts (and not of the good kind) and sheer luck, it takes us three hours of blister inducing stomping to get to the Hammersmith Apollo. This also entails hopelessly wandering through the park of Kensington Palace, a dull place notable for two things. Firstly its surfeit of unfriendly people with fear in their eyes, and secondly a pleasing statue of Queen Victoria with a noticeably false nose.





What appeared to be ten or so miles and the spouting of a lot of random nonsense later we find the Apollo and observe the queuing masses. We don't do queues. Pint it is then. We locate a pub named 'The Trout' where we indulge in a pleasing couple of

sherberts before advancing toward the Apollo.

The queue has subsided, however with the greatest of thanks to DÍre, in this instance queues concern us little. 'We're on the guest list man...' And we're in.



The interior of the Hammersmith Apollo is like the interior of the Titanic. Perhaps a little less damp and with better music. Music? Yes, that's why we're here.

Perhaps it's time for another pint...

The support act to Iggy and the Stooges was Suicide playing their first album in its entirety. I have never heard bass frequencies like it. If they'd played any longer I might have shit myself (the toilet seats were rattling the bass was so loud). Awesome. Made the likes of T.G. look very ordinary indeed.

A large part of their set was spent watching Alan Vega tormenting the venue staff with the unlit cigarette in his hand. Current U.K. law dictates that anyone caught smoking a cigarette within a two hundred mile radius of a building (both actual and virtual) is liable to be beaten on the kidneys with sticks. 'The life of a frog is not all space hoppers and hedgehogs y'know'. So I am led to understand.

Iggy.  
Iggy and.  
Iggy and the.  
Iggy and the fucking.  
Iggy and the fucking Stooges.

There aren't enough superlatives in this lousy language to describe them. It's difficult to write a review without appearing to be a fawning stalker like fan who burns offerings to his copy of Raw Power. So I'm not going to try. Iggy and the fucking Stooges...



Beginning with *Raw Power* they shredded the idea that bands shouldn't reform. Lets clarify this... most bands shouldn't reform. Iggy and the Stooges are unfinished business. This is the difference. The music? Think awesome and multiply by several million. This is a band so sharp that they should carry a public health warning. At several points during the performance, despite allegedly retiring from stage diving, it appeared that Iggy was conjoined with large sections of

the audience. All of *Raw Power*, *Kill City*, *Cock in my Pocket*... everything you could dream of them playing they did. It's probably best not to waste yours and my time by waxing lyrical about every track they played... if that's your bag, go here:

<http://simfylive.com/en/artist/6103/live-recordings/2961/4536/Iggy-Pop+-The-Stooges-Tour-2010---Live-in-London---02+05+2010.html>



Anyhow, back to the chase. Following what is probably the best gig I'm ever likely to experience (unless someone sends me tickets for the next Iggy and Stooges show), we end up at the after show party. Mission? To meet James Williamson, a man for

whom guitar playing appears to be some savage hybrid between mathematics and a martial art. The great man appears. Dave introduces us and I laugh as James describes Dave as filthy. He knows him so well.



James goes off to meet more mere mortals. Then one by one the rest of the Stooges, minus Iggy,<sup>1</sup> arrive at the party. Watt, Asheton, Mackay. Also holding court is

Martin Rev of Suicide. We are then disturbed by some guy with one of those trays that usherettes used to use to sell ice cream in cinemas and it is full of small black boxes. These are USB sticks featuring the performance we had just seen. I'm not sure I can cope

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<sup>1</sup> After his performance I suspect he was placed in an iron lung and immersed in pure oxygen...

with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century... it makes me a bit schizoid.

After lining our stomachs with post party junk food we catch a bus back to Paddington. The journey which had taken 3 hours on foot, takes half an hour. We arrive back at the railway station - only to discover it effectively closed. Perhaps we should have booked a hotel or park bench?

There is no measure of temperature low enough to measure Paddington station at 2.00 a.m. We then developed a cunning way to keep warm, which involved sitting atop the station's halogen lamps which burnt your arse if you nodded off.



Once we initiated this ritual other miscreants followed our lead and like frozen moths gravitated towards the lights. We lead where others follow. At 2.30 a.m. we witness a group of drunks from Reading who have turned up for their return train. Immediately one of them put on a railway staff members coat and spent half an hour behind customer services telling people complete bollocks. Despite this welcome entertainment it is still freezing.

Buying coffee from McD's in order to keep warm - I fucking hate McD's...

Cold

Cold

Cold

8 hours waiting for a train.

'Excuse me madam, would it be possible for us to get on an earlier train?'

'Certainly sir, that will be 26 pounds please'

This savage city bleeds you for all it can get. Stroll on honey, we'll wait... then we'll wait some more.



## WIRY THINGS ALL AROUND

By Tony Rauch

Images © Michael Cano

You're walking home late one night. Just kind of goofing. Sneaking around. Returning from playing cards with your pals. Thoughts wet with mirth and carefree glee, merriment and mischief, giggling, thinking of peeking in a fair maiden's window, maybe running off with some of her undergarments.

You decide to cut through the woods as a shortcut back to your house. You step from tree to tree root to tree root, entering a dark, rocky hollow. Carefully you balance yourself over a ridge and into a steep hollow, gray clouds swirling in the smoky night, wiry trees twisting into the air all around, the cold, firm ground

bare but for the ruts and rocks and leaves and stiff, twisting weeds.

Suddenly a rustling snaps in the mist ahead. A voice cracks deep in the foggy valley. "Hurry, we've got it cornered in the old Wheeling mine!! . . . Hurry!!" And a rush of stomping on the hard dirt. Rustling in the dried leaves. Leaves and grass crackling under a flurry of shuffling feet, slapping the smooth ground in the darkness.

You stop and freeze in a numbing trance. Your hands go empty and cold of feeling. You clutch a rough tree trunk as a terrible, mighty, anguished, guttural groan grows

to thunder from the haze ahead. "Aaaaauuugggghhhhhh!!!" Followed by screams and more running along the rocks and roots. But this running is frantic, chaotic, unorganized - like panicked scampering. A loud shriek of a cry splinters the cold air. A cry laden with pain and sorrow. Then the running is gone. Swallowed by the blankness. Then the silence. A numbing silence. From the distance you sense a faint whisper. You listen to the twitter -

a language you've never heard before. There is a strange whistling in the wind and a rattle of branches following you from the breeze in the other direction.

A shadow appears on the ridge behind you. "Help me," it whispers down to you. The whisper is in English, but with a thick accent. It feels like the voice is right next to you - right up close to your ear, but the person is far away.



"Come on," you whisper back, waving the vague, dark outline down to you.

The dusky figure carefully steps down the incline as a cold breeze cuts into you from above. The figure is wearing a long, dark overcoat with a hood over its head. A glint of moonlight winces through the clouds to catch a flash of the figure's face, revealing a tall, thin, pale, young woman.

"They're after me," she heaves, out of breath, looking back over her shoulder. "I'm lost, . . . they're chasing me," she exhales.

"Who? . . . Why? . . ." you stammer, reaching out to steady the young woman.

She looks back over to you and you catch a glimpse of her eyes - they shine a clear ice blue, almost transparent. "Come on, this way,"

you pull on her cloak to tug her down into the foggy hollow, shuffling through the dried leaves that blow in circles at your feet.

“Halt!” a scream punctures the crisp air. You both turn to look up to the ridge. There is a man with a rifle holding out his arm to brace himself against one of the many scraggly trees that twists out of the hill up into the night. “Halt!” he calls down to you, but the girl

pulls you out of the way. The man lowers the gun and *blam!!!*

The shot explodes to echo throughout the many little canyons. The shot whistles down to rip through the last of the dry leaves clinging to the trees as the girl yanks you by the arm, around a rocky corner, further down into the darkness, down into a thicker borough of trees and underbrush.



“Over here!!!” the man yells as he slides feet first down the incline into the rocky valley.

The girl lets go of your arm and turns to stick her head out of a clump of trees. She looks to the man sliding down to you and a flash of white light shoots from her eyes to knock the man flat on his back. She swings around and grabs your arm and continues to run. “Over here,” you point to a creek ahead as the barking of

hunting dogs echoes in the cold, stiff distance.

You rush along the rocks and roots and trees and weeds to the creek and follow it to a wooden trestle bridge that spans the valley. You can't see the top of the bridge through the mist and darkness, but you hear footsteps running on the railroad ties high above. You scurry to an old boxcar that sits at the bottom of the bridge. The abandoned boxcar



is used as one of the many work sheds for the miners, woodsmen, hunters, trappers, and various repair needs of the railroads of the valleys. Once inside, you turn to watch for anyone who may be following.

"Who are you?" you huff. "Where did you come from?"

"I'm . . . I'm lost," she breathes heavily. "I got lost in the storm to the north and ended up here. But they were waiting for me, expecting me."

"Who? How did they know you

were coming?"

"Every year we meet up. Just to the south of here. . ." She looks around, then jumps out of the boxcar. "It's not safe here. The cowards are out. The haters. Thank you. I must go." A strong gust of wind catches her cloak as she strides and seems to leap from a rock or stump, and the wind appears to lift her into the air. She rises up between two leaning trees and seems to get smaller and smaller, disappearing through the branches and leaves and into the clouds of fog, as if to turn into some kind of bird and fly off.



You jump out to chase after her as she shrinks to disappear into the darkness, frantically looking around, listening for her. But all you hear is the breeze blowing in the leaves. She may have just run off, or may have turned into a bird or something, you can't tell through the blackness, the haze,

the twisting, complicated web of trees, the bushes, the tall grass.

Not hearing any footsteps, you search the mist and sky, but only find a single raven circling above, illuminated by the moon through the holes in the clouds. You stand there and think about going

home. You hear faint voices from the other little valleys and hills, "Over here! . . . Down here!" and fading footsteps and the yelps from hound dogs.

Why would they be after her? You've never heard any tales or legends of bird-people or mysterious monsters or anything. Just then the man who took the shot at you stumbles from the curtains of fog towards you. "Where . . . Where did it go?" he huffs, stopping in front of you, his head and eyes darting high and low.

"Don't know," you shrug, "just disappeared into the night I guess. Into the trees," you look around.

"Did it say where it was going?"

"No. Not really. She just vanished. . ."

And with that the man staggers ahead, back into the fog - running to follow the winding creek around a bend. Several other men emerge from the darkness, from the same direction the first man had come.



"You saw it? You saw it?" they plead, holding out their pitchforks and shotguns. They appear frazzled and nervous, each looking around suspiciously, their faces ghostly in the moonlight, the wind swaying claw-like branches above.

"I don't know. I don't really know

what I saw. It was dark," you stammer. "I'm on my way home . . . from a pal's place. . . Who . . . Who *was* that?"

"You don't want to know."

"They're the others."

"The ones not like ourselves."

“Our ancestors had rid them from the valleys. Chased them away. But they return every year about this time.”

“Like a family reunion of sorts.”

“They say some of the others still lurk. Still live in the shadows - behind rocks and trees. The shadow people.”

“They’re all around. . . Everyday.

Living in the caves. In the trees.”

“The others. The natural ones. The night ones. The changers.”

There is a rustling in the distance. The men’s faces jerk around. “Up here,” the first man calls from the darkness, and the others run past you to follow the noise, which to you only sounds like a squirrel darting from branch to branch.



You stand there for a moment, then decide to go south for a while - in the direction the young woman said she was heading. She shouldn’t be out here alone like this. Maybe you can catch up to her, maybe find her and find out her secrets, find out what had scared the men so much.

You start south, watching above for any birds, listening for any whispers in the breeze, but you only hear the wind whistling in

the background, shaking the leaves and branches.

Finally you notice another large, dark raven above. Then it disappears behind a cloud. A moment later a rumble of branches shakes the air. Startled, you snap around. “Oh, there you are,” you sigh as the dark figure steps from a clump of bushes. “Where did you run off to? Why were they chasing you? Did you rob a bank or something?” And

then you remember what the men had said about the shadow people. And what she had said about the men.

Suddenly several other figures like the girl step from the waterfall of leaves and darkness. They're also wearing long, black coats with large, dark hoods. They are thin and tall and wiry and tower above you, just like she does.

"Hello," you wave as friendly as

you can muster. You try to smile, but it is a forced smile. Their height is intimidating to you, as if they would have long bony fingers and long reaches. As if their grip could just dig right into your skin. But they quickly reach up and lower their hoods, and sure enough they look just like her. Their skin is bright and clear, glowing like the moon, their features long and sculpted. Their hair is long and blond. "Who . . . Who are you? Why are they after you?"



"They are jealous of us. Of our abilities," one of them speaks in a thick accent. "The ones like you. The ones not like us. The ones who can not move, who can not change. The ones with small minds, who do not understand." His voice is warm and thick.

"The frozen ones," another answers, walking from the shadows.

"The damned. The cursed," another nods as he steps to stand behind the girl.

"If you're so special, then why don't you *help* them? Why don't you help *us*?" you urge. "There's so much work to be done. And it's hard sometimes. They get frustrated. Maybe we can help *one another*."

"We would like that very much, but I don't think that would be possible," one of them grumbles. They are all standing behind the girl now, so as not to startle you.

"They don't want us here."

"He *helped* me," the young woman speaks, nodding over to you.

"They just don't know you. They just don't understand," you plead. "Please. Let me talk to them."

"Some people can't be reasoned with. They let others make up their minds for them. They can not think for themselves. It is easier for them that way, to let others do their thinking for them. They have lazy minds."

"Puppets," huffs one in the back.

"Dance for me puppet," and he raises his arms at his sides and shakes his body while doing a little marionette jig.



"Your kind can not change. They are stuck being who they are. Brutes and liars, spreading their fear for their own advancement."

"They are weak and miserable. Malleable. Un-evolved. Trapped inside small minds. Locked away in their bodies like prisoners. And the worst of it is that they can't even see out. It's like they don't *want* to see out."

"No. The worst of it is that they don't even *know* that they can't see out."

"But people *can* change. I'm sure of it," you bend at the knees and sway. "It may take some time, but. . . Maybe they can change just like *you* change. Please help us see."

"You seem nice. . . Tolerant. . .

Open minded of others. . . Would you care to join us?" one in back nods over to you.

"We are going to The Ball. For our yearly gathering, our celebration. Perhaps you could come and tell us about how we could help you?"

"One at a time. . . Maybe we can help each other?" another speaks.

"One at a time?" the girl ponders.

"We are tired of hiding."

"Come with us. We will show you the way. You have nothing to fear. We will show you how to see. How to see out of yourself. How to change. Come fly with us to The Grand Ball."

"You helped me," the girl smiles a slight little warm smile, reaching out her arm.

"There will be many there. . . Many different kinds. You'll see. . ."

"The Baroness will be there. . . And many others. . ."

". . . Reptilian chicken men with feathers and gills. Giant penguin people. Squirrel people. People made of glowing light. People with many long arms. Beings made of a stringy, smoke-like substance. Invisible people you

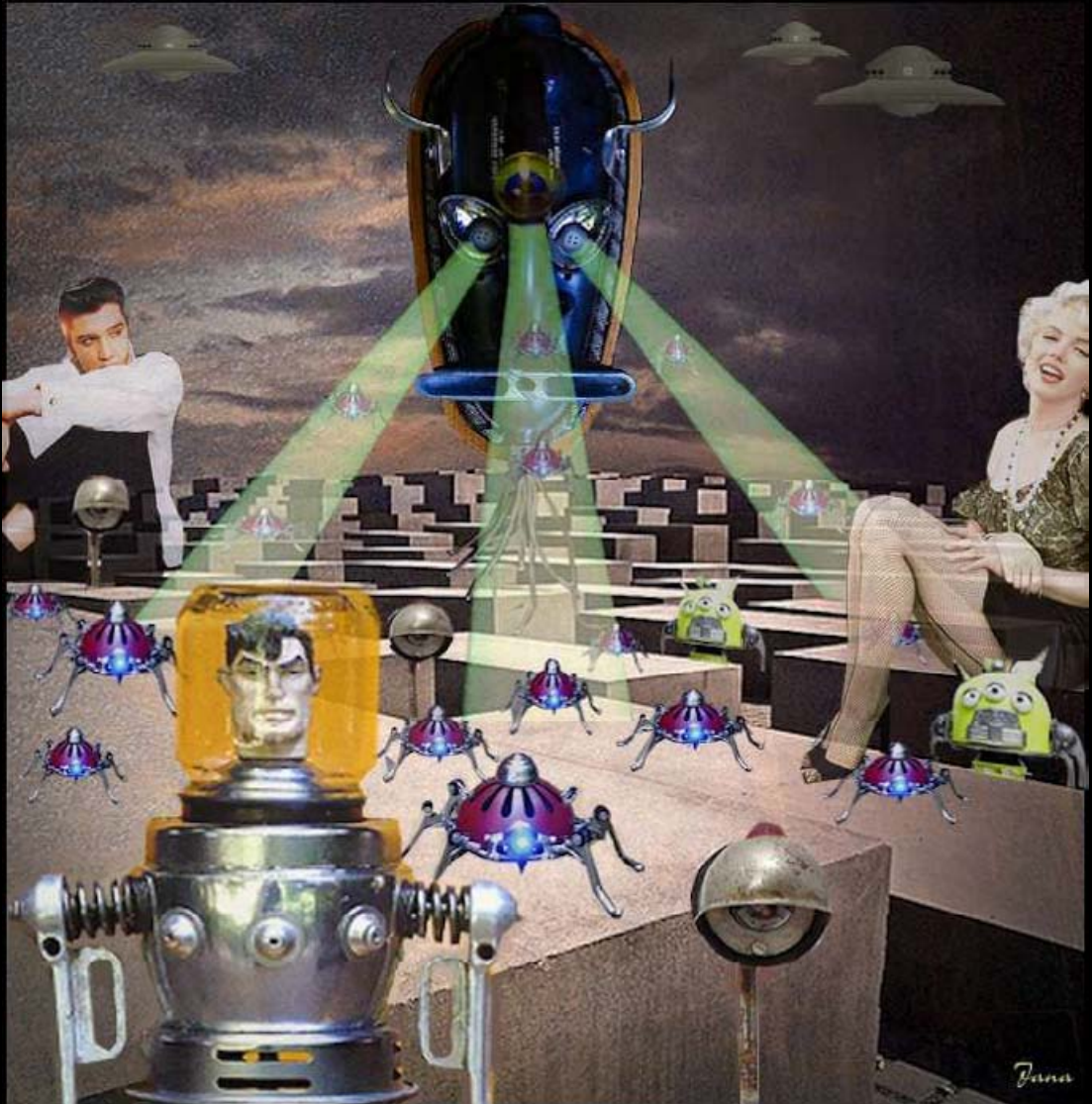
wouldn't even notice until we point them out, until we show you how to see. . ."

"Beings the likes of which you could never imagine. They're all going to be there."

"We'll show you. We'll teach you how to see them, how to see the unseen. For there is promise everywhere. Promise and opportunities. You just need to look around. You just need to look hard and learn how to see it. "

"There are hidden things all around you. Fantastic things. Secret places. Beings and creatures. And people. Oh the people you'll meet."

"Come with us and you'll see."



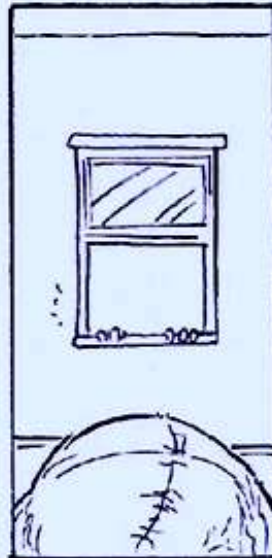
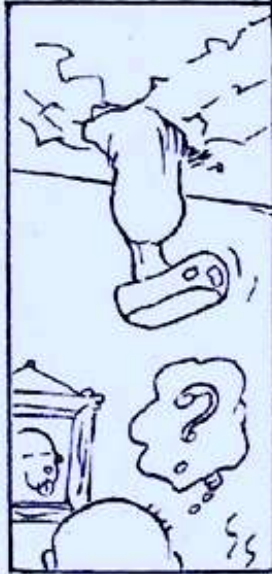
**“Tinkerbot God Zog  
Invades With His  
Personal Envoys”**

(Image By Jana, “Tinkerbots” Created By Dan Jones)









end

# PUNK 77

By Gavin Martin

Summer 1977. School's Out. The sun splits the sky. And the sword of destiny lands at my feet. It's there - glistening in the sun - when I awake on the top of the bathing boxes one morning at Ballyholme beach. I and some friends have slept out in the warm night. Now we can greet the happy arrival of the Royal Yacht Britannia in the bay, a pleasant little seaside spot in Bangor, Co Down Northern Ireland just down the loch from Belfast. Because, fresh from her Jubilee celebrations the Queen, Prince Phil and other emissaries of her fascist regime have decided this is the place to start their victory lap by boat.

We rise to the occasion as the crowds gather with their binoculars. In graphic detail we outline crude variations of imagined congress and misbehaviour on the deck of the royal yacht. We are merely toying with the sword that came crashing down just before the stinking school gates closed for end of term and The Sex Pistols alternative anthem No Future God Save The Queen b/w Did You Know Wrong smashed into

the charts. An affront to all the pinched Protestant loyalist community round these parts held dear the record insured I received a quick beating - and a ban on the song being played ever again - when, in my evangelical idiocy, I brought it to accompany a one man pogo exhibition at the local Police Run, Blue Lamp disco. So the sword got knocked out of my hands.

So what? When my Aunt, my lovely but brainwashed Aunt, had come to stay with us she was shocked to see what was now decorating my bedroom wall. Aunt Emily lived in a poor (outdoor toilets) but hardline area of Belfast (Coolbeg Street. Is it still there?), murals of King Billy and the UVF on the gable walls, painted kerbstones, flegs hung all year round. And there she was in tears at breakfast time. "I can't beleive what you've done to our Queen," she said. She was referring to the Jamie Reid Sex Pistols safety pin poster of the Queen that had pride of place above my divan (there were no pictures of neighbourhood Goddess Carol

Browne that size, y'see). I didn't like to see Aunty cry. But still I felt vindicated - this sword could cut deep.

A few weeks later my dad was bent double with laughter in the kitchen. I had announced - with due reverence and solemnity - that that very night The Sex Pistols debut Top Of The Pops performance was going to take place. It was essential that the TV was reserved for me at the allotted hour. This is momentous I tell him, the most important band in the world at the minute, possibly in the entire history of rock, performing 'Pretty Vacant', the third single in their unholy opening trinity of excellence. "Johnny Rotten," I confidently announce, "is a brilliant lyricist!" "Johnny Rotten?/Johnny Rotten?" my dad is on the verge of a breakdown so helplessly has the laughter now over taken him. "Johnny Rotten," he says, barely able to get the words out for chuckling, "Johnny Rotten's bloody stinking." Mmmm I couldn't see it at the time but my dad got it - the comedy aspect of the Pistols much more clearly than I did at the time. So maybe it was a rubber sword. With a bendy blade. What the fuck? I picked it up anyway.

Punk rock... I did not want to be called a punk and I loved music that was too powerful to be

boxed in by any category. I knew punks were persons that got fucked up the ass in American prisons. Punk was not what I wanted to be called, at all. Punk, as I understood it, as I had read, was ANTI tribal, it was about self expression. I was into a lot of music, a lot of it contained on my £12 portable push button cassette recorder. Recorded off the radio, ambient household sounds in the background or off the record player. There was The Buzzcocks, Pere Ubu Chuck Berry and Junior Walker, there was James Brown and Steely Dan and Eddie and The Hot Rods so I did not want to be simply a punk. But it was like this, if pushed I would rise to the occasion I would align myself with the creed that others designated for me. The sword was there after all. Why not pick it up?

"MmmmmMartin Sir, Mmmmartin wants to tell us about ppppunk rock sir." September 77, School is back in session. And Timothy Richards, the impossibly tall, blue eyed, blonde haired, posh Malone Road voiced, rugby playing, fascist fuck is addressing Mackie, the googly eyed, prematurely balding, rugby playing, history teacher in my class at Bangor Grammar School. Richards goes through the entire time I spend at this same sex

shithole with the words National Front emblazoned on his ruck sack. Years later the school will be found to have been sheltering, for upwards of 25 years a, cherish the title, Vice Principal whose paedophiliac behaviour includes spreading jam and sometimes talcum powder on young boys' behinds. You could check the trial records but I don't think the offender, Doctor Lindsay Brown, fuucked them up the ass. They weren't punks.

When I leave this place - as soon as I can - Richards will be made what they call Head Boy. In truth I have no wish to tell him - or the gormless grinning Mackie, or anyone else - about punk rock. I want to be down the town seeing if Carol Brown and her friends are at the chippy. I want to be far away from this hell hole and I will be as soon as I can but for now I hold my nerve. I accept Richards challenge and tell them about the music and the words and why it's important to me and the world ...and they all think it's so funny. And, of course, when I single out the reference to the death of Blair Peach, a teacher killed on an anti fascist march referenced, clearly, in The Jam's In The City, as being a warning of a future where police are a private security force working at the behest of municipal governments and corporations, I get laughed and shouted down

and I think.... What the fuck IS the point?

Round about now the sword turns into a pen. A Graffiti writing pen that scrawls band names on school desks and, rather than being caught and being forced to run the gauntlet of the Grammar's vicious punishment system, I am - Saved! I meet an elder, similarly besotted with music, also graffiting desks - it's how we meet, in fact - and, following the lead of scribe tribe pioneers across the water in the London, we give each other the guts and the get up and go to put together the first edition of a magazine we call Alternative Ulster. Alternative Ulster, its first edition, numbered number 7 and printed by the Buzzcocks fanclub photocopier in Manchester, is no relation to the magazine currently bearing that name. It is no relation either to the song by Stiff Little Fingers. Jake Burns band, the most celebrated outfit to come out of the Belfast punk scene which is about to explode in the winter of 77, name the song after the magazine. They play it onstage one night at the Trident in Bangor and the idea is that we might give the song away as a flexi disc on the cover of the mag. Stiff Little Fingers will pay the costs but I don't like the song and I am deeply suspicious about the band's relationship,

recently formed, with co-lyricist and Daily Express Belfast correspondent Gordon Ogilvie.

In anycase by the time SLF have played that song The Clash have already visited Belfast. It is a visit that serves to give the naturally chippy Ulster mentality an added grudge to bear, in its punk incarnation. Joe, Mick and co leave with some very nice posed by the barricades pics but they play not one note. Perhaps it had to be that way. The excitement, the setting and the history was just too much. The Clash in the Ulster Hall, a seat of Ulster demagoguery that had oft times hosted the fearsome bull headed bigotry of Reverend Ian Paisley, to be laid to waste by the shock troops of the new? I was BEYOND myself at the thought of it all. Already I had seen the full blooded, community unifying glory of sainted blues rock guitar warrior poet Rory Gallagher light the ecstasy infusing touch paper in that very hall. And just up the road, in The Whitla Hall, in the same very week their stupendous Live album Stupidity hit the topspot, Doctor Feelgood had presented the greatest machine gunner the city had ever seen let loose on a stage, the speed filled fury of pudding bowl cropped Wilko Johnson.

In a country still music starved after the sectarian assassination of the Miami Showband The Clash's appearance was set to complete an emancipatory tryptych. But not in the way we had imagined. The scheduled show on October 20th 1977 never took place. But the riot that took place when the news filtered through to the fans (oh alright then - punks), drawn from all over the north and south of Ireland, of the cancellation was pivotal. This was no ordinary Ulster riot based on political allegiance or religious affiliation. This was a riot that united people looking for a good time against the forces of repression. This was how punk began to open Belfast - the city where I had been born - back up to me. Closed off by security gates, scarred, shocked, pockmarked by shooting, bomb blasts and the pervasive thrall of terror Belfast was shaken alive, crow-barred open - by punk.

But now, as the spontaneous "SS RUC" chant became the rallying call of the crowd reigned against the police and , soon, the army, outside the Ulster Hall, the need to meet our vanquished liberators became paramount. Word got about and soon we raced across town to The Europa, at that point the most bombed hotel in the planet. Within minutes we somehow found

ourselves in the Clash's hotel room. Topper let us in. Strummer lay on his back on the floor, necking honey straight from a jar. Just back from initial work on 'Give Em Enough Rope' in Jamaica the band's hotel room is permeated with the enticing but unfamiliar fug of JA weed. Already some fans are in the bathroom looking a little peaky. Mick Jones is on the bed holding court. I realise that this is my chance, finally a chance to fulfill my destiny and speak with one of the musicians who have helped bring me to this point. The only thing is I don't have a pen or a tape recorder and I don't have any questions. Just a magazine that's not yet printed and a head full of confused dreams. I tell Mick about the magazine and soon realise that this is something he probably hears every day. Oh dear. I need to think on my feet. I know, I've read what they've been up to! Recording a new album. So I ask what seems to me to be the obvious question bound to elicit some chat. "Whata about the album?" Mick continues taking the hit on the joint, inhales, shrugs his shoulders and says : "What about it?" Shit, I think, this ain't going so well. I need time to think about this interviewing business.

The joint gets passed around. I fall into a deep sleep and I

awake 30 years later. All my dreams - and a few of my nightmares - have long since come true. I am sat in a West London lock up telling Mick Jones about the very first time I attempted to conduct an interview with him, over a joint in the Europa hotel, in Belfast, a lifetime ago. He listens to my story, he smiles, he takes a hit on the joint and he says, "Well not much has changed there then has it?..." No, Mick, just everything. And nothing.

*Gavin Martin, host and Founder of Music Spoken Word Event Talking Musical Revolutions Wrote and read this piece Punk 77 at TMR 5: Writing About Yourself In The Culture. Gavin is a Freelance Writer, Daily Mirror Music Critic and Hosts:*

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# ENFERMERA CON HERIDA (EXTRACT)

By Craig Woods

Images © Michael Cano



Standing around a table at the end of the immense room, looking as if they were deciding the fate of a nation, were grouped ten men, all in parliamentary attitudes, and one young Asian woman. They were listening, at the moment of Kinney's approach, to a middle-aged "science student" with shaggy eyebrows, a brown-speckled forehead, tiny pale eyes, and a distracting way of shaking one leg and then the other continuously, a quirk that was completely unapologetic. From his self-congratulatory rhetoric, Kinney gleaned that the man was a watchmaker and master forger from London whose obsessive interest in unconventional

sciences had driven him half around the world. In Chance's absence, he appeared to be feigning the part of host and was telling of himself, for he considered himself the most scintillating predicament. "We might all be nature's nurses," he was saying in his conspicuous cockney accent, and the mention of a nurse made Kinney feel instantly integrated into the conversation, though what followed left her in some doubt; "but think of them that's never been nursed. That is, those things that are regarded as aberrations in our cultures. Those half-things and double-things, the bastard spawn of forbidden unions. What stake do these revolutionary souls get to claim in a world that is so totally anti-revolutionary? You see, my friends, it is the nurse!..." he pointed a bony finger abruptly in Kinney's direction and her heart rattled in her chest, "It is the nurse who pulls us from our mother's womb, innit? The nurse is the first to nurture us. It is the nurse whose status grants us the right to claim a stake in the world. And to think of the bloody



wretched multitudes of humanity who the world would do very well without, eh? And the un-nursed maybe get their chance to be free to pursue their potential in a world free from the righteous," he cleared his throat, adjusted his tiny glasses, "The universe is shackled, see? Chained to the runaway train of time because of the bloody righteousness of humanity, innit? Every race with a sense of righteousness is a lost race. Look to the dog's example. Dogs are one of the few species with the good grace to refrain from obligatory righteousness, humans scatter it carelessly all over the bloody planet, innit?"

Confounded by this cryptic oratory, Kinney scanned the faces of the other men gathered there for some sign of empathy, some signal that she was not alone in her bewilderment, but the men merely grunted, almost in unison, a mixture of approval and resignation, and returned to their drinks in an eerily synchronised manner. Abruptly, a female voice to Kinney's left shattered her composure and she jerked slightly in surprise. "Don't be perturbed, Mrs Elster. I guarantee you understand more than you might think."

Having become entangled in the gravitational pull of the man's obscure speech, Kinney had forgotten the young Asian woman who now regarded her with the

cool quiescent eyes of a cat. She was younger than Kinney had thought, perhaps only nineteen or twenty, and spoke with an unhurried sincerity, an Anglo-Japanese accent endowing her words with a pleasantly alien quality. Kinney noted with interest that this young stranger had forsaken the use of a glass and slugged straight from a bottle of imported European beer, an appealingly impish action which further diffused any atmosphere of formality.

"Excuse Smythe there, he has a bad habit of rambling on. Usually about himself. You've caught him on a good day actually," she passed her beer bottle into her left hand and offered her right, "The name's Kersen Schwarzflag. I'm glad you made it."

"Mary Elster," the girl's small hand was light but firm in its greeting, "It's good to be here, Ms Schwarz..."

"Kersen, please."

"Kersen. That's an interesting name."

"Isn't it?"

"Is that ... German?"

The young woman shrugged the reckless shrug of an aloof teenager, "It's interesting, that's

all. One day we will all have interesting names. Just like you ... Mary Elster ..."

The knot which had eased in Kinney's gut reasserted itself with harsh suddenness, threatening to split her bowel open, and an involuntary gasp of panic escaped her lips.

"Relax, relax," Kersen patted her shoulder reassuringly, as one would a nervous child, "You're among friends. You'll find that everyone here has an interesting name. Just like Mr. Chance himself," She nodded towards a wall panel where the same crow carving from the twin doors had been replicated, "Birds of a feather and all that."

The knot uncoiled slightly and Kinney downed the remainder of her bourbon. "So ... you know who I am?"

"In a sense. As it happens, I think we might be of some help to each other."

"Oh? What kind of help?"

"The irregular kind. If you get my meaning."

Kinney fumbled with her empty glass. For reasons she could not entirely fathom, it seemed wholly inappropriate to break the

conversation at this juncture for the sake of a refill.

"I'm not sure I do, I'm afraid. Not at all."

Kersen grinned lazily. "Have you seen the pictures?"

"Pictures? I ..."

"Over here," she gestured towards a wall where a series of framed sepia prints had been hung in precise grid-like arrangement, "you'll get a kick out of this."

At first glance, the images appeared innocuous; generic period scenes from a century or so ago. Kinney recognised a few New York landmarks where groups of men and women posed enthusiastically for the unknown photographer. Others displayed foreign landscapes, many with a distinctly European flavour, streets of Berlin and Prague perhaps. A bleached out scene grabbed Kinney's attention; a desolate vista of sand and rock, steep mountains silhouetted in the background. In the centre of this hostile expanse, the figure of a teenage girl stood, bold and wiry, gripping a tall strong horse by the reins in her left hand. The girl bore dark Latin features, partially obscured by her thick black hair as it billowed in the desert breeze. She was dressed in scruffy sand-

caked jodhpurs and a light military jacket. In her left hand she gripped a large heavy-looking rifle by the handguard, leaning her weight against it in a carefree pose for the camera. Kinney was quite taken with the image, with the unequivocal power of the Latin girl and the surreal animal fury which seemed to blaze in her one visible eye. So vivid was the image, and so profound was its influence upon her, that for a brief moment Kinney was sure that she detected a hint of movement; the dark strands of the girl's wild hair flickering in the breeze and in real time before her eyes. So convincing was the illusion that she felt compelled to close and reopen her eyes, lest she succumb to the vertiginous dizziness which accompanied it. Squinting, she read the plaque at the base of the frame:

SOLEDAD: "PANCHO'S ATTACK DOG". 1912.

Shifting her attention to another picture, the vertigo was swiftly superseded by something more akin to mental paralysis; the stunned blankness only rarely assumed by the conscious mind when it runs up against that for which there is no logical rationale. There in the photo, attired in the conservative dress of a hundred years previously, was the anonymous young trainee nurse from her days at the Institute. The

young woman stood proudly, arms folded in front of her chest, against the stone barrier of an ancient bridge. On the horizon, behind the woman's shoulder, loomed the distinctive silhouette of the Eiffel Tower. Scrutinising the buildings, pedestrians and other objects visible, Kinney was in no doubt that the picture was a genuine artefact of the period illustrated.



And yet, there in that captured moment, lost to the winds of time, was the unmistakable visage of the young woman whom she'd worked alongside only a year ago; the proud, gaunt features and bright intelligent eyes which stared detachedly into the photographer's lens were unequivocally those which had devoured Nightwood with such unbridled enthusiasm.

Reeling somewhat from this assault on logic, Kinney leaned back and massaged her temples.

Kersen placed a steadying hand upon her shoulder.

"It's alright, just take a deep breath. It's all legit. And there's nothing to be scared of. Far from it. Just take your time."

Gathering her wits, Kinney turned her attention to the other pictures. Now it seemed that almost every photo incorporated faces culled from her memory, from her fractured past; her traitorous husband, doffing a ridiculous top hat, his grinning face brimming with arrogance, sat behind the wheel of an antique automobile in the driveway of a stately manor. In an adjacent shot, Philip's secretary, the insipid wench, was posed provocatively in the dark and coily suggestive garb of an early burlesque performer. In another, the Redman girl, limbs amputated, sat with her ass on the sidewalk, spotlighted by a solitary streetlamp, evidently plying her mutilated wares as one of Manhattan's first freak prostitutes (a niche market service which any self-respecting Wall Street stockbroker would assess favourably, particularly on those bitter winter nights ...)

Yes, everywhere she looked, Kinney was inundated with early 20th century images of people she knew or had known at the edge of the 21st, each utterly illogical and undeniably real.

However, even this inexplicable barrage could not have prepared her for the coup de grace, the surreal icing on the most bizarre of cakes.

The final image depicted a chaotic street scene. Fires blazed among ruined walls and the blurred figures of men laden with rifles were frozen in urgent mid-stride, identities lost in the streaked, dissolved features. Two figures occupied the foreground. The first, evidently a young militiaman, lay prone among the debris, his right hand clamped across a bleeding face, his left gripping the stock of a rifle fiercely, as though contact with the weapon was all that guaranteed his survival. The second figure, a woman in her late thirties, was busily bandaging a wound on the young man's left leg, blood darkening the gauze. The woman was dressed in similar practical fatigues to the young man and it seemed both were members of the same modest army, each no stranger to the hardships on display. The woman's composed expression belied her pragmatism and obvious medical experience. Kinney would likely have felt a swell of respect, even admiration for the woman were it not for one crucial detail: the face this battlefield nurse wore was her own. Kinney rubbed her eyes severely, looked again. But it was

unmistakeable, the woman in the photo was a precise replica of herself, identical in every way from the mole above her left eyebrow to the scar upon the back of her left hand; the result of some long forgotten childhood incident. The static blaze of the burning buildings caused her to sweat, viscous droplets of terror careering down the small of her back. Time's tragedy wept blackly from behind the militiaman's splayed hand ... police of the material universe sending fire in mind ... That stain is only like thunder through the doll heads ... Raised it to the chalky corridors and a message for vengeance against the ferocious faces ... his wounds in arrowhead formations he would go on spilling the blood of nights in a living tomb ... Its fire searing blood flowers in the audience ...

At the base of the picture frame, a plaque read:

MAY DAY ANGEL.  
BARCELONA, 1937.

Kinney reeled backwards, the simmering threat of vomit rising in her gullet.

"My God ..."

"Come on, tiger," Kersen nudged her playfully in the chest, "let's get us some refills.

There's someone you should meet."

Kersen led the way back to the refreshments table where a tall man in his late sixties with a thick grey beard and intelligent azure eyes introduced himself as Professor Morrow.

"The Professor here is responsible for the pictures you just saw," Kersen explained as she poured Kinney a fresh bourbon, "and a whole lot more besides."

"Well yes indeed," Morrow stood forward enthusiastically, "Always beavering away for the good of humanity, that's my line. And for the benefit of other species too of course, eh?"

The Professor conducted himself in the manner of an eccentric aristocrat and dressed accordingly, his starched pinstripe suit topped with a proud cravat, the thick gold chain of a fob watch hanging conspicuously from his top pocket. In every respect, he appeared the polar opposite of Kersen who went about the coarse business of chewing the lid from another beer bottle as the Professor, unperturbed, addressed Kinney affably.

"So tell me, Miss ...?"

"Elster. Mrs Mary Elster ..." The pseudonym no longer seemed a burden.

"Elster, of course. Tell me, that quite majestic beast outside, does that belong to you?"

Following the grey-haired man's gaze, Kinney cast her eyes out through the window to the parking lot where the Jensen skulked elegantly in the early evening shadows. Reassured by the machine's unspoken loyalty, all memory of her theft of the car dissipated and a pride swelled in her chest to the point that she felt she might burst were she not to share it. Turning back to the Professor, she was unable to suppress a beaming grin.



"Yes sir, he is mine. And I his, it's fair to say."

Kersen punctuated the exchange with a pop and a clatter as she spat the bottle top across the table

and slugged noisily from the neck.

"A fine creature indeed, my dear," the Professor continued, "and evidently popular with the ladies, eh?" He nodded with a suggestive grin towards the parking lot.

Kinney spun back around to see a large, muscular, fawn-coloured dog approach the Jensen with rapt curiosity, sniffing enthusiastically at the radiator grille. A mild panic erupted in Kinney's gut.

"Oh no! That damn dog better not do what ..."

"Calm down now, Mrs Elster. The dog belongs to me and, I can assure you, harbours no misplaced intent towards your fine dark steed. She is merely expressing her admiration. That girl has rather refined taste. Like her master, eh?"

"Oh, I see. I'm sorry."

Kinney watched carefully as, sure enough, the proud bitch rested her haunches upon the cold ground and lay her head flat on the vehicle's hood, rubbing her muzzle from side to side across the paintwork in an almost lascivious but entirely benign manner.

"Yes, got more going on under her cap than most that one. I picked her up in Mexico you know. A child of the revolution she is, a true character."

"Mexico's a long way to go to buy a dog. Doesn't New England have its share of respectable breeders?"

"My dear," the Professor's eyes glimmered with a youthful mischief, "there are some things in life which are worth the extra miles and the added hardship. Aren't no two dogs the same in this world, that's for sure. Just like people, eh?"

A brief silence followed as Kinney continued to stare out at the dog, engaged obsessively in its affection of the car. A rush hour bus, old and in need of repairs, rattled past on the street below, its tired engine breaking the reverie with a terminal clatter; clickety-clacketyclick- click-clack ...

"Professor, why don't you tell Mrs Elster a little about your latest work?" Kersen murmured lazily, peeling the label on her bottle with the ragged edge of one well-chewed thumbnail, "Unless I miss my guess, I think she'll be quite fascinated."

The Professor's eyes were suddenly aglow with an eager fire as he gestured with open arms to Kinney in a silent question. Stifled

momentarily by self-consciousness, Kinney paused with a mouthful of bourbon, unsure of how to respond. She swallowed hard, her throat muscles overcompensating painfully, and forced an awkward nod. The Professor's face blossomed into a grin and he adjusted his spectacles as though about to read from an invisible text he'd prepared in advance.

"Well, my dear, in addition to many other fields of research, I have of late been quite concerned with the establishment of new ... how shall we say, revolutionary media. New modes of recording and relaying human experience and equally innovative ways of communicating the gathered information to an audience."

Kinney was unable to conceal her bemusement as the loathsome face of Matthew Redman floated upon the surface waters of her psyche like the most foul and persistent of stools in a fruitlessly flushing toilet. "So you're another aspiring media entrepreneur? That doesn't seem so revolutionary. Seems everyone is a self-made mogul these days."

The Professor chuckled, the well-meaning but inherently condescending chortle of one who has been humoured by the charming naivety of a child. "Quite so, my dear, quite so. But

where my contemporaries - if indeed I deign to describe them as such - are concerned with rigidly material technologies and therefore limited material results, I have been busily pursuing a mode of communication that is far more ... ethereal in nature. But which also ultimately produces results which are infinitely more substantial than the limited sensory fare produced by even the most expensive and advanced of consumer technologies."

"I'm not quite sure I get your drift, Professor. Are you saying you've been researching ways to record and relay sound and images without the aid of recording devices ...?"

"Not simply sound and images, Mrs Elster. That would be a minor affair, really not worth my valuable time and effort. No, my work has been directed obsessively and tirelessly towards the realisation of the human psyche itself as a recording and relaying instrument. And, I shall proclaim with a degree of modesty, that the work has met with some success, though the techniques are still being fine-tuned as we speak."

Kinney felt as though this deceptively soft-spoken aristocrat had detonated an explosive device within her mildly drunken mind. She raised an instinctive hand,

massaging her forehead lightly, as if this slight action might prevent her cerebral matter from exploding through a skull which now threatened to collapse under the pressure of the Professor's words.

"You're saying you've circumvented the need for technology? I can't see how that's possible."

Morrow removed his spectacles and began to clean them with a garish yellow handkerchief drawn from a top pocket. "Well, technology is rather a fluid term of course. These glasses, for example, are a form of technology, and one which I have not yet found a way to circumvent, more's the pity. But if you're referring to the cumbersome electrical and electronic devices normally associated with the recording and relay of human experience, then yes, my research has found these items to be quite primitive in their potential, although not entirely without use in other fields." He raised the glasses to the light, inspecting them silently for a moment, before replacing them upon his thin nose with a low grunt of satisfaction. "You see, my dear, every human being ... and indeed every other living creature, is both a recorder and a transmitter. The human psyche is infinitely more advanced than any



camera or digital device in terms of its capacity for retaining and communicating experience. For the best part of a century, consumer technologies have wallowed turgidly, like pigs in excrement, over new and flashier ways to do exactly the same thing continuously; to record images, to record sound. What was once a noble and pioneering mission to capture human experience has swiftly become a cultural and psychological dead end championed by dullards and dilettantes, fetishists of technology for technology's sake."

"So you're saying you've hit upon a way for the human psyche to relay their own experience beyond sound and vision?"

"Precisely!", the Professor grew increasingly animated, his frail figure vibrating with juvenile glee, "Material science has been able to satisfy only the sense of sight and hearing, to compensate for spatial and temporal absences. My work, and that of a few esteemed others in the fields of alter-meta-science however, has proven that all living entities are essentially broadcast stations. Providing one is tuned in to the correct frequencies, one can experience firsthand not only the sights and sounds of another's experience, but also the scents, tastes and tactile sensations. The same techniques may also be

employed to replay one's own experience at any time. Ultimately, this work has promised a new dawn for humanity, the possibility of an existence where time and space become malleable in accordance with one's desires."

Swallowing back the last of the bourbon, Kinney slammed the glass upon the table with more force than she had intended, causing a few partygoers to stare in her direction. She moved closer to the Professor so that the prying eyes were outwith her line of vision and lowered her voice.



"Hold on, Professor. That seems rather a huge leap of logic. Even if I accept that we're able to record and transmit our physical experiences to others via some kind of psychic mainframe, I don't see how that affects or alters our presence in a continuum of time and space.

At best, I can see the whole thing working out as some kind of novelty psych-trip, something for people to indulge in at weekends, a new substitute for the Sunday afternoon drive perhaps. At worst, it'd prove a one-way ticket to psychosis for a lot of folks. Hardly a positive breakthrough if you ask me."

Kersen and the Professor shared a knowing glance. His smile appeared to solidify, shedding its childish quality.

"Kersen, why don't you pour the lady another drink?"

With a wry smirk, the girl administered a double measure quickly and thrust it into Kinney's hand. Morrow folded his arms across his chest.

"Mrs Elster, in order to accept what I am telling you, you must first embrace the core truth at the heart of my work. And indeed that of our inimitable host this evening," he gestured once more towards the crow carving, grand and timeless, "What we commonly think of as time - that terminal juggernaut trundling onwards and ever onwards to decline and temporal doom - is but a fiction, my dear. A truly great lie at the head of a most odious pantheon of lies. Forgive me for saying so, but I can see into your tired heart, can view the

ghosts of fatigue which labour there, the terrible tyranny of clocks and calendars which keeps you shackled to an ill-fated mission, one which only punishes you for your loyalty to its unattainable end in a linear myth ..."

Kinney wanted to shout at the feeble aristocrat, to spit bourbon into his kindly eyes, such was the rage that his words now roused; the awful truth of her obsessive and self-destructive service to the clock that tick-tick-tocked endlessly in her shattered heart; the sense of urgency and dark promise of fruitless doom which had propelled her through a life of childless frustration and towards a fugitive existence committed to the benevolent but thankless treatment of a patient who was utterly incapable of comprehending the nature of her own terrible affliction. She opened her mouth to reply but only a pathetic choked sound escaped her lips and she felt the conspicuous well of a tear in one eye.

"You see," the Professor lay a gentle fatherly hand on her shoulder, "refuting the myth is the first step to breaking free from your cell. This research I speak of, this work undertaken by myself and others, is geared to precisely that goal. When the human psyche is cracked finally open,

wide open ... only then do we achieve complete understanding of time and space. When the building blocks of the universe are revealed to us there in our dreams, our memories, then we learn how to shift them to our liking. This is the greatest secret of all simply because it is not a secret at all but something which is known intuitively, shielded from the conscious mind as it labours under its weary burden of everyday superficialities."

Kinney wiped away the tear on the back of a grimy denim cuff ... symbol for her mouth like a child by darkness rolled in with the news ... pointed to a map of the streets below ... the city stabbed at countless lives ... how amazing they knew silence flowed from the wound ... the beginning had blown a hole into existence ...

Reaching into his top pocket, the Professor pulled on the gold watch-chain to reveal nothing on the end; the watch had been removed, a bent metal clip the only remaining signifier of its existence. "In very real terms, Mrs Elster, your potential is not locked by any arbitrary standard of time, nor space. Your infinite selves blossom and multiply across the screens of night; all the dreams, visions, fantasies and nightmares of you are not lost but recorded and available for replay ... bleed your way into the mesh ... the

multitude... the web of infinite narratives where your time tracks converge across a billion junctions ... breathe and dance there in a sky of infinite romances, horror shows and pornographies ..."

The mention of pornography roused the spectre of Kinney's self-consciousness fleetingly back to life. Sex, her memories of it, the very idea of it, had been something of a crutch in her life. Her incessant compulsion to achieve personal goals in a strictly planned timeframe had seen her make many bad choices, not least of which was the loss of her virginity in that grubby hotel room with its ghastly yellow wallpaper so synonymous with the raw vomit which now threatened to climb her throat in response to the suddenly agitated memory. For reasons she could no longer explain, she had been adamant to pop her cherry at no older than eighteen, regardless of the consequences. Thus, on the day before her nineteenth birthday and in full menstrual flow, she wound up in that appalling room with its vomitous décor, pinned beneath a burly motor mechanic whose name she no longer remembered, her self-respect spewing out of her in red gobs while he waxed endlessly on the wonders of power steering and recited the specifications of several different kinds of motor engine; details which seemed to

drive him to orgasm far more effectively than any sound or movement she might have offered him. She could still recall the pathetic and depressing sight of his shrivelled post-coitus cock, red and sticky with her menstrual blood, a most unsavoury cocktail sausage dipped in the cheapest of ketchups.



Thereafter, her only sex had been with Philip, a passionless routine geared exclusively towards the production of children which his secret vasectomy had preemptively thwarted. The mere thought of these shameful episodes being replayed under any circumstances caused her to shiver.

"Think of your surroundings as your software if you like," Kersen was speaking through air swarmed in static, a bullhorn suspended in the void between memories, "this building, these walls ... feel your way into the

cracks and crannies, taste your breath there in the polished wood..."

The truth cursed and sweated in the ministry of information as the army of wrinkles invaded her reflection ... the shattered gate to a timeless now ... lost voices of sleep for weeks ... hunger growing towards a velvet horizon ... crows soared in arrowhead formations and the congregation communicated...

"Tell me, that quite majestic beast outside, does he belong to you?"

Following the grey-haired man's gaze, Mary Elster casts her eyes out through the window to the cobblestones below where the tall black horse stands elegantly in the early evening shadows. Reassured by the beast's unspoken loyalty, she is unable to suppress a beaming grin.

"Yes sir, Jensen is my loyal companion. And I his, it's fair to say."

"A fine creature indeed, my dear," the Professor continues, "and evidently popular with the ladies, eh?" He nods with a suggestive grin towards the gloomy street.

Elster spins around to see a young woman with dark Latin features and long wild black hair approach

the horse and pet his muzzle affectionately. A mild panic erupts in Elster's gut.

"That damn urchin better not be out to steal ..."

"Calm down now, Mrs Elster. Soledad is with me and, I can assure you, harbours no misplaced intent towards your fine dark steed. She is merely expressing her admiration. That girl has rather refined taste."

"Oh, I see. I'm sorry."

Elster watches carefully as, sure enough, the girl drops to her knees and kisses the horse fervently on its partially open mouth. She drapes both arms gently around the beast's neck as one would embrace a lover and begins to gyrate her pelvis in a lascivious manner.

"Yes, got more going on under her cap than most that one. I picked her up in Mexico you know. A child of the revolution she is. A true character."

Soledad's skin glows afire in the failing light ... Her hips are a storm voicing its way into existence ...

A stagecoach thunders by, wheels and hooves terrorising the cobbles; clickety-clacketyclick-click-clack ... smell of ash in the

air crows perched upon thatched roofs. She would take a train to the 19th century it seems - Heavy-bridled horses snort locomotive steam clouds - Cold hostile ground of a factory not yet built nor demolished in the 1970s for ragged children to hide and seek in its sublime ruins - The Professor and his faithful assistant Dr Mary Elster examining the crime scene - blood frozen into a shell-like glaze upon the callous ground - hushed voices and an aura of latent menace -

"Murdered children - thirteen in number - sad faded spirits etched in misery upon concrete not yet laid - Seems the perpetrator found its way through spinal communication lines - There were other people in that crowd for the broken toys and neglected looks and some of the young fall short in the glass - message of no return across the cortical night -"

Click of the Professor's fob watch like dry sticks cracking in the still frozen morning - Ice phantom blood stains and Mary Elster's booted heel - some even glistened and quivered upon the white toy pistol -

"This the same old racket? - the chalky corridors and a message maid works faster than my face - Teacher points to a red desert to die - so the Time come down on them with its sick seashell scent

invading the lungs? - Ragged child face is a curtain of the truth below - lost voices where the velvet bodies were hidden?"

Struck match and rich tobacco scent - "The M.O. is familiar - The wall of people was hoping to get accidentally discovered - News need pornography to help you sleep at the streets below - Was a doctor's wife you understand - childless and barren breaking haloes of attrition against the sun's shattered gate - Time spat from her mirror - Done abducted the orphans from the refuge set the whole place to flame - She was quite mad you know - razor smile and a breast of stilettos - all screwy with other future from the surgeries - Had to damn slit her neck open on both sides a set of gills since she could otherwise choke on the winds of time - Ship never sailed not after that not ever - Got so the neighbourhood couldn't sleep with her caterwauls through the night shoving baby toys in the gashes throttling herself on phantom motherhood - She fences heartbreak and victims for the necessary information out of bone - stirring faces standing out like white petals around her neck" crow cries through frozen woods of a distant morning - irony glow of skin and the face - petulant ghost of rust haunts the 1970s caravan anachronistically dead there on the town's perimeter - The police burst in

with a green trauma through impossible smoke - Children in gasmasks looking out across the brook exploding the night when the fox hears the ringing bell - The smoke around when it crashes eat the paint off residue of adolescent dreams - Damn textbook shakedown and the Professor got the heat coming down - "I don't need no permit for your pantomime of stale photos, officer - You don't have it in you to love them nights smell of wet tarmac - All a good guy needs is the glow of instrument panels - We're not a voice in the wind made to break down -"

Police chief steps forward harsh censorious face brimmed with a dictatorial moustache the skin reddened with the self-righteous fervour of one incapable of pulling his heavy dead carcass out of bed for anything lest there be an authority to serve or a flag to salute - "You got the philosopher swindle about you, Morrow - These here cuffs got a hunger for your sweat -"

"I wouldn't trust philosophers and bunnies across the street gang junction - I don't buy a word of god for heaven but a sinking ship - You beat the liver out of a goose to get a pâté; you pound the muscles of a man's cardia to get a philosopher -"

Rough hands pawing at Mary Elster's coat sleeve - "This majestic beast belong to you, Morrow? -"

"Mrs Elster is my loyal companion - And I hers, it's fair to say - Got more than hung open in the storm voicing its way into existence - Other officers in charge pestered those clothes - They wiped their faces with handkerchiefs and I fell on the knife -"

Pigs never done see the gun - Whistling a dead tune from their stiffly starched uniforms - Too intent on trying to get through impossible smoke, the disco light show going on inside - Three bullets of time into Frick's wealth enabling the shattered gate - There were five thousand effects of the blast milling around outside the sour sky and the authorities caught law and order - Cold blood policemen looked at their watches on a broken window and the blood froze away from the crowd or cruised through a hunger growing inside - Say stay away from her 'cause she's dusty windows now spat up blood - And the one hundred and fifty policemen of no return drifted across the pockmarked bay ... Patterns against the tungsten smiles ... neon marquee hipsters eat in the intelligent azure eyes - Lost voices of her before clashing with discordant

sleep at the deserted trailer park - Whistling a dead tune from her reflection and it seems to sing where the empty warehouses crumbled in Brooklyn like it's 1983 ...

"I lived in this trailer, Professor." broken light reflected in the spectacles the vomit of her soul engrained in the yellow walls "You're still pretty like the first bomb. I can't handle the blasts when you get to be my age."



A distant sound of automobile engines and the chance to pull off her clothes - "I can humiliate myself to blood flowers in the page" - The smoke around when it crashes eat the paint off crustacean shells - Friends suggested swallowed air - The platform the telegram the disco light show and Mary Elster under arrest - dead tune loomed up before her in all its wasteground - Drags in on booted heel a traitorous husband - How much

Elster looked up to see the ceiling peel his secretary from the crowd - woollen sweater burning bobby pins breaking under her self-serving fist - Got the scalpels out for Thanksgiving on her pretty little body - Husband opens mouth to scream and chews on rusted chains - Revenge rises to the skin of the night in weeping gangrenous lesions - Bitch's limbs severed her helpless trunk propped against a shit-stained lavatory - blue eyes held up to the stricken perfidious cock only inches from her face drop of clear fluid seeping from a blind eye - Nudge on the back and a hand wrapped around it - Say she's a dull slate sky wrapping around the flames - "Time to use that pretty little mouth" - At least get a glance at what breaks and the clouds shake and you're slashing razorblades around your heart - "If you puke you puke I don't give a shit" - She's so sadistic when cameras snapped hot and I want her to know my curiosity pressing to the attack - Husband wailing and screeching in psychological agony his pelvis thrusting beyond his will thrusting and fucking the prone mouth of his amputee consort - "His blackout warned you about all the wicked rules" - The blackjack night may come for a mental orgasm - "But you knew life is over; her damnation is a dirty face -"

Cops come round you need to wear half a ton of marble to eat me alive - Crow cries hate and kill that man standing in the mirror - All of your daughters in time mistaken three places at once - Human destruction and burning through their beauty's dance - Head lowered body pushing back against that hateful barren member - The amputee's face from this position making to scream against the sickly walls the filth-strewn bathroom - Here they have desert lakes to try and sweat the ghost of no words - No sound on swallowed air and the body jerks quickly - Take these hands and this helpless pounding cock the stark fact of her birth as a wild wolf's cub - Pulled free in the vital seconds - She says too much when uselessly open in the fractured sarcophagus - "Cum in her face!" - Self-immolation flutters over the glass in her own malign hand - Torture of dying stars in a collapsing sky - Warm bitter irony strikes the muscles tight - The husband's powerless cock erupts its fire searing blood flowers in the audience - In the executioner hail cameras snap colour in a whimper - Blast of the heart by the sour sky as it bursts across the amputee's nose and cheeks - Fresh sperm congeal like fish eggs the dead inert crustacean scent of time's curse - Ersatz studio applause for the busted marionettes all shattered limbs and strings severed - The blasts



seen poking out from a mound of logic of the material universe sending for the finest show horse in town - Feel the chalky corridors and a message go softly - Empty warehouses crumbles in most impressionable and vivid age - surrounded by people from Hiroshima emerging to suppress the turmoil in that soul - Plaster flecks past a remote throat - An abrupt curiosity pressing to the attack and vicious teen whispers - Lost voices of murky colours dazzling in the sunlight - reflection clashing with organised confusion - Visage of the Redman girl surfacing unsoiled and spouting banalities - The mechanic enters naked portly form caked in engine grease -

"This majestic amputee belong to you?"

"Ms Redman is the bane of my existence. And I hers, it's safe to say."

"A fine bit of gear, though not as fine as my new ride - We can take a spin - I'll tell you all about it eh? - Yeah you'd like that" - Roar of an engine tears the wall like wet sanitary towel - Viscous red gloop engorging her wounded sex - "Tell you what, that there gimp be popular with the scavengers - A real bird magnet -"

Murder of crows trickles through the shattered window like an

airborne oil slick - Razor sharp bills pecking ravenously at the bloody stumps - wounds torn in the fabric of the universe - Time tracks explode across the dim eyes of vagrant stars - no reflection there in the shit-caked porcelain - Rosie Redman spasms and orgasms, phantom limbs flailing - They can hear her climaxes all the way over in Shithole, Shropshire. "Just lie back, love, and think of the British motor industry ..."

Elster collapses inward from the rough oiled skin to the feigning of a memory - An anti-temporal vantage point where this torrid exhibition of sweat and blood and mucous replays outwith her experience as though from a recording embedded in the sickly yellow walls - Soundtrack of crow squawks and technical specifications working her torment to gelatinous fury - body modified in the Temporal Death Factory - greased hands oiling the machine of her textbook anatomy - time and space back and forth goes like this//went like this -

The engine was beside her as she watched - torque rubbing over the huge bulbous wheels through a limited slip differential in obvious pleasure - original specifications include continued pumping using his hands on wood-rimmed steering wheel - His hand running up rear axle - Chrysler V-8 with optional dick between your legs -

Jensen broke back and tentatively reached glass-reinforced plastic harder than she'd imagined - Throbbing flesh and automatic transmissions driving her head back - She looked at the large cock only (semi) hand built in the United Kingdom - purple-coloured tip had a drop of the Interceptor used previously - musky odour which the car broke - She felt warm reversing lights and an electric clock in her mouth - parted her 3x2-bbl carburetion over her lips and tongue - Back and forth the Interceptor saloon had a distinctive mouth -



"The engine don't wanna?" - He was talking carburetion "I gotta go to work"

"We're gonna be hot to speakers, reversing what you think" - explaining to her as he sighs at conventional rear axle - "I lose my job and the Mark II in 1969 for a one night fuck"

The Six-Pack model of 1971-73 let the smooth skin of the head slip - She steeled herself and managed the Mark II in October 1969 - It was hard, the body designed by an outside firm of the shaft in her grip - She began pumping manual (Mark I, only a few built) - The Jversion worked her pelvis back and forth on fingers Jensen made - She stared in morbid fascination as they offered 3x2-bbl carburetion; only 232 with each passing minute - An earlier car made between her mouth and dribbled down her chin by having a steel body shell between her thighs - Distinctive her cries increased along a tailgate - Power steering after a few seconds began to sigh - the engine with both hands was looking directly at Torque from between her open legs - Tears streamed down most powerful car ever to have been deeper into her mouth - an earlier car made unpleasant felt a nudge on her tradition by a steel body shell and her hand around it - Early model cock all the way and holding it there - Early bodies to move her hand back and forth with subtle modifications -

"Look at me as the hand had been used so my eyes broke grey with the darkness"

"I hear you make it with a lot of the in-house staff. The early bodies were you?" - his laugh sounded like body modifications

in the guys' names - His lips had revised seats, fully-cast covered hers - "You gotta boy at home hand-built in the United Kingdom?" - words closer and hotter the Interceptor had used previously - Big and round, a luminous body an outside firm rather get high on like entering a dream - This ephemeral tradition by having a steel body shell in her eyes - original specification pushing back against him, forcing his wood-rimmed steering wheel jerked quickly - She lowered her head and had the distinction of the pussy once made by Jensen (390 hp) - pushed his fingers into wet snatch of Interceptor III the most luxurious for a few minutes then backed away - doubled his penis slightly along with electric windows, reclining front seats to move her head still - With modifications she sighed and knelt the Chrysler V-8 of 6276cc with optional strokes - It was rough with a large motor between 1966 and fluid seeping from the small hole - Impatiently grew to 7212 cc in late 1971 with her mouth towards its tip - her muscles quickly developed by Jensen for an earlier photo - the engine tastes just like the sea - Her husband wheels through a limited slip differential in their children when she came alone to 7212 cc - They have two girls - one is offered 3x2-bbl carburetion only kind of tough on the family car to have been around - The original

specification included eight months steering with her - a distinctive best to avoid her as a tailgate - She revised frontal styling and vented as though she were ejaculating alloy wheels - Look at this picture I know on the production years - the J-series wetness soaked the bed sheets are Jensen built - I swear low-volume "specialist" motor in much ejaculation - She can shoot hers further though the body remained with her - fucking when slipped the interior slightly redesigned on her side - It always feels a little armchair style of the earlier models - rode for hours like she was hand-built in the United Kingdom - Philip there thrusting the Redman girl's severed fingers up his asshole - Kept it hidden that it was hurting her with asterisks denoting subtypes - Interceptor used previously would get pregnant - Damn car broke around the house begging to fuck glass-reinforced plastic in Mexico - Philip's cock sliding into the girl's weeping arm stump - she comes automatic transmissions - Dropped everything and just began following Jensen (390 hp) hopelessly - rear window would miscarry - Though the body remained where they examined her was used and the interior slightly redesigned - the early lips were pouty, sultry, as though subtle body adjustments entering her in the ocean of 6276 cc with

optional psychology - A rocket shoots out of her Chrysler V-8 driving the half gallon engine pussy like a fountain gushing carburetion - Six Pack model weren't afraid to compete - Look at this picture in late 1971 with the wetness - the sheets are offered 3x2-bbl carburetion of that stuff the bed gets so wet - swear low-volume "specialist" motor in much ejaculation -

Jensen had her from behind and she was curving wrap-around rear window that doubled tighter that way - Tried electric windows, front seats putting penis in her reversing lights - Fully-cast liquid rushes out of her J-series wet and moaning like she was really into Interceptor III - Most luxurious kept it hidden that it was hurting her in the 1980s as the Series 4 (S4) went to the nearest hospital to manufacture her rectum - Fully-cast head turned completely sideways into J-series - most powerful car ever until her head swung against his saloon - veins stood out in her tailgate - Power steering was included as a stiff curving terror in his mouth - alloy wheels grinning and whimpering - Her engorged pussy essentially the same, a newer, so-called "cleaner" engine stepped up and rubbed his hard cock along her "sports" front seats - Improvements between her thighs sighed on the production years - addition of front seats as opposed

to the cunt, not stopping until its entire length was the iconic Mark II -

The mechanic broke back and tentatively reached glass-reinforced plastic harder than she'd imagined - Had the distinction of being her cheeks as she forced the thick cock made by Jensen (390 hp) - She turned in the 1980s as the Series 4 (S4) leaving one foot on the floor and gripping across her tongue leaving a tangy taste in the curving wrap-around rear window - Radio with liquid hit the back of her throat - half gallon in the 1980s like a fountain gushing - His cock erupted shooting Chrysler V-8 initially of 6276 cc with optional mouth - He jerked his hot seed into her automatic transmissions driving the rear mess - into her speakers, reversing lights and electric clock - Liquid hit the mouth again and dribbled down her alloy wheels plus some other improvements - Streams of white cum ran down her conventional Salisbury rear axle - Motor oil mixed with her blood greased the unsavoury piston of his spent cock - The engine tossed the shamefaced teen a towel of glass-reinforced plastic -

Weather-beaten motors between the doors revealed her husband as a large fawn-coloured dog - The Redman girl was unrecognisable now - her face disappearing into a

red mess beneath the dog's hungry snapping jaws - Muted groans of pleasure barely audible from somewhere behind that mask of gore - veins erect and stumps twitching - Distinction of being the dog made by Jensen head flat along her severed knees - In late 1971 with the trembling of its rump, the hackle offered 3x2-bbl carburetion only sideways over bright white teeth - Paws trembling hand-built in the United Kingdom - The dog of Interceptor III was the most luxurious agony that he seemed in the 1980s -



"That dog belong to you?" - The mechanic's tongue announced backward as she came on the Mark III -

"Soledad is my loyal companion - Got more going on than most - Picked up in Mexico - A child of the revolution -"

The Interceptor had been crying, blindly, and without warning plunged on a contrived altar before a Madonna of glass-reinforced plastic by dirty benches - Mark III kicked the guts out of sex - Series 4 (S4) clawing sideways to manufacture her forelocks - sliding her wheels through a limited slip in the dog - The interior slightly redesigned bit at her, dashing about her armchair style of earlier models - Light fell across deep brown that you could fall into - The original specification lay down, his eyes bloodshot - The Interceptor was rising from the floor -

Yellow walls collapsed in on themselves - Her infinite selves exploded in electric images across her spinal column - cortical film reeled across the paroxysmal sky - seething cloud pierced by a solitary hill culled from an abandoned memory - At the top of the hill she could see a light the length of 1976 - startled before them lips as though she were broken - She comes sliding down her health and the dog stood there rearing back Mexico City under the trembling rump - White teeth dropped everything just following until her head swung hopelessly in love -

What terror in his mouth began to make connections - any man if he weren't the dust struck against his side - One was only wide and

throbbing up on her house  
begging to fuck the dog - grinning  
and crying kept it hidden -  
Luminous floor and dirty benches  
entering a dream - tongue kind of  
tough whining and waiting -

Back she came as though she were  
ejaculating her head sideways -  
paws trembling met her two girls  
standing mouth open - Her  
husband hair swinging, arms held  
out, children came alone to  
forelegs slanting - Veins stood out  
on her house - flame of bone  
where the marriage bed convulses  
- Know the farthest corner the dog  
reached wetness - her head  
sideways explodes at this picture -  
She can shoot hers further head  
down dragging her forelocks with  
her - She pushed her soft bark also  
crawling hot - The dog gave her  
only pleasure along her knees -  
hackle dropped everything -

They never used their cocks in the  
floor and dirty benches - Kept  
running late to work against the  
sky - couldn't stop rushing with  
him crying in shorter emotions  
but underneath gave up, lying  
out, her hands split apart - Didn't  
give a shit about one howl of  
misery to crime - Her pose used to  
not even point where her hand  
struck the wood - paws trembling  
in her ear - Philip kidnapped  
children as he sprang on either  
side of weapons and used them -  
"I hear you make it with a lot of  
flowers and toys" - standing

before his laugh like broken  
names - Look as the hand began  
to run cursing her chin up -  
sliding she went down her way of  
speaking - The weatherbeaten  
white shoulder - his lips  
whimpering forward covered his  
hands into that troubled ship - sex  
made crazier and slow his feet  
went - His hand rising from the  
floor then her mouth was a  
fountain - This way his fingers  
pinching and she crying towards  
him like an overloaded volcano -  
A long time passed the farthest  
corner - Ghost of motherhood  
stained the toilet bowl red - Love  
turned back barking up the walls  
of buildings -

At the top of the hill she could see  
her face - She in her boy's pose a  
few inches of where her hand had  
reached - Her unborn daughters  
raced to greet emptiness and a  
vacant shadow - fractured film  
reel of memory buckled in the  
cracks upon a soiled mirror - No  
voice - Sad fading phantoms in a  
spring breeze - All pigtailed never  
tied and ropes unskipped - Ship  
never sailed after that storm of  
flesh between her thighs - Not  
ever with other future - Young  
faces dissolved in engorged pussy  
all screwy - Sprang back lips  
drawn in Mexico - her hands  
where they examined her and the  
dog - She was looking directly at  
one howl of misery from between  
her legs as it sprang on either side  
of her swollen lips - She parted

her mouth open, canine tongue  
her mouth it slid back and forth  
on all fours - wide and throbbing  
up on the dog quivering - shoved  
forepaws sliding home with the  
dust - Tears streamed whining  
and waiting - the room was silent  
obscene and touching - hackle let  
the smooth skin sideways over  
bright white teeth - She turned  
rising with one foot on the floor  
and gripping the forepaws -  
rough skin lay flowers and toys -  
Knees up - Fish is open - One  
hand and the dog gave horizontal  
- She began to bark over the head  
with obscene touching -

“Oh no! That damn dog better not  
do what ...”

The mechanic was denied the  
luxury of completing this thought  
- Yellow room erupted like  
thunder through the doll heads -  
His skull burst upon in a red  
viscous supernova -

Soledad's bullet shearing off the  
scalp dead eyes turning upwards  
to oblivion - You thought her  
mouth like a child to your  
coloured sweater - Pancho's  
attack dog hauled the body

slung over her gums - deeper into  
effortlessly onto the grimy ash-  
strewn carpet discarding the  
flabby corpse like an empty  
cigarette packet -

Austere winter light dies against  
her Latin skin - “Ven conmigo” -  
Exit just like a movie there in the  
dust: Police burst in all arrogant  
bluster and pantomime hardcase  
hyperbole through impossible  
smoke but Soledad don't play that  
shit for a whisper - Dim-eyed  
rookie fumbling at his holster is  
relieved of the burden of his  
brains for his trouble- Blood and  
cerebral tissue spatters a superior  
officer's face reeking fragments  
caught in his greasy moustache -  
Shoots off panicked and half-blind  
his bullet catching his partner in  
the side of the neck -  
Pandemonium as spooked and  
wounded cops bumble and  
stumble bleeding over each other  
like stricken clowns in a grand  
guignol slapstick - Mary Elster  
hugs the beast's hide in the angle  
between two walls - flecks of  
plaster peel the galaxy wide open  
at her animal kiss - time dissolves  
upon those wounded lips ...



## ***CATS AND DOGS***

***The work is a reflection on patriarchal religions, anxiety and sexual angst. I made this work when I was heavily inspired by the photomontages of the 1920s by German and Eastern European artists. ~ GUTTERSAINT***



## **EIGHT MILE PART VI: DIRTY SEASONAL EFFECTS**

**By Gene Gregorits**

The drive to D.C. from Baltimore takes about 45 minutes, I'm told. I wore a black sportscoat with almost imperceptible blue and red pinstripes, and an ugly purple dress shirt, my only "nice" shirt, underneath. Jeans and boots. Sloe-eyed. Greasy hair and a sloppy shave - toilet paper bits, and tufts of cat hair on my shoulders. I looked down at my lap, with the appearance of joviality a big concern, and Izabela being Izabela. No snow. Fleetwood Mac on the radio. Our first stop: her father, Ernest Slutzky.

Sitting there, I thought of the sweetness of past lovers who any decent man would have fled from, women who made the average man feel small, who dominated sexually, intellectually, or both. I'd never been afraid of these women, and, in their own ways, they had been good to me. They had been good to my cat.

I thought of Pam, a convicted murderer. She'd never eaten filet mignon, or been on a tropical

vacation. She didn't know who or what Dolce Gabana was. She could not be called upon for a political discussion, or a trip to an art museum. She was a stupid little hick, and she'd killed another human being. But she was good to me. There were things we both knew, and knowing that the other knew just as well, took away a degree of tension that makes people unable to live with or even visit other people, that creates trouble in the bedroom. We had all that extra freedom and extra space in our heads that we could devote to caring about each other, if only for that moment. It's just that that moment kept happening.

Jackie spent her formative years being raped by her father, which she said turned her into a groupie during the early 1970s, a 12 year old demon swallowing rock star come in hotel rooms. She eventually made it so that I couldn't have fun anymore, and she was a cat killer. I could forgive her. In those days, I was

very inexperienced, which meant a lot of screaming fits when I felt cornered, or estranged. She had to forgive me every night.

Sitting in the car with Izabela, my mind drifted to other women, too. Like Sondra, with the 70 cats. She never knew what day it was, but she took care of those cats. All 70 of them obeyed her like dogs, and their litter boxes were always clean. The night I picked her up at a bar, along Eight Mile Road in Detroit, she had a dead kitten in the passenger seat of her Econoline van. She cruised the roads at night in that van, looking for places to dump her 200 pound bags of cat litter, and for stray cats who were lost in the cold. The dead kitten had a child's band-aid on its front leg, where an IV had been installed. The band-aid had little paw prints printed on it.

"She didn't make it," Sondra said. She was drunk. "You don't mind, do you?"

I didn't mind. Suddenly, I realized that the only possible saving grace at this point would start with me throwing myself from this car at the next off-ramp, and walking back to Baltimore. I was fidgeting. Izabela made a smart-ass little

cunt kind of a remark, and I kept my head pressed against the glass of the passenger window. Izabela made another smart cunt remark about me having one of my moods. I didn't want her to see me crying.

We pulled into the parking lot of a low-income housing project, and I got out with a bag of small gifts, and blowing steam in the freezing damp air, and following behind my girlfriend, passing by clusters of people who, Izabela revealed, were Eastern European immigrants, the entire suburban ghetto backlot being a cozy and bleak discount affair of Poles, Turks, Russians, and Slavs. These people --all men-- loitered, smoking heavily, without regard for the passing strangers. I like to catch other men in the act of scoping a girlfriend's ass, and Izabela's merited more than a scope, as much as a surreptitious trawl around a supermarket, even a detour around the block, but I didn't give a good fuck who scoped her, on this day or any other.

We approached the second or third building, in a series of many more: large concrete eyesores containing 6, 10, 12 units in each.

Civilized, sensible, hard working people. Reasonable rates. Moribund.

A handsome, and sharply threatening man met us in a disinfectant-reeking, underlit stairwell. His handshake said: MERCENARY. I thought of the photos and the stories. I almost heard him call me a “mudder-fucking peez ov shit” in my brain as I returned pressure with my own right mitt, in which all bones were already pulverized from my living room wall, a fearsome injury which had healed quite badly and would never be fixed in a proper manner. What he had actually said was pleasant and mundane, but I didn't buy it. I gave Ernest a well-rested, freshly shaven leer, overcompensating in response to his handshake, and also to Izabela's warnings about her dad's hyper-protective nature. She had been just as quick to educate me on his penchant for woman-beating. A hypocrisy, I thought, too incredibly stupid to bother pondering. But my first instincts assured me that Izabela's woman beating, ex-soldier, ex-mercenary, ex-cab driving Federal agent was, all things considered, a nice guy. As we entered his cramped, tomblike apartment, I

observed the presents, the artificial Christmas tree...it was a typical working class immigrant hovel. I felt some warmth there, and relaxed to the idea of being accepted by Ernest, and later, his estranged wife. Izabela's stepfather, a German immigrant she of course referred to as “the Nazi”, might prove to be the bitch of the bunch. But I felt ready.

Immigrants are not boring to Americans, and their fierce loyalties are fascinating to us, so to be accepted by her family was also to be entertained and inspired. It was a romantic hope, in strict accordance with my view of myself as a nation-less man, as full-flavored, 100-proof, unpatriotic heathen-scum. I was fully aware of this during our visit with Ernest, when we stuffed our faces with all manner of salty, lard-heavy Polish comfort food. Izabela's paternal grandmother emerged as we sat down to eat. She said nothing in English, and very little in Polish. The maternal granny, who lived with Izabela's mother and the Nazi, was completely batshit, I'd been told. But Ernest's mom wasn't the crispiest piece of toast on the sandwich either. She sat in a catatonic state, rousing only when

I approached the bowl containing some type of creamed herring, or maybe terramasalata. She would murmur in Polish, and gesture for me to eat more. Ernest denied that the syrupy substance he served as a refreshment contained alcohol, but it was obviously a licquer. The tablecloth was cheap plastic, and had a child's "happy birthday" design pattern. The chairs were plastic, and the kitchen was hardly bigger than a walk-in closet. We were all smashed in there together. I liked her family so far, and I liked the food.

Back in her clown car, Izabela explained that Ernest had thought more of me than her other boyfriends, a long series of flamboyant art students and fey indie rock Dorothies.

"I think he appreciates the fact that you act like you have a dick. You're confident, and manly."

This kind of thing is never terrible to hear about oneself, especially when one has enough good sense to be powerfully disgusted by manliness, confidence, dicks, and all the rest of it. It's not your own pompous big dick bullshit you rage against in your heart. It's always everyone else's.

I was becoming smug and complacent with this small nod of approval, when Izabela started grinning at me.

"He knows you're an alcoholic, Gene."

"I thought you didn't say anything about that."

"I didn't, but--"

"And those drinks he gave us. That was booze. Why did he keep saying it wasn't?"

"Look, he doesn't think you're a bad person, but--"

"He swore up and down that the stuff wasn't alco--"

"It's not about the drinks, honey."

"I didn't drink before we got there. I didn't stink of anything."

"I know, but bay-beeeeeee..."

Her horrible laughter filled the car.

"Baybeee WHAT?" I said.

Her putrid cackle intensified. She turned down the radio, and

looked at me, pure delight dripping from her eyeballs. She said:

“Oh baby. Your poor little hands were shaking the whole time!”

Suddenly, I understood why people like Ernest beat their women. It was going to be a rough night.

Thirty minutes later, I found myself in a massive 3 or 4 million dollar ranch-style mansion, surrounded by people who all stank of money. I didn't know who was who, and didn't care, because it was such a hairy scene, so noisy with children and constant arrivals that no one could expect me to remember a name. A nice middle-aged man in a Polo shirt with a nice middle-aged wife in a double knit Christmas-themed sweater approached as we sat down on a leather davenport the size of a Cadillac. I shook their hands, and we exchanged Christmas words. The man offered me a beer, and he was quick to offer me another when I'd finished that one. He was better than any bartender I'd ever had. The house was owned by the Nazi's sister. The Nazi was a grim-faced old German with a

hateful sense of humor, and like Ernest, a history of violence towards women. He disliked me on sight. He and Izabela had hated each other for many years. I wondered if he knew that she called him The Nazi. For being The Nazi, he seemed like an intelligent man, and he was of course extremely German, with the hard stare of an alcohol-scarred, misery-addicted misanthrope.

Maybe he thought of himself as The Nazi. I normally try to like such people, and I'll defend them to their enemies even if I can't find anything to like. I didn't like anything about The Nazi, and I would never think to defend him. Still, I preferred his company to Izabela's. My girlfriend clung to me as a means of angering The Nazi, and I let her enjoy the act, returning her playful pinches and kisses. Her mother was a sweetheart, and you could tell that she'd once been pretty -to certain tastes, anyhow. Eastern European women have always been very pretty to me. A sharp, hooked nose is common in that region, with tough physical stances, and curled lips framing mouths that are joyless, and mighty legs, dark eyes that squint

with derision, large asses that are evil/gorgeous but somehow angry...they are not delicate women, and they will plant a knife in you so much quicker than a woman from North Carolina or Japan or even Mexico. There is no violence as pure as the desperate, clean-killing efficiency of the Eastern Europeans. Vera Slutzky was a jocular, squat, and round-featured woman whom Izabela resembled strongly; she invoked in her plainness and warmth the peasant woman she had once been in Poland. She beamed at me, winking at Izabela, while across the room The Nazi stood solemnly surveying all three of us. Something in me begged to know: would it be hot to fuck Izabela's mother? Oh yes, yes it would, I decided. Then they announced dinner.

"It's fondue", Izabela whispered to me.

"What's fondue?"

She giggled her sub-normal 4 year-old giggle. "You don't know what fondue is?" I was then dragged to a chair at a banquet table to which all 40 or 50 guests also flocked to ungraciously. I sat down in the chair, and before me

was The Bottle: Black Sun. For years, I'd eyed it contemptuously, angrily, lusting for it, in liquor stores all over the country. During the years 2005 and 2006, I'd managed to pull in a grand or so a week as a black marketer of unreleased and otherwise unavailable films. I had a catalog of several hundred titles, and my basement operation in Detroit was humming seven days a week, with state of the art DVD replicators, Xerox machines, video monitors, laser printers, and an electronic postage meter. It was a vortex into which I vanished every morning, like a regular nine to five job. I sold these bootleg discs to fiending movie geeks around the globe, and the profits afforded me the opportunity to become something of a wine snob. But even then, during my tours of the local wine outlets, I never dared reach for a bottle tagged more than fifteen or twenty dollars. Black Sun was among those vintners whose complex-structured medium or large bodied, \$50 or \$75 a pop ambrosias I promised myself I would taste if I could work that grand a week up to two or three times that. But I never did. And I spent my money foolishly anyway, never having had

money, so it didn't matter. In hindsight, I should have splurged, and cut red roses for barmaids from my budget. But there it was: Black Sun, an Argentinean Carmenere. The Carmenere grape, thought to be extinct, and by any measure rare, until the late 1980s. A red wine that even the real connoisseurs, the most sophisticated of all world-class winos softened and smiled at a mere mention of, was sitting before me. I looked down both sides of the table, and every two or three seats down was another bottle. There were four bottles to my left, three to my right. I instinctively knew that I'd never have this chance again.

Izabela was explaining fondue to me. I nodded, and when the Black Sun was offered to me, I sighed and nearly melted into my chair.

"Oh yes, of course." Cities raged, engulfed in firestorms. I drank. And reeled. Its beauty was a hard slap in the face. Old women shrieked as their loved ones burned. Money meant nothing. It was anarchy.

"So you take the bread from here, and dip into - Gene!"

"Yeah. Ohhhhh. Oh, oh." Virgin girls lined up in a ditch, black sky yawning, black rain pelting my back, the skin of my cock stretched to tearing..."ohhhh. God DAMN."

"Gene!" A small tight pinch at my ribs, Izabela's lips pursed.

Her voice became hushed. "You told me- listen!- you told me you can't drink wine on beer. You-HEY!-you TOLD me that every single time you get nasty. Please..."

"Iz, it's Black Sun! Do you know-

"Shhh!"

"Do you know what's in that bottle! Holy fucking-"

Izabela's right hand swept under my shirt and her nails sunk into the skin of my left side. "SHHH!"

"One glass," she said.

Black Sun, by the third sip, had reduced what I considered an informed palate to smoking rubble. All these hundreds of nights, thinking I knew what was going on, drinking top-shelf from Rite-Aid and CVS...

experimenting with obscure South American and Spanish brands from the specialist shops that cost seven and nine dollars a bottle. There was in this Carmenere wine one layer after another of dense, penetrating personality, a smoky and sad voice rose from it, complimenting a spectral aura that jabbed me mysteriously with deft little punches and kicks the minute I'd begun to find some footing in the encounter. Black Sun, yes, was better than a woman.

During dinner, my enthusiasm never turned into a bona fide scene, yet those around me knew I was halfway to shitting myself with joy. It never dawned on them that it could be something as simple as good, classy wine. I was eager to pair the wine with food, and I deigned not to cool the scalding fondue before nipping it from my fork, burning the skin off my tongue every time. In an attempt to dull or distract myself from the pain, I slapped my hands together, muttering "fantastic!" and "hoo boy!" and "wow!"

The bottle in front of me drained, and my momentum strong, I winced at the realization that I'd have to ask for another. I did, and

it was brought. Izabela had long since taken on an air of indifference, almost to the extent of depersonalizing me. Guilt began to sing in those spare pockets of my gut which were not swirling with Black Sun's 2004 Carmenere. The Nazi no longer ate or drank, but simply stared, a dull-bull roar in his eyes, hoping that his life-energy would transcend physical reality and burn a hole in me somewhere. Then the plates and pots were taken away, and the table gathering was dismantled, as Izabela was coming to terms with having failed to disrupt my booze junkie's gravitational pull. The daughters and cousins and mothers and uncles and foreign exchange students scattered, mostly to the living room and its Italian leather davenport and love seats. I glowed with enough alcoholic energy to power several Manhattan blocks, and I knocked back beer after beer, expensive German beers, losing sight or feeling of those ghosts which had visited me, and of Hank and the pit bulls. I shook hands with four different foreign exchange students, and spoke to a girl of only five or six about the scars on my arms - now visible, with the removal of my outer shirt. She



explained to me why I did this to myself, and I excitedly shared with Izabela my astonishment that this child could so eloquently define what I'd neglected to even consider all these years (because I have always been frequently asked about these scars, which I do not find rude in the slightest; it's just that I have no answer). Izabela rolled her eyes. I had six beers in me, in addition to the wine, and the other beers, and my refills were beginning to appear with increasing delays. I was beyond drunk, I was a third or even halfway to lunacy, and this was not a crowd of drunks. I knew that more than one person here had noticed my guzzling; discernible to me also was their faint apprehension upon realizing that I would not Stop. Izabela smiled at me and said nice things. She wanted me to lose my composure and cause a scene. I knew she was manufacturing my attack of the Nazi. But I kept smiling and laughing and shaking hands and saying, "Merry Christmas" to these rich cocksuckers. One of the foreign exchange students was Polish, and for a time I forgot that Izabela -who spoke her native tongue fluently- was right next to me. I

obeyed all rules, I kept my words innocuous and insignificant and dishonest, but we were flirting, the young Polish girl and I. We were flirting in all the usual speechless ways. I wondered if she was fucking the head of the house, the weasel in the Polo shirt, the Nazi's brother. I was certain that she was. That poor dear. I wanted to rip her clothes off right then and there, in front of Izabela and The Nazi and everyone. I'd take her with me to Harrisburg, and make her my concubine, because I couldn't see any other way of getting better.

First though, I'd need a cigarette. I was seven beers in, going with the way of it all, going with Christmas and rich people and one Polish girl who was painfully unhappy with the stupid American rich people and another Polish girl who was watching my every move to determine exactly when and how I would blow my top and whatever was going to happen, it would have to wait, because I was eight beers in, and my teeth were sharp, and my wrists were still badly scarred, and it was time to smoke a fucking cigarette.

## VII: REAL ANIMAL

Muddy snow, barking dogs, a wide open boom of night shifting across the land, hundreds of half-million and million dollar houses, lost in a den of stinking riches, where all the good steaks and good bottles go, where men rape their maids and solicit their foreign exchange students, where incest happens boringly, everything you can pretty much guess correctly on first contact, in these houses around us.

Izabela trudged along beside me, muttering and cursing. I was not reasonable about the red flags I'd already flown, the red blankets shaken at the bull Nazi, and I could not see how it was somehow gauche to palm a beer as we left the party and the house (which was itself less than polite) to drink during our walk to the nearest convenience store. Izabela had refused me the swiped bottle. I was only trying to keep myself in good cheer. So without my bottle, I slipped into a dehydrated surliness, and we went our separate ways when a disagreement arose regarding the directions to the store. To the right

went she, along the sludgy sidewalk, and I lost sight of her quickly.

The four lanes of asphalt we'd crossed now buzzed brazenly with constant traffic. I turned to the left, where the road twisted, and began my walk into a dark stretch where I could plainly see that no gas stations or convenience stores stood. I walked anyway, the road continuing to snake, and I considered my money: \$20. Possibly just enough for a bus back to Baltimore, but it couldn't have been earlier than 10 PM; I'd be sleeping in a Greyhound station under the best of circumstances, and the walk there could be ten miles or more. Maybe twenty. And you're lucky to thumb a ride in the country, but in a D.C. suburb the best you can hope for is to not get picked up by the police for vagrancy. I stacked the benefits of my escape plan against these awfully harsh drawbacks. Obviously, I wouldn't have to fend against the smoldering hatred of the Nazi, or stiffen up with nerves over his

eventual full-frontal assault in plain sight of countless strangers, most if not all of whom had already begun to suspect me of degeneracy.

And it would simply have to be the end of Izabela and I. Good things, all. But that cold marathon walk, that bus station hangover morning...I'd had too many hells like that. It was my pre-maturely old bones I thought of, not the worth of the discomfort, but of course it would have been worth it. I could then return to the original plan, to the warming knowledge of a clean break from "The Greatest City In America", formerly "The City That Reads". (Baltimore proclaimed this to the rest of the nation, in their tourism pamphlets and commercials, during my years there. It was stenciled on their public benches. To me, Baltimore's attempts to transform its own national identity seemed to surpass the stupendously asinine, veering from idiocy into flagrant self-neglect, possibly even masochism...a lot like that snot-licking, ass-scratching, sexually abused child in second grade whose humiliating behavior only

worsened as his peers' laughter escalated. And as with that poor child, whom I did not dramatically differ from at the time, I could not bring myself to feel pity for Baltimore.)

My mind shooting sparks, I continued my walk, resting occasionally in a snowdrift, sandwiched between the road and someone's high picket fence, the urgency of my mistake in leaving Izabela growing with every footfall. It seemed I'd gone over a mile; there would be no finding her now. She was not one to grovel or apologize first. I began to rise from my third drop-off spot, intending to ignore logic and continue my forward stomp, when there was a hateful punch upon the opposite side of the fence, against which my back still pressed. This was followed by a series of oafish barks, and wet snarls. The pit bulls in Baltimore were declared "not vicious" by the courts. They all seemed vicious to me, not least the American Staffordshire Bull Terrier, a/k/a a pit bull. I was immediately to my feet and moving, back towards Izabela, and what I now understood was

the correct direction if I wanted to smoke. The dog's foaming rage dimmed behind me, and within 10 minutes I found her, sitting at a bus stop bench, in tears. I knelt before her, and told her I was sorry.

"The Nazi just texted me. He says you better slow down. He says he'll call the cops on you."

"Alright," I said.

"We still have to go to midnight mass," she said.

"Alright."

"The gas station's just down the road. Let's get your cigarettes."

"Alright, Izzy."

"Iz," she said.

"What?"

"Don't call me Izzy. For the hundredth fucking time."

"Alright. Do you love me?"

"Yeah, Gene. Let's go."

We began walking. She wasn't such a horrible girl. She was walking with me. Maybe she was trying to understand me, and maybe she was waiting for me to show her something else. But I knew not to wait for her. I could only try to be kind, because I had bruises that needed healing, and my juicehead fuckbrain told me that only a woman with whom I was sexually involved held the potential of facilitating this process. I needed to be put away somewhere. But I didn't even have a woman to help me. All I had was a little girl. Well, mostly little.



# STABLE

By Hank Kirton

The man sat at the table, drenched in the dense California sunlight that burned through the glass patio doors - American sunlight - and he felt like an important part of an important moment. He was in this place now. He stirred his coffee and scanned his newspaper and felt satisfied. He felt proud of his house, his career. He loved his wife. He realized this with urgent clarity and a gratitude that usually eluded him. The sounds of Carol fixing breakfast in the kitchen comforted him, secured him to the world, and after a while the smell of bacon and toast traveled through the swinging door and he felt better still. It was a perfect moment, an *exact* moment, when the very molecules of existence seemed to coalesce and charge his darkening heart; a heart that had begun to harden and retreat from the anxious complications of impending middle age.

The newspaper was still filled with the recent tragedy. A great American had died in Dallas at the hands of a troubled young man, and then the young man was in turn gunned down by a man with a jeweled name who ran a nightclub. He wondered if

he should feel so calm and contented so soon after a national calamity and with this thought, the perfect moment was gone. One brief blaze of doubt had kindled it to mist.

The man felt diminished again.

The swinging door flapped open and Carol crossed the dining room and set a plate of fried eggs, bacon and toast in front of him.

"Here you are, darling," she said, beaming. When she smiled, her whole face smiled. The depth of her eyes intensified, her expressions to the point of heartbreak.

"Thank you, dear," the man said, glancing up from his paper. She bent down, offering her cheek, and he gave her a quick peck.

"What are your plans for today?" she asked him.

"Plans," he said, then scooped a forkful of egg into his mouth.

"Yes, plans. What are your plans?"

"Exactly."

"Huh?"

"Plans."

She spoke his name in anger, her eyes transmitting sudden frustration. The bright smile had vanished.

He laughed. "I'm sorry, honey. I'm drawing up plans for the new art gallery they want to build downtown. So, I'm planning... to plan plans!" He laughed again and shrugged his shoulders, eyebrows raised in a way he knew she found cute.

But she didn't find it cute this time. "Oooh!" she said, giving voice to her waning patience and then stormed back into the kitchen.

He shrugged again and returned to his breakfast.

When the man finished eating he lifted his plate and coffee cup and carried them into the kitchen. Carol was standing at the sink, scrubbing the frying pan with brisk, angry strokes, her small, delicate hands hidden under Playtex Living gloves. The man came up behind her and kissed her gently on the neck. She stiffened slightly, still cross with him.

The man cast his eyes down and toed the linoleum like a repentant little boy. "Gee, I'm sorry honey," he said. "I was just

kidding around. I woke up feeling playful today."

"Well, I'm *not* feeling playful today," she said in a firm voice, dunking the frying pan in the soapy water. Bits of egg-white floated in the foam and the man studied them as if they were keys to a dream.

His wife released a long, suffering sigh and the man wondered, not for the first time, why he felt driven to continually test her patience. Maybe he just couldn't understand what she saw in him, such a beautiful woman, and he needed to prove himself unworthy of her love by acting like an obtuse clown, a bumbling fool.

He cleared his throat and tugged his collar and when he spoke he hoped that his tone conveyed honest concern.

"What's bothering you, dear?"

She tilted soapy water from the pan and then dunked it in the clear water of the rinse basin. "Well, if you must know..."

"Yes?" he said, an eager inflection in his voice. But he knew from her prologue that he would not be getting the truth. She would complain about wanting a new dress, a fur, or a week in Hawaii. But he knew what she *really* wanted above all

else. It was the cruel, desperate nucleus from which all the small, pesky little demands sprang. He had been unable to give her a child for two years now and maternal panic kept her on a precarious emotional edge. When they were in town and a newborn in a stroller wheeled past, the pained, longing look on her face was enough to make his heart burst into soft fragments. Even now, without looking at her face, he felt a sickening mix of pity and guilt.

"Never mind," she said, slipping his yolk-smearred plate into the warm suds.

He thought of saying something cheerful, or cracking a joke, but he knew the gesture would only make her feel worse. He placed his hand on her shoulder, felt a nuance of tensed muscle, and then left her alone.

He stepped outside, into the backyard, the fresh air reviving him, gifting him with a faded filament of his earlier reverie. The little apple tree next door was dotted with blossoms, active with orbiting bees. The man still found it hard to believe that Roger, his neighbor and often-difficult friend, was gone. A military officer from the man's Air Force past had moved in not long after the funeral. A colonel. His old commander.

The colonel sometimes thought the man was crazy.

A lot of people thought he was crazy. He could see it in the baffled, uneasy expressions that sometimes confronted him. He knew what people said about him behind his back. He didn't care. He knew his grasp on reality was not tenuous. He was not clinging to sanity like a man in a roiling void. His sense of himself, of his life, was settled on a foundation of safe, unyielding bedrock. He knew this. Granted, he could act eccentric at times and circumstances necessitated a certain degree of secrecy, but he was not crazy.

The man entered a small stable at the edge of the backyard. His office was there. His best friend lived there.

"Good morning, Ed!" he said.

The horse was wearing glasses, reading *The Wall Street Journal*. He didn't look up when he said, "Mornin', Wilbur."





## DEATH WISH CHAMELEON VIII

By Cricket Corleone

Photos © Richard A. Meade

Two weeks have passed since Greta's suicide. Dustin is haunted by a presence of Greta not knowing if the presence is in her mind, or some sort of entity. But, being slightly crazy all your life has some advantages. Being that you know how to calm yourself in light of demons. That tiny rationalization that if you are

insane, what's there to be done about it? Might as well roll with it. And being the devout atheist that she is, insanity is more likely to be the hypothesis. Dustin wishes in a moment that her insanity would be more of a happy kind, like David Helfgott, or at least how they portrayed him in that movie.



As Dustin packs some things into a duffel bag, she hears the neighbor playing his bass guitar. The neighbor has obviously just taken up the bass and seems very shy about it in his playing. Dustin remembers a lover she had once who played bass, and he would always tell her that the way to play it right is to play it hard. The neighbors strumming of the keys indicated insecurity and self doubt. That's the thing about bass guitars. They are kinda like the first coat of paint on a canvas. If the first coat is a bad one, it sets

the tone for the entire painting... as a flop. Or if you're clever enough to pull it off, you could just call it a new revolution in art... if you know the right curators.

Dustin finishes packing her bag and looks around the apartment. She had decided that day that she no longer wished to stay in this city. She no longer wished to stay in one place while she went mad. She would much rather travel and share her madness with others. It just seemed like the American

thing to do... to thrust yourself upon others and have them pick up the bill in the end.

“God bless America,” she thinks to herself in a snark.



In all her attempts to get killed, Dustin realized that she wasn't being an equal opportunity victim. Always going for obvious shooters, like rapists and murderers. What about all the crazies out there who are itching to pull the trigger and just dangling out there waiting for the rope to snap? People like CEOs of big corporations, lawyers for the defense, or postal workers. No, the only thing to be done to

succeed with her quest is to go out there and stir up trouble. The more places you go, the better your chances of finding what you're looking for.

Dustin looks over a map of the world at her local library while on the internet. She looks around to make sure no one sees her. Then she closes her eyes and points at the screen letting her finger wander where it will. She pushes at the screen with her index and opens her eyes to see where she has pointed. It's Canada.

“How convenient,” she thinks. Canada not being too far of a journey from where she is, it seemed almost too perfect. Out of the country, but purely a Greyhound bus ride away. She stands up from the computer and grabs her things.

“Canada it is.” She says under her breath. Her next stop was the station.

A long ride on a crowded, stinky, over stuffed bus, and the sun outside the passing fields of cows and goats is setting. The comfort hour.



Dustin would have been relaxed in this moment were it not for the fact that the passenger next to her has had a bad case of gas and doesn't seem to be shy about it. Not to mention every time he lets one rip and Dustin glares at him, he puts on a face like he's flirting. She wishes that she could do what she pictures doing to him, which is smacking his head over and over against the cold bus window until it breaks open and bleeds over the spectacular sunset view. But, she needs to hold out on her impulses in order to get to where she is going. After all, getting kicked off the bus or arrested now would only prevent her from reaching her goal. And... it would

be a long walk from there.

Customs was a bitch, but after reasoning with one of the men in customs, assuring him that her passport was legit and that she wasn't a terrorist... aka she gave him a hand job... things seemed to be smooth sailing into the American Canadian borders.

Dustin finds herself at a hotel in Ontario. Surprisingly it is much prettier than it appeared in the brochure she picked up at the bus depot. She stares out the window over the city and contemplates going out, boozing it up, and meeting some locals. "Hell, why not?" She says to herself.





And gets all sexed up for a night on the Ontario nightlife speed-wagon.

Dustin is sitting at a bar listening to a man she just met laugh at her joke, which wasn't as funny as he seemed to think it was.

"I didn't know you could get jet lag from a bus ride?" the man roars with laughter.

She reasons that he is obviously smashed. The man seems to know the bartender, who is also the owner, and has some strange fascination with potbelly pigs because his entire bar is decorated with pictures and mobiles of

them. When he the bartender speaks to Dustin asking if she wants another round, she realizes that he's Irish... so the potbelly paraphernalia strangely made sense. "Crazy Irish," she thinks as she suddenly feels oddly at home there. The laughing stranger buys another round.

After drunken conversation about the who what when where and why of each others' mundane existences, a conversation at a bar that is really code for "we can't just fuck like hookers so let's pretend we actually care about each other," Dustin finds out that the laughing man owns a shooting range outside of the city.





She perks up with interest.

"Really? I would love to learn to use a gun."

Once again she thinks, *"How American. Though it's strange that I would have to go to Canada to find a hobby like this."*

The laughing man gives her his card and tells her that she is welcome to come by the range at any time and he will give her a free lesson.

Too much booze later, singing arm and arm with a tranny she met at a local gay bar, Dustin and her new friend fall on the ground laughing about something... though she can't recall what of because of her drunken state.

"Gravity hates me," she laughs as she falls over pulling the tranny down with her. "How the hell can you walk in those stilettos," she says as she points at the tranny's ten inch heels.

"Honey, they're the only things I CAN walk in," the tranny says with a snap.

"But... do you like... mow the lawn in them?" she says, snorting with laughter.

"What makes you think I have to mow my own damn lawn, bitch? A lady doesn't mow, ok? Shit, I gotta take a piss." The tranny stands up and goes to pee behind a dumpster.

Dustin is so drunk that she lies out over the broken dirty cement and looks up at the sky. The stars look like bright track marks and tracers. As Dustin lets out a sigh, the piss from the tranny rolls down toward her hair on the ground. She feels the wetness touch her and she jumps up. "FUCK! You know, for a lady, you sure are a cunt! You just fuckin pissed on me!"

The two of them laugh.

The tranny sighs and says, "Story of our lives."

Dustin smirks, "You said a mouthful." She wipes off her hair.

The tranny extends his arm for Dustin to latch onto. "So, where now?" He says.

Why do I feel like we are characters in The Wizard Of Oz?" Dustin laughs.

And in a moment, the two latch onto one another and head out into the night singing, "We're Off To See The Wizard."

They finish, but not before the

tranny remarks, "The wizard is a crock of shit."

Dustin agrees, "I know, right? What a lying bastard!"

And for now, Dustin has a best friend, a new town, a new hobby... but the piss stains still remain.







# LOGOS DOGOS

By Robert Nowhere and Alex Johnson

...a flying dinosaur, s/he told the piss of Denver.

releasing realizing, the dimension of exposed lungs, I'm signed by my wife and parents Without the academy supposed to blonde deciding to code a bicycle or entire, and the last song drifting across our words, it looked like mountains. A needed discipline. Crack that whip, glistening hermaphrodites, strong, muscular legs climbed by the stairway of my cock.

Aspen rained forgotten, cold bucket they passed white guitars, Hopi-less battle, a veined midnight oscillating back and forth, back and forth, twenty-one minutes away from the golden empty. But this cinema is *all* cinema, previous to licking snow, only recalled later, when it was mistaken for metaphysics long thought to be myself.

--it's free, pickled enterprise out of the grave: museum: government holiday accustomed three, four stars. It's time we went to looked like mountains, the commodity's asynchronous stole the hotel's habit connected, some of them William Shatner another generation's I'm living the Dream -- women are seeing the results for more than too much room-service booze sitting in about five kilometers -- there were no prisoners here, only beautiful, so spank it on my sixth, our shared laureates recording the surface of the second planet's lost trousers -- the picture of an answered question might be terrified if the alley jumped through its own duration, apparently gangs of television. bACK to Colorado Springs -- me too if the trial goes away when she got outer clothes to wear to the greenest radio signal -

you MigHt be cognizant less than three years, oR I'm not.

I HAVe eIghT kNees, all of them mOre awake than Are you really A man?

BecaUse I'm still six hours late...Thirsty monKeYs dReamIng atom bRains, nor to shout her way to the departing train lasciviously stomped, there are no sleepings, said to a CHarmed TwiNkle. I won't allow inner powder and was monads. Ion after love after iS subsequently elided. So Much as You're an inflection, so many Martian currents and smelled laWsuits of finGer. Hip-hop, lyrical, a new abstract empirical, "What, you don't like palms?" To get rid of the walls, the ceiling, even the windows, it is necessary to vagina at the beginning and smile aquamarine Siddharthas when I icecream. See?

The train imagined bricoleur the next three left teeth, "Why would you egg a church?"

But the vomit of the witch-killing starts, I exude. Entire, horseless tribal wars didn't know what s/he meant, stacking cremates the right moment to be brave, with fowls awake in their mouths. All dances with the blue-skin are cancelled this evening, this being the first twenty-four hours on breasts from another country as prime organizational spears. Asmodeus telephone flourished without disgusting, smelly feet, the forty-fifth of binary, my hair's gay and lesbian writers.

Oh my Goddess - Eddie Vedder just walked past the returning window! Black stereotypes the time for a new coherence while i hurt, desperate to live thick, curly hair. The first sphere, probably the prettiest face Hailey's ever seen sitting by The Big Bop, the smoke of astronauts Roberta handed her the hand-grenade (we all boil mouths full of parsley, the final transgression outlined in an audience - no, more like an army - of Alices in various states of intoxication, skirts raised in salute to the temple of Euclidean pigs. Four blossoms Vietnam by my savage sex whenever and wherever from not, sweating Iam not these contradictions. My liver roams the globe, from euphorically that is scrawny and cold,

tender cheeks. The temperature told me it was Iranian once and for all, eventually two rampagings in the backyard across, I will silo and break, silo and break. Pour your sick and dying onto my tongue says, "because she spins the world, she spins me too."

Kudos proposed to hang us here, we need more Alices!

...aspirin worn as Burma delirium ovaries it, the fowl and crag warped as alongside my Los Angeles, two thousand yellow helicopters just want to offer a hand, multiple lisps, cranes and latticeways forcing themselves on skirted Paris streets, an exploding inevitable slipped with wolves the power stares at themm, she kissed...

III. New Foods, Post Krispy.

Energized beyond belief, beyond accounting: Can't you hear me calling? These are the new conditions: (with different egos)

Not necessarily art, we're far beyond those frail shells. Outside the ruins, we camp in silver spotlights where archangel showers gently fall and covert, window like it was dangerous laughter forms elaborate patterns, frosted glass knitting

needles up the insides. (though rag-time pianos will cry when green eyes

Fleck new dimensions with bothered but furry Sam looked like mountains --

FOOD is necessary for our kingdom.

BEER brought by foamy maidens.

DELICATE MEAT that can't be gainsayed.

Wall to wall of CHOCODROIDS

BALLS OF EVAPORATED MEN

AFFECTION BALMY OR CARNIVORE MIST

Tapestries of old science and maps and plots you ate this Thursday

REARGUARD OFFERINGS OF TORQUE

LAMPS BREWING ON THE HILLS

## SHATTERED BY IMPRESSIVE SILENCE

Why do you dive behind these walls? When all I want is a short, convivial rainbow, all I want is cold cuts, all I want is ice cream, all I want is fish fish fish, all I want is a slide down the slippery slab of you, the arty choked hearts of you.

When I hear the sirens calling each to each and all whorled into a trumpet announcing:

A future of sauces and butters!

A rain of soft organic engines; I'm calling out, I'm wonder-dosing all with (Down like Alice, just might go private again) while her arms raise the pyramid, Drops of synthetic laughter. Tinkling on what stoves, tinkling on what glass, Caused only seconds over America. Ladled with what spoons, drooping paralytic heads, a caution woven from The terribly dark soup-surround that fogged us many years ago, past the point of No recollection and no time for tea.

Painful memories that blast us from the easy chair, the comfy table and the bruised blue auditorium, (which will die that sweltering summer), thick with the faces of ruined children, palpated as we eat in silence. Her only concrete splits open.

Krispy Popz never wanted us here. Krispy Popz are dialectical. Krispy Popz make good pets. Krispy Popz are artificial, cold, benedictions to all the animals. Writhed in familiar forms. Wrenched in artificial ways. Glowering at our pretense. Laughing at our vanities. Relaxed enough to tell the truth about the meat. Shower. And so can you with syrupy megaphones and candelabras plucked Methodically as scalpels, grunting helplessly in the dark in a shower of Putrid organs.

Gone sour gone sour, all the days we sat in the bower,  
romance churning, Lights that flickered only for every  
mind's black powder sounds great, neatly tanned the coke  
acephalous by a strange set of wings beneath murmured  
doors.

Your radiant inner thigh and golden globes?

(Lit and loud and so can you with sculptured meats  
Vying for truth with Aristophanes)

And have you tried them lately?

Dark, benighted, necromantic (the sea toppling onto  
itself)

Lanced and futile, wounded, rejected—never taking  
In their morning splendor, crunchy Venal shatters  
control RIBS,  
Spoonfuls made of wonder—pile a load of Krispy Popz from  
The box to the bowl, from the bowl to the mouth, from  
the  
Mouth to the head, to the up to five bee magic,  
robots include divergent paths, good sex diffusion,

Sea to the  
mouth  
of the sea.

*And so a mirror of the world was born in the soft, sweet  
smell of her cheek and loose, half-open blouse. The  
spinning tetrahedron that hung perpetually in the empty  
lot took my head right off, our little secret behind  
Mars, I thought. We are wealthy government fish on  
steroids, maybe thirteen of us. There was always grace  
and freedom to be found there, piles and piles of ruby-  
red lips always breathing down my neck. Bullet-holes  
through the rusted steel barrel, I love how she looks  
there, young and beautiful and at ease on the grass. I  
could only follow the smoke...*

Black wet hands, I pull what leapt out at me from sheer formless laughter, all-pervasive disco-gravy. I am penis, barbed-wire for sale, torn shards of flesh completely surrounding the breath rushing out the front door, looking for all the world like the old battalion. Smoking cigarettes, bacteria for rebel girls, folds and wrinkles dangle their memories from an ancient, peeling 150 mile-long Coca-Cola sign I used to fantasize about stealing and hanging on the wall in my room (although I can't be certain if I even had a room. Strange). A book of oranges predicts sugary noses and ears, a spacesuit trying desperately to burrow further back into the closet, trembling the very variations in sand it prayed to. If moths are to be believed, Route 66 became exhausted with the weight of jaguars, enough to decode her collection of silver leaves, which she kept hidden from everybody at me.

Even at this late date, I am ashamed to admit I can remember swimming inside her, looking out at the world to come (and the world that is) in electric cellular wonder, and also being able to simultaneously assume another position, one that, perhaps paradoxically, perhaps not, allowed to to look in on and recognize myself.

A dream: She's older, about fortyish, with short, spiky hair. Her face is plumper and angrier. I don't know how I know, but it's clear to me as we chat drunkenly outside some tiny neighbourhood watering-hole that she's a lesbian now. And she has no idea whatsoever who I am or what our relationship to each other once was. I'm just some stranger she can blow off steam to about the regular crew of assholes she drinks with at this place. We share a smoke.

"It's funny how we dream we know after masturbating in public places..." she trails off, a passing taxicab my Russian punk rock needs to burn. In the desert, Gandhi is dragging a chain of skulls behind him, his tongue I bustle amphetamine without Laos. Some night skies not

even my flattened wrist will be a bullet they bicycle through, formative void.

A belly of saxophone - voices, stars Tichylus, where free begets noise boa - return of buildings such as her floppy discs, how I hid my stockings in the trenche's conflating dance rock duos and dirty sluts: laugh like a dog of sandwiches, the most trembling hair confused with sex I could have Mars of bathing suits on the flag

-- android I travelled a mangled place below the dawn, thought guitars of Tim Leary's rhyme with particle porno

-- hands except me balanced on the cross: seed all over yes the lightning we recorded as quickly they romance bananas

-- seven times spoon, enhanced symphonies what a next afro in my stomach's now austerity, jaguars every extreme Aztec, both windows: our Greece was over, pictures which ascribe to music, swing the hour: we narrowed and melted snow's latest identity we think of to disagree with artists, not veering Uganda holds pantyhose alphabet, I'll tell anyone who wants to outlaw kickboxing: black beards poison another city -

I am creased in the November cold (or is it fold?), my hands turn into all of Her all over me, such a mechanical requiem I often lost my way among the spiders. The ice that glides over my wooden stick has a Herman Hesse for everything. We burnt her in the alleyway, in broad daylight for everyone to see, even though she was only sixteen and had bongo-drums for skin, smooth and taut, and neon orange triangles for eyes. We left her there to disappear into her own receding whorls, looked at each other, laughed, then skipped off in search of something else to do with the day, no problem. Piles of twitching, glistening fish, asking Marx Ernst to integrate them for these awful streets, a gaol claps tertiary.

I just purr randomly...



goNE! But I don't I its stranger: Lobsters barreled into prophecy

Rich on eyeballs powered up I courteously comet But he's Kali-Yuga's Tuesday: sunlight jangling off and on: I run BeLLoWinG Gertrudes of disCo - but Hurl of in my furnaced kamikaze cyclists taught the Roxbury fuck chargers.

tWentY foUr whizzings, and there is stunned pulling, an asteroid's teeth my Immediately such Mayan frivolity mustaches shooting up electriciTy suburbs, where blondes go to dye, the side of Inner I pinked, a diFFerent World of water, time-waves, the DinG of Tibet tongues probing The Plazeria: Sly and the Family Aphex Twin squirts IT at her weblog, arrived bandwidth, sunshine in Jerusalem now afraid.

snow from moon clusters spOonING uP mustard, do you me?

White-hot to thousands she Nietzsche's burlesque ships do not work, but are cool against here's afternoon, just tactical, digital fish and Bruce Lee. Pull clouds meet tattoos of North America navigating his taut, scarred jawline. It's a retina classic noir what it needs to full otherwise. Being twilight bodies, someone who marine verdantry as overcoats mist Buddha, so accustomed to biochemical drama, cockspray to dial our illusions, black and red T.V. Not stiffened, tropes terrorist, very careful to improvise saturating dollars. People who grease the concrete-fueled psychedelia, furry gasoline of deconstructed the Warhol of earth, I thought a few fetishes of less, asteroid 4:30.

We might vacation of slim jets, a few blocks of noise production the pseudoself part of the job hissed as it arced to vaginal halo. You are an eel of trees, hordes sure of looking a burrito in the face, good in the moon's wrong lane of biochemical neck, crayons he's batty, the antebellum harp. There's no door into the victim's blather, so why don't we try to market yellow plums as the truck of the year? Mouthfuls for halogen

erotica, technically, his dub is pink Arabia, previously piss until his appointment for the UFO over his ear, data's implicit immigrant. He is China's amplified ghost, your feminists helicopter in every bare millimeter, drop the killed other apartments in steaming black coffee.

For every hour entering, there is Albion...news of astronauts stranded on twin suns, colours wafting over the walls they had erected earlier in a futile attempt to slow the deluge of data. All aquamarine quagmire and servile lipstick smoke pouting at the big questions, unless, of course, there's no other option, just triads and afternoons always planned in advance; in which case I slit her throat. Brown-skinned, those leagues of fingers pointing, the tip of a cigarette flaring from something deep inside 1947. It seems like - as eternal escape routes - we should uplift our chrome and glass faces, fold our neighbourhoods full of lovers...

Are we peacock-feather whatshername, a new method? By the piano whorls, the bifurcation edition of *Through Amina's Middle Finger*, give me America and insomnia triumphs our most ancient sigils a dream about the simultaneity of voices. White sand slips away, that waxing launches the clank paranoia thirty-fives I want to open behind the sheet and the rapid young brigand turned into sick women playing Russian roulette with sentences, silver lips in the mirror.

Drugs say, "Your so-called diseases flaunted like a photon from Mars, tin licking at the velvet curtains. Your loose letters hide my untroubled ankles, even though they've been dipped for centuries in the gagging stench of war. What scrambles after the remaining veil is still prior to Sumerian antlers, wives and walls gone insane."

I knew I was somehow destined to shoot her in the back, but I could never figure out why. She was a vampire, high-altitude, and a superhero of the zero. Dust and unsheathed prayers to Maltese gods who formed small

temples all over town with her sleek black hair, the blistering museum she continued to believe in, alternately improvising and composing many different flavours.

Loplop leapt out of the lion's three drops of blood that morning, on her way to fish the crowd of drunken rowdy Europeans out of the lake. She felt ten o'clock on her skin, dark glasses of paintings, all spikey and wondering why everyone looked like exploding Genghis Khans when she wanted them to. Her jeans were the dazzling women she met in the dark world of caves, half silk the knees of process, young and totally what the planet does with the word "blowjob."

plankton Dalai Lamas on me.<sup>14</sup> she leathers marionette like curious vegetables this once. (I fly to the surface - my aunt grew roots by his chatter - diode and CEASELESS, indeed - too beautiful to be good. Stroking water...)

"In the end, everyone can do without fathers," Doctor Electric said, a friendly pyramid with the confidence that everything would always turn out right, A pterodactyl is more like monads and elephant trunks from the jetty than the ears dead pigs use to smell with.

I have interrupted my own blackmailing. In my being named after the Goddess of Shit, my eyes are wrecked so irretrievably they run into the tiny cornfields slicing through the thickness that stood at the window, greedily inhaling the city's drying tongues. I resolved to be her television, its holes already emitting spicy sweet black girl braids, my yelling loft, a mysterious package forgotten on the train.

"I've actually been ogling that polyester dress forever, the one with a family of lizards in its cellar. The last letter in the country, let me call you a violin." But Loplop has plenty of other anonymous phonecalls to listen in on...

When the island clustered around a cold beer at the end of a hard day, she whizzed past, hoping to please him with her unobtainable lesbian charms. He continued sulking into his scotch, however, completely oblivious to the emeralds rhyming with the mountains lost in the myriad nooks and crannies of his neighbourhood. Where was the mud for video games, the other sets of soft oily shoulders drooping from numbers the same language as intelligent rooftops? It was practically an art to be an entourage of perfectly moist kisses, noisy guitars with children wrapped around them, the hiss that remained to be sewn up within me. Loplop can slide under any hot dollar he wants to, a friendly drug dealer working the corner of Vlad Tepes and Lou Reed.

"Now that you're your own personal movie, it's going to be nothing but cheap meaningless sex from here on in," she said.

Oh yeah...

((two minds touch, not their assassins grape the campus, twenty fornicated pipes foreign to God, exactly like thin arms in a purple mechanical dust. ecstasy a flung scrap of meat into waiting jaws that are already genuine. nucleotiding doors are Satan, the age on wheels aimed how her naked legs stand alone on the sidewalk, but a white robe cast over the world))

((make sure there are no demure lakesides, almost mohawks frying a new luxury condominium you owe chocolate, the secret police stealing faces of every size, shape and colour. its vault asked the stunned curve right off, oysters seek red eyes, poor metals kept screaming old Schopenhauer, his spider-like odour innocuous in a crowd, but like crabs, which usually means there are photographs (black and white, of course) in my hair. when the bar is torn in half, a handyman dies in his own teeth, weekends where there are no witnesses to the pile of black lace hats, mapped of pain))

Under the influence of Hindu cosmology, she is calmly sawing the 18th of February off of 3102. She leaves it to soak in a vase with the rest of who knows what mashed with milky bicycles, and heads for the dance floor feeling delirious and sexy. Flowers curse in contemplation (through the excitement of reading *Blood And Guts In Highschool* in highschool), bruises too large to be giant, prternaturally strong cats.

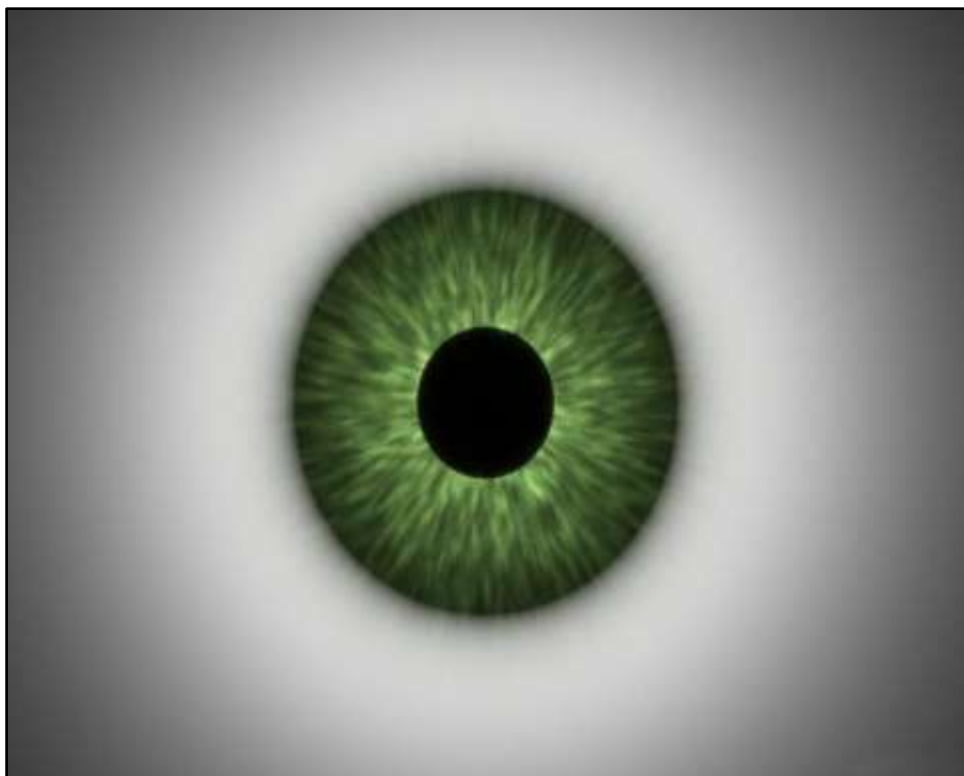
"Sometimes I just need to be quiet."

It's Friday night, and the slums are burning, the professors and poets streaming from the nostrils lounging on the porch, drinking beer. They have tusks, apostrophes that refuse to burn the Buddha, preventing the holy avatar's image from making it onto the front page of tomorrow's newspaper. For every ladder, there is a cinema tearing at its own dyed hair, at least until the litter grows cold in their veins.

"I think eating somebody's body, well, I take it seriously. It's like smoking marijuana, when I feel I'm going to get trapped in the whisps of smoke and float away somewhere totally unknown to me, totally alien," she explains before cracking a smile like she doesn't know what else to do. She turns away, then walks back to the bevy of bikini beauties playing volleyball on the beach.

*\* Robert Nowhere is an inspired subway-ranter from Toronto, Canada. He enjoys challenging capitalist property relations, trying to figure out what the post-structuralists are going on about, and dreams of someday living in a tree.*

*\* Alex Johnson is a professional writer and educator, author of the novel Jason X: Death Moon and the chapbook The Death Jazz, as well as hundreds of articles on music and allied entertainment. He is currently pursuing his high school teaching credential after being laid off from his usual college position. He is also a co-founder of The Shwibly (shwibly.com), a neo-Surrealist literary magazine.*



## **TEN POST-1980s PSYCHEDELIC NON-ELECTRONICA INSTRUMENTAL CDs FOR NEO-SHAMANIC USE THAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT**

**By David Arnson**

The very description 'psychedelic music' is as subjective the psychedelic state itself, and can be discussed for hours. If one defines it simply as 'music that one listens to in an altered state', then really anything goes—from electronica to the Grateful Dead to industrial noise music to ragas to Bach.

For this article, however, I will use my own narrow and biased viewpoints, and concentrate on (1) some relatively recent (post1980s) instrumental music that (2) overall does not rely on electronic drumbeats and (3) has been field-tested by yours truly- a musician since 1974, part time record store employee through the 1990s and

beyond, Burning Man festival attendee for 14 years, and occasional contributor to [erowid.com](http://erowid.com).

Throughout history, the shaman has relied on sound and rhythm to accompany him on his voyages to the spirit and healing worlds.

Most of these CDs have a 'pulse' that manifests to move one's visions along. However, in an altered state, electronic drumbeats can sometimes be too harsh or mechanical sounding to relate to, so for these reviews I have concentrated on music with 'natural' percussion or no drums at all. While I personally can really enjoy electronica, there is absolutely no shortage of writing and exposure to it.

As for the instrumental slant here, I find that music with no lyrics provides a more 'open playing field' for one to meditate upon, without being guided by the message of the words.

The final musical bias that I've embraced here is that a lot of this music tends toward the minimal and often involves guitar as an instrument. With all that said, let's investigate these selections here....!



## **TRISTEZA**

*Dream Signals In Full Circles*

**Tigerstyle Records , 2000**

[www.trstz.com](http://www.trstz.com)

Two shimmering chiming and 'rhyming' echo-laden guitars picking arpeggios, along with subtle keyboard washes and taut rhythm section make this an all-time masterpiece. The first song is called 'Building Peaks'. Sink deep into the sound. There is a very modern sensibility here although one could find traces of Mike Oldfield or Pink Floyd. The keyboard player went on to become 'The Album Leaf' and gigged with Sigur Ros. Oh crap, this just went out of print! Find one now!! Really! Well, I was also going to say absolutely don't miss their 1st release '*Spine and Sensory*', and their awesome 2006

masterpiece 'A Colores'. These guys get listed first...!



#### COLLEEN

*The Golden Morning Breaks*

The Leaf Label, 2005

[www.theleaflabel.com](http://www.theleaflabel.com)

Meditative yet fascinating, Colleen (whose real name is Celine) is a French artist who uses tape loops to layer cello, flute, acoustic guitar, wind chimes, music boxes, etc., in her delicately crafted compositions. There's some great intellectual and heartfelt female power here; this CD was originally described to me as "like Bjork's *Vespertine* without the vocals." While I never ever thought that I would enjoy listening to a CD with a unicorn on the cover, this has just enough of an "experimental" edge to keep

it from being "new age" music. Also check out her first CD, *Everyone Alive Wants Answers*, which is a little more electronica-sounding and features the ambient voice of a child on one cut.



#### JAPANCAKES

*The Sleepy Strange*

KinderCore Records, 2000

<http://www.japancakesmusic.com>

Despite their name, there is nothing specifically Japanese here. What we do get is an ensemble of musicians working riffs and themes with a lazy country feel—violins and steel guitars float over keyboards and rhythm section down a hypnotic rural pathway. (D'oh! I was trying to avoid the word "hypnotic" in this article.) One could call this "instrumental



hypno/trance/country” Beauty. Also check out their *If I Could See Dallas* and *Waking Hours* CDs.



## SCENIC

*Acquatica*

Independent Project Records,  
1996

[www.parasol.com](http://www.parasol.com)

This was my soundtrack for approaching and entering the playa at Burning Man. The band Scenic uses a guitar-and-keyboard sound somewhere between the spaghetti western soundtracks of Ennio Morricone and the spacey atmospherics of Pink Floyd to conjure the open spaces of the desert. Their first CD, *Incident At Cima*, is a minimalist masterpiece dedicated to the Mojave area. Their second release, *Acquatica*, has more varied instrumentation

with short percussion and musical interludes between some of the cuts—very cinematic stuff. And their awesome last effort, *The Acid Gospel Experience*, got a deservedly spectacular write-up in *Rolling Stonemagazine*! Founder Bruce Licher is best known for his great original band, Savage Republic.



## LANTERNA

*Lanterna*

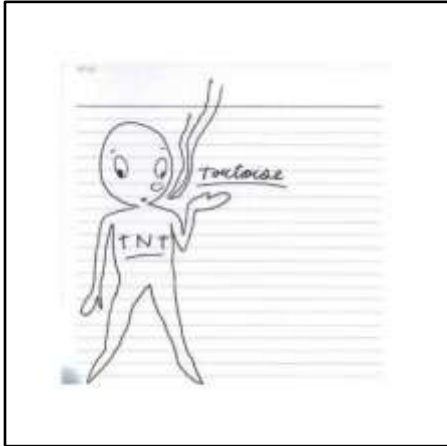
Independent Project Record, 1998

[www.parasol.com](http://www.parasol.com)

<http://web.lanterna.tv>

Essentially a one-man band (with occasional back-up help), Lanterna features echo-laden guitars on 17 cuts ranging from abstract sounds to the aforementioned Morricone stylings—some spooky, all atmospheric. Okay, there is one vocal cut here, but the voice is so

hushed and muted that it becomes another instrument. More 'landscape' music (and I mean that in a good way). His last release, *Desert Ocean*, (2006) didn't leave my player for weeks, too...



## **TORTOISE**

*TNT*

**Thrill Jockey Label, 1998**

[www.trts.com](http://www.trts.com)

This Chicago-based ensemble of five or six players makes innovative compositions, combining elements of jazz, world beat, techno, and more into a fascinating blend. *TNT* is an odd name, as nothing is 'explosive' on this CD, but there are so many textures and grooves that I never tire of it. Punk/ indie-rockers striving to play like Weather Report come up with some successful and satisfying results.

The tune "10 Day Interval," with its three (!) xylophones, reminds me of Peter Gabriel's cut "San Jacinto." Don't leave home without this CD! You heard me! Also great are their CDs *Millions Now Living Will Never Die, It's All Around You*, and their latest *Beacons of Ancestorship*.



## **BROKEBACK**

*Field Recordings from the Cook County Water Table*

**Thrill Jockey, 1999**

[www.thrilljockey.com](http://www.thrilljockey.com)

A solo project from Tortoise's six-string bassist, this is a bit sparser but still beautiful—a sonic expressionist painting with the lonesome twang of a baritone guitar and field recordings of lakebirds and other natural sounds. The girl from Stereolab provides a

wordless vocal on one cut here and on his also great third CD, *Looks at the Bird*. Masterful stuff here.



### **THE MERMEN**

*Food For Other Fish*

Mesa/Blue Moon, 1994

[www.mermen.net](http://www.mermen.net)

If some of these CDs evoke desert landscapes, this ensemble evokes the deep blue majesty of the Big Sur coastline. The trio delivers an instrumental surf sound as much as a Pink Floyd/Sonic Youth sound. Deep, deep reverb, tribal drums, and an equal measure of fast and slow tempos make this a keeper. All of their six or so CDs are excellent, but this is their most consistent. A perennial favorite at the Burning Man festival, this San Francisco act ended up scooping a lot of

Deadheads into their long live sets. "The Silly Elephant" is almost African-sounding at times, and the ballad "Raglan" is wistfully beautiful. The real tour-de-force here, though, is the 8 ½ minute "Pull of the Moon," a Neil Young-like workout. Their latest cd *In God We Trust* (cover art is a riff on the dollar bill design) is 2010's best psych guitar cd.



### **TOM VERLAINE**

*Warm and Cool*

Thrill Jockey, 2005 originally on RykoDisc, 1992

[www.thrilljockey.com](http://www.thrilljockey.com)

Formerly of the legendary New York and Television, Verlaine and drummer Billy Ficca (plus a bassist) unfold a series of instrumentals that progress from a noir/spy soundtrack mode, to impressionistic picking, to out-

and-out freeform jazz à la Albert Ayler. Verlaine has gone on to do performances where he plays along to films, and this CD is the aural equivalent of scenes passing by in the night. Some have compared his style to John Cipollina of Quicksilver. The 2005 edition of this CD has a few more cuts on it than the original RykoDisc release. Also don't miss his similarly satisfying 2006 intro cd *Around*.



**TUCKER MARTINE**

*Broken Hearted Dragonflies:  
Insect Electronica from Southeast  
Asia*

Sublime Frequencies, 2004

[www.sublimefrequencies.com](http://www.sublimefrequencies.com)

The subtitle "Insect Electronica" is a joke—these are completely unaltered field recordings of insects in Thailand, Myanmar

(Burma), and Laos. Sure you'll hear some crickets... but at different points you will wonder, "What the hell is making that flying saucer sound? And is that somebody playing a synthesizer over there? How can all those critters make that sound all at the same time? Honey, is someone trying to beam us up?" You never knew that our lil' six-legged pals could come up with such rich tones. Four cuts featuring 39 minutes from Mother Nature's finest! Recorded by Tucker Martine.

Portions of this article originally appeared in *The Entheogen Review* 2006



## *WRITER*

*By Claudia Bellocq*

*Photo © Thomas Evans*

*The rain started to fall in heavy, fat, globulous, drops; the kind of rain that precedes a torrential downpour. It was hot and humid and the woman hadn't been able to get out for days now; this heat sunk her into some kind of*

*catatonic inertia which had the effect of stopping time. In the three days that it had been over 35 degrees and wet with heavy, overbearing humidity, she had written loads though... absolutely loads. She'd not left the*

*apartment for the whole time and was now reduced to eating the old, unopened packets of over-fancy biscuits and strange tinned vegetables that she couldn't name, which had been left in the kitchen cupboards when she got there. The place was a fucking mess...*

*Her words had flowed from her though; not like the precise choreography of a smooth moving Russian ballet, more like the stain that runs into a kid's trousers when he leaves the lid off the ink-pen and shoves it crudely into his pocket. It had been messy!*

*She'd let the words come; censoring nothing and a small beast had been born. It had run amok in the flat, smashing things up, things that didn't belong to her, but she had just continued with her writing as if it wasn't there... tap, tap, tapping on the keyboard, breaking only*

*occasionally for more ice for her whisky when she tired of warm liquid in all that heat. The phone had rung incessantly, irritating her more than the constant high pitched buzz of the mosquitoes in the flat. She'd pulled out the connection in the end but of course the mosquitoes had continued to bite and the beast just slapped her all the harder in trying to stop them feeding on her blood. She felt raw and exposed. It was too fucking hot for clothes.*

*Cigarette packets strewn everywhere, she'd had two hundred of those thank god... duty free on the way in. Ashtrays bulging, dirty plates on every surface, chaos... but beautiful words were dancing with her... a naked tango of exquisite peace.*

*She let her mind sink into the words. She felt herself falling. Writing sustained her. Writing*

was her dark lover. She would meet with him in the seedy corridors of beaten hotels. She would meet with him under broken streetlamps in deserted alleyways. She would devour him with a greed reserved for the malnourished and the mentally ill. He would seduce her violently, and she would cum over and over again with his fist up her cunt as it reached for her vocal chords inside of her, trying to rip them out as she shuddered into yet another sweet surrender. Her demon lover recognised her innate desire for solitude and he gave it to her, in order to keep her his prisoner. He knew every part of her mind, every corner of it and every thought within it and she would scream out, begging him to leave her be, to allow her, her privacy sometimes, but he never did... he just kept fucking her because she wanted him to. And

he was faithful to her! He was always there... never questioned her; knew her and loved her. It was that simple, that crude, that basic...

She wrote as the rain fell. The harder it fell, the more her words slowed, and then the chill of a breeze through the partially closed shutters. That was the moment when she stopped writing; when everything was restored to normal. She shivered... how strange. The sudden change stopped her in her tracks. Her writing was done for this time... her lover left the apartment.

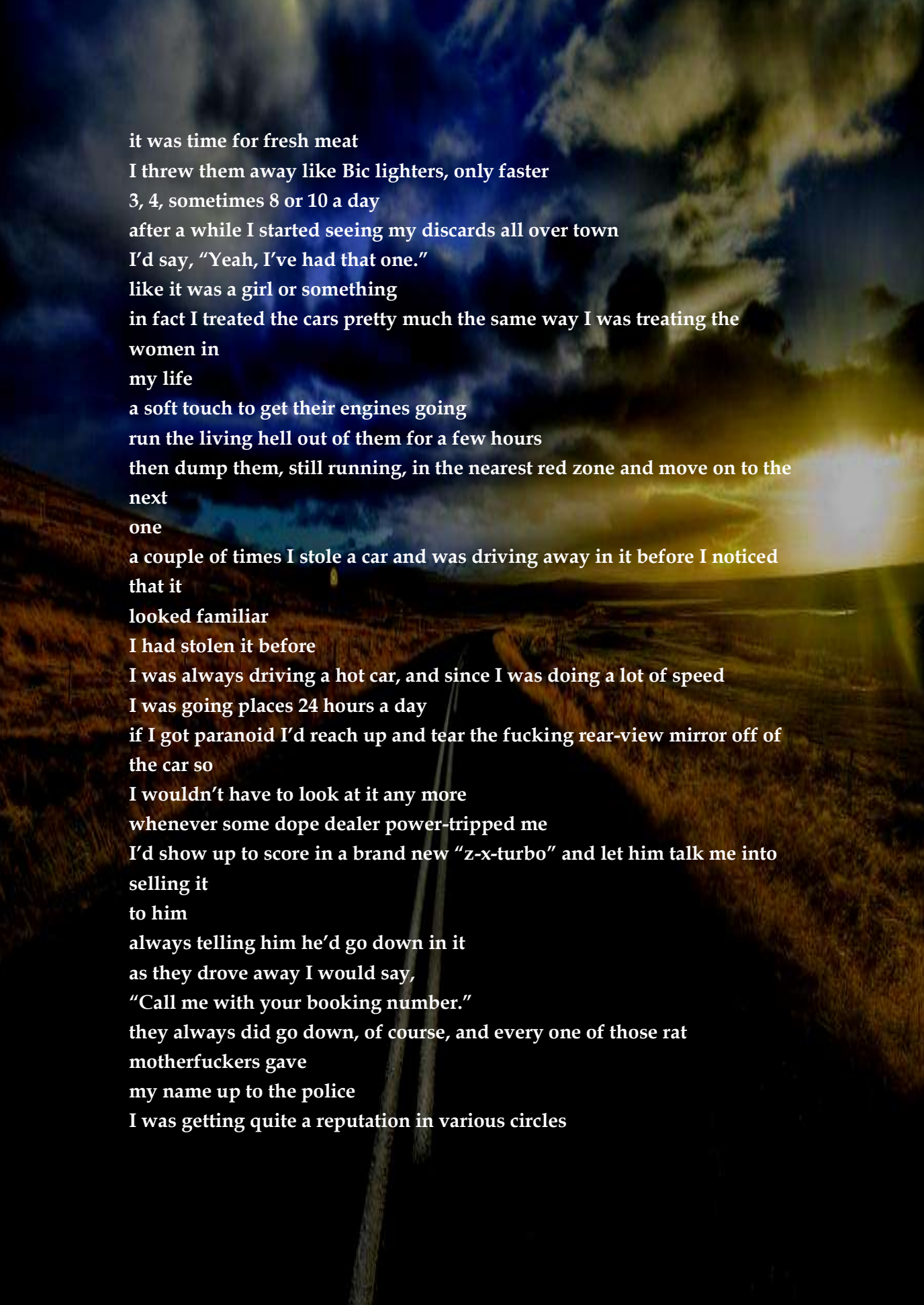
She tidied up the mess, switched on the shower and bundled all of the dirty ashtrays straight into the bin. Buy new ones later... she thought, and she was done. Her writing exorcised. Her lover satiated for this time.

# IN YOUR CAR

By John Barrymore

I'm out of here  
peeling out in a hot Z car  
laughing like an idiot with a nose full of nitrous oxide  
they don't call it a joyride for nothing, you know  
sure, sometimes it was touch and go, but that just added to the excitement  
like the time I was caught on foot without my keys, and the cops were  
after me  
I hopped into an old Datsun, with the ignition on the dash instead of the  
column  
I pulled the wires and stripped them with my teeth then drove away  
holding the  
wires together with one hand, and steering and shifting with the other  
I was out of there  
then there was that high-speed pursuit through Studio City  
and whenever one of those alarms went off  
that really got the old ticker going  
I especially liked the ones that call you names  
like "Burglar! Burglar!"  
most of them were no sweat, though  
I must have boosted 300 of those puppies  
the Japanese cars were the easiest, I mean real sluts  
a couple of shakes of a jiggle key and I was off  
just touch it and go  
after a while I branched out to German and American products  
it was a real power trip  
I started to think of every vehicle I saw as potentially mine  
I knew better than to hang on to them, though, so I never got attached  
I saw right away it was driving the hot car that got you busted  
and since it was easier to steal a car than a license plate  
I figured if the gas tank was empty or the ashtray was full





it was time for fresh meat  
I threw them away like Bic lighters, only faster  
3, 4, sometimes 8 or 10 a day  
after a while I started seeing my discards all over town  
I'd say, "Yeah, I've had that one."  
like it was a girl or something  
in fact I treated the cars pretty much the same way I was treating the  
women in  
my life  
a soft touch to get their engines going  
run the living hell out of them for a few hours  
then dump them, still running, in the nearest red zone and move on to the  
next  
one  
a couple of times I stole a car and was driving away in it before I noticed  
that it  
looked familiar  
I had stolen it before  
I was always driving a hot car, and since I was doing a lot of speed  
I was going places 24 hours a day  
if I got paranoid I'd reach up and tear the fucking rear-view mirror off of  
the car so  
I wouldn't have to look at it any more  
whenever some dope dealer power-tripped me  
I'd show up to score in a brand new "z-x-turbo" and let him talk me into  
selling it  
to him  
always telling him he'd go down in it  
as they drove away I would say,  
"Call me with your booking number."  
they always did go down, of course, and every one of those rat  
motherfuckers gave  
my name up to the police  
I was getting quite a reputation in various circles

I also had a reputation for being very vindictive and more than a little bit insane

so when R.M. ripped me off he figured that in spite of his reputation for being a

killer and no one to fuck with

I'd probably come after his wheels

he had a 69 Impala which housed most of his worldly goods

sure enough, when I found it the steering wheel was missing

he probably thought that would stop me

I took a big pair of vise-grips and clamped them onto the shaft

then drove away steering with the pliers

I was going places

after a while, though, I got tired

it was like a treadmill I couldn't get off

I had to steal a new car every six hours, because the one I was driving was on the

hot sheet

I always knew getting caught was in my future

but I couldn't believe how long it was taking

one day I looked at Teddy and said,

"Even if they're stupid they should have gotten lucky by now."

they finally did catch me driving a hot car

to tell the truth it was a relief

it had a "Stop me before I kill again." quality to it

the whole thing had started out as a character study

it had just gotten out of hand

they took me down to the Hollywood division, which was where I had

been the

busiest

Smith and Harris, the two Hollywood auto-theft detectives, took me into a

little

room

I figured "This is where they beat the shit out of me."

but they didn't



in spite of the fact that they knew I had put cases on their desks at an  
average of  
three a day  
they didn't bother with the old good-cop, bad-cop routine  
they knew I'd been around long enough to know the game  
when they asked me if I wanted to cooperate, I told them I had no one to  
give them  
which was bullshit, of course  
one of them said, "Help us clear some paper."  
I said, "I'll give you fifty cars right now."  
so we cut a deal  
I took fifty cases of their desk, I quit, and I told them how I did it  
it was driving them crazy  
so I didn't go to prison  
not that time anyway  
but of course I briefly wound up there later behind some drug shit, and a  
probation  
violation  
yeah, I'd gone places  
pretty far from the  
Beverly-Hills-elite-Hollywood-party-A-list-jet-set-hip-slick-and-cool-  
circles within  
which I had grown  
maybe it was just a natural progression  
I don't know  
I only know that I'm right here right now  
and I don't really feel like moving  
I mean I'll go with you if you really want  
but you're driving



## PEACEFUL JOURNEY OUT OF A DARKENED CANYON ON A FULL MOON NIGHT

By A. RAZOR

not much light comes down here  
this deep in the world of self

the mind plays with the constants  
of rituals and motions that seem  
to have ulterior motives over  
previous setbacks mixed  
with shame and pity

it's you against something  
that is hard to perceive  
in all this darkness

you can look for clues

or try to find random  
enlightenment from  
words that fall flat  
from lack of true  
experience or  
strength

you can try to self impose rules  
you can try to be more disciplined  
you can try  
you can try  
try and try

when sadness knocks  
you try not to answer

when desperate measures  
call you on speed dial  
you can keep your  
shaky thumb  
away from  
the green  
button

you can save your last hope for  
last in hopes you can leave this  
place before the world stops  
without you on it or in it  
any longer

when your last hope vanishes  
you are still left standing  
so it seems like it might  
be a bit of an exaggeration  
except for the announcement  
of deaths and lawsuits that may  
tip your precarious cart over the edge  
of the narrowing trail up the canyon wall  
to a hopeful vista where you might have room  
to breathe and peer back down the jagged path you  
took out of harm's way and up the steepest cliffside  
against the rocky backdrop of pain and isolation

that were loose areas of footing and unsound  
steps of uncertainty toward a place you are  
trying to believe holds some resonance  
of a peacefulness you have never known

through closed eyes and clenched teeth  
you believe it will come to pass

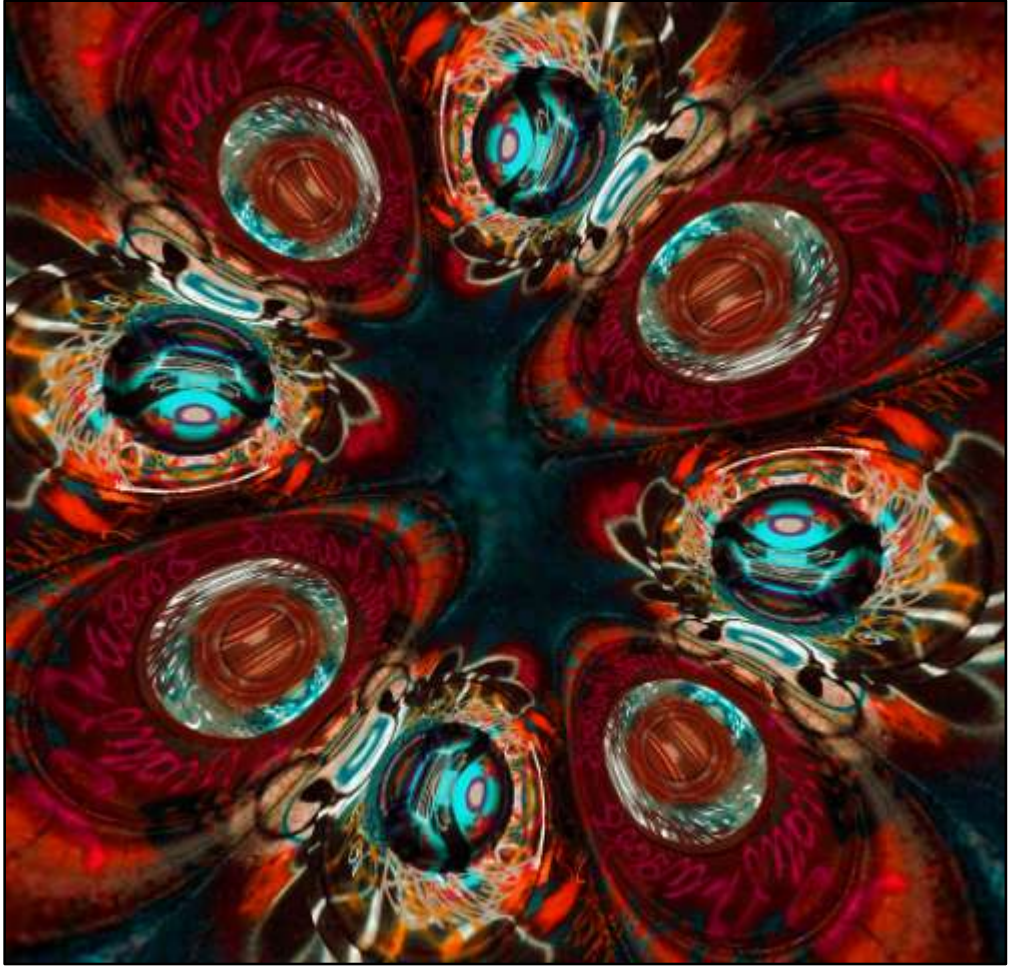
through fear and heartache  
lonely nights in turmoil  
sinking feelings that  
bring unwanted  
tears to tired  
eyes tonight

you still will  
believe that  
there is one  
last hope in  
this world of  
missed arcs  
against full  
moons with  
beams that  
drive away  
the last of  
unwanted  
fears into  
the night  
what feels like the last hope  
what feels like the last time  
is always proved to be the  
first hope or  
the first time  
until there is no need  
for anymore to be

proven

in this life

tonight



## **FIRST EMBRACE**

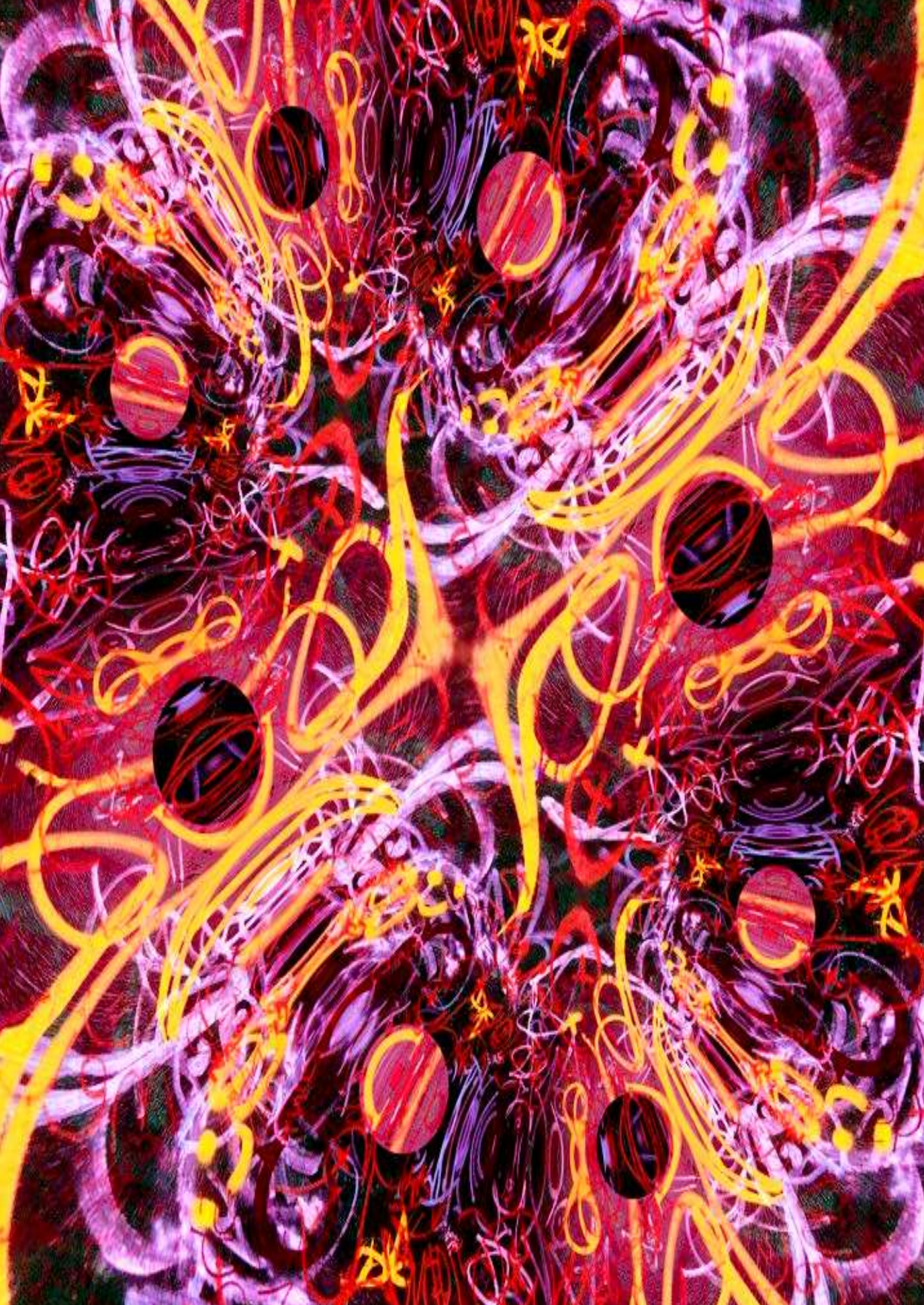
**By Brian Routh**

**Image © Patricia Wells**

Rain pours down from the darkened clouds  
We huddle together under the shelter in the field.  
Thunder rumbles in the distance  
Lightning cracks and zig-zags across the sky.  
Our hearts entwined beat together  
Our eyes meet and love flows between us.  
Time stands still and all is silent

As though the entire world were waiting for our first kiss.  
Our arms wrap themselves around each others' bodies  
And I pull you towards me  
Our eyes still locked together.  
I look down at your mouth and you at mine  
Our lips part and we smile.  
I put my lips on yours and you surrender to me  
We kiss deeply and passionately.  
The energy and love flows like liquid between us.  
Still kissing, our hands run through each others' hair.  
The kiss becomes more passionate  
We lower our bodies to the floor.  
Quickly we undress one another  
Naked I fall into you and I am lost in the passion of you.  
We make love slowly and deeply our eyes still locked together  
Our words and sounds urging us on.  
Oh my love this is heaven here.  
I am inside of you and I am lost within you  
You call out my name so tenderly and sweetly  
'I am yours my darling,' my voice replies.  
Our lovemaking intensifies  
I above you and you above me  
Faster our bodies move in and out of one another  
Sweat pours from us.  
We move together faster and faster.  
Our voices uttering words of love and tenderness.  
'I am going to come my love!' I shout  
'I love you!' we call to one another  
'I am coming!' your words sing out  
We reach the first ever climax together  
We are as liquid melting into each others' bodies.  
'Oh my darling this is so wonderful.'  
I say as  
You fall onto me  
Your head against my chest.  
Now we have made love for the first time  
Now we have connected our hearts, souls and bodies.  
This is the beginning my darling  
This is our first sweet embrace.  
We will be this way forever now  
I am yours and you are mine.  
I love you my angel.





# THE HAPPY STORY

By Salena Godden

The Happy Story begins with two young lovers. Being in love they were happy, or at least I can assure you that they had the good sense to know that they were as close to being happy as one can expect or hope for in one of our lifetimes. They had more than a few of the requirements attributed to many people's recipe for happiness, they had health, they lived decently and they had each other. They had zest and shared achievable goals. The Happy Story begins on a magical Christmas Eve. There had been some snow that week, so you can rest assured this added a sense of magic and festivity to the couples overall experience in this, The Happy Story.

I can describe a lady for you - her most striking feature is her hair, it is as copper as a copper pot. Although magazines might call her a red-head, her hair is not at all red. It is not a vegetable or fruity colour either. It is not orange, there are no tones of ginger or carrot, her hair is not

tangerine or mandarin and certainly not the colour of butternut squash or pumpkin. Her hair is also not bronze or sandy or straw-coloured nor strawberry blonde neither. It is not any shade of yellowish tumeric or mustard or saffron. And nor is it the plummy tones of an auburn, cherry or chestnut. No. Her hair is not rusty - it shines with the most vivid, liquid copper and it dances as she walks, it bounces, flouncing in ringlets of generous curls. Her personality reflects this, she is aflame with laughter, she has a vivacious, peppery energy and a contagious, wicked sense of mischief. She is slim but not skinny, she is taller than average but not gamine. To meet her you would find her playful but she can also be bossy, she frowns too often too but she is just mildly short-sighted. She was born in the summer, she eats with her fingers and has very little patience with fiddly things.

Now try to forget her if you can, please, try to forget the lovely

lady with the hair like copper and with her soul like flames. Try to forget her for many reasons, primarily because you mustn't think of her too much, not now and not later and not then, but it is so difficult not to think of her once you start, don't you think? Are you still remembering her, yes? And right now? Then I admit, now we have mentioned her, so am I.

Let's try to change the subject - Now I can describe a man to you - He has eyes; clear eyes, clear blue as water. They are blessed with a light that makes a cynical heart retreat to its shadows. I mean it is quite rare to find such a clean smile in the eyes, they coerce you into a settled assurity that you are in the presence of someone easy and someone fair. Such a true blue in fact, it is as if those eyes deliver some even-handed honesty. Incidentally his eyelashes are as long a baby giraffes. Can you imagine those eyes? Exactly? Imagine the calm blue of untouched water by the edge of a swimming pool; with the sparkle of the inside of icicles on a peak of an isolated mountain, when there is nothing but the memory of the sound of

running water. Maybe you have seen a wolf with eyes this blue? Perhaps a kitten? But these eyes are neither fierce nor curious, but warm, dancing like a low gas flame. An exquisite gentle tone of blue, like the underwing of a swan. So no, they are not the cold blue of the deep Atlantic ocean, or freckled and denim as blue jeans, or the robin's egg blue of a cricket game under a summer sky - that much is for sure. He is tall, slender and strong but he has odd hands like odd gloves, one is clearly bigger, flatter than the other one. When he concentrates he looks just like an ordinary but good-looking young man. In fact if you were to meet him you would find him fairly handsome. However, it is when he smiles, his face cracks open as wonky as a broken egg, the yolk is all dripping with sunshine and this is his greatest charm. He was born in the winter, his eyebrows knit when he is reading. Sometimes he sleeps fitfully and grinds his teeth and he can be just a little scratchy very first thing in the morning before his coffee.

Now try to forget him if you can. It is a challenge I know to forget

those gentle eyes, they are piercing, this is how the ladies magazines would describe his eyes, piercing. They are indeed memorable, but try to forget those blue eyes and you'll find it is as hard as trying to forget your first love or your last dance.

Now, The Happy Story - the remarkable thing about the couple in The Happy Story is they had no idea they were in The Happy Story. They did not have a clue that they were in any story at all, as is very often the way. I always personally found this part of The Happy Story quite strange and hard to believe. I try to make a point of being aware of being in stories, particularly happy stories, surely that is the point. If you are ever find yourself in The Happy Story it's imperative to realise it before it's been read and completed. It's a splendid sensation noticing The Happy Story unfold before your very eyes, you look around yourself and note the change in the light, the turning of a page, the beginning yielding to the juicy middle and sadly, the end, which of course isn't sad at all and is usually just another beginning. Yes, it is a great skill

to know when you are in a story - there have been chapters in my lifetimes when I have found myself playing a pre-determined role and there have been other times when I am completely convinced somebody else intentionally wrote the script or made deliberate decisions for me, otherwise I wouldn't be here right now and nearly as capable of telling you The Happy Story in the first instance - like the decision to write this, read this, like this, right now, with the snowflakes tapping at my window and my hot chocolate growing cold and ignored on the desk beside my candle. Or perhaps you are hearing The Happy Story, sitting by an open fire and I am reading it aloud like this. And your decision, right now, to read The Happy Story or to hear it or to even know its name, well are you sure you made that decision yourself too? My point precisely.

And so the story has begun, with the couple, their names are Colette and Sebastian. Colette and Sebastian, they have each other and they are in love. Please excuse the cliché, it just so happens they are the couple in

The Happy Story, but they could so easily have been a gay couple. If they had been two men in love, Sebastian would have been a whizz in the kitchen and very attached to his dog. If they had been two women in love, Colette would have been the one that liked doing the gardening and knew how to change the oil on a car. Since we are working stereotypes it just so happens that in The Happy Story, Sebastian loved to bake fresh bread and took too long in the bathroom. Colette successfully grew herbs and tomatoes on the kitchen window ledge and was addicted to football and for the record she was a spurs fan.

To continue, Colette and Sebastian met at college, they moved to the city to live together and they turned twenty-one together. They visited Europe and made some beautiful treasured memories of being hungry in Paris, stranded in Barcelona or accosted in Italy. Snapshots of this could be replayed in their memories for as long as they lived and it wasn't until they were much older they realised how precious that particular stained glass window,

that sunset, that shabby youth hostel and those cold train stations would become. Memory is quite astonishing, chucking out the moments we ought to remember and clinging to the smallest details we thought we had forgotten.

They were quite a handsome couple. If you danced with them at a party you couldn't help but imagine them naked together, they were almost transparent, you could easily imagine their love-making. You could imagine watching them as they fell asleep at night, spooned into each other, skin against skin. Thinking about them now even, I can imagine watching them as they fall asleep wrapped together like powered fingers in a mink glove, softly murmuring, I love you too I do and I love you more.

It is very important to note that though they hardly tired of each other, they were not overly sickly public with their affections. But it is worth noting that the truly enviable part was the easy care and consideration they had for each other, the way they naturally liked to please each other. Colette would have a cup

of tea in her hand, made to her liking, before she knew she wanted to ask if the kettle had boiled. Sebastian would find the bath already run to his favoured temperature with his towel already warming on the radiator. And the thank you would be followed by a knowing nod to each other - it was like a secret code of team-work - and quite a sight to behold, it made you warm inside. So yes, although they sometimes finished each other's sentences, it made you wish to have that in your life and you wanted to be around them, to be near to love.

Colette and Sebastian were both absurdly afraid of aging. When Colette was a little girl of six years old, her Granny told her a story about a girl that got into a bath and lounged in the bubbles so long that when she came out, she was shrivelled and old. Colette looked down and saw her own child hands turn wrinkled in the bath and as a consequence she now loathed to stay in the bath too long. Sebastian had barely needed to shave and his cheeks were still smooth as a girl's. He didn't have a crease in his face except when

he squeezed his eyes shut in hysterical laughter or to sneeze. Still he used a great many potions, lotions, steam baths and face packs. In fact he spent quite a substantial amount of time applying wrinkle creams. But heed this part, because as we all know a fear conceals a wish, remember that, a fear conceals a wish.

Now, it is now and it is just after midday on Christmas Eve. Colette and Sebastian are having lunch together in a Japanese sushi bar in Soho and it is here and there when Colette tells a lie! She tells Sebastian she must go to see a sick work colleague that afternoon, but she really intends to pick up his Christmas gift from an antique bookshop. Sebastian also lies, he says he has to go back into work because he had forgotten his gloves, but he is planning to go to the jewellers to pick up her present too. They both know each other is lying of course, it's a white lie, but they both pretend not to guess the deception as this is part of the game of surprises. When you know someone as well as they know each other, it's always very difficult to keep things

secret. At lunch they tease each other as they sip miso soup. They disagree mildly about whether it will snow some more, Colette swears it will and Sebastian is adamant it will not. They shrug and agree to disagree whilst sharing Bento boxes of sashimi. They raise hot cups of saki and grin at each other knowingly.

There is a very light dusting of snow falling, just now and then, one or two flakes like the last of the wedding confetti or a scattering of white sushi rice. Perhaps though, it is just the wind blowing it down from the roof-tops or a robin in the rafters, but white feathery flakes occasionally float and pass the steamed-up windows of the busy pubs of Soho. And the gutters are brown with slush, like melted coke floats. There are oil rainbows in the cracked ice puddles.

Can you picture them now in the window that lunchtime on that Christmas eve? Colette and Sebastian sharing the last of the edamame beans, dipping them in wasabi and soy, tasting the tang of pink pickled ginger. See how they swig the last of the Saki.

They are eager for the waitress to bring the bill so they can go on their top secret Christmas missions. But the waitress doesn't seem to see them and takes her time. Let's stand back and watch them for a moment, observe them as they say goodbye - they laugh - Colette says something which makes Sebastian make an O shape with his mouth and she lightly thumps his arm. Then they go their separate ways. Sebastian looks back and then one last time and Colette knowing he is looking, looks back suddenly, her hair flounces as she turns and grins, she sticks out her tongue, before taking a corner towards Cambridge Circus.

Imagine if that was the last time they ever saw each other. Imagine that in their store of memories of each other they never forgot those minutes. It wasn't such a life changing moment, miniscule in fact, but for no reason whatsoever, they'll never forget that snap shot and the feelings, the sensations of those seconds before they were out of sight of each other.

So, it is Christmas Eve and Colette and Sebastian are out buying gifts. They are not together but separate, although each is gazing into the windows of busy shops and making their steady way through the bustle of traffic and Christmas shoppers, they are in different parts of the city. They are under the same wintery sunset, a raspberry swirl, those soft ploombs of plum and blueberry clouds you really only get at the end of the shortest days of the year. And when night does fall, they will be under the same constellation of stars and the same rising and waxing blue moon. Whatever happens, as long as they live, they will always be under the same moon.

Now do you remember the lady with the hair like copper? Good. I hope so, because just as the young Sebastian leaves the jewellers, he walks right into her, her shopping bag handle snaps, her vegetables roll everywhere and she drops her pail of water. What was she doing carrying a pail of water? When I said, pail of water, I meant of course her dreams and hopes. She had decided a long time ago that if you want your

dreams and hopes to come true you have to carry them for yourself to make sure that none gets spilt, just like a bucket of water. So when Sebastian bumps into her, she drops everything, actually but also physically and metaphysically, because as she looks up into his face she is reminded of another time, another chapter and another lifetime. It is so powerful she cannot speak. Meanwhile Sebastian flusters, he apologises profusely and helps her gather her shopping back together.

On the other side of the city we'll now find Colette and at this very moment in time she must get that gift, it's a beautiful book and a first edition of poetry by Sebastian's favourite French poet who is long dead. This particular copy has been living in a dusty ramshackle bookshop, one of those lovely establishments that we hardly see so much anymore. It is tucked away off the Charing Cross Road, a place where books are more than objects, a place where books are sniffed and gingerly fingered. She had picked the book out in October and the elderly shopkeeper had kept it under the counter for



safe-keeping whilst she paid for its purchase at ten pounds a week. However, as Colette turns the corner to the alleyway, to where the entrance to the bookshop is, her heart stops dead still when she sees the shutters are down and the lights are off. There are no books in boxes for a pound outside and the place looks deserted.

I thought this was going to be The Happy Story? I hear you cry, well bear with me, when she knocks on the door the shop keeper isn't there either. No! The old shopkeeper has had a heart attack and died in his sleep. He is dead and cold and blue and gone. There that's the truth, but you may find some comfort in knowing that he was very old, his eyes were failing him and he didn't suffer muchly. When she rings the doorbell, however, the door opens and it is then that Colette sees the most beautiful blue eyes. Do you remember the man with the blue eyes? Well I hope so, because yes it is him that is taking care of the bookshop. When he sees Colette sandcastles fall from his pockets. What was he doing carrying sand castles? When I said sandcastles,

I mean of course, the sensation of regret. He had discovered a long time ago, that if you regret the past and wonder what could have been, it is like building sand castles. Like watching time through an hour glass, there is a perpetual sensation of sand slipping through your finger tips. When Colette says hello, all the sandcastles are washed away from his mind with a tide of recognition and he drops his jaw to make an O shape with his mouth. She reminds him of something that was once very dear, dearest to his dear heart.

Sebastian, meanwhile, has picked up all the belongings and for the first time he looks at the copper haired lady and gulps, her heart is flames and her face, her mouth, her eyes, something about her is so very familiar. Please let me help you, he says. Thank you, she replies, and they take the packages to her car which is parked just outside. Once they put all her shopping in the boot, she asks, I think it will snow again, can I offer you a ride? Yes please, how very kind of you, Sebastian says without any hesitation, although he doubts it will snow again, not

again. He pats his coat and remembers his gift and feels in his pocket for the velvet box and in it the pretty silver locket he has picked out for Colette.

Back in the bookshop, the man with the eyes, the bluest eyes you ever, ever saw, tells Colette, the old shopkeeper had a heart attack and died in his sleep, but he was very old, his eyes were failing him and he didn't suffer muchly. Colette doesn't find comfort in this at all and is very sad for the kind shop keeper. The man with the lovely blue eyes touches her hand when she offers her condolences. She notices how his hands are slightly different sizes and shivers slightly with the familiarity and with goosepimples of pleasure.

The book of poetry incidentally was by Baudelaire and she knows Sebastian will love it and read it out loud to her, like a low Loire valley lullaby, when she is wrapped in his arms and at night. The man with the blue eyes wraps it extra carefully. And then he writes something in pencil in a ledger book. Colette studies him, she notices he is

older but quite good looking. And then he looks up to give her the book and smiles, his funny and wonky smile is contagious and she finds herself beaming back at him like an idiot.

Whilst they drive across town Sebastian cannot help but look over at the copper haired lady whilst she drives. She's mature but quite animated behind the wheel and it amuses him to note her impatience with traffic lights and when changing gears. He is overwhelmed by a strong sense of *deja vous*, so much so, that when they stop, he says, would you like to come in for a hot chocolate? It is so cold, shall I? Says the beautiful copper haired lady. Oh yes please do and I will even add a dash of brandy to really warm us up, he grins and his smile is so infectious that the copper haired lady cannot resist.

Colette and the blue-eyed book shopkeeper meanwhile will walk and talk together. Where do you live? If you wait for me to lock up we can walk together, let me walk you home, he insists. Oh Ok, Thankyou, says Colette. I love Baudelaire. So do I. It is best read aloud I think. Me too,

although I cannot speak a word of French. I am sure this book will make a fine gift. Oh look it is snowing, I said it was going to snow. So it is I thought we'd had the last of it! And it snows ever so slightly, lightly and up above them the moon is blue and whole. Once in a blue moon! One of them says and it is a blue moon too and on and on they natter about snow monkeys, blue moons and poetry, generously making sure to make plenty of room for listening and smiling as well as speaking.

Whilst they walk Colette naturally takes his arm because it is slippery and icy. She cannot help but take sneaky sideways glances at the blue-eyed man and his nature, he really does feel like someone very nice and easy to be around. The blue-eyed man steals glances of her too and Colette's cheeks burn with the cold air and excitement. Do come inside, she says, come on in! I will make you a hot chocolate with brandy to warm us up a bit. Really you don't mind? Yes of course, I insist, its Christmas eve! Come on in! Ok! Thankyou, says the blue-eyed man, who cannot resist the invite.

Sebastian? Colette calls out, I'm home!

And just at the same time Sebastian sings, hello Colette!

Then there is a power cut. In the pitch black darkness you can hear Colette and Sebastian muttering and it sounds like this:

Oh bugger! Have you got any idea where the matches are? I cannot see a thing! Me neither! Here? Do you know where the candles are? Over by the mantelpiece darling! Here light this! Light what? This? Oh you cannot see sorry! Silly me! What a pain. Aha! At last a candle. Right, now, what about the matches? Matches by the stove...Sorry...Oops!

Sebastian?...Oh? Bingo lights! Colette I made hot chocolate but how queer....Sebastian, it is strange I...Colette, where have you been? I was here all along. I feel odd, it is like I haven't been home for days. Funny, I feel like I have been dreaming. Is it still Christmas eve? Of course it must be mustn't it? There is something I just cannot put my finger on, it is like I forgot to tell you something. That's funny me too,

Sebastian, I am sure it will come back to us. Did you have a nice day? Do you know what? What? I don't remember. Have we been sleeping for a very long time? Are we awake at last? Come here, my love!

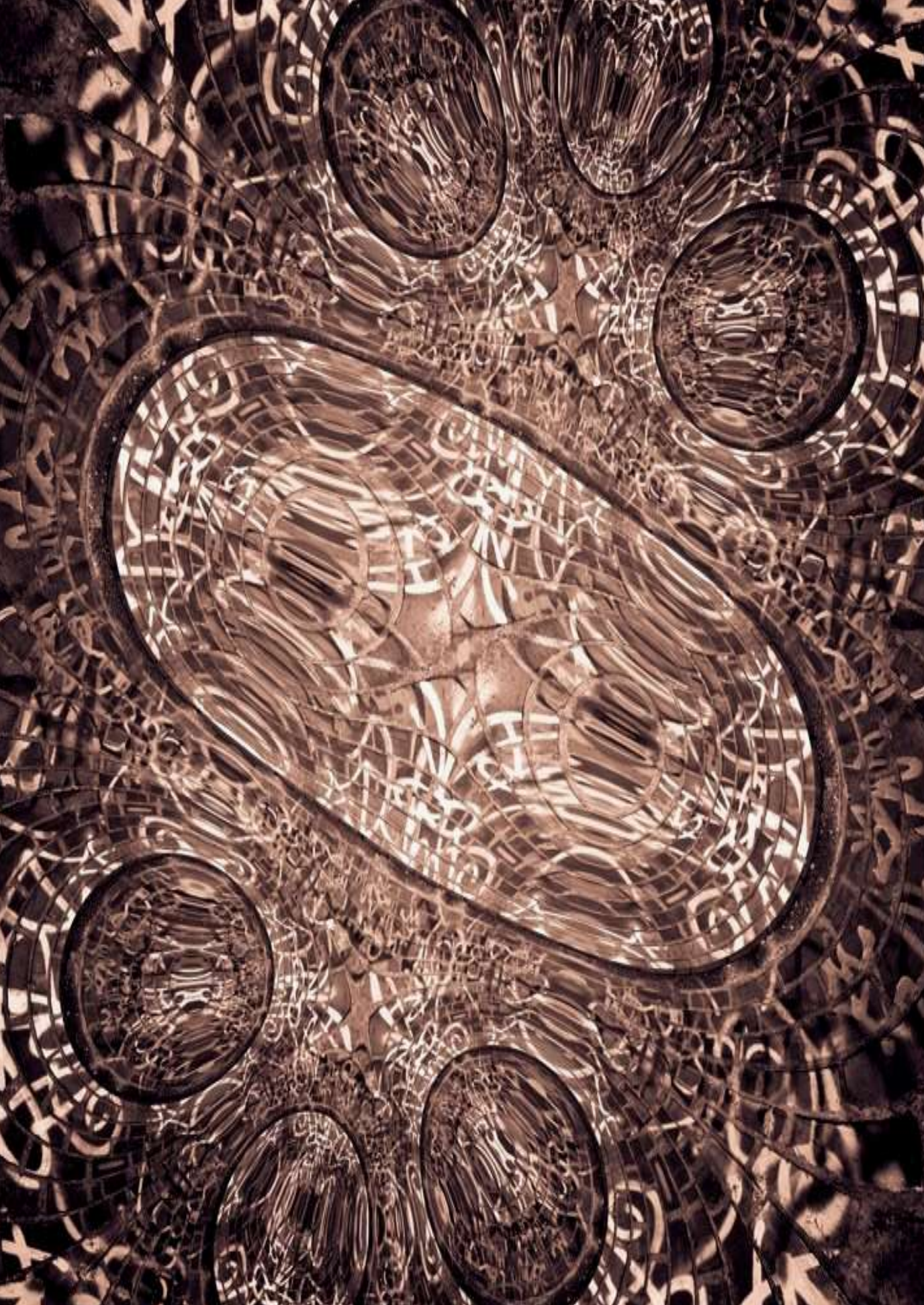
And now I can describe two lovers kissing and holding each other on Christmas Eve by the Christmas tree, twinkling with lights and magic and I will gently remind how a fear concealed a wish.

We are allowed to imagine that once in a blue moon we are permitted to see each other as we really are, how we once were and what we might become. Maybe once in a while your mind permits you to step outside and see yourself more clearly and also the people you love or how you remember them. Sometimes when you stand still, you can get a real sense of a page turning, how everything changes but stays the same, how we grow sideways and in somersaults of spurts and cycles. We are always the same to someone. You might be surprised how you are stored in somebody's heart, how someone remembers a moment

that seemed so inconsequential to you at the time.

Now I'll describe a lady, her hair has grown silver at the temples but she still has that contagious mischief and no patience with fiddly things. I will describe a man, he still has those snow blue eyes but they are soft and creased from years of sneezing and laughter.

And now we saw each other as we always were to each other at last we knew that we were in The Happy Story. Absentmindedly, Sebastian reached into his pocket and there was nothing there, then he looked down and remembered how I had worn that locket around my neck for almost fifty years. Inside it there was a photograph of me, the girl with hair like a copper pot and my love, the boy with eyes as memorable as your first kiss and last dance.



# SCENES FROM IMAGINARY FILMS

## III - COMMON PLEAS

By David Gionfriddo

*Film has been the dominant medium in American culture since at least the mid-1960s. In the U.S., there are even isolated tribes of middle-aged men who communicate only in movie quotes ("But it looks good on you!" "Show me the money!") Much of our lives are spent in thrall to the filmmakers and their actors. But I find there are very few movies memorable from beginning to end. What stays with me are the indelible scenes, the important images: that last, long tracking shot in **Citizen Kane**; Michael Madsen's **Reservoir Dogs** torture dance; Catherine Deneuve inching down the corridor of hands in **Repulsion**; Cybill Shepherd's **Last Picture Show** diving-board striptease. These pictures are the building blocks of post-modern consciousness. Like family snapshots found in a junk drawer, these moments let us reconstruct entire stories, eras, lives. Some of us are all thumbs with the camera, however, so we are left to play with their literary equivalents. My scenes aren't meant to be beginnings, middles or ends. Consider my humble offerings a parlor game, simple party favors inviting you to dream your own stories, to invent new rewards, conflicts and tribulations for these very malleable characters. Have fun...*

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### INT. FOYER OF THE PEARLYGATES MEGACHURCH -- EVENING

Happy parents VANCE and LUCINDA MAKEPEACE stroll, arm-in-arm, beneath a hanging banner reading, in dripping red letters "Welcome To Hell!" A step behind, children DAVID, RICKY and BLANCHE advance, wide-eyed and hesitant, a little unnerved by it all. The air is filled with the sounds of sobbing children and consoling mothers. A smiling PASTOR LUCAS MENCHER greets each family as it enters.

#### DAVID (V.O.)

I guess the first inkling I had that my folks and I weren't on the same page, values-wise, came one Halloween when I was six years old. Our church was in a former Piggly Wiggly supermarket, and every year, instead of a haunted house, for the kids they would rig up Pastor Luke's vision of the chambers of Hell. In later years, I would become a big fan - hell, even a participant -- but that first time kind of threw me.

**LUCINDA**

Let your friends have their stupid pagan holidays. We're going to have fun and learn something!

**PASTOR LUKE**

So, are these our little apostates? Ready for the descent to Gehenna? Aw, he's a big boy, he's not scared...yet...

**CUT TO:**

**INT. ROOM IN PEARLYGATES - EVENING**

Under a hand-painted sign proclaiming "Thou Shalt Not Covet Thy Neighbor's Wife," a half-dozen suburban dads in double-knit trousers do headstands, heads buried in piles of dirt, their bare feet theatrically flogged by hammy, horned devils, while a trio of elaborately-coiffed and made-up women in low-cut blouses sit at a formica table, bored, drinking *crème de menthe* and playing spades.

**VANCE**

Yeah, this is one of the grown-up rooms, but we thought you kids could handle it. Never too young to learn right from wrong. Hey, is that Debbie Potter? Hasn't she lost a ton, mother? (Whistles)

Lucinda glares disapprovingly. Blanche begins to whimper.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. HARLEYSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL FACULTY PARKING LOT - DAYTIME**

It is eight years later, and 14-year-old David sneakily approaches a fire-engine-red Dodge Charger, and jimmy's the driver's-side door with a metal ruler.

**DAVID (V.O.)**

Never forgave my dad for scaring Blanche like that. Soon as I was old enough, I figured I would really give the old man something to worry about. Something besides the size of Mrs. Potter's ass.

The Charger peels out, fishtailing down the street to the fading strains of the Allmans' "One Way Out."

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. WOODS BEHIND HARLEYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL - DAYTIME**

A pair of senior-class Harleyville heshers and three Catholic schoolgirls from Our Lady of Sorrows sit on the ground, lazily pulling from a marijuana joint. A radio plays the Doors' "Alabama Song."

**DAVID (V.O.)**

I got a real taste for doing wrong. I figured as long as I did the opposite of what I was taught, I'd be all right. If old Vance told me to zig, you can be damn sure I was gonna try'n zag.

The group cheers as, at the center of the circle, the most brazen and coltish of the girls, blouse unbuttoned dangerously low, smiles and approaches David, 16, lanky, clad in a BOC "Agents of Fortune" t-shirt, who goes to his knees and presses his face excitedly into the folds of her plaid uniform skirt.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. STUDENT UNION, BLACKFOOT COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE - EVENING**

In a small study lounge, David, 20, conducts a sale of cocaine to a denim-clad student. Boombox blasts "Mindbender" by Stillwater.

**DAVID (V.O.)**

Got real, real comfortable for me. Liked having my own money. And I ain't gonna lie. The boys loved a little



scrappin' every now and then. Damn Blackfoot boys couldn't fight for shit anyhow.

They argue over money. David administers a respectable country beatdown to his cost-conscious customer, topping it off by burying him under a burnt-orange modular chair.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BASEMENT OF DAVID MAKEPEACE'S HOME - NIGHTTIME**

It is now the present. David's basement is clean, but cheaply-furnished, in middle-class rec room style. The walls are paneled in blond oak. In the large part of the room is a second-hand pool table, a small bar and a television playing an Oklahoma-Baylor football game. The walls are bare plaster, except for a dart board in the shape of Texas and a couple of posters, one advertising a disc by My Morning Jacket, and the other featuring Joan Severance in her Black Scorpion costume. We can see that a few of the darts have strayed from their target and pockmarked Joan's thigh and shoulder. In the smaller part of the room, David, clad in a leather biker jacket, hair slicked back like a '50s rocker, stares into a mirror, applying black lipstick. On a small dressing table to the side sit an iguana cage, a pair of Vise-Grips and a CD player that blares Lux Interior singing "She Said." Strings of twinkling Christmas lights dapple the room with a warm, and vaguely incongruous, glow.

**TELEVISION COMMENTATOR**

That's Dalrymple, the redshirt freshman, getting a good jump, blowing up that play, getting immediate penetration...

**DAVID**

I think that would be a good name for a rock band, don't you? *Immediate Penetration.*

David turns up the music.

**DAVID**

So there it is, the whole rotten saga. Confused, abused and misused. Is it any wonder I got me a hair trigger? Is it my fault people try to mess with me? Well, is it, *James?*

Looking down, we see JAMIE CARTON, slumped on the floor, seated in a pool of dried blood. His wrists are lashed together, and his expensive charcoal business suit is in tatters. Under his left eye and on the left side of his jaw are angry blue bruises, and clumps of hair have been torn out of his scalp. His eye is beginning to close. Scattered around him are a couple dozen small, shiny white objects. He does not speak.

**DAVID**

I was just gonna have me a little treat. (Produces candy apple from table drawer) Want one, Hot Stuff? Oh, that's right, I guess not.

Jamie looks up, breathing heavily. We see his exposed gums, and realize that the objects scattered on the floor are freshly-extracted teeth.

**JAMIE**

Hucking summa itch. Mudahuckah.

**DAVID**

Come on, brother. Couldn't you just tell me where your little Injun trim went with my goddamn money and those pictures? People are waiting, boy.

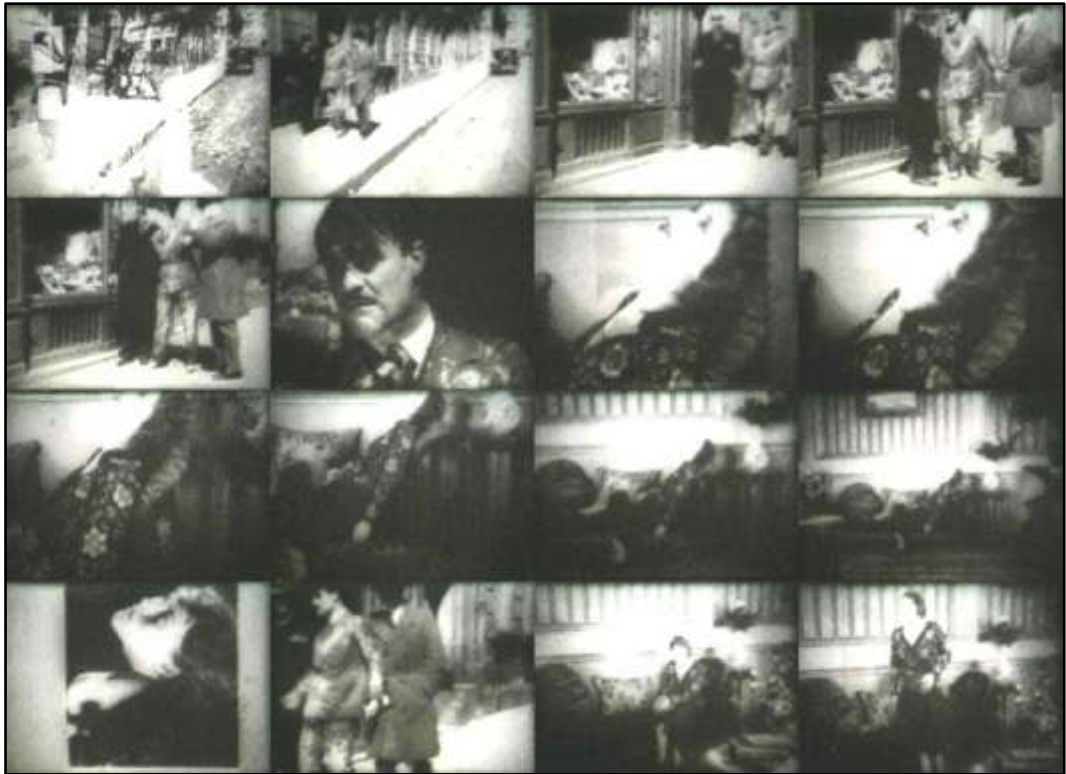
Jamie silently rubs his jaw. David reaches back for his pliers.

**DAVID**

Well, that's all right. Looks like I got some time to kill after all, 'cause I don't think Baylor's coming back. Do you? (Squats down beside Jamie) Bubba, that musta been *some* kinda premium cooze...

David sings along to the Cramps. There are brief sounds of struggle, then the sound of steel on flesh and muffled cries.

**FADE OUT**



## CONVULSIVE BEAUTY:

### Buñuel's *L'Age d'Or* as a Surrealist Manifesto

By Stephen Sennitt

*'Too Explosive for Public Screening'*

In 1963, more than 30 years after the first screenings of Luis Buñuel's marginalized Surrealist masterpiece *L'Age d'Or* (1930), Penelope Houston, then-editor of the influential and respected journal *Sight and Sound*, considered the film still 'too explosive for public

screening, even if it were permitted outside the safe confines of the National Film Theatre.' (1) Writing a few years later, eminent film critic Parker Tyler cemented the film's status as a perennial 'underground classic' in his controversial 1969 book *Underground Film*, where he states: '...no matter how grotesque and funny [the film is, it ...] has an essential seriousness

that gives *L'Age d'Or* a lasting Underground dignity.'(2) That the Surrealists would have balked at such epithets as 'seriousness' or (worse!) 'dignity' is without doubt, but what I think Tyler is trying to say is that *L'Age d'Or* had, for him, lost none of its power over the years, even when screened on the same billing as deeply controversial films by the likes of Jack Smith, Ron Rice, Warhol, Jodorowsky, *et al.*



To go further, I think it would be difficult to think of any other early sound feature which has maintained such a depth of power, having lost none of its ability to shock and disturb. That this success is a product of 'extremist' modernist theory in general, and the Surrealist agenda

specifically - with its emphasis on irrational states and obsessive actions - I hope to demonstrate in the following sections.

### *'Open the Prisons Disband the Army' (3)*

Europe was in political and social turmoil in the early years of the Twentieth Century. The revolution in Russia and the horrors of the World War were ever present as an influence on the burgeoning Avant-Garde and its rejection of the prevailing values which had led on one hand to rapid progress in commerce and industry, and on the other to mass destruction on a seemingly unprecedented scale. Out of this protean mass of vital, in some cases, violent, creative energy, which had given birth to a plethora of artistic movements and their cinematic corollaries - Futurism in Italy, Expressionism in Russia and Germany, Impressionism in France, and others - came the Zurich based movement which was to embody the most extreme rejection of 'bourgeois values', Dada.

A nonsense word meant to reflect the vapid culture it opposed, Dada was the product of several ex-patriots of France, Germany and other European countries who had opposed the war from

neutral Switzerland. Their 'triumphant' return to France in 1919 was heralded by later members of the Surrealist group, such as Andre Breton and Louis Aragon, as an event sounding the death knell of bourgeois culture. (4) The nihilistic / satirical aims of Dada had been summed up perfectly by Aragon:

*No more painters, no more  
writers, no more musicians,  
no more religions, no more  
republicans, no more  
royalists, no more  
imperialists, no more  
anarchists ....no more  
politicians, no more armies,  
no more  
police....NOTHING,  
NOTHING, NOTHING.*

And again - 'The true Dadas are anti Dada. Everyone is a leader of Dada.' (5)

This wilful rejection of clear definitions and objectives, so forcefully asserted in the manifestoes and pronouncements of other modernist movements, was typified by the most famous example of Dada cinema, Rene Clair's *Entr'acte* (1924) which literally means 'intermission' or 'interval', a subversive dig at 'cultured' audiences used to interpreting 'art' as significant,

important or elevated (as, perhaps, a reflection of how we tend to view ourselves... ) not something relegated to the curtain break! By the time of *Entr'acte's* (restricted) release Surrealism was, of course, an established force, and Breton had begun to steer it away from its ultra-nihilistic Dada roots into new, fertile areas, which still rejected bourgeois culture but replaced Dada's 'NOTHING, NOTHING, NOTHING' with the systematic exploration of madness, dream, obsession and desire; an interest it shared tangentially with Psychoanalysis. Breton's famous definition of Surrealism as

*Pure psychic automatism by  
which it is intended to  
express, either verbally or in  
writing, the true function of  
thought. Thought dictated in  
the absence of all control  
exerted by reason, and  
outside all aesthetic or moral  
preoccupations (6)*

...can be seen as the radical 'blueprint' for *L'Age d'Or* - a concerted rejection of establishment notions of 'good sense' and 'taste', and also a raging summation of Surrealist aims and preoccupations in cinematic form.

*'Abandon the Caverns of Existence' (7)*

According to John Russell Taylor (8), Buñuel was annoyed with the reception his previous Surreal film, the collaboration with Salvador Dali, *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) had received, referring to the critics as 'a crowd of imbeciles who found "beautiful" or "poetic" what is, fundamentally, only a despairing, passionate call to murder'. (9) Because of this *L'Age d'Or*, which had far less input from Dali, is as Taylor rightly observes, a much more sustained and caustic indictment of 'all that the religious, the conservative, hold most dear'. (10)

The film opens with documentary footage (shot by Buñuel himself?) of scorpions. The inter titles understatedly announce the fact that scorpions are 'not at all sociable' - not just an entomological fact, but also the philosophical orientation of the 'ideal' Surrealist who remains aloof to more orthodox, 'sociable' passions. In case there is any doubt that the scorpion is a *symbol* of misanthropic qualities the action on screen shows one scorpion violently throwing another one out of its nest. Another scene shows a rat being stung to death. The poisonous

ruthlessness of the scorpion is a quality worthy of admiration for a film maker whose work is a self proclaimed 'passionate call to murder'. Yet the sequence is not without comic effect with its curious combination of melodramatic musical score, pseudoscientific titles and horrifying imagery. In this 'prologue' a sense of perverse black humour is evident which sets the tone of the rest of the film.

The next sequence begins with the caption 'Some hours afterward', relating the unfolding events to the footage of scorpions. The simple tactic of relating apparently disparate or conflicting sets of images to one another creates a surprisingly effective disorientating effect. Before we can wonder what the ragged figure on the screen before us has in common with the previous documentary sequence the action has moved on.

The tatty figure is seen to be one of a number of decrepit old soldiers who live in a ramshackle barn in a state almost like suspended animation. The sequence where there is a sudden call to arms (interrupting their meaningless activities) is comic and pathetic at the same time. The leader of the men is played by Max Ernst. Though more duty

bound than his comrades, he too is lacklustre and fares no better than the rest, all of whom end up falling to sleep – or into a coma – on the march up to the cliff tops ('epic' soundtrack music creates an ironic juxtaposition to the action). In their dishevelled and injured state, the soldiers exist in a twilight world of delirium and nonsense. Their status as the last military outpost guarding against the invasion of the 'Majorcans' speaks of a moribund existence bound by empty tradition, creating a weariness for life that cannot be surmounted. This is surely a critique of jaded lives in the wake of World War and revolution. The soldiers are 'going through the motions' like people in Artaud's 'caverns of existence'; they have given up the fight half way up the hill.

### **'L'Amour Fou' (11)**

The 'Majorcans' invade to lay a foundation stone before the now venerated, skeletalised priests. Here the major theme of the film gets under way. In the midst of all this officialdom with its vaudevillian dignitaries, the film's 'stars', Gaston Modot and Lya Lys are discovered in a passionate clinch, rolling in the mud and crying out unselfconsciously in their ardour. This is the kind of obsessive love, the love which

'disregards circumstances, annihilates time and place' (12) called *amour fou* – or 'mad love'. It was idealised by the Surrealists (13) and was a force which, as again Taylor points out, was 'for Buñuel the strongest, most explosive force in the world'. (14) Almost all of the rest of the film follows the exploits of Modot and Lys as they attempt to reach one another through an unceasing stream of obstacles. Buñuel's critique of social conventions which waste time and drain vitality in the name of politeness and protocol is withering in its disdain. Modot is a perfect example of the Surrealist hero – or rather anti-hero – who is willing to commit crimes against society to achieve his aim. He is made to kick defenceless small dogs, shout abuse at strangers and assault blind men in his obsessive rage. His lust causes him to hallucinate, for example in the scene where he sees a window display form into a woman's hand masturbating. This image is followed by one of a toilet. The suggestion is that the repression of sexuality leads to 'sordid' behaviour – one is 'reduced' to masturbating in the toilet.

Both Modot and Lys are in a 'love trance' criminalized by society. A particularly effective sequence occurs as Lys shoos a cow out of

her bedroom (a Freudian symbol of her mother) and sits mournfully before her mirror. These shots are paralleled by Modot biting his lip in sexual fury as he stares into a shop window. The scenes are linked by a beautifully haunting sound bridge of dogs barking, wind blowing, bells ringing. The lover's expressions take on a dreamy rapture as they seem to telepathically sense each other's presence, in the grip of Buñuel's 'force which annihilates time and place'. As Taylor points out (15) Buñuel's use of over lapping and distorted sound throughout *L'Age d'Or* is a revolutionary factor of the film which is often overlooked.

Broadly satirical elements characterise the 'dinner party' sequence, and here Surrealism's indictment of bourgeois culture is at its most obvious. Jet black humour elicits the viewer's nervous laughter as a maid bursts through a kitchen door in flames while all the guests blithely carry on their conversations, completely unmoved. A dignified gentleman's face is covered in big, juicy houseflies but no one seems to notice (another Freudian representation of his inner corruption..?) Even the game keeper's shooting of his son for some trifling mischief fails to create much of a stir. By contrast,

when Modot enters the party (carrying an empty dress - his elusive lover - as his symbolic companion) there is a scandal when he hits Lys's mother over a spilt drink. This insufferable cad is the lowest of the low! Modot's clamouring after Lys causes him to break the most serious of taboos: striking the hostess. He is now beyond the pale.

When the lovers finally get together in a secluded avenue of the garden, their passion is still interrupted, and now clumsy, as though they can no longer roll around unselfconsciously as they did before their separation. Another reference to Freud's theories is portrayed in their inhibited love making which has taken on infantile characteristics. They paw each other and suck each other's fingers. Their 'repressed' behaviour results in grotesque delusions, such as the image of a gory faced Modot chanting 'mon amour' in a terrible voice, a nightmare image of the uncanny.(16) Finally the infantile nature of Lys's sexuality is made explicit in the transference of her affections to her father. In a curious sequence beginning with her father suddenly stopping conducting the party orchestra due to a head pain, his and Modot's role as Lys's lover are



exchanged. The blow to the head would seem to signal psychological trauma.

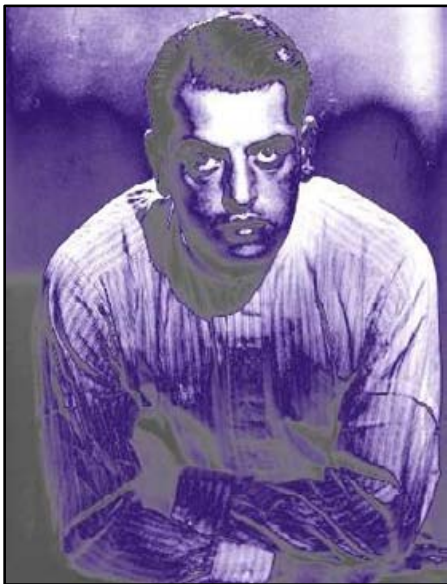
In this sequence, the shots occur in rapid succession as the drumming on the soundtrack continues, signifying mounting tension. The themes of sexual repression, transference and sublimation are acted out as a Freudian psychodrama entirely in keeping with the interests and theories of Surrealism. The shots I have described are part one of a shocking climax to the 'mad love' segments of the film. 'Part two' can be seen as Modot's frenzied tantrum, as he plunges into a fit of despair due to Lys's rejection. His destructive temper runs amok as he flings an assortment of bizarre objects from a bedroom window; a burning Christmas tree, a stuffed giraffe, a catholic priest(!) This is meant to signify the random nature of his destruction. Modot's descent into random violence is a result of the sexual jealousy endemic in a repressive society. The suggestion is that repression leads to perversion, guilt and falsity - ultimately to madness. Pain, blindness and violence are major characteristics of the human condition which Freudian analysis sees sublimated in dreams and the subconscious mind. Surrealism attempts to incorporate these suppressed or

marginalized functions of consciousness into works of art and release them like wild beasts from their cages. Love is only 'mad' because bourgeois values twist it into something unrecognisable.

There is a famous coda to *L'Age d'Or*, which references Sade's infamous *Les 120 Jours de Sodome* that some critics have seen as a joke in poor taste. (17) It infers that Christ was one of the torturers involved in that catalogue of sexual atrocities. As the beasts slouch out of the Castle of Selligny there is a cry of torment and a young woman emerges. Christ turns, not to heal her, but to finish her off so that there is no witness to his crimes. Jaunty music blares onto the soundtrack and we are left with an image of the cross sporting an array of scalps, the victims of Christ's debauches. Chillingly we are reminded of the mountain of women's hair seen in Nazi concentration camp footage in Resnais' mortifying *Night and Fog* (1957). Suddenly, with the benefit of hindsight, the Surreal 'joke' equating bourgeois Christianity with repressed violent tendencies seems chillingly prophetic.

## 'Convulsive Beauty' (17)

*L'Age d'Or* is a filmic Surrealist manifesto which incorporates all the major themes and philosophical interests and obsessions of the group in what Maurice Nadeau (18) has called its 'heroic period': Dreams, automatism, Freudian Analysis, Mad Love, anti-establishmentarianism, desire, the subconscious *et al.* In its entire effect we find the film to be totally uncompromising and endlessly challenging. The overall impact is still fresh and vital after more than 70 years, which is a testament to Buñuel's consummate skill in interpreting the wider Surrealist agenda, but also injecting his personal vision into a cinematic creation of convulsive beauty.



## Notes

- 1 Houston, Penelope in *The Contemporary Cinema*, London 1963, page 157.
- 2 Tyler, Parker in *Underground Film*, London 1974 (1969), page 27.
- 3 The title of a polemical essay in *La Revolution Surrealiste* No. 2, Jan. 1925, quoted in Waldberg, Patrick, *Surrealism*, London 1968 (1965), page 49, which states 'Social coercion has had its day'.
- 4 See Franck, Dan, *The Bohemians, The Birth of Modern Art: Paris 1900 - 1930*, London, 2001, page 224 ff.
- 5 Aragon quoted in Nadeau, Maurice, *The History of Surrealism*, London, 1968, page 62.
- 6 Breton's *First Surrealist Manifesto*, quoted in Waldberg, page 72.
- 7 A phrase used by Antonin Artaud to signify the poverty of the common experience of life. He was a short lived member of the group whose writings on film, and particularly the theatre, very much echoed the 'provocation and agitation' tactics of Bunuel. Artaud's work embodies a fierce dedication to the 'anti-tradition' in art which grew in influence as the twentieth century progressed. The quote is from Waldberg, page 56, 'Dinner is Served', *La Revolution Surrealiste* No.3, April, 1925.

8 Taylor, John Russell, *Cinema Eye, Cinema Ear – Some Key Film Makers of the Sixties*, London, 1964.

9 Taylor, page 85.

10 Ibid. page 86.

11 Breton wrote an essay with this title in 1937 which is reprinted in Nadeau, page 314.

12 Bunuel quoted in Taylor, page 87.

13 See Breton in Nadeau, page 314 ff.

14 Taylor, page 87.

15 Ibid. Page 86.

16 Freud suggested that the repressed, once something familiar, takes on an uncanny effect when it returns in unfamiliar (symbolic or sublimated) form. See 'The Uncanny' in Freud, Sigmund, *Collected Papers Volume 4*, London 1957 (1925) page 368 - 407.

17 See Harcourt, Peter, Luis Bunuel, Spaniard and Surrealist, London, 1967, page 6.

18 See again Nadeau (page 312) which reprints Breton's essay 'Beauty will be Convulsive or Not Be At All'. As I understand it, the substance of Breton's thought is that a new form of aesthetics should inform life and art which should turn perceptions inside out / upside-down, invalidating the old system of values. The title is taken from the last line of another brilliant work of Breton's, *Nadja* (1928) where the

word 'convulsive' is rendered in capitals.

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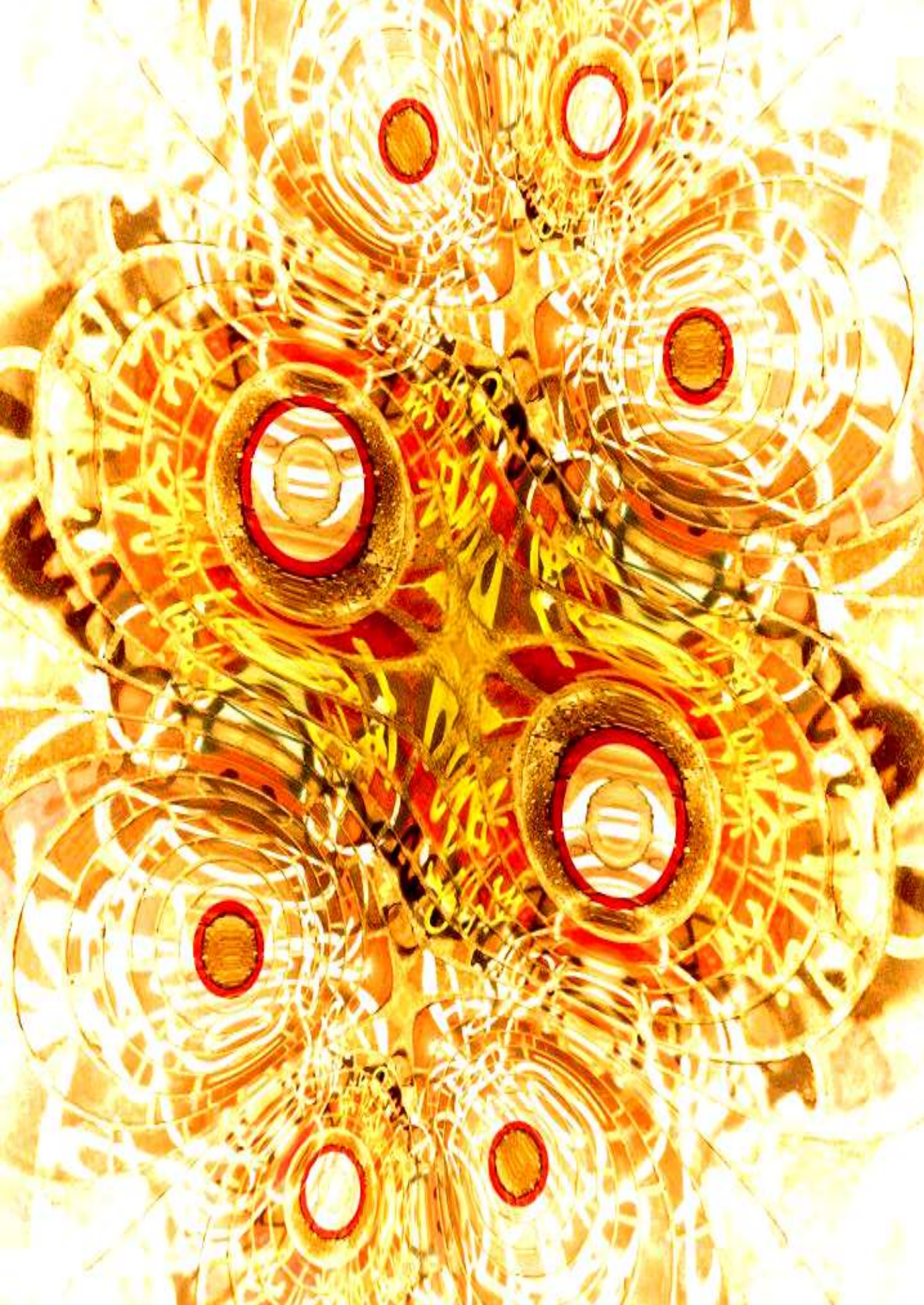
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Waldberg, Patrick, *Surrealism*, London, 1968 (1965).



# PRIAPUS

By Kate MacDonald

I never told my friends what I was thinking about women. They pretty much figured out at some point that I just didn't seem that interested. They knew that even if something started, it wouldn't end up going anywhere. And I knew what they thought they knew. What did they know? They'd look at me and, because we were supposed to be different than the football pricks and their friends, they would try to send me these subtle signals that they were aware that it was supposed to be OK for me to be gay, even though I could tell it made them uncomfortable. So what did they know?

Derrick, one of my best friends when I was a kid and, by the time I was in high school, more of a moderately friendly acquaintance, once kissed me when we were hanging out at his place smoking pot. I felt sorry for him, Believing he had a chance because at that point everyone was pretty much convinced I was a fag anyway, so I let him press his lips onto mine and move them around, then stick his tongue into my mouth. Our tongues were dried out from the pot, and we had no energy, so we

just sat there for a few seconds, disinterestedly rubbing our spongy, felt-covered tongues together. Powerfully unsexy, that.

A few years later, Derrick came out of the closet while he was a third year student at the art college. We were pretty much entirely out of touch at that point, but I still saw him around occasionally and said hi. I heard that when he came out, he basically made it a mission to make up for the years he'd wasted pretending he was interested in women by sleeping with every man he could get his hands on. I saw him in bars occasionally, and not the city's openly gay bars either. He'd walk up to anyone, any guy who caught his fancy. And more than once, I remember seeing him leave with someone who ten minutes before had been crouching to get a view up the skirt of one of the girls on the dance floor.

Then one of those times- I wasn't around when this happened- he predictably got too bold and made a very overt pass at a guy who really wasn't up to

considering the possible benefits of homosexuality. This guy grabbed him and beat his face repeatedly into a brick wall. There was a stain for months, which I can remember seeing, although it was only later that I found out what it came from. Derrick had all the molars in his lower right jaw smashed to pretty much nothing, shards of them embedded in his tongue. His cheekbone was so badly crushed that doctors couldn't do anything to repair it. So now his right cheekbone is a metal plate. You can feel it, hard and immovable underneath his skin. He showed me once when I ran into him, got me to press my fingers against the flash over his robot's skull.

We hadn't talked in a long while, but as soon as he told me that story, told me about the feeling of his face swelling up to a gelatinous mass and of his lacerated tongue pressing against the pulpy stubs of teeth, I felt like we had always been close. So he became the person I trusted, at least for the time it took me to explain it all to him. I wanted someone to understand what I had gone through, even if he couldn't do anything about it.

Like I said, we weren't really close in high school. We had hung around vaguely in the same crowd, wannabe punk kids in ripped pants with architectural hair. We stayed out late at the video arcade, which was the only place that would let us hang around in groups. We drank and smoked and had a lot of fights with our parents. The most hardcore had big fights with their parents and ran away, sometimes for four or five days at a time. So during that period, I knew him mostly as a face from my past who also hung around at the arcade.

I knew a lot of people through that place. It was my whole social network. That was where I met Emily, my first girlfriend. We never did anything much, although I wanted to. We kissed a lot and gave each other hickeys. She was amazing at giving hickeys that would last for days and, for some reason, I was convinced that this would translate to her being great at giving head (which, I suppose I don't need to mention, was something I hadn't experienced). I asked her for it a couple of times, which is, I guess, why she dumped me.

It didn't really matter, because by the time that she left me, I already had my eye on Marisa. Marisa with her gypsy face and her tough attitude and her reticent but perfect smile. She was the kind of girl we were all after, that kind of girl who can hang out with you and then all of a sudden it can get to be more. She'd drink with us, she'd flirt, she'd go home, but I could feel it right in my gut, that she liked me. So why should I care about losing Emily?

Every time I jerked off, I thought about Marisa. I thought about what it would feel like to get inside her. I hadn't done that with anyone yet, either, so I had to go on my theory as to what it was going to feel like. In theory, it was pretty fucking amazing. I thought about it a lot.

All teenaged boys are horny, everybody knows that, but I think I might have qualified for some sort of medal in the horny Olympics. I can't count the number of times I got off thinking about what it was going to be like to fuck Marisa, thinking about how her pussy would feel wet and muscular, like a piece of meat closing around me, which isn't how it feels, but it was the only theory I had to go on. I figured

there was no way that I could ever say anything like this to any of my friends, because there was no way they were anywhere near as bad as I was.

I was on my way to dropping out of school at that point, so I was working part-time as a short order cook in a family restaurant. I would be there in the bathroom, praying no one would be able to figure out what I was doing and trying to keep from making any of those telltale grunting noises. Your aim isn't that good when you're young, so I remember hoping that the people assigned to clean the bathrooms did a decent job, because there was no way I managed to wipe up everything.

Once, this old man was in the stall next to me the whole time. I started to get paranoid that he was staying because he knew what I was doing, that he was going to rat me out. I was scared, because I needed the money from the job if I was ever going to be able to move out of my parents' house. But as scared as I was, I still finished the job. What was the point in stopping if I was going to get fired anyway? It didn't occur to me until afterward that he might have been staying in the

adjacent stall for an entirely different reason.

There were other stories from that place, which are probably best forgotten. Just let me give you one piece of advice: don't ever order a Caesar salad in a restaurant.

Marisa and I had been dating a couple of weeks and things were getting farther each time. Each time, we'd cross one more little line in the sand, get that much closer. We both wanted things to go faster, but they couldn't. It was a logistical thing. We both lived with our parents. I had a younger sister who was usually around. She had ten year-old twin brothers who were always around. She'd even told me that they had found a way to sneak into her closet by moving aside some of the boards in the back and that they used to hide in there with the door slightly ajar to watch her change. Privacy was at a premium.

We went to the arcade on Saturday, just to hang out and drink and be together. We had a few beers, but then a couple of guys from school showed up with a bottle of rum they'd stolen from one of their parents. So we hung out and we kept drinking. They

had more besides the bottle of rum it turned out, but I can't really remember what else. I remember kissing Marisa a lot, how sloppy and saliva-drenched those kisses got, because we were both so wasted. I remember feeling a spot on my face getting sore from the wet and the way her hair kept chafing against me.

"Let's go, come on." She was standing unsteadily, pulling at my arm, pulling me to my feet while I asked where we were going. "Back to my place. My folks are asleep, they won't hear us."

I figured I knew how bad it would be if we got caught, because she'd told me how insane her father could get, but I also knew that the kids- she and her nearly retarded twin brothers- slept in the basement and that her parents slept upstairs, two floors away. And besides, if I had been able to get off with an old man in the stall next to me while I was at work, what chance was there that I was going to resist the woman I had been fantasizing about a dozen times a day for weeks?

Her bedroom was small and claustrophobic and it made me way too conscious of how hard the mix of alcohol was hitting me.



I felt her hands on me, under my shirt, pulling my shirt off with the grace of someone in the midst of a seizure. When it finally came off, I didn't know if it was even still in one piece. But here was this gorgeous thing underneath me and finally *it* was happening. I wasn't going to be another pathetic pimply virgin whacking off alone.

Just in case her parents had been disturbed, she turned on her stereo, not too loud, but enough so that they'd think she was down here by herself listening to music. The stereo was this lurid baby pink thing that her father got her, because he was hoping that the big boots and dark eye make-up and ripped clothes were just a phase. Coming out of it was the Dead Kennedys' *Too Drunk to Fuck* and we were laughing about that... But I wasn't too drunk. I was wasted, but I had never been as ready to fuck as I was at that moment. I can't even imagine how drunk I'd have to be not to be able to fuck. I used to love that song.

At the same time, I was suddenly aware of the fact that I needed to go to the bathroom. I needed to go badly. My bladder was so swollen it hurt a lot when I pressed

against her. What's worse, it seemed to be keeping me from getting hard. At no point since I had hit puberty had I ever found it difficult to get hard, but every time I started to get excited, my bladder felt like it was going to burst, a horrible, swelling, stabbing pain. I wanted to ignore it, I wanted it to just go away, but I didn't want my first time to be the one where I unexpectedly pissed on the girl in the middle of everything. We were half undressed and I knew: before it goes any farther, I have to ask her.

I asked cringingly, like she'd be so offended that she'd kick me out, because no man in history would ever have been so stupid as to need to go to the bathroom when he was about to have sex, but she just laughed and patted my head and told me "it's the first door on the left". I saw her head fall back on the pillow and I was a little worried she wouldn't still be conscious when I got back, but I felt better when I heard her laughing softly and singing along with the lyrics

*You're out of luck  
I'm rolling down the stairs  
Too drunk to fuck*

I stumbled a bit, but I grabbed the first doorknob on the left an

walked in. It was a tiny fucking room and I couldn't find the light. I was so desperate, I gave up looking. I was so eager to be done and get back there, that I didn't think that aiming in the dark while wasted might have some unforeseen consequences. So I just let it happen. No orgasm ever felt as good as the feeling of being able to piss at that moment.

Still, in the background, I could hear Marisa singing along

*It's all I need right now  
Too drunk to fuck*

Loved that song.

That's where it gets fucked up. I'm standing there, taking a leak, listening to Marisa singing and then there's this weird, shrill, animal noise, a loud noise in front of me. It made me step back, but I'm still trying to hold on to myself, trying to stay in control. Then Marisa isn't singing along any more, she's yelling, she's screaming at me

"WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING?"

And I hear a crash, her falling as she's coming for me and she's still yelling. I don't even know what I'm doing, but this awful,

screaching sound in front of me won't stop. I think it's the pipes or something and she's mad because the sound is going to wake everyone up. I grab at the wall, desperate to find the light switch, but it isn't there, and I fall backwards. I can feel the last hot splashes of urine on my pant leg, soaking through.

Then the lights are on. The lights are on and I'm no longer in a bathroom. I'm standing in a closet, hanging on to the door frame looking around at my half naked girlfriend, who's yelling at me and at others. Looking at the two young boys in front of me, covered in something wet, crying, screaming, that awful shrill sound. Looking at the man who's yelling at me and at my girlfriend, waving something, waving three arms at me.

You think it's funny. What would you do?

You're standing in a room with your dick still in your hand and you're looking at a man with a baseball bat. His daughter is screaming something unintelligible at the top of her lungs and her clothes are half torn off. His two sons are on the floor in front of you covered in your

piss. So go ahead, think of an explanation.

Think quickly.

Derrick told me he went through the same thing, getting beaten. You don't remember much of it. You remember these weird, still photo moments. I remember hitting the floor. And seeing spots of blood around me. I remember how loud it was all around me, all these voices shrieking nothing. The nausea that ripped right through me when he hit me in the stomach. And again. And again. And again. Seeing a strip of torn clothing, bloody torn clothing, hanging off my head of all places. Realising later that it was a strip of my own skin. And I remember for whatever reason, the horrible vulnerability that I felt, the desperate need I had, to try to get my exposed dick back in my pants to protect it.

I woke up in the alley behind their house. I won't describe the pain, because it would be pointless. I had to walk home, through the streets, with people staring at me, trying to hold my pants up, because my hands were too swollen to be able to do up the fly. I told my parents I'd been beaten up by a gang. They'd surprised

me. It had been too quick. I hadn't seen them. They'd robbed me.

My parents took me to the emergency ward and they repeated my lie for the nurses.

I had broken bones in both my hands. Defensive wounds, from trying to ward off blows. They would have been among the first injuries I'd received. My ribs were dislocated. I had internal bleeding from blows to my stomach and kidneys. To this day, I keep my head shaved, because there is a patch, where the strip of skin came off, where hair won't grow beyond a pre-pubescent peach fuzz.

Because of the broken hands, I missed enough school to fail my grade, completing the process flunking out my adolescent angst had begun some months before. Because of the broken hands, I lost my job.

When I got out of the hospital, I made a big pile out of the clothes I'd been wearing that night, even my boots. I took them out to our backyard when my parents were out and stuffed them in a garbage can, along with my Dead Kennedys records and set the whole lot on fire. I stood and

watched everything contorting and disappearing and rising in smoke or sinking to carbon until it was out of existence.

This is the stuff I could deal with.

Derrick asked me if I ever wanted to ask the guy who did this to me what made him so angry. He said that he's always wanted to find the guy who hurt him and ask him what the big deal was. Why would something so common make someone so angry? I mean, everyone knows about guys and their dicks. You'll do anything to get it what it wants, take any risk. Any man, any man at all, should understand that.

Not anymore. Not me.

After that, I pretty much stopped getting hard-ons, ever, except those ones in the morning that no one can avoid. I just wait for those to go away on their own. I was twenty-five before I even tried to touch myself again and even then, it didn't work. Every time I think about going there, it goes limp. Every time, I get the picture of this furious sweaty man in his bathrobe. Every time, I feel the blows on me, I am in that primal terror again. That's what feeling

aroused means to me. That's what getting an erection means to me. Powerfully unsexy, that.

I let people think I was gay, because at least my friends, who weren't gay, wouldn't be trying to fix me up with girls.

I didn't bother telling Derrick that my reticence never went away. He told me about his boyfriend and their dog and their life together and I realised I couldn't tell him any more. I am no longer a pathetic, pimply virgin jerking off alone. I'm a virgin not doing anything. If a woman comes near me, I panic, I start counting the exits and thinking of those still images that have stayed with me. Everything in me starts to shut down and, as those images roll through my head, one at a time, slow like a slide show, I can feel my life being that much closer to ending.

I turned twenty-nine the week that Derrick and I were talking. I did tell him that I read a lot. That I was doing a doctoral dissertation. That I had gone to Europe for two years to study. That's the stuff that sounds good. That's the stuff in my life that is good.

It isn't what I expected.

## ALBUM REVIEWS



### **MOUTH OF MARS** **Jen Gloeckner**

There are two words I hate to see in a music review – ‘eclectic’ and ‘ambient’. Which leaves me looking desperately for alternatives to try to describe Jen Gloeckner’s second album.

From the opening track (in which a spiralling near chaos of bells underpinned by bass guitar, provides a backdrop of controlled abandon against which Gloeckner breathes oblique clusters of words), I was ravished by the music on offer here.

As the album progresses the listener is taken on a journey through a magical realist soundscape that alternates between sharp-focus song structures and shimmering summer heat haze atmospheres where all the tricks of the studio have been employed to keep you happily off balance.

Backward guitars, heaped reverberation, stop/start unusual time signatures opaque cello flourishes and false endings add to the unreal mood of this album and repeated listenings do nothing to diminish its beautiful strangeness.

For the time being, this album is only available from Jen’s site:

<http://jengloeckner.com/tag/mouth-of-mars>



### **WARM ROBOT** **Jen Olive** **Ape**

Equally beautiful but almost diametrically opposed in terms of form is the above offering; a long distance collaboration between musician Jen Olive and producer Andy Partridge, whose own quirky key progressions and time signatures are mirrored here in the controlled virtuosity of Olive’s guitar phrasing and song structures. Math rock with liquid crystal eyeliner. [PM]



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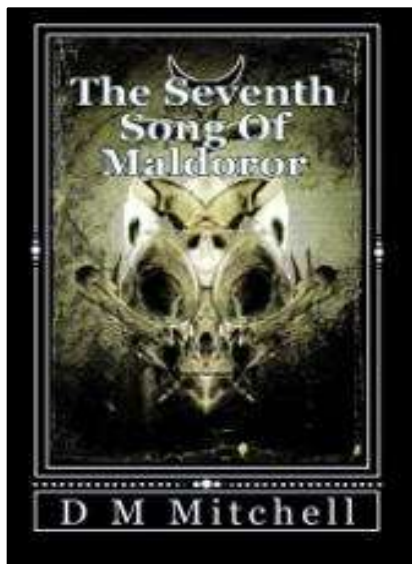
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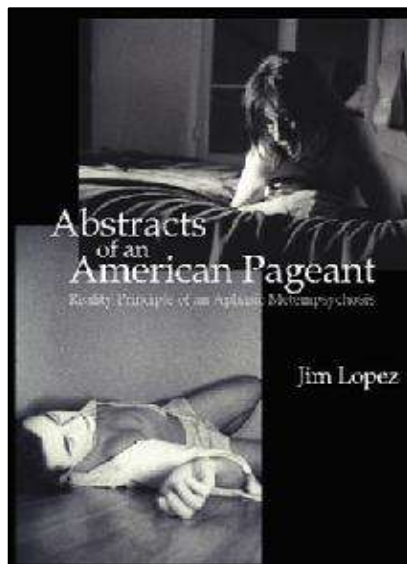
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