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In What Array That They They Were In and Participating Godlike Food

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IN WHAT ARRAY THAT THEY WERE IN
and
PARTICIPATING GODLIKE FOOD

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the

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THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

We recommend the dissertation prepared under our supervision by

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May 2013

Abstract

I am submitting two manuscripts for my creative dissertation, *In What Array That They Were In* and *Participating Godlike Food*. The former is a sequence of odes followed by a brief epic, followed by a cycle of verse dramas, with an ode epilogue. The latter is a book-length excerpt from an epic poem/crime novel/Menippean satire/television show/Dada collage/historical document/vatic investigation that comes in 20 page sections that are supposed to approximate the 42 minutes of an average crime show.

Preface to *In What Array That They Were In* and *Participating Godlike Food*

For my creative dissertation , I am submitting two manuscripts, called *In What Array That They Were In* and *Participating Godlike Food*.

In What Array That They Were In starts with a linked series of lyrics exploring the mechanisms and assumptions of the Pindaric and Horatian methods of ode, and about the Arab Spring and structure of history; then goes to a brief epic that explores the nature of the intersection of allegory, emblem, and document, with a post-phenomenological vision of the structure of the soul; and climaxes with a series of linked verse dramas about atrocities in South Carolina history. These all represent a move from the interior stasis of the lyric; to narrative mode that contains some interior, but moves toward “men of action,/ here to give your animals tangible traction,” as Bruce Springsteen says toward the end of the poem; finally to an investigation of visionary action and history in the plays, about the mystery of how to act in the world, and the burden of “carrying that slow rune slowly into town.” The collection ends with an ode-epilogue questioning whether the program of the whole structure was worth pursuing in the first place. Below are descriptions of the ideas behind the four individual sections.

Some Odes: Horace describes the odes of Pindar as a giant swollen river, a *ruit profundo* or profound falling, while he himself is the careful bee gathering thyme, with the *moro modoque apis*, mores and modes of the Bee, if you will. These seemed to me the two poles of strophic art, the turning art of the ode. In the poems I wrote, I dealt with Horatian and Pindaric methods of ode as a loose dichotomy of sorts, the first smoother,

more logical, hypotactic, ideal for personal addresses, and, particularly, political and historical considerations; and the second more jagged, wild, paratactic dedicated to vision, ecstasy, and celebration. I tried to see if the formal tendencies encouraged the philosophical tendencies, and looked into what happened when the modes collide or interpenetrate, explored the way the ode is the lyric form most suited to incorporating and synthesizing multiple perspectives and positions and even types and modes of materials.

Inter Umbras Arborum, A Pastoral Phantasm-agoria: Inter Umbras Arborum is a long poem in quatrains about a Nightingale with a baby face and Three Jabirus with fetus faces who take the narrator to a series of locations in which are located emblems and examples of the seven divisions of the soul. It's Egyptology and phenomenology and landscapes and etymologies psychotropically mixed, basically. It is nine sections in all (introduction, seven sections of the soul, conclusion). The title is from *Pervigilum Veneris*, and means "among the shadows of trees."

It is an allegory, but I have in mind something like Dante's four-part theory of allegory, which is always literally, allegorically, morally and anagogically the case: it is polysemous, not metaphorical. I'm not interested in the particulars of Dante's system there, but more generally in the fact that he is claiming that all four are literally the case at all times: it amounts to a claim that reality itself is polysemous and tetrafoliate, at least. You could translate his four part system into, respectively, these more widely applicable categories: there is the history of events, the literal history, the domain of the newspaper or the documentary; then the history of the soul, the spirit history, the history of consciousness, that thing Olson was after in "The Kingfishers", the move from Pope to

Keats for instance; then there is the personal and subjective impression, that thing that happens inside of us that was the particular domain of Hamlet or of the Romantics; then finally there is that which will happen when the history of events, the history of souls, the subjective rumblings of the interior are bound up in some event of future transformation: how do all of these things coalesce into our future actions? While the particulars of the world view of Dante don't really apply to my poem, I do think that, to use the example I use in the notes, when Bill Callahan is mentioned, he is historically and literally himself; *but also* represents a certain point of development in the history of consciousness and the spirit as a result of cultural forces and flows; *but also* represents my subjective and personal response to his work as a flimsy and private aspect of my autobiography; *but also* is part of the mechanism of spirit that will launch me into my future and my actions, and my engagement with the world in its literal and spiritual movement forward. So it is an allegory, but not so simply as *Pilgrim's Progress*, perhaps.

The narrative language of this poem is a little unusual and probably would benefit from a little explanation as well. The narrative style is heavily influenced by silent film: each stanza is in essence a scene, a strip of film, or an inter-card, and stanza breaks do the work of a jump-cut or of montage, depending on the situation. The language of the individual stanza is lyric, following images, emotions, or ideas not strictly necessary to the narrative in a schematic sense. However, the stanzas have been cinematically arranged to produce a juxtaposition-based narrative language.

The idea, essentially, was to write something with the condensation and density of a lyric, but with the mercurial, huge scope and wide flow of activity and adventure, of

spectacle, of all the shaggy, old narrative poems I love. The early days of cinema, particularly German Expressionist stuff like *Schatten* or *Secrets of the Soul*, provided a usable model of lyrical narrative language. Ideally, Cleanth Brooks could go to town on any particular passage of the poem, while Tim Burton could make a movie of it in approximately the way he translated *Alice in Wonderland* into the genre constraints of a contemporary Hollywood movie. Introduce fighting, and a love story the consummation of which would constitute the finale of the story, but the scenery and visuals, and the general quest-romance structure would remain the same.

Also, there is the matter of etymology. I often use modern abstractions, of primarily Greek or Latin origin, with both their modern abstract meaning and their earlier imagistic and metaphorical meaning, simultaneously. Why? Here again, Milton is the touchstone. At the time I was writing this, I was obsessed with Milton's hallucinogenic concept of etymology: Here's a famous example, from the opening proem, that I have directly stolen:

What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support,
That to the height of this great argument,
I may assert eternal providence.

So here when he uses *argument* we are meant to think to ourselves, "Ah yes, *argument*, coming from the Latin *arguo*, meaning *to bring to better light*, which comes from *argos*,

Greek for *bright white*. He is playing on the metaphorical origins of the abstract concept of *argument*, with the earlier reference to illumination, and the subsequent reference to providence, which means literally *fore-seeing, pro-videre*. In this way, logical argument and divine inspiration are given the same metaphorical expression, and placed on the same epistemic base, and can be equivocated on legitimately. Argument here is the light that shows us what God sees, the providential structure of the world. I get it. Clever, Milton. Taking apart the very concepts that make concepts possible, by deconstructing their etymological history, to make language and thought fresh at every moment. Neat, Milton.”

That’s part of why there is so much about hieroglyphics and ideograms in this poem: I became very interested in language at that adolescent stage between pictographic simplicity, where a picture of a horse is a horse, and the total abstraction of modern language where *chivalry* is an entire moral code with class and historical associations, but is named for a French horse. It’s horse-y-ism, literally. How did we get there? I was especially interested in taking apart the categories of western Philosophy, the Anglo-American tradition in particular, which seems so sterile and self-perpetuating, devoid of any nuanced notion of philology, and culturally chauvinistic as a result. My hallucinogenic etymological usages activate both the image and the abstraction, vacillating constantly between them in the unremitting process of their making and unmaking, forming and reforming in slightly different ways every time, as the sea reforms in different waves according to deeper tides.

About the front and back notes that are actually included with the text: I have kept them inside because I think of them as part of the text now, central to its rhetorical position. They represent a couple of different strata of self-interpretation and self-promotion, stacked in slow accretion over the course of about a year.

Also, I heavily revised each section as a unit in itself, but left each section afterward as a relic of my approach at that time. I wanted it to have the effect of watching a television show or reading a serialized novel: you can see me solving the problems of the text in different ways in each section, and there is genuine progress in the consciousness of the narrator, while, in a corollary way, the prosody and style also significantly change. Just look at the line lengths in the first section compared to the seventh section: you can *see* on the page how much longer the later lines are, how much closer it has approached to the slow shafts of a hexameter. The rhymes also get progressively weirder. It starts in chimes and ends in gongs. The movement is essentially a progress from the stasis of the lyric to the allegorical nonfiction of visionary action.

Carolina Cycle, a Tetrafoliate Portrait of Charleston: I have drawn in these plays from Greek, Sanskrit, Noh, and Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatic traditions, the sense of the possibilities of for narrative melody in opera, the unnatural dialogue of the theater of the absurd, the alienating effects of Brecht's epic theater.

The choral voice in these plays, for instance, is draws from individual emotions, communal speculation, intellectual trails of thought, narrative description (whose narration?), often providing subtext for the foregrounded speeches; the emotionally intense metaphorical language which does not relate a sequence of events, but rather

approaches music, and is considered the domain of lyric poetry; splitting and reforming constantly, echoing within and between, bifurcating, trifurcating, and conjoining finally in multiple modes; all of these tendencies works off suggestion of Greek, Noh, and operatic traditions, while having an effect quite different from any of them.

All the plays derive in embryo from the chapters in *Murder and Mayhem in the Holy City*, by Pat Hendrix, though obviously supplemented by other sources, with details changed or warped as condensation or thought experiment demanded, and my imagination has been a strange glue on this, too, obviously. I added all the ghosts and zombies.

As to the last and long play, it is basically a fable of postmodern liberalism. It is not really allegorical since the connections between the history of the play and contemporary conditions come not from random metaphorical associations but rather from historical cause: these are the conditions that our contemporary situation and the basic structure of the stream has not fundamentally changed, the banks of the stream have only eroded in a accordance with their origins.

The central concept of the play comes from the press release that David Simon, the creator of *The Wire*, put out when Felicia Pearson, Snoop from *The Wire*, was arrested for murder, which said, “Both our Constitution and our common law guarantee that we will be judged by our peers, but in truth, there are now two Americas, politically and economically distinct. I, for one, do not qualify as a peer for Felicia Pearson. The opportunities and experiences of her life do not correspond in any way with my own, and her America is different from my own. I am therefore ill-equipped to be her judge in this

matter.” It seemed like a very postmodern thing to say, got me thinking about interpretive communities and justice, and how eventually pantheism and postmodernism collapse into each other, lateral schmorgus board of spiritual possibilities, as Wittgenstein once pointed out solipsism and naive realism eventually collapse into each other. Or perhaps this leads to a visionary agnosticism.

I took away the notion that a trial is a consciousness, twelve people tasked with the burden of extreme consciousness of a situation, and that to insist on a jury of peers is to insist on a form of similar-consciousness, on membership within that big community brain. This is edging toward self-consciousness, it seems, as the eventual goal. So I thought, why not design a trial with a jury of pure self-consciousness, a jury by self, take this thing to the logical conclusion. Simon seems to think that the jury must ask themselves, would you convict yourself if you were someone else? that this identification with the accused is necessary to true justice. Otherwise, why would the jury need to be of peers? So seamless self-consciousness would be the best justice. Hence the eyeball stuff.

I picture something like the Tyrone Guthrie production of *Oedipus Rex*, with the masks removed for the middle dialogue (possibly on a hinge, like an armor helmet), the speech patterns turned deadpan there. The cycle splits evenly into 4 and 4 approximately equal units, the first three plays and the first act of the last play, and then the remaining four acts of the last play, with an intermission, an act of kindness to let everyone breathe, and drink, and express how uncomfortable they feel. The first act hopefully acts as a hook, dragging the interest and presence of the audience across the blank of the intermission. Ideally, the spectator could have recourse to a libretto of some sort, and the

audience would be encouraged to read the lines of the chorus aloud, becoming a part of the performance, as one does in church. In this way, the cycle is a night of entertainment.

When I say “wraith,” I mean the type of ghost that comes, often to loved ones, moments before the death of the ghost person, as a sort of messenger and last goodbye. For *Jeanne Berchaud*, “Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall,” is from *Paradise Lost*.

Why did I chose verse drama, of all the defunct and outmoded forms in the world? Because it represents a visionary form of narrative in opposition to the naturalistic narrative tradition centered around the novel, which dominates now. Verse drama tends to be used as:

1. A spiritual action. Like the epic, the tragedy is always an act of prayer. The elevated and variegated language, the non-naturalistic psychology and narrative mechanics of verse drama appeal over and over again to religious sensibilities, as a matter of historical fact. From the birth of Greek tragedy out of dithyrambs to Dionysus, the birth of Sanskrit drama out of Vedic rituals, the birth of Noh drama out of Buddhist temple dances, the birth of the English dramatic tradition out of the Miracle and Mystery plays drawn from medieval Christian liturgical practice, to the consistent concern in the Western dramatic tradition with the influence of the gods and related concerns about the nature of the structure of the universe in such apparently godless authors as Shakespeare, to the obvious liturgies of Fry or Eliot, the occult symbolist rituals of Yeats, the jovial quasi-paganism of Thomas, poetic theater was born, lived, and died on the altar. The methods of the verse drama are conducive to religious vision.

2. A historical reconstruction. Verse drama tends to be set in a distant or mythological setting, from *Oedipus Tyrannus* to *Atsumori* to *Hamlet* to *Murder in the Cathedral*, and is often an attempt at mythical and essential rather than naturalistic and rationalistic and eventually impossible because of the opacity of historical and cultural distance, consideration of history. Verse drama's non-naturalistic language and narrative mechanics, both redolent of the incense of the altar, make a visionary concept of history possible.

3. An encyclopedic verbal mode. Verse drama presents its subject in multiple modes of speech. It is cannibalistic, it mixes genres of speech, and engages their relevant interpretations of the world, the scope emphasized and the causalities allowed. It allows or even requires the jumping to multiple modes. Greek Tragedy for instance incorporates a sea of preexisting speech genres the rhetorical, the language of law and the political; the language of the religious hymn, or the church and theological explanation of the world; the language of the personal lyric, of the home and the heart and the private interior; the strophic deviations forward, and point/counterpoint investigations of the and the language of narrative description, of the epic or the novel, and the distinct mode of story offered there; and finally of dialogue, of the drama as practiced to day the mercurial stichic jumps of two minds flowing off each other.

Verse Drama allows the chance to synthesize different modes of speaking, to put multiple dictions and modes of thought in conversation about serious issues. This goes beyond the narrative methods of "commonplace" minds that live in Eliot's "desert of exact likeness."

4. A moral investigation. Verse drama is allows necessarily about social action, and therefore essentially moral in emphasis, although its morality is usually of a questioning or interrogative, rather than didactic and declarative nature. it gets out of the merely personal scope that the lyric often encourages, takes a wider perspective. It is often centered around a crime or transgression, a social violation. Think of Oedipus or Atsumori where flashbacks accrue around the moment of recompense, so that whole narrative structure places a crime and its reckoning at its center. This notion of action, of the nature of the ought, is essentially informed by the enlarged spiritual historical and linguistic consciousness that verse drama makes possible. It is an art form of visionary action.

As an art form, Verse drama encourages a spiritual and historical focus; a suspicion of individual forms of language or poetry, and a corresponding desire to put several different modes of language in conversation with each other in an essentially synthesizing way; and a view that has at its core a concern with and questions about morality, or how one ought to live, in the light of the spirit and history and the funhouse of language. Verse drama is a visionary form of narrative in opposition to the naturalistic narrative tradition centered around the novel.

An Epilogue: The final poem in the collection wonders whether the lyric, as a mode and as an act of consciousness, was the only mode of salvation from the beginning, and whether the whole development from lyric to epic to dramatic was not misguided from the start..

I am also including a book-length excerpt from *Participating Godlike Food*, an epic poem/crime novel/Menippean satire/television show/Dada collage/historical document/vatic investigation that comes in 20 page sections that are supposed to approximate the 42 minutes of an average crime show.

It is essentially a Menippean satire, in its suspicion of the realist mode of characterization, its verging on and off of allegory, its resistance to conventional ordering of consciousness that the pressures of plotting necessitate, and in its tendency toward a medley of style and investigative parody. The Menippean Satire is essentially the strophic form in narrative, pushing to constantly new methods of presentation, and represents an other tradition of storytelling that exists both inside the novel's lineage, and as a thing apart and unto itself in *Tristram Shandy*, *Moby Dick*, *Ulysses*, and *Gravity's Rainbow*, just to name the most canonical.

Participating Godlike Food carries on the concerns of *In What Array That They Were In* in many ways: where *In What Array* looked closely at how genre determined the meaning and the metaphysics of the text from within those genres, feeling the threads from inside the bag, this mode looks at how genre determines world view from the outside, by colliding different visions in a medley of styles, by disjoining them in sequence, refusing to allow a settled way of seeing, by forcing a constant readjustment of consciousness and a constant questioning of how language is forming and forcing your concept of human action.

It is also an extended investigation of a point of view usually left out of fiction: the epic narrator, first person divinely inspired. The epic narrator is not undercut by psychology, he is not denied credibility and a genuine pulpit a conscious and present character. He is a divine mediator or intercessor, achieving a vision or omnipotence that seems to contradict the possibility of his being a first person "I." He often is or seems to be a vates. He is atemporal, and conscious of large swaths of history. He is uninvolved with the action at hand but a present character to the reader, in fact the biggest and most realistic character, as Joyce is the main character in *Ulysses*, beside whom Bloom pales into the background; or as Milton is the most vibrant and touching character in *Paradise Lost*, though separated from the action by millennia and dimensions; or as Ishmael is the only one we get to see up close while he engages in almost no significant action. These narrators must phrase and interpret their visions as they can and in their own local words and forms, though they tend to trace the history of these words and forms.

To my family,

My teachers

My turtle

And my babies

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In What Array That They Were In

*To vouch this is no proof,
Without more wider and more overt test
Than these thin habits and poor likelihoods
Of modern seeming.
Shakespeare*

*Forego the state
Of local minds inveterate,
Tied to one poor and casual form.
To avoid the deep saves not from storm.
Melville*

*Me thinketh it accourdant to resoun
To telle yow all the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed to me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degree,
And eek in what array that they were innne.
Chaucer*

In What Array that They Were In

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Some Odes

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Ego apis Matinae
moro modoque
Horace

Pine Creek Pindaric

So you peek into the mountain, where your desire goes.

Pine stream turns its wedge green, more than any other Nevada,
that vernal trough washes clear among the green and over white stones,
red sand sloughed off,
ice and melt-water over,
the collapsing white on the tops of mountains melting
in jagged chunks sometimes,
dragging water-bellies over stones.

Elated cold cleans among the stones and feeds greens,
dripping through them always with food,
by wet voluptuous clumps of soil,
tiny red deltas of sand,
through snow in the shadows still from months,
and sometimes the stream sinks under rocks and pebble-sand,
leaves only albino moss and ice on the bed above
that puffs my fingers pink, and slides and disappears in them.

Forget about death-grass,
how many plants push me out always fresh from stomach to my skin?

How many bits of me have shot in effluence,
reconfigured elsewhere, contributing?

What about all of the atoms I've already lost of me,
dispersion before death,
my body more of a slow effervescence?

There is always something ancient about that pastoral set
of grass floor, grasping trees, and fluid glass over stones,
passionate as cold lakes,

as if prepared for you to heal and listen in,
that Greek healing in a grove that gathers
green, wet things and hides a god-world,
in verdazurine involutions and hard, dark pine-green.

There is a Greek temple beyond, up the paths,
perfectly fallen and ruined, with a feast table set,
where Keats and Holderlin discuss the Abstract Greek,
who lives no place less than Greece,
and I listen to some translation in the water.

The paths eventually clumsily constrict and disappear.

Strange roots like yellow veins gather pebbles in the pools,
the mountain's utensils,
that hold its rocks against itself.

I touch pieces of bark heavy as the stream stones,
and running with sticky yellow.

I know the pines and I are switching air between us,
and I picture the tiny green liquids working in their cells,
and think sciency of tight molecules that feel wet when they touch me,

I feel I would be safe naked here,
I feel like that water can be put into my flesh,
I feel the pink sexual movements of god in my fingers.

High on a rock, I take off my shirt,
and eat salty-sweet almonds and cranberries,
with January sun and January air on my soft, white chest,
and sit on the rock, and read Holderlin in the cold-passionate sun,
and listen to climbers' shouts wrapped in a tissue of distance,
(like the music come from the other room, *Carmen*,
to me in my seat in the sun,
that sounds like clean air and deep lungs,
and I drink the tea that makes me feel stoned,
and become a buzz in the sun.)

The pain of every transcendence, what we rise beyond,
begins in me again,
that nagging knowledge of irrevocables.

The stream's clear and shadow are in the sun,
and its fluent mosaic burns,
collapsing back into place again and again,
bright vitreous chorus,
and pine needles wag on the exact film of light, they conduct.

The Abstract Greek knows the dryness like a desert, too,
the stern Hellenic hills with groves for entrails.

(Still, I eat egg whites and feta in olive oil,
with Kalamata olives,
and garlic hummus rubbed on English Muffins,
and hear Bizet behind the rustle of my papers by the window.)

I am sure the grove below contains a temple
left from Greece and wedged in the dry red of the Mojave,
in the snow-redolent green of the canyon.
Euripides and the kithera emanate from the center of the temple,
with adumbrated melodies among the greens,

and nightingales spasm with resonance in the trees.
The yellow geometry of bees covers sleeping Pindar's mouth.
That Platonic house drools honey on his chest.
Keats and Holderlin can't quite understand,
and they clap intensely into the canyon.

(I wouldn't like opera if I could understand the languages,
the adumbrator in me
thinks stories are fine
as long as you can't tell what's going on,
and are in the sun and wind.
I don't like Britten.)

What the green means, why I love it, why it heals and what,
I find when
I reach the socket of the canyon,
the final pool bottomed by subtle green and utterly clear before that,
outside the sun.

I sit with the thought of a January swim
in the complete cold, complete passion, complete glass of that water.

I am awkward and white in it,
and cones float and soak their geometries there,
and the mountain tallies overwhelms
in the bent and gathered browns around the stream.

I walk red with the intensity of the water to the pine,
and touch the gouges between the barks that ages make,
and breathe that microscopic brown.

I trade matter with god's adumbrations when I'm face to face with pines.

I rise, and dress, and am surprised by mountain goats,
with the strange involutions over their brains.

Green, still animals save my life.

The Mountain

Squad cars and shooting stars,
the lights,
driving from the academy,
little seizures of red and blue, surgical fluorescent whites,
the police make shivering bulbs of light
on the highway home at night
in this city of stars, the cosmopolis Las Vegas. We make the stars.
The vista wrenches open from far west Vegas,
the grid of the city
a deranged square,
bowl of luminescent balls and bulbs, small glowing of each house,
the stars above only soft insistence in orange cream.

The inwardness away,
the other territory of human life,
the Egyptian distance,
when the sekhem
ruled,
the folded cloth, the placenta, the hawk, and the scepter,
the power of the land
lived in the essential, the power, the control, of the soul,
lived in the bodily terrain of the dead,
lived in the light of the casing.

This morning,
I drink Egyptian licorice in the sun.
I shine.

Through dry abandoned Cairo,
hiking the slumber or paralysis,
past closed shops and empty streets
in a sun that is bright beyond thought, and confuses,
the smell of day old preparations
clinging their waft
to shuttered restaurants,
those old savors, old meats,
the air beginning to clear
just slightly of the miasmal diesel and dust
that clots to brown mist in rain,
to the amphibian protesters who pray and sleep in mud
in squares.

Pelops and Heiron's man drove brown horse muscles
beside Alpheos' mutable, brittle shines,
with green, dreaming patterning beneath,
 in different years,
gathered in the arms of Dionysus out of time,
those muscles verged toward gold in the sun,
the verge toward effulgence,
reflective juice in the sweat from the chariot.
 Horses, gods, and light,
lead my radio.

Will there be spumes of milk and nectar sprayed from trees
for osmotic, effortless consumption?
 The pure equivalence of grass and bodies,
where we also eat the sun?
 The nakedness always, effortless in the streams
that do not even clothe us they are so clear?
 This dazed pageant of berries and wind?

 The light,
the green of working earth,
of poems and operations,
 it moves.

I have been wondering lately
what is inside of the mountain? And what is it like to be there?
 This is what I think about.
Does the mountain shine?

The puppy in front of me filled with so many natural leaps,
fluid paw placements,
fits these rocks, as I fit these rocks
with my innumerable steps.
 The moss, the only moss in Nevada, hides on the rocks of this valley,
on the crumbled green bottom of this canyon,
by the small falls bright with ice,
pines deranged into bulbous curls by years of current,
 the soft encasing of the air infused with water
distilled from snow,
passionate clear ether of that air which gathers me tangibly.

I climb past mountain goats,

to where the soil ends,
where the world has gotten too tall for dirt and plants,
and grab the naked stomach of the mountain.

The outside of the mountain glows black and hot
with February sun,
and perhaps
the inside of the mountain glows black and hot. I do not think this.

I believe the inside of the mountain
is like the air around the mountain,
I believe it is like the pines,
the green pine-light.

I am alone with something difficult
when I am with the mountain.

An Horatian

The night-vision world, the dark flayed green,
the twist-mouth, librarian queen,
your pink face of the decisive attitude,
your bulbous mouth, where confusion protrudes,

Connecticut cowboy, high-schoolish and foolish,
with a mouth open, expectant fish,
are you just a holy elephant, a gracious blunder
tangled in trees, and frustrated to slumber?

Were you just doing the donkey-work of the soul
and transcendence, pushing the tool
of the wheel to grind those grains with bulbous brain,
and donkey thighs that strain and shine?

They say you can't understand or entertain
certain things, but this can't obtain:
ignorance can't allow according to the plan,
can't control what happens in dark's green plane.

Someone affable, horrible as you comes only from the South,
with the decorous and procedural mouth
that allowed those crimes of cotton and sweat.
Are you just a donkey working at wheat?

Do the tubes of your thew shake with it? They do.
Your jasmine creeper spreads across mangos,
a rhizome of pale roots and organ-control,
plant-parts connecting the world and your soul.

The Kalidasan elephant roils in the flood,
the detritus of house-sidings and pluff mud;
the Jinni turns and turns in bright accidents,
pomegranate and wolf in the desert's scientific dents.

Γαα Τεκνον

The weekend spreads in the vitreous display
of bright wind in windows, bright flay
of shiny bushes with purple knobs, pink tears,
and my music bolts in the open, naked air,
violins subtly slide in blue-taffeta bolts,
the guitars pound out in green clots,
and all is different without having changed, is sprained;
I've constrained the thing the green contained.

Earth babies, harsh purples, burst earth everywhere,
and I love to see the soil bend and tear
with such bright growth, such particles of purple life,
the central venting semen's purple slough!
I want it on me, over me, the red African outrage of sand,
delicate and entire in dusting my hand!
Mountains streaked with iridescent veins of ice
cover me now with their strange device.

I want to be Chrysogonee, and bathe here
in this snow-frigid creek, brown-mottled as a deer,
and towel with purple flowers, and lay on a rock
in light from the sun, and light off the creek,
and steep the particulates of sun in my belly,
as the sun turns green and blue in this valley,
and have the heat of the ball turn to a baby,
and to bend and tear it through my body.

I want a heaven made of monadic seeds,
where even the angels bodily feed
on mutable particles, and are ensouled
with similar monad seeds, slick greens enfolded.
I will plant myself, and be a dirt in angel wombs,
a honey-drooping larva-worm in holy combs
that bend and love as they contain,
and I'll live again in the green stain.

The Pergola

The ashy Carolina cat teethes green,
distends the lizard's viscera and veins,
tight white dots of scale calmed
flat, the flesh in flesh enseamed.
Long purple balls with their faces
peeled open dangle from foxgloves, pathologist-laces
bunched in veined ruffles on the side,
their purple dark at bends, black implied.

In umbra-drapery camellias' fling
on the white gliding of the swing,
even their shadows sting with pink
to roil the veiny lotus to think.
The plants are fakes of the total maker,
props of teleology down to bark's flakes,
but there is love only on the stage,
safety in the ritual of the plant's pilgrimage.

The geometry of daffodils
bounces in flare-yellow quills,
clean diaphanes that wrap
the air in yellow, sexual slips.
To drain pink spirals with sun,
to desiccate the green bulge of impatiens,
the strange ritual artifice of a kiss
must be enacted and reversed.

A turtle rubs brown back and orange eyes
among puckered tulips, spilling calla lilies,
similar pinks with other DNA's.
To the turtle, it's all green anyway.
I laze and sunburn in umbra-slats,
the pergola-patina of all above the slate.
I pour the wine for a red swig,
and drape my lips in a paste of figs.

Oak Creek April

Millions of spiritual Creatures walk the Earth
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep.

Fertile clouds crumble their weather,
and distill into their pods of falling,
on
crystalline umbles inside them,
the turtle-purrs of their hearts,
vitreous amphibii, pods of green jelly,
the infant frogs that scatter like flung mucus
into the river-bent grass,
drop modestly into the water, and dangle legs in cold,
where rainbows, curves of colored monads,
Plato lobes,
bends of fumes flushed with light, judder from tiny falls,
and the gurgling green algae judders
imperceptibly, coats stones beneath,
and wanders drowsily from that fastening.

To make this transcendence into a science,
to make it reproducible,
to make happiness more than a chance thing,
I desire this.
There is no light, just the monadic bits of colors,
I know this because,
when light opens, rainbows are the bowels.

The cedars' secret bits enter me as I pass,
then it is all warm, humid cedars in my brain,
and I can make a map of bouncing smells
and walk in that darkness of invisible red sands.

The flies are glorious wanderers on my flesh,
I don't even mind the bites,
and sit on a nest of rock-colored infant spiders,
and let them walk on me and am not afraid,
and they are fumbling and new and don't bite me.
Small water on small stones,
lime leaves and purple flowers stutter lushly in the wind,
the feral mathematics.

Fetal from Libya, they pile,
heaped thistles,
eternal Carthage immigration,
running from Qaddafi,
from trivial-quivering Libya,
into Tunisian tents of antiseptic aid, living in orphan camps,
among pied dunes of prism-bits,
swivels and squiggles of enameled light,
and latrine spumes.
For those eternal travelers in Africa,
there are
tears for things and death touches minds
always,
Plato and Leibniz in always Africa.

The boar rambunctious in the rain,
led to caves with blood,
and Dido and Aeneas
followed in burnishments and leather,
to hyacinthine openings replete with moss,
the marriage there in feral perfume
of boar blood and caves,
I must see the monads in it, do that work,
to see the enarrable bits,
the cosmos bits.

In Baghdad,
take the lapis lazuli,
and judder these figures in.

Sometimes I love this,
this body,
this house.
I have been trying for weeks
to force communion with my body,
trying to force that motioning beyond,
to be something other than desire,
which is not possible.
I have been trying for weeks after one good day.

I desire the natural task,
the exertion,
the true geometry of measuring myself on earth.

I want to touch all parts of the mountain,
the monads of green.

The frogs, those turtle-blisters.

I follow pied fumes,
 judder stutteringly up the stream,
the hyacinthine-scurry of the plants,
 the purple bits of wind of burrs and thistles,
until
the algae dries to bright enameled green in peels,
 and I enter the black socket of the mountain,
and scurry like a sandspur on linoleum,
 and cross the crisp line to the upper snow,
material rainbow-bits, and cannot breathe, and see

 a wheel for the work of a churl and mule,
where the plants are themselves at umbel angles,
their insides made surface,
 and I turn and return in snow's monadic rainbows.
From them, a petunia.

The Bees at Mount Charleston

The bees drink the waterfalls here, and suck on puddles.

The aspens jingle their white bellies in the wind,
their concentrated motion large and liquid in the valley,
so plural and green,
the cellulose left-overs of the pines with roots ajar,
stacked in scattered washes,
the pines dug out and guttered for the shivered-coin-green,
of the aspens' dropping ocean.

Bees supper here on sap-infested puddles,
in yellow huddles.

The sun busts the muffle of the clouds,
insinuates itself into the crisp sprinkle,
moments darkle, then light and smell of pines,
the drops so slow they imply aforethought and intention,
this cloud, this sun, this rain, they really mean to!
The small cedars shaped like their experience of the wind
make me jealous,
I want to be shaped like my experience of the wind!
I want to be shaped like the mountains!
I want to be shaped like the plural green of the aspens!

A waterfall so small it reminds me of a candle,
its mossy bottom-splash its flame,
rough liquid of its cylinder,
and it is in a parentheses of rock,
collated and arranged into a pebble bowl with boulder frames. I am happy!
The dog and me explore this bowl,
sit with the bees that drink its trickle
in this cubbyhole waterfall hidden from the path,
and I read Tu Fu to the puppy.

The grasshopper's stuttering belches, like tiny digeridoos,
please me with their flight.

For the first time in months, it's cool in the shadows and warm in the sun,
and nothing is prohibited,
I possibly do not even live in the desert,
and the thin air lets my mind glide pleasantly without content

on the seizing greens of aspens
and the frozen sluice of pines in soil veins.

I am happy today, and why?
The mystery of happiness, the freedom to touch rain,
why does my happiness always come from the side?

The bobbing and inhaling streams gather bees,
the bobbing green knobs of umbels do.
I think the bees are happy in their emptiness like me.

So, a Nevada Autumn

My God is very much like *so*. *Fire, so smoke. Smoke, so fire. So* is the constant humble process of one thing turning into the next thing it will be, of fire turning into smoke, the thought of smoke giving us the fire-thought, wood fluffing into flame, flames souring into smoke, the sour thought of smoke returning to the fire, the thought of fire contracting back into the wood. The fire is *so*, more flavorful and fluid than *be*. I think this when I enter rooms sometimes: So there is this.

I entered the dry autumnal river bed
with drifts of leaves in depths of stones,
the opaque fluffs, the oranges with veins,
where the pure cold clarity flecked with plants,
the stream so inclusive in its soak, so improvising in its body,
stays in Spring -
the leaves now making crisp red sounds on stones in wind
where once in the Spring frigid melts slurpingly murmured -
So I walked this bed dry with Autumn.

So as filler, like *um*, like *like*, connector, the unconscious recourse to the notion that in the meantime there is happening, the long guttural consideration of relaxation by the fire: the *so* melisma. The *so* as type, repetition of one thing in the subtle tics, the methods and shape of another, the secret twins of this: Do it *so*, light it *so*. To be the exact edge and extent of quality, to actually meet our thought of how good the world might be, to be *so* bright, to be *so* hot. *So* always soaks to the beginning and the end, and all the sides.

I walked out of the dry bed,
leaves like enormous moisture on my shoes.
By the concrete foundations of a building never made,
the aspens yellow with autumn in coin balls.
The meadow is beneath itself a stream,

wide and soggy and foaming slightly in the soil,
meadow shy of flowers, instead

thick long grass that lives only in liquids,
that greens with yellow stomachs in the Spring,
that yellows into gray in Autumn.

On the concrete foundations, I sat down,
and shared almonds and water with my dog,
and thought of another *so*.

The cold Ovidian clot and soak of seeds,
the seminal original lump,
in original pre-lunar darkness,
to say that this world is different now is to insist on *so*,
the polysemous fire,
the old Vedic fire of Zoroaster.
The Vestal faith of burning works now in America.

They gather back in Egypt beneath red signs
that claim the martyr's right in swerving script,
one dead this morning,
the police in gear, and certain Cairo streets
in crummy scattered flames
that thin their orange to yellow spreading,
and dry their yellow to gray rising,
the lasers and the angry bleary in Tahrir Square,
November not so far from February,
Nevada Autumn from Nevada Spring.

A video, colors sent to computers,
a spume of light on screens
flecked with bits of California,
the angry blue of officers,
the spray orange with the taste of it,
students in winter clothes in bleary rows -
the cops wear gear here, too.

I would now like to talk about the moth I sat with,
with a coil for a mouth,
and slowly orange, brown hair with darker singles
that blew in the wind,
so short, more like a lever shifting than a liquid flowing,
in the weird autumn light that comes always from the side too early
and leaves a black belly on all the grass and trees and moths.

The moth had those dank stained-glass eyes
of multiple gothic shades,
and his wings were curled with recent hatch,
with murky patterns in the brown, and he sat on my book,
in a sort of agreement, and I agreed,
I would wait for the wind to shift him off before I turned the page,
and then he would return.

So there is this.
So fire.
So orange.

There is no walking in Las Vegas:
I drive only as vitrine witness
past smoking women in McDonald's shirt and slacks,
and the homeless dressed in T. J. Maxx;

past orange knobs surrounding gnarled road,
Walmart women, tumid, liquid toads;
past unbought slots and patches of desert,
sometimes the publicly masturbating pervert.

It darkled, the city. I entered on the 95
with the sputtering rhythm of that drive;
and the city from that rapid pedestal,
sputtered also its lights, plural and vestal.

I pulled into the moon-dark desert and mountains,
the imported grass resplendent
by the light of the psuedo-classical fountain;
bulbs blew light in the verdant.

I saw far away in the lunar dark the light
of the digging, digging, digging,
of the distance-silent, metal rigging.
The mine by my house was on last night.

Inter Umbras Arborum, a Pastoral Phantasm-agoria

The Invitational Note:

Inter Umbras Arborum is a long poem in quatrains about a Nightingale with a baby face and Three Jabirus with fetus faces who take the narrator to a series of locations in which are located emblems and examples of the seven divisions of the soul. It's Egyptology and phenomenology and landscapes and etymologies psychotropically mixed, basically. The title is from "Pervigilum Veneris." It's a narrative structured on but not philosophically or theologically limited to the ancient Egyptian notion that the soul is divided into seven parts, or partakes of seven aspects, so that the first section is a lyrical introduction, the second section corresponds to the Khat or body as decaying device, the third to the Sahu or the body germinated by a deeper understanding, the fourth to the Ka, the fifth to the Ba, the sixth to the Khaibit, seventh to the Ren, eighth to the Khu, with the ninth and final section as a lyrical conclusion. There are many references, but knowledge of them is not necessary and in many ways might be counterproductive, resulting in objections like "Why is Wallace Stevens placed in the Sahu instead of the Ba? He is obviously more ethereal than bodily, even if the body is germinating." A lack of knowledge of the references lets you read the image for what it says. Many of the centerpiece images are literalized hieroglyphics, and again, it is neither necessary nor even ideal for you to know them. I hope it can be enjoyed on several different levels: just sound, just image, just narrative, the humor, the horror, the mind-bends, or the more esoteric center-stuff, take what you like, leave what you don't.

Obviously, though, for the text to really activate for you, you must be of a highly interrogative and analytical frame of mind. And to enjoy scavenger hunts. And *The Waste Land*. And *Lost*.

As to genre: it's a Dantesque vision, which is not to say an allegory. Dante's God is not an allegorical representation of something else, he is literally three double-rainbow-resembling rings, and Farinata is actually Farinata. In a similar way, Bill Callahan is Bill Callahan, and the soul-claims here are literal.

1. The Sung Introduction.

Spring is the anatomy of light:
the body of the sun widely split
into the camellia's foliate slits,
when it gives too much, reflecting white;

given in lobes to the ripples
in pools cold makes shadowed and clear,
and settling like a sediment's veneer
in the green growth below the puddle;

the body of light curving in bent nickels
on oak leaves, coins of its divide
speckling the lawn with light. It's implied:
a bright day is the sun's burial.

That communion that tastes of light
let me walk in it one Saturday,
and let the pieces of the earth say
the nature of death spoken in light.

I wear my nerves like a necklace,
and don't even understand their path,
just lay back to be some wire's swath,
allow the tingle of their talking's lace.

I am a radio made of plants,
the songs I play on my green lobes
all understand the wires of their birth; green globes
fructify with melody the magnets inside understand.

Whether my throat is angry like wool,
or compliant and slick like a stream,
determines the color of the electric steam
that trails from and composes me, a spool:

sometimes phlegmy yellow and crackling;
a liquid blue with bellies of green
when I am right; crisp pink when I am mean:
my mood spools out in gaseous string.

That day I spooled a cerulean stun,

the blue of a bruise in Caribbean water,
speckled with green in lobes and filters,
and other brilliant coffins for the sun.

These yarns of smoke engendered
and contained a Nightingale and Three Jabirus;
their substance at first a feathery cirrus,
a moment left them more solidly tendered.

I wired and steamed everywhere around,
and in the dirt I made a mirror
by pure force of permeation and odor,
and became a phrase of the ground.

The birds, all brindled like oil slicks,
flecked with ambiguous gristle,
and with a nerve's invisible glisten,
were man-sized, and crusted with black.

The Nightingale had a baby's face,
and all the Jabirus had the face of a fetus;
they ate the grass like anorexic lettuce,
and left it in their teeth like green lace.

Obviously, then I followed them –
their fetal cheeks began to spasm
with the force of their nature and phantasm;
what they said was their froth's skim –

Said the Jabirus,

“We are bound to each other by a mirror:
he flattens us three into his one image.”
“They are a prism that splits my pure plumage
into its constituent speckled odors,”

said the Nightingale.

“Here's a natural history of the soul,
which comes in seven jig-sawed parts,
and comes apart in several animals,
each one with a new-colored, raw-colored heart.”

2. Khat, the Decaying Body.

I followed from my yard into a garden
where beads of corn yellowed light,
and cabbage turned it purple, like fluorescent night;
into the peppers, the sun hardened green.

The garden elsewhere held Roman instruments,
and fruits of Mediterranean integument;
in some corners, blue British fruits;
and below, the soot-dirt and drizzled roots.

In umber-textured shadows at the edge,
my sun-stunned eyes put nothing together
out of the movement near the hedge
where lights and feathers circled each other:

The humming shadows then all coalesced
into a rotting factory's calm progress –
The Jabirus' crowded fetus-cheeks around me,
and pointed out this factory's anatomy.

We saw a massive lion curled recumbent,
calm and unobtrusive like a monument,
with fur flecking off in necrotic tangents;
skin below the texture of stone and color of mint.

His coat, mold-white and in wigs like moss,
was filled with hawks and hawks' nests,
especially gathered on his moldy breast,
which their violent feathers all embossed.

Bent salt trout shed reflective scales,
that tingled with their tiny rippled lights,
and left gauzed patches in my sight,
when they spasmed in the nest as a meal.

Embroidered bowls below caught all the juice
of their breathing and liquid cycle,
like gray and white and red acrylics;
and fed sometimes the lion, mouth bent obtuse.

Beside the cat, a field of burning cigarettes

drew to it crumbling bunches of bees,
who stuffed ash into their black thighs,
and turned away in fecund pirouettes.

Rochester and Richard Hell stayed in the garden's park,
shot heroin together in corners after dark;
Rochester's cock more limp than a breeze,
Hell bent over with the pain of a tease.

They staggered the park for a nice instance
of a phlegmy and mucused license;
they talked about music and poetry,
while they shivered at the state of their anatomy.

George Chapman and Black Francis forced
down a horse-large frog, splayed open its brain for discourse;
Chapman applied blue, fraying slits of current
to the frog brain, in the skull like a monument;

and straddled the amphibian neck,
of greens bruised black between his thighs.
"These nerves come from my blood and crystal me,
the material spirit blue makes me suspect."

Francis took notes as green parts bent
and flinched into the ground, peeling dents;
and measured the frog testicles for relevant elements,
and meditated on them, serene and lambent:

"When you scream, you defeat the fetus,
wrapped in the plastic of its uterus;
from that organ, it quickly liquidly exits;
in the air of your voice, it lambently exists."

On a temple that bristled with candles,
and marked the years in blacker blood,
a woman walked in the light's fickle flood;
her name, she intoned, was Climactic Miranda.

Climactic Miranda spoke for Christ:
"The cleanest Catholic mouth is a catalyst,
better than a Protestant's viscous spit;
my capillaries generate in those holy Petri spots."

She ordered candled slaves; they slit a fox,
and put its fox-red, tick-red drippings
in a chalice for communal sipping,
and desiccated its remains in a holy box.

Tom the Possum burred on the cleanliness of women,
and rubbed his painful tooth with aspirin,
“I rub a sponge between her slit open legs,
and chemicals into my grin, white dregs.”

And in the painful-yellow bulbs of squash,
the man-sized rodent with the expressive snout
searched the soil that gave like felt
for his lover through the vegetable mesh.

A corner of the cucumbers, drooping green rods,
arranged inside itself a recursive theater,
that everyday repeated down to the smallest feather,
for the pleasure of birds, or interest of gods.

Tereus, reoccurring in the brilliant crops,
found prone Procne always at the edge,
as she collapsed against the prickling of the hedge;
he always dragged her under the willows' mop.

All these around the lion – nervous veins
that transmitted in mechanical lines
the delicate, visible electric lengths of pain,
that hissed and burned in the large lion's mane.

I reckoned my capacity to its dimension,
and my skin shifted at its vigorous ruin.
The Nightingale exhaled a baby breath:
“You live, in part, in mildew's sheath.”

Me:

“Aren't you going to explain this more to me?”

Jabirus:

“That isn't the exact job of us three.”

Nightingale:

“Nor is it the type of bird I tend to be:
we're just a form of light in one and three.”

3. Sahu, the Germinating Body.

By the lion, we took a path that looked like bruises,
rubbed black and gouged by strange use;
I saw in it the image of a bizarre foot's device,
marks from toes as sharp and austere as ice.

The Nightingale cracked open his baby throat
(while the Jabirus let out fetal coughs,
and shed between bald gums a phlegmy slough),
to give some explanation as we approached:

“Our atrophied, small words can't equal sight;
it must be shown in ambiguous full light,
in bare glory, phenomenon, and phantasm
underneath our guiding's lambent spasm.

“We are the purest form of argument:
the sun-fertilized world without augment.”
“What's the next notch on our itinerary
through the soul's total anatomy?”

“We're going to the beach.” The white sand
gave a dark-flecked light, redolent of bruised hands;
a massive irritation filled the ocean,
that menaced the green with its commotion.

A nymph, prone and riding white, like teething,
lived in innuendos of the ocean's green,
in the mountain-cold squelch of the wave's green screen;
slept in shadows underneath the white froth's seething.

The sea's green rumor screamed like an infant
around a quail car-large and lambent,
with a big down belly, and back with oil-feathers,
larger and wider than yellow weather.

Its stomp of massive, backward thighs violated
the sun's division into green, wet curls,
and scurried off the riding ocean girl –
The froth bubbled afterwards, sedated.

A brace of mammal-hands, wandering like fluid,

spilled from it's bird-neck, bird-flesh diluted;
into the green more crystalline than nerves,
the iridescent ocean's forest-sized swerves.

The hand-headed bird searched water for the nymph
with a cross with a noose for a head,
while green waves crumbled like a hyacinth
whose petals deliquesced and spread.

Behind the quail, scavenging lions
shook and dried their manes above the green,
followed and loitered, their waiting obscene,
for the scraps of the nymph's ruin.

In a quail-boat among cats after the quail,
Jeff Mangum and John Keats tried to harpoon
the bird in its back, to play its injured tune,
and braced in tableau against the sun-doused sail.

Cried Keats:

“A thing of beauty is a joy when it's tethered;
someday that quail and I will live together,
and we'll be a perfect yellow forever
when I harvest and ingest her feathers.”

Mangum trolled while the other talked;
he calmly massaged the threads of the rigging,
and kept the whole time desperately singing,
till the wind turned, and the sail flaccidly sulked.

The ambivalent wind plucked a natural feather,
so Keats grabbed it, uncapped it at the quill,
drank the yellow of that bird's hair,
and turned downy and lit as the quail distilled.

Nightingale said, with a cough that came soggy,
“Here is the hum of the pied body,”
and pointed to Stevens and Kevin Shields
creating in the sand an innately pink field.

They poured a red mix of acid and cough syrup
from scientific bottles, dreaming eye drops.
Those scientists of the mind turned sand a glowing pink,

and created in it an image of what they think.

A million other chemicals and sounds
were poured and whispered into that ground,
until the whole surrounding sand
was made into a pure cinema of the land.

Then at the after-party, Steven's spoke his mind
to several girls galore, the record's blackened wind,
the pink, intricate clusters of the camellia's design,
and the black-centered purple of a bitter wine:

“Only metaphors exist, no abstractions:
the pieces of the earth speak in reunion.
Only vines insinuate, in focused curls;
the only innuendo is the wink of the girl.”

Down the beach, the Three Jabirus pointed
(and their wings hid and revealed small hands,
and the fingers that guided were askew and disjointed),
toward something displayed across the sand.

The Jabirus:
“Here is a Natural Museum of Biology.”
In an atmosphere as private as a vitrine enhanced,
three women sat in silent and green colloquy,
and floated and recurred in a stationary dance.

Joanna, as a catalytic mist again, dispersed into the land,
her hair into the waves bent receptacle of sun,
her thighs and bones in the lights in the sand,
her heart a sour red part of the sun when the day's done.

Joanna's ribs turned to green droops of dune grass,
her eyes to a green, yellow-center sheet of weed –
her spine became the curls of the tide,
and the bones in her throat came out worn sea-glass.

Ophelia turned flowers each time she saturated:
dark water came from every orifice and pore,
and leaked until a flower grew from skin so irrigated,
with lilies for a face, and roots at her core.

Her throat filled with fennels that spilled from her mouth,
and she spoke then in botanical colors,
figures of pink and green from the South,
that told the eyes a story with no collar.

Daphne kept turning tree to escape the world,
forgetting everything with her chlorophyll brain,
and taking a job consuming the sun,
always moving with vegetable patience upward.

The sun turned to green balls in the leaf's belly,
that rolled through her veins to make her laurel body.
Daphne pumped pollen from her tips like a billows,
and it fell on the water, and waves broke yellow.

Further than the floating and the liquid pollen,
stood a sand-dune-backed and multicolored lion:
the breeze against his face bristled it blue;
the wind turned hard, and he went black all through.

When the sun stumbled out from the clouds,
it pinkened and innately lit the lion's back,
and little shudders of red radiantly flowed
through his mane, and massaged out the black.

One laurel pollen dripped a yellow spot
that spread across that mutable scalp,
and eliminated all the pink in a colored gulp,
that was the schematic of a yellow shout.

Bees built their combs in his teeth's gap,
which turned his mouth a permanent black;
but a light came from the geometric sacks
of the secret and religious insects' sap.

William Browne bent suppliant before the lion
with a horseshoe crab turned over, hollowed like a platter,
filled with rank shark meat, spiced with plant matter,
and surrounded by other relics of animal ruin.

Said Browne:
"I've made the echo umpire of my brain,
and brought you these animal bits again.

Please, consume me into mutable color,
like the burning and effulgence of sunny water.”

The lion extended his tongue, disturbing bees,
and Browne took it, like a hand to dance;
the cat gathered him into his mouth, consumed and enhanced,
and began to chew him in service for animal fees.

And the juices of his body wet the wings of the bees,
and his bones crushed their combs,
and he got squeezed honey in all his wounds
for the hope of a kaleidoscope’s supple variety.

In revulsion, I fell, I vomited, and spat.
“Shouldn’t we do something about that?”
The Jabirus:
“That’s the business of the variegated cat,
and there is no disagreeing with that.”

“Please just tell me, what are you three?”
“We are only your nervous curiosity.”
Nightingale:
“The same thing, really, goes for me;
we’re what your electricity makes you see.”

Just by us, a violence drew our attention:
the plump quail roped the nymph from the ocean.
Its soft hands spread to reveal an animal beak,
and the noose dropped the girl to that conch-colored peak.

A red squelch rose from above the hands,
and dropped in viscous reds into the sea,
and a sanguine mist settled pink on me,
and I fainted to sleep, and I dreamed about sand.

4. Ka, the Shape of the Essence.

I woke up to the liquid pulsations of pines,
the natural whispers in the water-light –
The birds with immature faces all held a limb,
and carried me with the hair of their flight.

The back-lit wag of needle-light slurred
as I struggled down, and coughed the words,
“I think you could say just a little bit more.”
“What can we say that we haven’t said before?”

said the Nightingale in wet, frustrated reply,
with a lung-deep exhaustion physically implied
by the drool that involuntarily fell and dried
on his baby lips the sun reddened and clay-fired.

“Our ideas must be argu-ing, lit vision,
taken from the world with effulgent permission;
you still don’t see ideas as radial videos
the sun-spackled world convulses to let us know.”

I rubbed the confusion out of my shoulders,
and lingered as I felt pine-wind grow older.
My face was still drowsy, and my whole world
seemed an acrylic smear of pine-light swirled.

“Okay, bird, well then where do we go next?”
“We go to the dark spot of this illustration text,”
he said, walking through pines and cypress knees
that turned the water brown in their botanical laundry.

The water kept washing itself in the wood
until the brown became thoroughly understood.
The white chalk road we followed split
the browns and blacks of the trees’ spit.

Then two huge hands sprung from the soil,
mammal sprouts, and dirt at their base boiled;
the sudden hands with grasps for points
whirled on their subterranean joints.

The sideways-searching hands shattered pines,

and in the scope of their violence cleared a field,
a discovering space their spasm revealed,
like the paddling of a buried, upturned swan.

Two black-suited men dug in the soil's eruption
where the field suffered elbowed corruption;
they shoveled toward the motivating joint
that stood under that spastic plant:

dirt fell to moisture on their sweaty hair,
and looked like mildew blackly flared,
as David Lynch and Heidegger debated the ego,
with the wrenches of "furthermore" and "ergo."

Said Heidegger,
"Inside the sun, there is a dark place where light starts –
we're the dark spot always occurring before the light."
"But there's no band in that performance, done right."
"That doesn't mean the tune has no silent heart."

Those black suits gyrated in the blue behind,
as they dug with fecund, root mission,
and made the dazzling buzz of discussion,
the brightly colored particles of their mind.

Spurts of gelatinous, effulgent residue
convulsed out with every shoveling advance,
those deep, distinguishing, and musty lances;
and on the handle, a dark substance of mildew.

Spider-tigers, with a tiger-body, legs like a spider,
and a face like delicate orange powder,
felt their thighs meet in their orange bellies' hair –
It made them miserable, geometry joining there.

The spider-tigers spun a web that prised,
and distinguished in the light its floral anatomy,
the many lantana valences it trailed in its history,
and wore their radial fuzz as the wind spasmed.

The web respired, and turned the air viscous carbon.
In those thick molecules, jellies pumped their swim.
In that sticky element, huge butterflies caught –

all this in the color of the prism's expansive blot.

Watching these massive jellies, webs, and wings
beyond all born butterfly or spider precedent,
I decided to say a naïve and earthy thing
to the three part-bird, part-fetal residents:

“Are these things big, or did we get small?”
“Here, it's unclear there's a difference at all.”
“But have I changed how much I'm tall?”
“Your response changes, as World changes its call.”

The iridescent mucus collected a bug-brained bird,
and its mouth's black, insinuating hose
flailed with the intelligent touch of a search
until the concentrated carbon thickened it close.

“Those wings' monarchical black and gold
are an emanation these men want to hold,”
said the Three Jabirus, concentrating my head
on two men who worked with nonchalant dread.

Dylan and Ashbery dragged the pretty flies from the thick,
dried the many prismatic clots off them,
and surgically distinguished beneath their skin –
the particular black results made me sick.

They found quail embryos in the black vegetable lungs,
a baby with caterpillars crawling from his brain,
that pumped and vibrated like segments of vein,
and for the fly's heart, a searching mammal hand.

A deposit in the stomach of scales from reptilish fish
gave off a scientific and Egyptian light.
In that visceral effulgence, we saw their wish,
but it spastically left, a humming bird's fickle flight.

From them, a bushel of torn chromatic ducts,
where the black and gold dripped and sucked,
spread to the muscles beneath the wings,
and the wings showed their radiant sting.

Said Ashbery,

“We need to find the organ where the color turns on.”
“But every time we cut in, it’s not there, it’s gone.”
They searched for something blacker and further back
than the black viscera: the silence of our intimate lack.

At the edge, studio workers took the elbows’ effulgence,
and painted oak leaves with that residue;
those oak bits made a guttural flutter in blue,
as they launched their resplendent utterance.

King Arthur directed with a magnetic twig:
he tried to make a cinema of pure light,
but the soul is the black residue left in sight,
and his story appeared in the black lag.

Scales suffused with blue electric energy
penetrated the air and blackened the screen,
like a butterfly beamed generatively into the trees’ green,
the pied image of the twig’s intelligent anatomy.

He bruised the floating, glowing leaves,
and the story grew where shadow and light cleaved.
In embryonic leaves, he birthed a silent heart,
and a light that burst from a dark part.

Leda and Mary harvested the arm’s follicles
for the milk in them, and placed them in baskets.
On their skirts, they rubbed emulsion molecules.
Beneath the basket, the white leak of their trinkets.

Mary mentioned, as emptying her wicker,
“Joseph wasn’t mad that I’d slept with God.”
“I have to say, I really find that very odd,”
finished Leda, wiping her hand with a snicker.

They squeezed the dairy hairs by a hearth,
spoke of catching the light in their solid children,
like a shimmer in the water in an earthen urn,
but we’re all just the dark water beneath.

The arms sucked back into their spontaneous sockets,
and left behind a shattered, a brutalized marsh.
Brackish water filled hand-gouges, with crushed fish,

like brown, old bruises gathered in a basket.

They gurgled retracting, and left behind wells,
where Egyptian jars raised on jagged water,
and I could not tell if they poured or filled.
“Walk into its wet, and conduical flutter.”

said the Nightingale, with tubercular exhaustion –
his lips viscous, cheeks moist, and eyes wet;
but his wings in a determinative, pointed set,
convinced of his extinguishing, generative mission.

“But won’t I fall into the brown elbow-well?”
“The change that comes makes that hard to tell:
this purifying, liquid beam functions like me,
the hard color of one dispersed to soft three.”

I walked into the changing, Egyptian water
that dripped to maintain the stasis of its jars;
I acclimated to its liquid and jagged meter,
and it felt like pines and dark in my skull’s jar.

5. Ba, the Noble Intuitions.

I woke up to oxygen's spastic yell and call
in the frigid humidity at the bottom of the waterfall,
and my thought went from pines to vitreous thrum,
and all the gyrating water said: mm, umm, mm.

The forest moved its canopy like a pretty lime worm,
and the wind-sucked trees loudly rubbed their grains,
like the sound of a chrysalis ripping open.
This green hatch repeated in river's liquid brain.

From my pool under the waterfall, the water fell
down to a spinning middle lake, centered on a lighthouse,
fed by an opposite and similar, green and limpid yell,
a mutual waterfall: they formed a bowl of water's force.

The Appalachian water swirled diaphanous green
above rocks bruised brown and black,
made brilliantly black and brown by liquid flame,
with the cold, submerged soil at their back.

My fingers and knees bled into the diaphane,
drifted in pillowing strings down the smooth drain
of the bent, vibrating glass of the further waterfall,
a liquid extension of me incomparably small.

The center held the strange dilapidated lighthouse
marked over with Greek and Coptic sayings;
a coiled wire with wrinkles like a brain
surrounded its base and produced a blue force.

A wet and wrinkled man surrendered his brain,
and projected a bird-faced, kinetic transport;
seemed to use its light, blue magnets, and Greek secrets
to give him the swoop and scope of an egret.

His body shrank to a fetal and avian string,
his wrinkles grew feathers that effloresced blue
as his metamorphic birthing's magnet residue –
he jumped from the lighthouse, onto his wings.

A green-inflected mist of mountain trees and streams

swirled over the bowl in a moist and cool gyration
in frigid radials from the lighthouse's station,
and held its light-beams and bird-beams.

I heard the sound of birds in waterfalls behind.
From the frothing, rocky joint, the Nightingale
emerged to cold air on which his lungs impaled,
and his face took the shape of his final mind:

The clarifying and native spray of the waterfall,
dropped the infant face from the tired bird,
and he became a dark-cheeked, feather-cheeked ball,
untroubled by vulnerable face and weak words.

Nightingale rode feathers into the liquid weather,
as three Jabirus popped from Appalachian bubbles,
gasping and breathing through their fetal features,
spastic in the resistant green of the cold puddle.

I waded a white-bubbled path the water would forgive
to Three Jabirus, cried, "Nightingale disappeared!"
"We know, because this is where Nightingale lives.
It's only us anymore." The water fell green in my ear.

Sad and confused, I stepped on cold rocks to shore,
and dropped my back on moss, a reactive green
that as I closed my eyes, still showed the pastoral scene:
the shattered lime above, and the ruffled green floor.

I asked blindly,
"So it's just us four anymore, my one and your three?"
"That's the way it was always going to be."
"Are you guys going sometime to leave me?"
"That's the way it is going to have to be. Sorry."

"Okay." I lifted myself on cold green moss,
and the three vestigial bird-babies helped me up;
we walked down the hill toward the virid cup
striated with white, pneumatic bubble-floss.

As we walked down, I heard a natural song,
one a human hand seemed to lead and drag along;
the Three Jabirus located with avian gestures

the lonely composer of the trees in weather.

Master of brooks, Bach held a botanical magnet
that bent the trees like wind, and played their grains
in plucks and groans so careful a numeric, organic brain
can hear the arboreal songs the German set.

Bach's skull blurred with lysergic, Pythagorean modulations:
his face-pieces protruded, things thoughts within fondled;
the skull extended in a slash behind for the glissando,
then it melted into his neck with silent cancellation.

The Jabirus explained,
"His harmony is a synaesthesia of the particles."
The trees busied themselves with the sun's article;
a squirrel violated their waiting with calls and jumps,
scouring the trees for their little brown lumps.

We continued on the green, threatening bluff
that absorbed the particles of the rough stream's froth;
as our walk girdled the light-making, bird-making house,
a particle of thought fell from my mouth to Jabirus,

"Hey, what does that lighthouse there mean?"
"That lighthouse is an angel-making machine."
Another man entered its blue industrial wrinkles,
disappeared in the shaft to climb to his spiritual rankle.

An Egyptian, human-headed hawk invaded the bluff's view,
like a feathered, hybrid, and glistening bruise.
I was silent at the region's metamorphic master
the importantly-filled, inclemently-juiced blister.

His flight trailed behind it black and brown turtles
which flopped like a fickle-watered, ethereal fever of rays
with their improvised reptilian wings in the sun's display,
that stretched boney from the soft between dusky tiles.

I asked the left birds,
"Jabirus, could you at least tell me where we are?
To really play the course right, I need to know par."
"This is the home of walked-beyond structures,
ruled by that thing with a human face and feathers."

I frowned in green. “Wait, wait – that’s as far as par can go?”
“As far as you can know, without infecting what we show,”
finished the Three Jabirus, asthmatic down the bluff,
as the stream’s invisible glistening made their lungs rough.

The hawk with the human head settled with authority
on the lighthouse with his fever of gliding turtles;
their scaly, chilly feet were lucent and fertile,
and the lighthouse sent out a radiant deformity.

As me and birds entered the green fundamental of the cup,
we walked into a sun-exposed and mossy gap.
From the moss-level dropped a green, submerged landing
that held in its cold water two old men angling.

Russell and Plato there debated the birth of reason
in the moist of that perpetual Appalachian season,
and fished in wading trousers and floppy hats,
that hung over their eyes like soggy slats.

Complained the Englishman,
“The world to me is a very thin, colorless place”
“You seem to underestimate that transparent lace.
The Shapes can explain themselves in the lucent spasm
of their radiant, permeable, traveling phantasms.

“I need to feel the Shapes as lambent metaphors,
the transcendent reunion all things implore.
I need to live and believe the transcendent concrete,
that sits in the spring-tight grass on our feet,”
answered the Greek.

In black undulations, lake-grass tickled the brim dark,
but their brownish-silver still exhaled starkly,
through sheer green, an effulgent and metal bark;
as brim desperately jerked, it swiveled darkly.

Both men reeled in their slow-glittering angling
that shook the brim in the light’s prised tangling.
The Russellian fish and Platonic seized to a union
in the human-headed hawk’s light-carrying dominion.

As they fished for more silver-brown fish
in the lake's radial drifts that glistened like a wish,
the brim sank away with a doubled brain of resemblance:
a glistening green knowledge of remembrance.

In the heaven-still and skin-reddening water,
Milton waded to his chest in sheer liquid matter,
and his body became a sieve and filter,
that rendered a pied picture from the water.

The naked poet developed in each pore an eye,
that sputtered its lids at the lake's wet sighs;
they rendered on a nonce screen of wet particles
images of the atoms and digestion of angels.

“With turtle-colored eyes, I tried to justify the mysteries
in which I saw the emblem of God's chemistry.
With turtle sighted-fingers, the real darkness of the body
gave me a fugitive piece of light's anatomy.”

Angels on Milton's screen made their organs into rain,
and from fallen lakes re-pixeled their organs again:
blue, electronic spools of sheer, radiant liquid,
amphibian lanterns in juicy thats and quids.

But Milton's angels got in Presbyterian debates,
and started to destroy each other in an athletics of hate,
swords slashing immortal organs, a kinetic Phidian
that scared away all the Appalachian amphibians.

Said a reaching Milton,
“I need to find the synaesthetic, luminous structures,
as beautiful and concise as an egret's feather.”
He reached an angel, cut into his creation's angelic humidity,
and stuck his fingers into the bird-like, God-like anatomy.

Over my shoulder I heard the sound of man turning bird,
looked to the house to see its slow radial bright
wash the metamorphic and nativity floor blind white;
the man's awkward change so white seemed absurd.

On a beach down the shore were two figures,
engaged and bickering around a blue, distant glitter,

a kabuki of angry, righteous, decisive gestures.
We walked toward them on the drifting seam of the water.

Marx and Kathleen found a chemical in phlox
that contracted the clarity of the lake to cerulean rocks:
a blue, hard, and meticulous collection of shards.
Kathleen declared, with brandished, acrid words,

“Let me hear them de-politicize my crimes!”
“The stuff I wrote undergrad had really corny rhymes.”
“Do you ever listen to a single word I say?”
“I’m sorry, today is just not really my day. Okay.

“We’ve made them clear, now we make them hard:
we need to find a way to weaponize these blue shards,”
continued Marx. As he tested on human-soft animals,
the results were brutal, bizarre, and dismal:

the shards left tableau-ed exploded arabesques of deer,
and struck the squirrels an immobile and green clear
that the wind pushed off trees, and proved brittle;
shards made a vitreous brown suspension of the turtle.

The memories of the turtle were implanted in the sand
as it crumbled there: vitreous analogue of the soul.
Like a turtle radio, it played wet memories in plants.
“These two live by piecemeal clarity, with violent holes,”
said the Jabirus.

“And we should tell you, to be eaten by an angel
is not that bad a thing to be from some angles.
Anyway, we’re sure you have some human curiosity
about his inside organs’ ambrosial virtuosity,”
they continued.

“What?” The newly fetal, wrinkled, feathered angel
(more bird than ambrosial, and residually electric),
fell from the lighthouse on a hunched flight’s trick.
The hawk-posse followed behind, a metaphysical dirigible.

He hovered above me with a buzzing menagerie halo
of hawks, turtles, and Nightingale, brown as fallow;
with his wing and mouth to demonstrate a swallow,

the hawk sent the fresh angel out, newly allowed.

I became the angel's wafer for communion
in the clear-green, glass-green Appalachian wind;
the angel put his mouth and throat on me to devour,
and I felt myself spread out somewhere like a flower.

6. Khaibit, the Shadow.

In the angel, I felt myself spread into seven parts,
like animals tingling with wind in a garden
without the spirit of menagerie the sun hardened;
nocturnal petals, they'd recoiled together as the bright started.

The decaying device; germinative touch; inky essential;
the luminous shape-feeling; black bread;
shadowed-to monad; the synaesthetic wires of the dead;
I felt those separate tingling kinds in private shawls.

Bright. Recoil. The ethereal digestion left my face in fallen reeds:
I lifted my head to a laguna, and bubbling trees
perturbed to show their black spots to the breeze,
a purple rainy grime behind the lime frill of marsh weeds.

I found the Three Jabirus in my approximate weeds,
I rubbed the nubs and joints on their back
until they tightened up after somnal slack,
and involuntary words spilled over, my mouth exceeded:

“Hey Jabirus, I feel like I just died! Did I just die?”
“That would imply that on this trip you've been alive,
which is not totally wrong, but a little over simplified”
“Sometimes talking to you makes me want to cry.

“Am I a zombie? Please, please tell me – am I alive?”
“Not in the way that being on earth is living.”
“Am I a dreaming zombie? Will I survive?”
“This is really happening, and can be unforgiving.

“Listen young pilgrim, you are a wraith of yourself,
material dream before your death, that tingles with the Delphic.”
Plump short cactus', like porcupine eggs,
punctured little tender leaks into all our legs.

The Three Jabirus spat the sour-saline marsh-lime plants
from their nursing and vestibular mouths,
with milky eyes the digestion enchantingly enhanced,
and their wordy emulsions came out smooth:

“To get to this next part of the pictured-through soul,

we will have to pay a considerable toll.”
“What toll?” “To be honest, it’s more like a pledge:
look over there toward that saline hedge.”

By green, I saw men at a card table in the sand together
under the diaphanous black of a sunshade of ostrich feathers:
Baudelaire and Webster wagered with the fly-black parts of avians,
and speculated on the dark they always operate in.

Began Baudelaire,
“I think we’re in the shadow of an angel’s radial tail.”
“It’s always at the limits of light; I think it’s light’s jail.”
“I think it’s an umbrageous cathedral’s veiny vault.”
“Look at its lines; it’s a dark earthquake’s fault.”

I saw only a mirror in the sunshade’s gloss,
the stained glass of occurrence on a milky screen.
The white of the sand and the Low Country green
formed a focus on them where my stare got lost.

Webster turned quick to us, like a bird in prison,
and reckoned for us the toll, the pledge, the damage:
“You know the pledge I need from your particular plumage:
your eyes are the currency of your permission.”

The birds reached in their sockets with trained fingers,
plucked the seeing balls, and pinched the nervous strings;
fetal hands held their eyes’ slack glides, yokes lingering;
the optic ropes hung down with dissipating tingling.

Baudelaire grabbed the bundle by their nervous handles,
and dropped the prismatic wet balls on the table.
The black roil of flies lifted bored from old bodies,
and jostled to clot out the white of the new eyes.

Too horrified for thoughts to harden into words,
I led away the hands of the blind, martyred birds
The grass spun off like carved bits from the earth’s lathe
as we headed toward the bubbling complex of tree caves.

The laguna held aquatic horses with birds for lovers,
that poked with domestic ease on horse backs,
and carefully ate the small insect-bits of black;

they dove together under the waters lucid green cover.

They dove with dolphin-fluency to submerged recreation,
magnificent gills from their throats to their manes,
(the birds had skull-gills that went straight to their brains),
and became at the bottom green umbras of sedation,

where, their gills slept, and they choked on their own devotion:
their bodies drifted green in the lowest water,
that deep sunlight cooled by the aqueous filter;
a horse and bird above started the loving, drowning motion.

The equine breathing membranes jingled with the sun,
and those iridescent, invisible particles turned the horses on;
the desire of the horse happened outside the horse:
it dove and loved by the solar gills' force.

Horse bodies and horse ghosts and bird bodies drifted
magnetically through an underwater garden,
clotting the topiary, wet hair and feathers combed and sifted,
to a center through those pastoral margins:

an English manor house retrofitted as a temple,
its atrium filled with an iridescent dimple:
an effulgent drain that gave, for water, a piece of light;
nervous, searching lightning as the horses drained to ignite.

We walked by the strange eventful laguna,
and the I watched all these horses through grass lacunae.
The blind birds followed me by our hands dexterous string,
and asked, "What can you see? What's happening?"

"There're horses swimming toward light, and dying."
"We never have to worry about someone dumb as you lying"
"Have you done this before? Been a midwife?"
"No, I'm you're bird; or rather, you're my life.

"The sun's meticulous color in a prism,
these places are a truth divided to its syllogism;
Reason to me using your somatic sight
of these meeting surfaces exuberant with light."

We walked from the equational light of Webster's justice

to the tree-caves' dark, with branches hung like old asbestos;
and every jagged edge and emptiness and lump
acted on my luminous fingers like a lamp.

“We are in the place of desire's first reality,
the location of original, dark chemistry;
the dark piece catalyses light to desirous image,
and we are in its region, the sunshade of ostrich plumage,”
said the Three Jabirus.

I can never tell if its wind or just raining,
always with the sound of things touching leaves;
I heard a noise and with no seeing for explaining,
this was the only fact I could retrieve: touched leaves.

The cooking sheets' metallic spoors, splitting breath of coal,
gave on pied detail spread out whole;
I don't know if my eyes adjusted to the dark paste,
or my imagining body gave dark things a light pace.

Radiant pastries and bread shaped like black gore
rendered, in tasty pixels, a bakery of collated spoors,
made of clay and other surfaces too simple for history,
in the side of the Low Country shrubberies, saline trees.

The black adobe grill seemed to precipitate and nurture bees –
they swarmed when a baker cooled the grill with cream;
the bees consumed the sweet rising dairy steam,
and collected in its gaseous pod, black roiling peas.

They cooked shellfish in the milky steam, blue conch
that died like limp tongues, dripped mollusk salt from white tips;
the chemical change of heat pulled the fish inward in sips –
its wet, sporadic exhalations convinced my ear it sank.

Ray Carver and Leonard Cohen stood at the adobe grill,
and continuously checked the black bread striated with gills.
“We need to feed this to one of the interns, if it's fuel
for the requisite and pungent blackened hallelujah,”

said Cohen, fingering tea-black, coffee-coarse flour,
and checking his wrist for the culinary hour.
Lackadaisical Carver seemed lost in his work,

but said in a voice both catatonic and berserk:

“I want a love made not of flowers but of roots,
as fundamental and black as a bruise;
we should be seeds, which process dirt into leaves,
a conduit for something black and not ourselves.”

Cohen and Carver walked out from the antediluvian kitchen,
into the café replete with whispers and mentions.
They approached two men earnestly engaged
in a discussion of polite, sensitive, white boy rage.

Lou Barlow talked, possum-frail and sensitive in glasses,
to Morrissey about love’s more hateful classes:
“Listen, anyone could be your brand new spidery love.”
“But will they fit as smug and snug as a glove?”

“This old black bread is glazed with black honey,”
said Carver, offering the black into Morrissey,
who accepted that clot from the ancient bakery,
and prepared with them all for the bread’s mystery.

The black bread made a black plant in Morrissey
that busted his throat with a black, exhumed bloom;
punctured the soft between ribs with umbra flourishes,
a black bird flexing out of an egg; it exuded spoor fumes.

Lou looked nervous at the nonce trellis of the skeleton
“Hey, there we go. He turned to necessary gelatin,”
Carver said, as Lou carried the body from the dark adhesive
into the prismatic occurrence of the light’s missive.

Two men in a debate that a Rioja compelled
ate from the blackened pastels of grilled periwinkle shells.
Freud and von Strohiem remembered Viennese restaurants,
until Erich took the talk on a more umbrageous current.

Freud took a piece of seared and breaded conch
and said, as he wet the harsh crumbs with the wine’s tonic:
“We’re fountains that erupt with unaccounted for water,
from a dark earthen clot to a liquid candle-matter.”

They ate a plate of crabs who’d been given DMT

to render in them their ancestors' memories,
and Erich ate the milky brains their bellies exuded,
filled with seafloor remembrance and generational turpitude.

Dining on Japanese plum wine and turtle soup,
two men in boots talked strange cosmology in loops,
punctuated by nervous, blasphemous laughter:
McCarthy said to Melville, and reciprocally after:

“Wheat-dark, I think that God is a large black thing,
and we come out from him in illusory-luminous rings.”
“Turtle-dark, I think we can know God only in a cringe,
and we bend and slam always on our hinge that joins him.”

Strawberry blades, blueberry ribs, blackberry back,
spots where their violence had brightly fructified,
they ate a girl made of fruit, devoured her slack;
her cherry and dark berry spots were a forensics implied.

“Know what you've seen, but we can't be here much more –
Pilgrim, it's time to take us out the back door,”
said the birds with drowsy fetus faces. “Okay.”
I led those bleeding birds toward a fleck of day.

Out back, Bill Callahan drowned a horse:
the exit spread out an inclemently wobbling coast,
and the tide gauzed the horse, flecked its nut-gloss.
The two talked with intimacy's special coarseness.

The wet sea-smell and the dry horse-smell slurred and bent
in the surf brown with agitated sediment.
The black-brown sea and the blond-brown mammal
met with the exhalation of a soggy cymbal.

The storm squatted a blackening light above the island,
emphatic with rain and milk-swirled-purple of lightning
that rendered the distant trees exciting green –
the electricity above the palms like spastic candles.

Callahan held her neck in intimate dismissal,
then sloshed into the storm's electric borealis,
and wrapped himself in the breakers' brutal filigree,
with this as his gently disgusted decree:

“I don’t want see you swimming after me,”
and he placed her horse-heart in his permanent history,
brown-beating fetish-bit, desired animal-clip –
the taste and the texture he held in his lips.

The horse stumbled after Callahan, sinking into the sea,
brown into brown, darkening toward the distant island,
hooves attempting the slight webbing of hands.
The horse drowning left a soundless desire in me.

I left the birds on the beach, asking questions all to each,
and swam as far as my spastic legs reached;
I took the drowning into my mouth at mercurial pace,
and it tasted austerely sweet, like metals taste.

I then drowned brown toward the island,
and couldn’t tell in that inky sensation
what was my lung and what was my hand,
and I forgot the distinction between kelp and stars and skin.

7. Ren, the Name of Heaven.

I sank into that sea with the slow intensity
of a plant, and a planet's immensity
until I turned off, and the dry, green juts of the agave
kept me company in the autumnal Mojave.

Sand red with a powdery blue, like a bruised cadaver,
surrounded desert shrubs whose lime looked soft,
but had hard scales up close and yellow powder-flowers.
The scape opened up like a yawn from a dry mouth.

Acrid red clods glommed loosely to the bluff
where I sat lackadaisical, dumb king of the cliff.
The red rocks all around me crudely gouged with runes,
I heard in the wind pert, forgotten Nazi tunes.

Clouds fluttered on the burnt-out knobs of Joshua trees,
crumpled black fingers, emphatic and defeated;
virid ephedra reported reticently on styles of the breeze;
chollas bobbed corroded tubes, replete with spine-spires, in the heat.

My clothing, I realized, was caked with all my journeys:
the garden dirt; the thin white Carolina sand;
the fine green sediment from the Appalachian clarity;
pine water; angel spit; stiff leftover salt from the island.

I looked behind me and saw a Biblical, hermetic mountain
with some vibrating Moses-light on the top;
I let my drying eyes wander and catch and slip
back down to the red and yellow spreading plain.

The red spread out speckled with unshaven bits,
and I wondered where my guiding birds were hid or had hit.
I looked down through shafts of purple desert thistle,
and saw the blind birds in the dry red rubble

of a river bed abandoned by the weather a long while;
so I went to get the animals of my soul.
I stumbled down the red flakes and clods of the hill,
the glaring geology of the place spelled in jagged bold.

The Jabiru in the center spasmed with breath;

his bird-bone jutted runny red through his scaly knee,
and his skull was crushed but not ripped, leaking beneath
with that thoughtful, yolky juice that holds myth.

“Bring us the gelid ox skull and shepherd’s staff,”
blindly screamed the remaining Jabirus with coughs;
they pointed to a bluff-shadowed ox skull and sheep staff,
and I retrieved them on a quick, redundant path.

They jammed out the spinal socket on the skull-bottom,
put the dry Hebraic bone over the newly soft and leaking head,
and the fetus-face looked painful red as it went hidden;
they raised him on the staff, and filled the ox-mouth with bread.

Intoned the Jabirus,
“The soul has an organ that knows and names heaven,
and we are in the frigid red of three god-worlds,
where we can see three ways of naming heaven,
with the mouth, the water, and the snake for words.

“We fall more and more apart as we get closer to the soul’s heart.
The different rocks shed different soils, satiate different plants.
We’ll want to follow the red wash up.
We’ll see the god-worlds when we get to the Mojave’s top.”

I felt like Moses with my Hebrew birds,
as we stumbled up the red in a shattered herd.
Their little fetal arms were tender in calamity,
and streaked all red by the desert’s hot chemistry

We walked the sublime red bubbling of the earth
where the bushes held the hill with the gentle clutching of mold.
The red and suspended, exploded, folded solids
of the rocks at the top tingled with worth.

The air got moistly hard with cold, and soil turned swart.
The Three Jabirus stumbled, reassured and coughed.
A strange and somewhat natural cuneiform on all the flint,
I stared into the desert, my brain dilated and far off.

I asked the Jabirus,
“Hey wait, are these places we go themselves or something other?
I mean – is this *the* Mojave or another Mojave?”

“This is a Mojave as distant and intimate as a lover.”
“I find that confusing.” Frigid desert. “Yes, probably.”

The rocks leveled out in to a bowl where plants collected,
strangely bulbed and bulging plants in a lace.
I took the shaft from a yucca’s shattered-egg base,
used the dry and crunchy beam for a walking stick.

A snake with the body parts that don’t have hair,
insect wings, crab legs, and the gelatinous scales of a fish,
moved precise and close and made sand scarred,
and I followed its scribble to a lacustrine dish:

the snake led us to a lake, a verdazurine location,
and I saw only the water, with a sudden concentration.
The hairless snake stuck crab-legs in the lake
and I felt my body was a big scratch to slake.

I drank in the lake’s dark, evasive color,
and realized heaven is a mouth and water;
a suggestion worked sideways like the taste of liquid,
as I drank in the large, blue, clotting quids.

Cardboard boxes, book pages, magazine covers, black plastic
clotted sodden on the surface of the lake.
Sunken coins and ID card that sun made fantastic
shone like artificial stones, and tidally shook.

Some strange light and water moved above my face,
and pulsed and gulped with adumbrated harmony
of music made of a matter unlike prosody or chemistry,
and formed a solid shape of water, a runic lace.

Said the Jabirus behind,
“Here’s the first portion, one of wafer’s skin,
where certain incantations and further song
prove heaven is a margin, a substance of suggestion,
one made three, and three made one again.”

Two men made the water and the sound,
and dressed in antiquated suits, wading in aquatic spools,
the one gyrating puffy-cuffed hands,
the other singing from an unusual tool.

Hart Crane sang with a metal bowl around his head,
and Wagner used incantations that bled and slid
to make a liquid bridge rise from the lake,
a liquid distillation, a light that tickled and shook.

The quivering vitreous fell when the music stopped,
and filled Crane's bowl, and made him choke and gulp.
Wagner approached with a ball of litmus,
green and prodding like an obscure citrus.

He dropped it in, the bowl became a veiny virid leaf,
and it bubbled up bulbous green molecules,
and it filled with sharp kelp, brown coniferous teeth.
They drained the water from the spherical tool.

Satie played a sun-puckered piano in the background,
and narrated his reticent tumble of sounds:
"I made melodies soaked with white, Greek light
that are not that other world, but can incite."

*In incantations, the electric, suggestive understanding of God
expressed itself in magniloquent, liquid clods.
God for those scientific singers is a thing
that only gets a matter when they sing,
I thought.*

I could hear maybe cars, disturbances of air,
and a vague roiling of black from far.
"Not exactly: they make their song a godworld,
as God was a man – heaven is their song's frequent curl,"
the Jabirus answered.

"Hey, did you just hear what got thought in me?"
"Not exactly: we are you, and you are us three.
We're the material extensions of your soul,
like a lung, heart, and brain: yourself and your tool."

"Can you always hear exactly what I'm thinking?"
"We didn't hear you, we knew. And, no."
"If I am you, then why can't or don't I know
what you're thinking? This all makes me feel like drinking."

The snake poked me with crab-legs, instructionally.
I looked back toward the three Jabirus,
and red sand clotted on the Jabiru knee,
in gouged sockets. My brain burst with a juice.

“Here’s the second group who love the lambent twine,
who see the entire world translucent with design
the effulgence of mathematics that shows in light on parts,
and the turgid, rhythmical clods of the heart.”
said the Jabirus,

pointing – I saw two men farther down cast a net,
and pull it back in that bulging pucker.
They divided the fish into wriggling sets
by their number of bones and lumpy colors.

They catalogued the cellular prism-expressions of scales,
felt fish-bellies for fish-babies, that turgid bump,
and felt the spine’s verdazurine, electric slump,
and cut them in the sun with a piece of shale.

Cort Day and Wordsworth found heaven in the lambent strings,
the sloughed efflorescence off all the bright things:
“Monad burns the scales with geometric light,
the entire world’s determinative delight,”
said Day.

“The little spots of time spread through their biologic grime...”
started Wordsworth, lost in a peculiar, pellucid mind.
The inside of the fish looked like the glassy future
when the sun made all the vein-y sutures lucent,

and the bulbs of the swim-bladder vitreous pink,
vibrating and soft like something that thinks,
and the invisible, tremor-filigree of nerves
a net on the soft meat in blue, implied swerves.

They placed it in a machine of translucent frog
that anatomized and clarified the thing
to points of vein and points of light
that made the fish a translucent insight:

the flayed open trout in the organic machine

made from a translucent frog's subtle green,
became a magic lantern, made light embody waterfalls
that rang with the other world's limpid, ecumenical knell.

The snake prodded me with insect wings
that bothered me to focus with their nasal song.
I could not hear the Three Jabirus behind me,
and the snake led me farther to autumnal bees and a mummy.

“The third group lets earth-things perform their math
to prove beyond themselves, to the swath,
with the holy animatronics of an alle-gory
they make with autumnal bees and the mummy.

“It's a type of MK Ultra of the ineffable,
figures wrenched in lit locations by effulgent control,”
came the blind bird voices from behind me,
and I heard in them the broken leg and punctured knee.

I saw the antiquely folded body next to an apiary
whose effluence of bees moved like topiary,
and recuperated themselves into their combs
filled with the viscous, holy liquid of their homes.

Blake and Yeats and Dante all held
bees in microscopic and religious bridles,
and dropped chemicals into their eyes' multiple temples
until the bees and effulgent intentions melded.

The bees disassembled the mummy in a spiritual autopsy,
removing rags, joints and sandy-puckered lungs discretely,
and discovered in the mummy by conjunction
the lucent bee-dreams of the Egyptians.

The bees carried with them the orange atmosphere of fall,
and wrapped around the mummy in an attitude of fall,
shaped like a black and bubbling shawl,
made by and squirting those bees, pollen-thighed coals.

I felt a thought touch my brain and stick;
hit the bees with my yucca, and the bees shattered it,
and mutually the bees shattered on the crumbling stick,
and I felt a bitter honey in my stomach for doing it.

The bees busted open onto me, and burned my hand.
The little bee-bits, like black, acid sand,
and began to melt my hand, and show my veins.
“Hey, Three Jabirus, is this really happening?”
I screamed.

“I can smell you melting. Did you touch a bee?”
“It wasn’t me! The bee touched me!”
“Look around, there should be a verdurous building.
They’re our people, and can do medical welding.”

I saw an annex like a garage among the plants,
and the scientific tools outside looked ancient:
satellites made from Sumerian clay, Babylonian glass,
a Baghdad battery, some Egyptian die-casts,

and a metallic baleen: bales of cobalt wire
wrapped dilapidated around a magnet large as a tire.
Moss and grass and certain palms covered the roof,
leaving the annex moist and aloof. We walked through scruff.

The scientists inside greeted the Jabirus as long friends,
and pointed to a suspended bulb of verdazurine light
that seemed to oscillated in tides that held it tight
between it’s bulbous and uneven ends.

My bones slimy with their melt, and marrow dribbling,
I heard birds and doctors beside me quibbling.
With the rough-glass song of blind and limping flies,
the three birds touched with small arms, said “Goodbye.”

The scientists dowsed my hands in cooling chemical balms,
and fed me purple opium powder to keep me calm.
They tied me down and opened me slowly in vivisection,
and implanted the blue light beneath my stomach’s skin.

I dazed on the table and felt the blue, amniotic blur:
the cobalt and aquatic searching particulars, tide fingers,
of a flood filling a filigreed forest, mountain parts, a wobbly plain,
the blue light filled me to specific tips, and made me sane.

I felt my open chest and melting hand and veins mend,

with the aloof ether of the light's vitreous blending;
then the dark-eyed scientists with the blue light
sent me on my penultimate, ambrosial flight.

8. Khu, the Ethereal Casing.

I filled along my veins, liquid in cotton swab:
blue light opened my joints as knobs,
and took me apart with transport's wheels,
and sealed me back in the autumnal Georgian field.

Folded in a noose of loose cloth, an owl
ate a placenta, beak in that fertile towel.
I jumped back into an arbor, decaying twine,
covered with scuppernong and muscadine wine-vines.

Hay-bales curled in the field, fuzzy geometry.
Cows clicked into a system of rural chemistry,
drank water from dilapidated tubs on grass
circulated liquid in bones and their eyes' glass.

Pine coffins, filled with fecund brown,
soil wet and blackened from recent turning,
held worms to sell for bait later in town.
The worms moved with the patient roil of burning.

In the autumnal splurge of red, the Three Jabirus entered
over my head, burst with wing-jingles, and scattered;
their fetal parts melted, and two turned to holy birds
in that region where they lived, and permanently served.

The bleeding Jabiru could not turn bird,
and transformation slowed by the dirty blood;
the Jabiru drooled a rhapsody of broken bits of pain,
change stopped – my bird died on the plain.

I grieved into the oranges and reds around
that filled autumnal Georgia with leaves like crisp sounds,
and did not even have any birds to cry at or explain
the dead bird from my soul spread on the hay-plain.

I spun, and saw in the field two men in salon chairs,
with antique English flows of hair,
and women working in antique clothes there,
slowly on their bodies and their hair:

Shakespeare and Marvell were wrapped by Egyptian girls,

in mummy cloth efflorescent with Egyptian light;
their minds vacillated with mutating delight,
as they swaddled in those Egyptian rags and curls.

Cherub rubbish of bird splurges, fetal skin and flesh,
scattered in the field, suspended in hay-mesh.
The Two Jabirus dismissed the Egyptian girls,
and took back over wrapping the poets in Egyptian curls

with the calm dexterity of humming birds,
with fetal skin gripping stork-cheeks still,
wrapped the Englishmen in their vacillation's skill.
They had lost the talent for human words.

The girls reached the main house, and the tin trash bin.
They slipped off shoes, swept their shins, walked in.
I walked toward the crowd of birds and poets,
observing the effulgence of their physics.

Said Marvell as I approached,
"Here's lambent knowing, your words of the torch light,
pellucid vacillation, lucent groping, mercurial habit,
where the light happens in the soul's eccentric orbit,
our florescent volition, the mummy cloth of soul done right."

I despairingly squeaked,
"Is this the end? Are those my birds? Can I speak to them?"
"You can't speak in mouth-ways with them again,
but are them, white beach that's a reflective grain,
and talk with them again by being light in time.

"To organ-ize your soul, to show it as a working organ,
that was the purpose of all of this thing that ends.
Now you can begin again, with inward operation of an organ,
with the soul's understood and lit ethereal casing."

"Is my bird dead? Did part of me die when my bird died?"
"Yes, he was an organ from your soul's side."
"Yeah," said Shakespeare. I asked thoughtfully,
"Why can you talk to me? No one else has talked to me."

"I live in the region where the soul flows and is sealed.
Now walk to the middle of the field."

In the middle of the field, a lump
and a disturbance formed, and soil crumbled limp

upward from it. In the aperture:
a giant, reptilian egg with mummy cloth texture.
A brace of cats and birds that were my soul
tore themselves out through mummy cloth holes,

and wallowed awkwardly in red Georgia mud:
the cadaverous lion, the vicious quail,
the geometric tiger, the hawk who made me bleed
the ostrich who made shade with tail.

Thy emerged in fetal-confused from that womb;
the desert snake slivered in their tears' comb.
The Jabirus left alive flew to greet fraternal animals,
and dabbed birth-clots from siblings of their soul.

In the side of my eye, I saw two men
playing football with Egyptian skin:
Tolstoy and Springsteen were having a catch
with improvised, inflated mummy-parts.

“Tolstoy and me, see we're men of action,
here to give your animals some tangible traction.
See that hole, you're gonna have to jump in,”
said Springsteen, delighted and winded.

Well beyond the line of asking, I peeled
away egg parts, with awkward jerks revealed
a red canyon of mouth-livid Georgia clay,
secret and bright between the wool-dreary hay.

I struggled in, and my feet choked on stones.
I tumbled, exploded my head on a rock alone,
and knew in my skull a stained-glass hurt,
and felt my sense extend in blood, liquid eyes in Georgia red.

9. The Sung Conclusion.

I deliquesced to consciousness of the camellia.
Home! Those were my own camellias!
Summer scene of my yard returned –
How many months had passed? – and the humid burn

of camellia-pink filled lumps of my thought,
and left my soul pink, pollen-swollen – taut.
Home! Camellias! I didn't seem to even be dead!
I fingered brown curls where in Georgia there was blood.

The impatiens were so soggy with heat,
their pods exploded, messy with seeds,
dried and cracked with old sticky liquid and hard dots,
reds drowsing brown, drooping till they bled

red on grass. A new gate, raw lumber bright,
crossed and pierced the yard's heart starkly
among azalea phantasmagorias in the arriving dark,
in the humid blackening of evening light.

Through natural mouths of gnats,
those miniature organic woodwind slits,
the evening murmured something lachrymal –
I had the intimation that there were animals.

I suddenly felt in me an elegy for all I'd lost,
a lamentation for the sudden disturbance.
I felt in the virid, ripe Summer-breath
that to see the soul was to see death.

I remembered the bird, limp on the plain,
the angel belly that flew me to Mojave sun,
the bee-deleted hand that holy acid sprained,
the nymph-blood smeared on the beach – all birds abandoned.

The Nightingale and Three Jarius,
the prime flock and murder of my soul,
were nowhere in the viscous evening cirrus,
or hiding behind the lattice-light of raw poles.

I felt suddenly, impossibly exhausted

by every thought of birds and the cost.
I turned to walk into the drowsy-lit house,
and let my confusion lose its force.

I relished the cool metal of the front door,
peeled off crusty clothes, revealing sores;
and then with the Spring's sun-thick words,
I wrote this poem in pledge to the birds.

Notes to *Inter Umbras Arborum*

These notes are just direct quotes and etymologies. All the Egyptology, the hieroglyph translation stuff, is real amateur hour, me with a series of dictionaries and grammar books which all seem to partially disagree with each other. It should be thought of not as philological and historical reference, but as specific imaginative trigger.

1. *Inter Umbras Arborum*: “Among the shadows of trees.” Taken from the poem “Pervigilum Veneris.”
2. *Pastoral*: I had in mind that genre in which the pastor and the pasture are the guides for eating - that is, the original etymological sense of the pastoral.
3. *Phantasm-agoria*: coming from φανος- bright light, torch light, appearances, phenomena; and γορειν- public speaking, αγορειν place of speaking; that is, phantasmagoria means, an agora of appearances, or an assembly of speaking torch lights.

2. Khat, the Decaying Body.

The hieroglyph for the Khat consists phonetically of an oxyrhynchus fish, which is more like a guttural H than a K, then a vulture percnopterus, which in this case seems to represent an A as in “hat,” then a piece of bread which represents a T. The determinative of the sign, that portion which is pictorial rather than phonetic, consists first of a pustule, and second of a corpse on leonine bier, denoting the physical body, but emphasizing death and disease connotatively. The same phonetic arrangement, with three strokes at the end, indicating plurality, is the word for disease.

1. George Chapman said:

“These lines come from my wounds, and not from me.”

2. Black Francis said:

“This is the sound the mother makes when the baby breaks.”

3. Tom the Possum: T. S. Eliot.

3. Sahu, the Germinating Body.

The hieroglyph for the Sahu consists phonetically of a door bolt, representing an S, then a single disembodied arm, pronounced as a broad A like in “palm”, then a twirled wick, which represents a hissed H, then a quail which is a W sound, then a determinative which consists of a sandal strap (the ideogram for life, pronounce “ankh”, the sound sign with which we still refer to this symbol in modern English, though it has no sound here), and the corpse on the leonine bier from the Khat, denoting a physical body that has attained a special knowledge that makes it incorruptible, and involving in its connotation the paradox of the live death or the living dead body.

1. “glory, phenomenon and phantasm...argument”: glory deriving from “gloria”, a bright light; phenomenon and phantasm originally deriving from φανος –bright torch light; and argument deriving from “arguo” – to bring to better light, which derives from αργος, bright white. Point being, all these terms are metaphorical extensions of the same visual image, light.

2. John Keats said:

“A thing of beauty is a joy forever.”

3. William Browne said:

“I made the echo umpire of my strain.”

4. Ka, the Shape of the Essence.

The hieroglyph for the Ka consists of a single symbol: two hands raised up in prayer or exaltation, and connected to each other beneath. Phonetically, this represents the sound “ka”, and is the ideogram for the concept of a double, or duplicated abstract version of the person which can inhabit and leave the body. Whether this is also a pictorial determinative is an interesting question, since the spirit, certain concepts of which bear a striking to this, does not seem to lend itself to pictorial treatment. If so, it denotes the abstract double that can inhabit and leave the body, and claims this looks like exaltation.

1. “you still don’t see ideas as radial videos” : Here I had in mind the common derivation of “idea” and “video” from the same Greek word, εἶδος, meaning visual shape or outline. Idea comes pretty directly, thanks to Plato’s usage of the term, conflating form and idea, while video comes more circuitously from εἶδο, or “I see,” which was adapted as “video” into Latin, meaning, again, “I see” which was adapted into English as the seen thing, the simulacrum of sight.

2. David Lynch said:

“*No hay banda.*”

3. Bob Dylan said:

“I’m not there, I’m gone.”

4. “King Arthur”: Arthur Robison, the director of *Schatten*.

5. Ba, the Noble Intutions.

The hieroglyphic for the Ba is a single Jabiru stork, which represents the sound “ba”, means literally “sublime” or “noble,” is often translated as “soul”, and is the ideogram for the concept of the single deathless portion of the human. It is frequently depicted as a human-headed hawk.

1. Virginia Woolf said:

“‘If you had my brain you would find the world a very thin, colorless place,’ [Bertram Russell] said.”

2. John Milton said:

“In real darkness of the body dwells.”

3. Kathleen Hanna said:

“Let me hear you de-politicize my rhymes.”

3. Edmund Wilson said:

“[Karl Marx] wrote her bad romantic poetry from college.”

6. Khaibit, the Shadow.

The Khaibit is represented by a sunshade made of ostrich feathers, a piece of bread, and a small stroke indicating that it is an ideogram, and therefore not a simply phonetic arrangement. It is pronounced “khaibit” wholesale I think, although the sunshade could be a bilateral phonogram that represents a guttural H and a B, and the piece of bread would retain its accepted T, though I have had trouble verifying this, one way or the other. It denotes something like a less colorful version of the Ka, a duplicate that can enter and leave the body at will. It has much in common with the Roman *umbra*, or Dante’s concept of *ombra*, or shade. The sunshade seems an obvious, but gorgeously, ingeniously tangible choice for a pictorial representation of the Khaibit, and the bread suggests to me sustenance in the shadows.

1. Lou Barlow said:

“Anyone could be your brand new love.”

2. Bill Callahan said:

“Tonight I’m swimming to my favorite island,
and I don’t want to see you swimming behind.”

7. Ren, the Name in Heaven.

The hieroglyph for Ren consists phonetically of a mouth to represent a trilled R sound and a squiggled piece of water to represent the N, with the determinative of a man seated with his hand to his mouth. (There are no real vowel symbols in hieroglyphics). The possessive masculine form has a viper in place of man touching his mouth, which represents an F sound. This denotes the name of a man, which is, somewhat mysteriously, thought to exist in heaven. It seems connotatively to suggest the nurturing, quenching notion of speech.

1. “Elohiym” in Hebrew is just the plural form of “Eyl” which means the mighty one, which is essentially identical with the Anglo-Saxon *aelmihtig*, or almighty. In archaic Hebrew, the aleph was represented by a cattle skull and the lamed was a shepherd staff, so that Eyl was written, right to left, as cattle skull then shepherd staff, a very smelly and farmy emblem of the holy strength of God.

2. William Wordsworth said:

“There are in our existence spots of time.”

8. Khu, the Ethereal Casing.

The hieroglyphic for the Khu is three Jabirus. It represents an intangible ethereal casing for the soul. Also, the Sekhem is, phonetically, a fold of cloth, representing an S, a placenta to represent a “ch” like in the Scottish “loch,” an owl representing an M, and a scepter for the determinative, denoting some sort of “power” or “form” of the soul, and connoting imperial efficacy.

1. “words of the torch light”: literal translation of phenomenology.

Carolina Cycle, a Tetrafoliate Portrait of Charleston

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It's just incredible. It just does not explain. Or perhaps that's it: they don't explain, and we are not supposed to know. We have a few old mouth-to-mouth tales; we exhume from old trunks and boxes and drawers letters without salutation or signature, in which men and women who once lived and breathed are now merely initials or nicknames out of some now incomprehensible affection which sounds to us like Sanskrit or Choctaw; we see dimly people, the people in whose living blood and seed we ourselves lay dormant and waiting, in this shadowy attenuation of time possessing now heroic proportions, performing their acts of simple passion and simple violence, impervious to time and inexplicable.

William Faulkner

Jeanne Berchaud, a Noh Splice Grown in Carolina

Nous voila enfin aterre dans cepais tant desire. Jean Boyd, 1691.

1691 Anno Domini

Old Charlestown Settlement in Carolina

A Stage of Pines and Azaleas

Chorus among the Camellias

Stinking Log Battlements

Tar-reeking Log Houses

Enter Jeanne Berchaud

As a Ghost

Gray Veil Across her Face

Jeanne: The body has disappeared,
and the soul has reduced to a suite of wounds;
my body has atomized into Carolina air,
and my soul has reduced its claims in the world.

The seaweed's beached sluggish and drying with sand,
the soft white spew on ropey green;
too much sand on the grease of red clay
for searching, farming hands
here between clay-drinking pines
for the land to fructify and splay.

Chorus: The body has disappeared,
and the soul has reduced to a suite of wounds;
my body has atomized into Carolina air,
and my soul has reduced its claims in the world.

Jeanne: The water turtles and dirt turtles,
the water ones tasted salty and light and thin,
the dirt ones thick and earthy like liver
under nonce arbors of crepe myrtle
dripping ruffled pink nuggets of plant
on us; in the pleasant frisson, we'd shiver.

Chorus: The body has disappeared,

and the soul has reduced to a suite of wounds;
my body has atomized into Carolina air,
and my soul has reduced its claims in the world.

Jeanne: Rattlesnakes sank caustic liquid into men,
and we rubbed the tapering rears of hens
on their wounds to draw the poison.
The black and white cat with putrid urine
searches for butter-white grubs and feeds
under the azalea's pink ruin
of the original green seed.

Chorus: Death is just another
lens for the soul,
a new body for farther
looking, seeing hole.

Jeanne: We shot iron pebbles at the ruffled gutters
of crocodile backs, and invisible ricochets
sounded hollow gulps and howls in humid air.
The baroque lizards never moved
from marshes' methane murmurs.
You and I went to camellias for pink play,
pink dreams of our camellia affair.

Chorus: Death is just another
lens for the soul,
a new body for farther
looking, seeing hole.

Jeanne: The Indians tortured enemies with Dionysian slicing,
festivals where they'd expose and staunch
all tendons for days, leave the bodies ash and fraying.
They forced them then to eat themselves in crunching strings.
Though they spoke with the holy coughs of Hebrews,
they were devoid of legitimate praying.
Georges, you thought they were the ten lost tribes of Jews.

Chorus: Death is just another
lens for the soul,
a new body for farther
looking, seeing hole.

Jeanne: You always forced me to the things I didn't want,
especially among the pinkest plants.

The blood even of Indians
is caustic inside death's second lens,
and burns in my vision,
supernatured, metaphysic reduction
above the born.

In the pink metastasis of summer,
in the heathen botany of Carolina,
in the humid chokes of summer murmurs,
under Carolina sun's wet grinder,
you take this time each year to remember.

Enter Georges Berchaud

Jeanne Hides

Georges: In this purgatorial aviary for pelicans and mosquitoes,
the savages cut our child out of her,
and let him dangle from her natural rope,
a noose absolutely implanted in the belly,
his limbs in forced expression like a starfish,
eyes unopened, blackened with pools of clot.
Jeanne dangled on a rope from this oak,
its cordage pinkened by her abrasions,
her throat covered with dark raspberry confections.

Jeanne Reemerges

Jeanne: What are you doing here?

Georges: My wife died here.

Jeanne: You're blunt.

Georges: I'm honest.

Jeanne: How long ago?

Georges: Ten years ago.

Jeanne: How did she die?

Georges: There's fewer than two hundred citizens here.

Jeanne: That right?

Georges: It is, and I don't recognize you.

Jeanne: What do you think about God?

Georges: Too much. Not enough.

Jeanne: So much?

Georges: That much.

Jeanne: That's too much.

Georges: As I said.

Jeanne: Here's what I think, and I think it a lot. Here is my problem with God: did Eve know?

Georges: Know what?

Jeanne: That she was being tricked.

Georges: It wouldn't be a trick if she knew.

Jeanne: Exactly. But she had to know.

Georges: How so?

Jeanne: If they were sufficient to have stood, based on their God-given will and reason, but free to fall, then she could not have been genuinely deceived beyond the capabilities of her reason, or else the Fall would not be their fault, and the punishment would be unjust. She has to have been able to figure it out, or else its not fair.

If their will and reason made them sufficient to have stood, then it is impossible that Eve was really duped, or tricked. She must have been conscious of the consequences and true nature of the situation the entire time, or else God is unjust. We know God to be just, so Eve must have known, and have never been truly convinced by the snake.

Georges: That right there sounds like a trick to me. So what are you getting at?

Jeanne: You knew. You knew what you shouldn't do. As I knew too.

Georges: Who are you?

Jeanne: I'm Jeanne.

Georges: You aren't.

Takes off Her Veil

Jeanne: I am.

Impervious to the Supernatural

Remaining Sarcastic:

Georges: I guess you are.

Jeanne: You knew, and you knew what they would do.

Georges: What did I know?

Jeanne: Where what we did would send us.

God wouldn't have let you not,
or this game of ours would not be fair.
We necessarily must know the right.

Georges: God told you this?

Jeanne: You don't just get an audience at death. You have to figure these rules out even after the world of born things.

Georges: They were exceptional leopards, articulate hyenas,
brutal and animal, devoid of God.

I didn't know I shouldn't. I really didn't know.
You can commit a crime within a time
and certain mind and have it not be a crime. You can. I did.

Jeanne: In the shed we kept surrounded by impossibly tall camellias,
by the tallow pots and privies, tanneries reeking with animal rot,
we kept Indian corpses in cool weather,

salted them in the summer, and sold them,
one winter and one summer before we died.
You and I, to settlers, to feed their dogs theatrically.

Chorus: We are both just Calvin-ghosts atoning
to the raw numen of our just God,
devoid even of the pieces to make moaning,
in a punishment devoid of rod.

Jeanne: We came from the sunny turtles of Barbados
to this land with humid vegetation like wet bitch fur,
and landed in a war: colonials gathered and raped
the Esau women and children, sold men to New England
and back to our Barbados to slave them to death,
but the Yamassee sent the bloody stick, a sign,
and the Westohs, Apalachee, and Savannah
cooperated to dissect the colonists in lonely cabins.

Chorus: We are both just Calvin-ghosts atoning
to the raw numen of our just God,
devoid even of the pieces to make moaning,
in a punishment devoid of rod.

Jeanne: The Charlestown force killed schools of the indigenous,
enfolding the outlying cabins in their dispensation,
and brought savage corpses back at your insistence
and your payment, because you had a Spanish plan.
You knew a hundred years ago conquistadors
fed mastiffs Indian meat, as a cruel instrument of morale.
You'd do the same. It was a hit.
We had to clean the bodies first, the floral offal,
hang them upside down to drain the lingering blood.

Chorus: We are both just Calvin-ghosts atoning
to the raw numen of our just God,
devoid even of the pieces to make moaning,
in a punishment devoid of rod.

Jeanne: They came one night for us purveyors.
They hollowed out your pelvis to a gory circle,
passed their ropes through blackish mutilation,
and hung you splay-legged, pelvic blood dripping
down you in baroque black rivulets like candle wax.

They hung you by me and our hanging baby. You died,
and have been dead for ten years since.

Georges: I refuse you. I will never know. And I live in that. I can never die.

Carolina Continues Regardless

Peter Rombert, a Santee Wraith

Anno Domini 1724

On a Path of the Banks of the Santee

The River to the Right in a Brackish Swirl Behind

A Black and Brackish Pool Behind and to the Left

With Certain Cypress Knees Protruding

First Chorus in the Brackish Pool, Knee-Deep

Second Chorus in the River, at Analogous Depth in the Tannic

Peter Rombert Must Materialize, Without Entering, on the Path

As Wraith

Green, Pointed Spray of Carolina Pines Abounds

Peter Rombert: A series of miracles of uncertain moral import, that which is impossible but is also the case, and means something we cannot know about our safety - I have seen too much of this lately here among these Carolina greens

where
the wind staggers its bounce
through a cat-tail bank,
that roils also with reptiles beneath,
awkward progress of a terrapin
wagging and twisting the green.
Egret feet use pluff mud to sink,
with alligators only a pinch
of nostrils and eyes for breath
in this Carolina world I soon
must quit seeing.

First Chorus: I am the Janus at the joint between
the world of the born and after,
both the joke that you intend
and the stranger's laughter later.

Second Chorus: I am the Janus at the joint between
the world of the born and after,

both the photographed that you intend
and the light that makes itself again
in chemicals in patterns.

Conjoined Chora: I am the Janus a the joint between
the world after and this green,
am both the candle
and the image that it casts through glass slides
for children onto walls
of lambent knights in static riding.

Rombert: A wraith? But what does that mean? Perhaps effect can come before a cause or
during it, in the world we enter after, and this is just a foretaste of that order, the sea-
smell-twirls of wind that tip and introduce the hurricane,

here where
the first crisp
of fall glisters the tannic, wraps
it in precise sparkles and darkles,
the opaque rapture of the light
on brackish, next to the dirt
gouged in rhythms by horse-feet,
loop-evidence
of congealed toes, by clumps
of the discolored, clotted hay of dung.
A cottonmouth swerves brown
punctuation between cypress knees,
then dips its script
under the tannic.

First Chorus: I am the Janus at the joint between
the world of the born and after,
both the joke that you intend
and the stranger's laughter later.

Second Chorus: I am the Janus at the joint between
the world of the born and after,
both the photographed that you intend
and the light that makes itself again
in chemicals in patterns.

Conjoined Chora: I am the Janus a the joint between
the world after and this green,

am both the candle
and the image that it casts through glass slides
for children onto walls
of lambent knights in static riding.

Rombert: Am I an effigy of myself, or is myself an effigy of my wraith, which is me as I am here? Or am I both? A double-consciousness? One being which is two? And would I not be a God in that? Is this the plural feeling God consists of? Does my other self know also of me? I do not feel as if I do. I seem to know that I don't know,

back at the house
where now I watch
the workers warped
to glazed black bubbles
by flaws and hollows
in the glass,
while austere air of October
drifts in modulating sucks and gusts
inside the front and open door
on wide pine treated
to amber-bright,
where I talk to Dutartres of Boehme,
while watching the wide field and work
that spreads in hazy boles almost blue
on darkened stems.
This also I am.

First Chorus: I am the Janus at the joint between
the world of the born and after,
both the joke that you intend
and the stranger's laughter later.

Second Chorus: I am the Janus at the joint between
the world of the born and after,
both the photographed that you intend
and the light that makes itself again
in chemicals in patterns.

Conjoined Chora: I am the Janus at the joint between
the world after and this green,
am both the candle
and the image that it casts through glass slides
for children onto walls

of lambent knights in static riding.

Enter an Armed Dispensation of Charlestown Militiamen

On Horses Marked with Marsh

Led by Captain Simmons

They Pull up Short for Homiletics

Simmons: These men use metaphysics to rape children,
and hide their crimes in slanderous theology.
They're French, and reading Germans, which tells
you what you need to. Judith, twelve, is pregnant by her father,
and he's potent by this Rombert's order.

Rombert: Hello. I know you. I absolve you and here are the terms of my absolution.

Simmons: You do not know me. I need no absolution.

Rombert: I do not know you personally, but I'm a sentient effigy of myself, and know
that I will know you soon.

Simmons: Of course.

Rombert: Which course? I don't think you know this course.

Simmons: You must be one of the Dutartres.

Rombert: I am.

Simmons: We're here for you.

Rombert: Not yet. Thirty minutes worth of miles more.

Simmons: For them, but not for you.

Rombert: No, for me too. Here's the nature of you're absolution.

Simmons: I need no absolution.

Rombert: You do. You're the man who will be killing me. Here goes.

Omnibenevolent isn't omni at all. For God to be a true totality he must desire both the good and the bad. We impinge on his omnipotence by claiming he must desire only the good. God is total, and more than that, more than benevolence. All are his agents, and always must be.

I have done a service, as have you, each in his part.

Simmons: I haven't done mine yet.

Rombert: That is a naive definition of yet. You exist for distinctions, but I have recently become plural. I am Rombert.

Simmons: The worst. I am you're officer.

Rombert: How do you know yourself, when you do not know the other side of the limit? Things will change soon for you, and you'll become plural, too.

Simmons: That'd be quite a thing to do.

Rombert: You think you're swimming in this river, but you are a chunk of the water. Quit pretending to swim, water.

Simmons: We can arrest you and then kill you, or just kill you here.

Rombert:. That changes nothing. I have done a service.

First Chorus: I feel the tingling tip of the mind
twice now always, dykes apart;

Second Chorus: I know another mind with mine,
and think myself plural and ajar.

Conjoined Chora: Between the photographed and chemicals,
between the candles and the knight,
between joke and strangers lips,
I am a seeing rind.

First Chorus: I am God and omnivulent,
wanter of all, the kind and violent,

Second Chorus: the encyclopedic stream
that makes us permeable as dreams,

Conjoined Chora: am wraith, the river,
and my own murder.

Rombert: In thirty minutes time,
through indigo and cotton,
the boles that bust their husks,
and drop their floss,
the rice, more canny stuff,
patties crossed with custodian dykes,
the necessary floods
engendering malarial bugs
whose babies spasm in the wet,
and parents irritate our skin,
you'll penetrate to the plantation,
and I'll see you again.

First Chorus: I feel the tingling tip of the mind
twice now always, dykes apart;

Second Chorus: I know another mind with mine,
and think myself plural and ajar.

Conjoined Chora: Between the photographed and chemicals,
between the candles and the knight,
between joke and strangers lips,
I am a seeing rind.

First Chorus: I am God and omnivulent,
wanter of all, the kind and violent,

Second Chorus: the encyclopedic stream
that makes us permeable as dreams,

Conjoined Chora: am wraith, the river,
and my own murder.

Rombert: Certain slaves and cousins
will drop the work of plants,
pick up planned weapons,
muskets in near barrows,
soil thickly sticky with manure,
intimate nets of little roots,
covering the hands of nonce defense,

and fire back without repentance.
Simmons, you'll soon be dead.

First Chorus: I feel the tingling tip of the mind
twice now always, dykes apart.

Second Chorus: I know another mind with mine,
and think myself plural and ajar

Conjoined Chora: Between the photographed and chemicals,
between the candles and the knight,
between joke and strangers lips,
I am a seeing rind.

First Chorus: I am God and omnivulent,
wanter of all, the kind and violent,

Second Chorus: the encyclopedic stream
that makes us permeable as dreams,

Conjoined Chora: am wraith, the river,
and my own murder.

Rombert: I'll fire from inside,
break windows striated
with their own glazing,
fill my smooth mouth
with the wheezing taste
of chemical smoke,
notice briefly an October oak,
take a pellet in my chin,
droop and swell with it then,
and taste it white in my nose,
feel a second almost-molten
bullet nugget in my ear,
wet clotting out of sound first,
and then the coming rest:
I'll die on cotton of our couch,
and set this in motion with that.

Simmons Shoots Rombert in the Skull

To Liquid Effect and Collapse

Gaskins and the Rumble Ghost

Our bodies are our gardens; to the which our wills are gardeners. Iago

North Charleston

1975 Autumn

A Rural-Industrial Back-Behind-the-House-Trash-Pit of a Yard

Like You Find all Over the South

Enter Pee Wee Gaskins

Gaskins Surveying

A Choral Voice

From All Angles Off Stage

Chorus: A rumble ghost, a poltergeist,
a spirit immanent in the architecture,
I am a variety of cyborg really,
dead thought in inorganic fixture.

Pee Wee Gaskins: The wooden tennis rackets warped by watery air
and dowsed in dirt,
detachable windows in plastic frames smashed
in severe spider designs,
with drunk-circle puzzles at the center of the break,
original contusion,
rags of the shatter in the pecan leaves,

Chorus: A rumble ghost, a poltergeist,
a spirit immanent in the architecture,
I am a variety of cyborg really,
dead thought in inorganic fixture.

Gaskins: old plastic bottles from liquor and milk,
speckled with the sickly
blond grains of North Charleston dirt,
PVC pipes like strangely angled whale bones
trellising weeds to no purpose,
their original use forgotten,

Chorus: A rumble ghost, a poltergeist,
a spirit immanent in the architecture,

I am a variety of cyborg really,
dead thought in inorganic fixture.

Gaskins: a flower pot swabbed in pseudo-Oriental scrolls
of pink and blue,
surrounded by a yellow bubble
of truant lantana,
drifted from a neighbor's yard,
and vibrant in the autumn gunk,

The Grass Begins to Undulate Beneath Gaskins

A Terrible Noise Emanates from the Flowers

Bits of the Broken Glass Begin to Rotate in the Air

Chorus A Speaks from the Right

Chorus B Speaks from the Left

Chorus A: We are the undulations of the grass,
the terrible noise from the flower's whorl,

Chorus B: like glass on panicked lungs,

Chorus A: the swift rotation of the glass,

Chorus B: severe and clear tongues,

Chorus A: our architecture this natural world,

Chorus B: inflected with detritus of a slum.

Gaskins: the terra cotta boy with a bunny on his lap
and wings on his back,
his head broken off, sinking in leaves at his side,
a conch shell as large as the whole clay boy,
pale and prone to holes
from years apart from the sea and living fishy-snails,

Chorus A: We are the undulations of the grass,
the terrible noise from the flower's whorl,

Chorus B: like glass on panicked lungs,

Chorus A: the swift rotation of the glass,

Chorus B: severe and clear tongues,

Chorus A: our architecture this natural world,

Chorus B: inflected with detritus of a slum.

Gaskins: old paint cans that leak from soft rust spots
onto bags of acrid fertilizer,
and special treated soil,
green bags with black inside,
leaving shriveled acrylic clumps of white
powdered with fecund black,

Chorus A: We are the undulations of the grass,
the terrible noise from the flower's whorl,

Chorus B: like glass on panicked lungs,

Chorus A: the swift rotation of the glass,

Chorus B: severe and clear tongues,

Chorus A: our architecture this natural world,

Chorus B: inflected with detritus of a slum.

Gaskins: my Sunfish wedged awkward in dirt,
so old that acorns dent the hull,
the crumbling crunch of fiberglass cloth,
with raccoons in it, marsupial-style,
this graveyard of mine has degraded,
and the rumble ghosts are acting up.

Grass Undulations, Terrible Noise, and Rotating Glass all Stop

Gaskins Stoops

Surveying on Smaller Scale?

New impatiens wedge small greens,
grow out of cracks in bricks
on this abandoned patio,
after the balls of
spring-loaded ribs of chlorophyll
that burst then curl into themselves,
pressurized seed pods, have spread the brown inventions,
dripped seeds over months in soil
to climax with pink cloth.

Enter Doreen Dempsey

A Ghost-Woman Cobbled Together from Detritus and Trash

Gaskins Stands

Doreen Dempsey: Hey Pee Wee, it's Doreen Dempsey. You smashed my brains open, then sodomized my two year old daughter, Robin Michelle, and broke her throat closed until she was dead. You buried us here, with scores. How do you plead?

Gaskins: You can't plant your own garden.

Dempsey: I don't follow you, exactly.

Gaskins I'm not saying I didn't rape first, but to be raped is a bad, hard thing, it is a difficult thing. You be a child at the South Carolina Industrial School for boys, and then we'll talk, then try me.

Dempsey: Regardless, you must plead. Not guilty by virtue of the existence of other people?

Gaskins: You can't plant your own garden. Let me explain what that means. Your self must eventually just happen to you, or you're left with an infinite regress.

Let's say that all emotional states are plants in your garden, and that suicide thoughts are these pink impatiens. These thoughts grow in your garden, but you don't want these plants to grow in your garden, so you pluck them out. But of course this desire to pluck, this gardener, cannot be gardener, must actually be another plant, the desire-to-remove-suicide-from-my-emotion-garden flower, the lantana let us say. You must posit a second gardener to plant the first gardener. But of course the second gardener, the desire-to-desire-the-removal-of-suicide-plant must also be a plant in your emotion garden. This process repeats itself into the infinite. We have an infinite regress. It is logically impossible that you make your own personality. Your self must eventually just happen to

you, from the outside, or you're left with an infinite regress. You can't plant your own garden

Dempsey: What seems to you an infinite regression in thought in actually an infinite progress forward in time, you are constantly making yourself and must make a newer self to make the making self, on forward infinitely, working toward the original gardener of the future, but you never leave the garden, and always there is blooming and newness, unaccounted for by the materials of history.

Gaskins: Possibly. What does this amount to? Can you kill me with your glass?

Dempsey: We can't.

Gaskins: That seems impossible, which makes me think it's the case.

Gaskins Turns

Gives the Yard a Think

By my styrofoam cooler
sticky with a yellow
that clots with gnats
near unused plastic siding slats,
the Christmas lights with wires busting
with their white corrosion,
albino rust,
salt vestiges of ocean,

Chorus A: In the animating twist
that makes dangerous
the innocuous
volutions of a drill,

Chorus B: in the pressure in the chlorophyll
desiring to tear the pod,
cell-frill,

Chorus A: in current living as pressing
in the liquid green
of the marine,

Chorus B: in the pattern in the plant
that proves itself in pink,

Chorus A: in the moving jut that thinks
in gelatinous animal dank
of the brain,

Chorus B: in the seed that brownly gives
and is
when the pert pod rives,

Dempsey: By my grass that cradles
the white degraded belly
of the kayak,
and the sun-grayed rods of the surf-rack,
the pecan leaves a dry brown nest
for impatiens-cloths pinched
pink from their throats by wind
to shift by subtle bits in Charleston dirt again,

Chorus A: In the animating twist
that makes dangerous
the innocuous
volutions of a drill,

Chorus B: in the pressure in the chlorophyll
desiring to tear the pod,
cell-frill,

Chorus A: in current living as pressing
in the liquid green
of the marine,

Chorus B: in the pattern in the plant
that proves itself in pink,

Chorus A: in the moving jut that thinks
in gelatinous animal dank
of the brain

Chorus B: in the seed that brownly gives
and is
when the pert pod rives,

Gaskins: by my abandoned lumber branding grass

with yellow of its rest,

Dempsey: by my live oak aching with moss,
and sloppy with chlorophyll mess,

Gaskins: that catches gnats in vestige sap
like blood on a cow's back,

Dempsey: so full of oak it droops with itself,
and children use its mazes to make paths,

Chorus A: In the animating twist
that makes dangerous
the innocuous
volutions of a drill,

Chorus B: in the pressure in the chlorophyll
desiring to tear the pod,
cell-frill,

Chorus A: in current living as pressing
in the liquid green
of the marine,

Chorus B: in the pattern in the plant
that proves itself in pink,

Chorus A: in the moving jut that thinks
in gelatinous animal dank
of the brain

Chorus B: in the seed that brownly gives
and is
when the pert pod rives,

Gaskins, Dempsey, and Conjoined Chora: we live.

Gaskins: What is it like to be a ghost and live in grass like this?

Dempsey: It's a lonely thing. They'll catch you soon. You'll burn in '91.

A Pageant of Victims Appearing

De Crevecoeur and the Draugr, A Play in Five Goat-Songs

“Tanke, you white man, tanke you, pute some poison and give me.” St. John De
Crevecoeur

First Goat-Song

Year of our Lord 1736

On the Way to the House of Thomas Lynch

On a Bluff Scrubbed with Lime-Bright Bushes, and Moss-Tangled Oaks

Wet Floppy Blooms of Various Brights

Overlooking the Tannic Wando Churn

Thomas Lynch Junior, a Slave with his Master's Name

In an Elevated Cage Hung from an Oak, Slumped and Exhausted

Sea-Birds Drape on Him, and Eat from Him

Unchallenged like Mosquitos on a Sleeping Face

His Cheekbones Exposed among Other Brutalities

Pecks Red All Over, Drying Toward Black

Enter St. John De Crevecoeur

Apparently Unaware of the Caged and Bird-Bedecked Man

Chorus Huddled Around the Bottom of the Oak that Holds the Cage

Chorus: I am my residue made literal,
a haunting made of viscera -
have gone, but am still actual,
a ghost in a body physical and miserable,
logs crusted black and busted by their absent flame,
fine sand and round stones left dry by absent stream.

Thomas Lynch Jr.: The saline gulls with rank salty feathers reel and maul
my body miserable,
a feathered fire that burns me, salt and all,
my ammoniac tissue,
my punishment in viscera emblemed,
in slow gull flames.

I was a man, and am a bird-speckled draugr
in slow fragments.

St John De Crevecoeur: The soil its very self seems to churn and threaten
with movement of earthworms, vermicular swirls,
slowly deliberate like the direction of stars;
bush and oak bounce their greens in lime sun
and purple sun of wet and floppy blooms,
all the spring green shifting and curving
like a green snake's lithe hide.

Chorus: I am my residue made literal,
a haunting made of viscera -
have gone, but am still actual,
a ghost in a body physical and miserable,
logs crusted black and busted by their absent flame,
fine sand and round stones left dry by absent stream.

Lynch Jr: Like an orange peeling back
to white rind stuck to fruit,
osprey peeled back cheek flesh,
pores squirting clotted oil,
and scratched pink-white face bones
that yellowed over days;
and gouged in exploration
at death-relaxed paunch,
and hopped to sniff with interest
at pits and crotch and other joints,
jumped back, and slammed hook
of beak into open flesh instead.

De Crevecoeur: This eddy brown with bitter tannins on the sand
distills this burp and eruption of bodies,
where water bugs draw tiny lines in sharp tea-brown,
that spread out in tiny wide sheets
that catch a different fold of the light,
while the minnows below jostle to shine
as they shift to eat.
And these azaleas! Their leaves dull green scabs
their blooms suspended little turtle hearts,
pink and nervous flutters in the wind.

Chorus: I am my residue made literal,

a haunting made of viscera -
have gone, but am still actual,
a ghost in a body physical and miserable,
logs crusted black and busted by their absent flame,
fine sand and round stones left dry by absent stream.

De Crevecoeur Approaching the Cage

De Crevecoeur: I saw this morning where the windows overlap
a blackened lizard skeleton with a fly
still in its mouth,
a lizard with black mummy skin,
and here the skeletal shell of a baby turtle
the brown organic plates that once were full of blood
have peeled to reveal bulbous bones,
ball-shaped white.

Lynch Jr: My flesh shrinks back on my hard parts:
my cuticles rip their clear collar
on my nails as they dry and pull back,
my gums shrivel back on dry teeth,
my tongue an ashy nugget like a turtle's,
and corn-slimed teeth evaporate,
and crack with blue lines
like something buried in milk,
and the frills of open flesh reddened and blackened
and white and yellow cartilage rinds
desiccate back from open bone,
a rose extending out from pollen-dome bone,
and cormorants smell their long necks at this.
Mosquitos catch in every wet on me.

De Crevecoeur: What is this feather-pollen pile inside this green rose?
It seems to speak. An accident of birds
with a substance of man. Is that a man in a cage,
speaking from a body of birds?

De Crevecoeur Kicks the Cage

The accident of birds dissolved, the inward and the outward match.

Who's that? Who's there? Can you speak?

Lynch Jr: I am Thomas Lynch Jr, and dead.

De Crevecoeur: You seem somewhat alive.

Lynch Jr: I am a draugr.

De Crevecoeur: A viking ghost, a haunting for a very physical people. Perhaps. Who put you in this cage?

Lynch Jr: Thomas Lynch, my title-holder.

De Crevecoeur: For what?

Lynch Jr: A murder. The overseer. But for reasons.

De Crevecoeur: What reasons?

Lynch Jr: I will not tell. I have already been punished, and refuse to suffer the humiliation of remorse.

De Crevecoeur: Let me feel your pulse and flex. The cardio-vascular system of the draugr is inoperative, and the muscles attain no tonicity, since a spirit animates the bones themselves.

Lynch Jr: Who are you?

De Crevecoeur: I'm clergy, come to visit Thomas Lynch for lunch.

Lynch Jr: Ok. Test me for a zombie.

De Crevecoeur Reaches in the Cage

Touches Lynch Jr.'s Chest Slowly

De Crevecoeur: I feel in your chest your heart. You must be able to hear that in your head. A draugr doesn't work by that engine. Flex the breast above your heart.

Lynch Jr. Squints with his Flex

Weak, but tonic. You are disgusting, but you are not dead.

Lynch Jr: Really?

De Crevecoeur: Come with me, and we'll see about commuting your sentence. We'll get you water, too.

De Crevecoeur Opening the Cage

Chorus First: Why does De Crevecoeur allow it out,
and illegal breath?
What does he think he'll accomplish
beyond a torturer's extending wish
before death?

Chorus Second: Why does Lynch Jr. not attack the white,
and run with residual breath?
What does he think he'll accomplish
beyond a brackish wash
before death?

Chorus First: It's the pride I get from the knowledge of a dog,
my mercy is my power,
the spreading of some legs,
the application of a dower.

Chorus Second: Everybody loves a savior,
the opiate and needed
paralysis of that,
the haggard,
my innocent redemption without mixture,
Greek sheep in ecstatic pasture,
the leg that lives by a splint,
ivy that shapes by lattice fixtures.

The Action Goes as Said:

Conjoined Chora: De Crevecoeur opens the cage, and lifts the body down
in this tannic Golgotha green and oily with poison ivy
and walks the naked man on shivering legs
tender and stiff they are so dry and bent and starved,
and drops him in white river sand that catches
on sweat and wounds, a peppermint in every gouge,
and Lynch slurps brackish that will make
watery brown vomit bubbling with mucus
on the later path.

Chorus First: Why does De Crevecoeur allow it out,
and illegal breath?
What does he think he'll accomplish
beyond a torturer's extending wish
before death?

Chorus Second: Why does Lynch Jr. not attack the white,
and run with residual breath?
What does he think he'll accomplish
beyond a brackish wash
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Chorus First: It's the pride I get from the knowledge of a dog,
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the opiate and needed
paralysis of that,
the haggard,
my innocent redemption without mixture,
Greek sheep in ecstatic pasture,
the leg that lives by a splint,
ivy that shapes by lattice fixtures.

The Action Goes as Said:

Conjoined Chora: De Crevecoeur cleans the shaking, drinking man,
dips handkerchief in tannic, that scares the minnows off,
silver exhalation into darker black of middle river;
is careful around sandy wounds, edges them only,
dripping dull stains on concave peppermint lozenges,
and dots of sand detach and float in the drips.
The kerchief fills quick with gore and oils,
and even washing in the Wando does little
for the overwhelmed cloth - De Crevecoeur sticks to the face.
He takes off his vest and cinches it on Lynch
like a diaper.

Chorus First: Why does De Crevecoeur allow it out,
and illegal breath?
What does he think he'll accomplish

beyond a torturer's extending wish
before death?

Chorus Second: Why does Lynch Jr. not attack the white,
and run with residual breath?
What does he think he'll accomplish
beyond a brackish wash
before death?

Chorus First: It's the pride I get from the knowledge of a dog,
my mercy is my power,
the spreading of some legs,
the application of a dower.

Chorus Second: Everybody loves a savior,
the opiate and needed
paralysis of that,
the haggard,
my innocent redemption without mixture,
Greek sheep in ecstatic pasture,
the leg that lives by a splint,
ivy that shapes by lattice fixtures.

The Action Goes as Said:

Conjoined Chora: De Crevecoeur gathers berries with black skin
and purple bursts inside, and he feeds Lynch them,
and lips stain multifoliate black that shifts like the river.
The white lifts Lynch, lattices his starving seizures,
Lynch rooting on De Crevecoeur,
the Carolina creeper curving a living on the oak,
and they start off on the path, peculiar geometry,
the scab in a diaper bleeding on the clergy,
shifting and falling, a triangle drunk with the mutable.

Exit De Crevecoeur and Lynch

Second Goat-Song

The Front Porch of the Planation House of

Thomas Lynch, Senior; Actual, Unmodified

However You Would Have It Said

Unironically Lynch

He Lounges on his Porch of Charleston-Green Floor

White-Painted Flaps of Oak-Wood Make the Walls

The Lumber Wandering and Curving like a Natural Thing

The Almost-Black of Charleston-Green Shutters around Windows

With Flaw-Bubbles White and Crystal-Milky

The Glass Dark with the Lack of Light Inside

Camellias Insinuate their Pinks over the Bannister

And Occupy the Porch

Enter De Crevecoeur and Lynch Jr.

The Chorus as a Retinue Behind

Chorus: An effigy whose object none remembers,
the doll of the animal nobody knows,
I am that anonymous lingering God only tracks,
and none construe or follow below,
a lumberer with speckled trough for neck
long after the last death of the giraffe.

Lynch Jr: My heart is a warm wheeze inside,
busts and stutters with pressure
of my juice thick and unrefreshed
by new pieces of snuck deer and beer
dissolved in me to make new blood
as dirt and sun burst up indigo.

I can barely walk, but pump.

De Crevecoeur: My clothes grow inchoate with his stains,
a confused mumble of smells and red and yellow ochres
of blood, and puss, and starvation-viscous sweat,
a distillate of sure disease that smells like moulder-leaves
he's going earth,
the element-shrunk black bits of his inside liquid out.

Chorus: An effigy whose object none remembers,
the doll of the animal nobody knows,
I am that anonymous lingering God only tracks,
and none construe or follow below,
a lumberer with speckled trough for neck
long after the last death of the giraffe.

Lynch Jr: The vomit after's acrid in my mouth,
note of fish, counterpoint of mud and acid,
the body of it light, thin around
brown floating dirt, a coat
like the fireless warmth of salt.
The brittle inside of my nose
snapped and tore with vomit force,
and I bleed now on myself.

De Crevecoeur: I have spent so many springs on that pink porch,
enwombed in the ruffled hug of the camellia,
discussing metaphysics in the humid air
that sponges in all thought and weights it down
in lingering slops, and we drank muscadine wine,
ate humid deer and Wando fish with white flesh
milky and thick with the dirt of swamps.
It wont be like that now.

Chorus: An effigy whose object none remembers,
the doll of the animal nobody knows,
I am that anonymous lingering God only tracks,
and none construe or follow below,
a lumberer with speckled trough for neck
long after the last death of the giraffe.

De Crevecoeur: I have brought a dead and walking negro execution
to his door in a dispute with his entire livelihood,

that i've had before and lost. You cant win an argument with a man, and drink his wine.

Lynch Jr: My cheek's an obvious empty,
a loud lack of feel, I notice the no wind there,
surrounding it elaborate pain
of inch-thick open face-muscle
that dehydration splits with tight.
De Crevecoeur, what should I say,
or should I not at all?

De Crevecoeur: You should not at all. I will for you.

They Approach the Porch

De Crevecoeur Deposits Lynch Jr

On a Bench of the Porch

Thomas Lynch: Hello, De Crevecoeur. You carry my delinquent negro. I'll have, I'm afraid, to ask why.

De Crevecoeur: Hello, Mr. Lynch. I found this slave in the woods in a cage.

Lynch: You have no right to my property.

De Crevecoeur: Osprey have eaten off his cheeks.

Lynch: They seem indeed to have.

De Crevecoeur: Did you mean to kill him?

Lynch: I did and do. He is a murderer. I cannot maintain a killing slave. I am well within my rights to punish.

De Crevecoeur: To kill him?

Lynch: Yes, that.

De Crevecoeur: I doubt it.

Lynch: If, and only if, they disagreed with my execution, then the fine is seven pounds sterling for a dead slave. I get half back if I inform against myself. I'd pay that much for wine for a night.

De Crevecoeur: But did he even get a trial?

Lynch: Why a trial? What trial?

De Crevecoeur: Have you tried him by a jury of his peers?

Lynch: Oh, that. We're doing that?

De Crevecoeur: This is Common Law, mere Magna Carta. The vikings, even, did a thing like that.

Lynch: Ok, then. Are you his peer?

De Crevecoeur: I don't know, but think not.

Lynch: No, he's not a citizen, he's something else. He has no legal designation as such, and all cultural and linguistic indicators fail to match as well. You are not his judge. Or if you are, I am.

De Crevecoeur: I didn't say I was his peer.

Lynch: What about the other negroes? But who knows if they are his peers or if they all originate in myriad and disparate sub-Saharan polae? One can't police another's polis, or my judgement of him would work just fine by that reasoning.

De Crevecoeur: That's true enough, I guess, but their circumstance is similar.

Lynch: Even if he did have a jury's worth of darks from his kingship here, so what? We are not in their sovereignty. We are on other soil. My soil to be exact. An Arab in England does not make Arabia. Law is always a matter of geography and language. We speak English in Carolina.

De Crevecoeur: I can't argue with your particular syllogisms, but the larger web of it seems false.

Lynch: You're right though. For any slave that demands a trial, a protocol must be developed, a ritual achieved, if only to stem whining. I've been thinking this over and have something: a fully Cartesian legal system. Let's go. Come to my experimental shack.

De Crevecoeur: What do you say?

Lynch Jr: Ok.

Lynch: What a good bukolos you are, De Crevecoeur.

A Portion of the Chorus to the Left

A Portion of the chorus to the Middle

A Portion of the Chorus to the Right

A Three-Part Chorus

A Triple-Wondering Mind

Lights Out

Chorus First: Why does Lynch allow it?

It's no plantation-standard
to grant trial to the haggard if they've murdered,
a precedent too hate-fallow to be set.
Revolts ferment in this mosquito-foment,
the larva's wet stretching worms
in these puddle-stages of the squirm
thrive if done right by the sun.

Chorus Second: Why does De Crevecoeur persist?

He's already got the Jesus-gist,
his ritual and dramatic decency performed,
his proof the worn stains of the worm.
You can't change a sunny orbit with a talk,
and you can't save the Negroes with a half-a-day's walk.

Chorus Third: What really could the Negro do

at this point? Pending corpse, he's through
without slow incantation of planter's consent
to give his life reprieve and splint,
the larva-launching of that heat,
that sun-permission to his plant.

Conjoined Chora: They verge toward the geometric center of the paint,

in some uncertain ferment
that will grow wings and a mosquito-face
with a needle-mouth and black-combed eyes like ice,
that bake to shape beneath a sun
black with a confusion of stars and moon.

Lights On

The Action Goes as Said:

An avatar of that later faith,
a midwife to God happening in the heart,
who makes us our best vessels for the shared singular substance,
no trough shunting off the holy from the vicar,
De Crevecoeur stoops in pink camellia light,
to pick the negro up from slow pine angles,
but the black can't stand, hands shake on the helping back;
his empty calves shiver him back to the pine.
De Crevecoeur looks up at the first Lynch for help.

Lights Out

Chorus First: Why does Lynch allow it?

It's no plantation-standard
to grant trial to the haggard if they've murdered,
a precedent too hate-fallow to be set.
Revolts ferment in this mosquito-foment,
the larva's wet stretching worms
in these puddle-stages of the squirm
thrive if done right by the sun.

Chorus Second: Why does De Crevecoeur persist?

He's already got the Jesus-gist,
his ritual and dramatic decency performed,
his proof the worn stains of the worm.
You can't change a sunny orbit with a talk,
and you can't save the Negroes with a half-a-day's walk.

Chorus Third: What really could the Negro do

at this point? Pending corpse, he's through
without slow incantation of planter's consent
to give his life reprieve and splint,
the larva-launching of that heat,

that sun-permission to his plant.

Conjoined Chora: They verge toward the geometric center of the paint,
in some uncertain ferment
that will grow wings and a mosquito-face
with a needle-mouth and black-combed eyes like ice,
that bake to shape beneath a sun
black with a confusion of stars and moon.

Lights On

The Action Goes as Said:

Actual Lynch whistles out house-negroes for help,
two girls come with wooden platters stacked with drinks,
set them down to sweat with April heat,
set about repulsive instructions, in crisp clothes
uncorrupted by wet invading Carolina nature,
that stain with ochres of the negro's slow evaporation.
They consent as splints to him. His spine vines limp on them.

Lights Out

Chorus First: Why does Lynch allow it?
It's no plantation-standard
to grant trial to the haggard if they've murdered,
a precedent too hate-fallow to be set.
Revolts ferment in this mosquito-foment,
the larva's wet stretching worms
in these puddle-stages of the squirm
thrive if done right by the sun.

Chorus Second: Why does De Crevecoeur persist?
He's already got the Jesus-gist,
his ritual and dramatic decency performed,
his proof the worn stains of the worm.
You can't change a sunny orbit with a talk,
and you can't save the Negroes with a half-a-day's walk.

Chorus Third: What really could the Negro do
at this point? Pending corpse, he's through
without slow incantation of planter's consent
to give his life reprieve and splint,

the larva-launching of that heat,
that sun-permission to his plant.

Conjoined Chora: They verge toward the geometric center of the paint,
in some uncertain ferment
that will grow wings and a mosquito-face
with a needle-mouth and black-combed eyes like ice,
that bake to shape beneath a sun
black with a confusion of stars and moon.

Lights On

The Action Goes as Said:

They make a triangle that drips in its center,
a system of two Mary's with an anesthetic God,
limp with lifts and drops and breaths off.
De Crevecoeur and Lynch smile and nod mutual
and follow behind. The planter's private deputation
scurries up with muskets, Lynch gestures them follow,
and they do, an order sorted by the polis,
a starry hierarchy sequenced by the prudence of a jurist,
the polite trailings of a comet that will clutter in a crash.

All Exit for the Experimental Shack

Third Goat-Song

A Shack Half-Sectioned for the Audience-View

Full of Pickled Black Body Parts

A Great Variety of Dark-Irised Eyes in Chemical Suspensions

A Fetal Skeleton in Striding and Reaching Pose

Held with Metal Wires and a Pole

Distilling Flasks and Other Alchemical Apparatus

Grimy Magus Paraphernalia

Sketches of Nerves in their Spread on the Body

Wine-like Ink, that Thin and Purple, on Yellow Paper

*Eyeball Sketches with Latin Legends Etched, and Platonic Geometric Figures
Behind*

Similar Purple Drawings of Mexican Pyramids

A Crude Oak Table Perfect for Operations of All Sorts

A Table Back of that Set with Indeterminate Tools of Carpentry and Surgery

Enter All in Order of Their Previous Exit:

Two Mary's and Lynch Jr.

De Crevecoeur and Actual Lynch

The Private Deputation

Chorus Too

Chorus: To make all justice into one word-sequence,
a closed circuit of the nerves like the green flytrap,
to make a dark and certain instinct of prudence,
a vocabulary in the blood that can't be stripped,

I want this,
the blind perfection of the whale that lives on sound,
the dark magnetic direction of migratory down,
I want it.

Lynch: The jars stand correlate and evidence to the attempt
against this Carolina atmosphere invading,
chemical hermits against the elements, formaldehyde Anchorites,
the liquids in them won't give in to plants or humid,
filled with fine pieces of black fact, similitudes building
to an absolute, even if it's multiple and foliate
like a fly's eye, a bureaucracy of visions,
but they wouldn't understand, De Crevecoeur specially.

De Crevecoeur: Hammer-dents web on the wood,
and darken with blood,
the chemical and animal smells
of grease mix with marsh-stink,
a grit of dirt and dews
and intermittent use covers
these weapons of investigation.
Grease blackens golden twine.

Chorus: To make all justice into one word-sequence,
a closed circuit of the nerves like the green flytrap,
to make a dark and certain instinct of prudence,
a vocabulary in the blood that can't be stripped,
I want this,
the blind perfection of the whale that lives on sound,
the dark magnetic direction of migratory down,
I want it.

Lynch: I will introduce seamless self-knowledge,
a total closed circuit of self-vision,
with an eye gouged from its bowl, the nerve-braid at back
worked carefully out long, turned to see the other eye,
and the brain will heal the seam between them,
so the eye sees itself without reflection, or other indirect optics,
the ultimate Cartesian police for Charleston,
a jury of coincident peer.

De Crevecoeur: The straps on the table yellow
with the sweat of procedures,

blotted black with spots of blood,
that crunch red again on hands
in small crystals of their brittleness.
Bowls beneath are black in Aztec arcs
of old blood built with ritual.
The small black wings of Carolina
gather on these bits of liquid flesh,
scatter in awkward loops
when they are swept.

Chorus: To make all justice into one word-sequence,
a closed circuit of the nerves like the green flytrap,
to make a dark and certain instinct of prudence,
a vocabulary in the blood that can't be stripped,
I want this,
the blind perfection of the whale that lives on sound,
the dark magnetic direction of migratory down,
I want it.

Lynch: I should send the female negroes out, an unwise arousal,
unnecessary too. The deputation will do
for strapping, the eyes, the possible execution.

De Crevecoeur: Why would he let this trajectory travel,
and ride it? It's not in wise, fiscal interest,
the whiff of justice elusive and local makes men angry,
while its impossibility anesthetizes, an entire ocean
in an opiate hug to separate them from true judges.
So why would he let that happen, or rather he wouldn't.
He has accidents of justice, but substance something else.
There will be flailing.

Lynch: You two leave, and wash before further service.

The Two Women Leave

De Crevecoeur: What happens now?

Lynch: Now a little explanation.

We are here to see if an eye can see itself, if a literally seamless self-consciousness is possible. If it is, you can act as your own jury.

We will remove the right eye with great care, the birds already did a lot of clearing for us, carefully again work long that electric, smart cord that connects into the skull, then turn it around to look at the left.

We will see if you can see yourself seeing yourself. That is, since the reports of two eyes form one undifferentiated story, you eye will see itself in a recuperated screen, actually, without reflexion or indirect optics. Your mind will be a seamless screen of itself.

If that happens, you can act as your own jury. Ok?

Lynch Jr: Ok.

De Crevecoeur: Not really.

Lynch: Ok, then. Deputation, do the straps.

They Do the Straps

Pop the ball out.

They Pop the Ball Out

Work the cord out careful.

They Work the Cord Out Careful

Hold his eyes in mutual regard.

They Hold his Eyes in Mutual Regard

Is your mind a seamless screen of itself?

Lynch Jr: Yup. I can see my eye with my eye, it's true.

Lynch: You are seamless self consciousness, excellent. Here's the trial.

I am the sovereign of this ranch?

Lynch Jr: You are.

Lynch: It is against Lynch-specific law to kill the overseer?

Lynch Jr: Yes, of course.

Lynch: Did you?

Lynch Jr: Yes.

Lynch: So you are guilty?

Lynch Jr: I guess there is no way I'm not, sure as a syllogism.

Lynch: My words are implants of my law inside your soul. My vocabulary finishes this, completes itself, jurist peers or not. Ok, shoot him.

The Deputation Shoots

Punctures Lynch Jr's Stomach, Chest, and Throat

Blood Coughs and Mists

The Room Covers with Smoke

The Blood Exits Him

I give them burial by marsh: they live forever after in the crabs and the raccoons. De Crevecoeur, you can follow the body.

Chorus Separates Triply

Chorus First to Left

Chorus Second to Center

Chorus Third to Right.

Chorus First: It's sorted out,
Lynch planned the thing entirely,
it falls right and slots,
mere preamble to a cruelty distilled in a trial
to make every negro in himself a vassal,
a closed circuit of the right in this Lynch-city.

Chorus Second: De Crevecour never figured it out,
his newer mind already tired.
Lynch wore him short,

now he's crouched with secondly-pubescent soul,
a halfway, elder hump between a vassal,
and movement to another, and recrudescing city.

Chorus Third: The flame blown out,
coals carry the residue of fire.
The body shot,
Lynch Jr. burns subaqueous with soul.
Death won't deposit him in other vessel,
only contract heat further in the body.

Conjoined Chora: They're three recuperated in the orbit that lived before them,
in the seamless navigation of the stars,
through which they are reborn in the quotidian,
the fabulous, impossible combustion of carpool cars,
that changes only with the slow elastic of stars.

The Action Goes as Said:

Lynch leaves the deputation
to their perfect inward instruction,
walks out without a verb,
while employees store and shelter muskets,
walk in the earthy chemical air
toward the emptying body,
but De Crevecoeur pounces in a hurry
that pulls his muscles wrong,
puts his hand on the mouth
to feel the hot shuffle of breath,
but feels nothing, and wipes blood,
regretting the mess.

Chorus First: It's sorted out,
Lynch planned the thing entirely,
it falls right and slots,
mere preamble to a cruelty distilled in a trial
to make every negro in himself a vassal,
a closed circuit of the right in this Lynch-city.

Chorus Second: De Crevecour never figured it out,
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in the seamless navigation of the stars,
through which they are reborn in the quotidian,
the fabulous, impossible combustion of carpool cars,
that changes only with the slow elastic of stars.

The Action Goes as Said:

They unfasten the unnecessary straps,
lift the body centrally sagging from struggling hands,
a plane that drips in a dip at its center,
as a valley drips to its point with a river,
and de-cross this viscous anointed
who died in a humid parody of passion
with Cartesian furniture instead of Roman shapes for death.

Chorus First: It's sorted out,
Lynch planned the thing entirely,
it falls right and slots,
mere preamble to a cruelty distilled in a trial
to make every negro in himself a vassal,
a closed circuit of the right in this Lynch-city.

Chorus Second: De Crevecour never figured it out,
his newer mind already tired.
Lynch wore him short,
now he's crouched with secondly-pubescent soul,
a halfway, elder hump between a vassal,
and movement to another, and recrudescing city.

Chorus Third: The flame blown out,
coals carry the residue of fire.
The body shot,

Lynch Jr. burns subaqueous with soul.
Death won't deposit him in other vessel,
only contract heat further in the body.

Conjoined Chora: They're three recuperated in the orbit that lived before them,
in the seamless navigation of the stars,
through which they are reborn in the quotidian,
the fabulous, impossible combustion of carpool cars,
that changes only with the slow elastic of stars.

The Action Goes as Said:

They lean with breath into a parallelogram.
Tobacco-blackened phlegm stutters grunts in them.
They taste the salty ham from lunch again.
Their dirty clothes keep that sluggish stick on skin,
and they dream hallucinating of cold air and far kin,
and sweat the recent beer in aqueous air,
and droop the parallelogram. De Cevecoeur follows them.

Exit All

Fourth Goat-Song

The Oyster Marsh

An Oyster Bank with Streaks of Pluff Mud

Some Bleached and Drier Sand

De Crevecoeur Next to the Lynch Jr. Corpse

On Haunch-Springs and Supine Respectively

Crabs and Raccoons and Possums Threatening at Edges

Sea-Oat-Hirsute Dunes Behind

Chorus: A silence among other sounds,
contributing my hum,
I am the ocean bubble,
evaporating, flimsy drum.

De Crevecoeur: The sea breeze has that steady heaviness that spends
itself continuous and makes its pressure rush and lightness,
dyed with the green view of ocean
by covert currency between the senses,
and brushes salty green on
oyster bunches in undulant patterns of compatible surfaces,
muddy filing, fractal architecture.
Crabs on dry visits, raccoons with humid hair,
and salty possums all
will start at the corpse soon.

Chorus: A silence among other sounds,
contributing my hum,
I am the ocean bubble,
evaporating, flimsy drum.

De Crevecoeur: A traffic of grains on pluff mud strains
of soggy blue and black,
white sand blondes the black.
Sticky viscous hermit crab holes
leave phantom blacks in the mud.
Sea-oats shift at relaxed leans

on the ingrown springs of their stomachs.

Chorus: A silence among other sounds,
contributing my hum,
I am the ocean bubble,
evaporating, flimsy drum.

De Crevecoeur: And the sound -
it's like the waves themselves
projected on a screen I hear,
white and indeterminate,
with curly rough swells up,
and quick spires that sink into liquid,
with infinitesimal pops of bubbles
subtle into silence.

Chorus: A silence among other sounds,
contributing my hum,
I am the ocean bubble,
evaporating, flimsy drum.

He Tumbles to a Seat

De Crevecoeur: My curls limp open with the salt,
my shoes loosen their leather
to a slight sticking hug,
the linen in my clothes
relaxes with the fact of salt,
a clean, dry moisture unlike sweat,
like thoughts and skin in sunlight,
that fresh and absent.
I resign; I resign to beauty.

Lynch Jr. Stumbles Up to Knees

De Crevecoeur Astonished

De Crevecoeur: You're not dead?

Lynch Jr: I actually think I am.

De Crevecoeur: Let me feel our heart.

He Feels His Heart

Yes, it's quite stationary. You're right. You really are dead this time.

Lynch Jr: Indeed.

De Crevecoeur: Are you in pain?

Lynch Jr: Not at all, it's the strangest thing - every gouge and wound in me is ecstatic with the lack of harm, like a stomach after purging.

De Crevecoeur: Are you a zombi?

Lynch Jr: No, I think that's just a voodoo thing, real Caribbean science. It is, to oversimplify things, basically someone who has a spell on them.

De Crevecoeur: Do they have to be dead?

Lynch Jr: They do.

De Crevecoeur: Do you feel spelled?

Lynch Jr: I don't.

De Crevecoeur: Then you're probably not.

Lynch Jr: You're probably right. Then I'm a full draugr, a walking dead, a bodied ghost.

De Crevecoeur: You are.

Lynch Jr: I am a draugr, the dead that moves, like the vikings knew.

De Crevecoeur: Indeed.

Lynch Jr: What do I do?

De Crevecoeur: I have no idea.

Lynch Jr: Even a little first step?

De Crevecoeur: You'll need the metal chip that proves your freedom, at the least.

Lynch Jr: So what does that mean?

De Crevecoeur: It means, we go ask Lynch for release.

Lynch Jr: Again?

De Crevecoeur: He'll need to sign the documentation.

Lynch Jr: Couldn't I just leave?

De Crevecoeur: To where? Alone, enfeebled, probably dead. It wouldn't be wise.

Lynch Jr: You're right.

De Crevecoeur: To Lynch.

Lynch Jr: Thank you, De Crevecoeur, for all your help.

De Crevecoeur: Well, you did end up dead. I didn't help that much.

Lynch Jr: Thanks anyway.

De Crevecoeur: No problem. Can I ask you something?

Lynch Jr: Sure?

De Crevecoeur: Why did you consent to that trial?

Lynch Jr: Playing along seemed the best way out. I was sort of wrong and sort of right, I guess.

De Crevecoeur: Do you need some help with walking?

Lynch Jr: No, thanks. I really feel positively youthful.

The Chorus into Two

Chorus First: Their soul has outlived its music
an instrument whose fingers died;
a concert solitudinous and runic,
past the time of audiences.

The Action Goes as Said:

Chorus Second: De Crevecoeur tumbles forward to a crouch,
an egg of a man without edges filled in,
unrecuperated in a shell.
Lynch Jr. sprouts athletically,
and offers help with gory hand,
De Crevecoeur accepts with squeamish thanks,
touches the negro's viscous inside-out.

Chorus First: Their soul has outlived its music
an instrument whose fingers died;
a concert solitudinous and runic,
past the time of audiences.

The Action Goes as Said:

Chorus Second: De Crevecoeur inspects the anesthetic wounds,
touches bare cheek bones not yet dry,
places the drying eye back in the skull
with a little bumping friction
bunching the swollen lid,
pokes musket holes and feels
dark solid of the ball below,
Lynch immune, De Crevecoeur amazed.

Chorus First: Their soul has outlived its music
an instrument whose fingers died;
a concert solitudinous and runic,
past the time of audiences.

The Action Goes as Said:

Chorus Second: If things with beating hearts with breaths between
can live or die, then Jesus must have been
unlike a thing with beating hearts and breathing,
a monster beyond breath. They leave for Lynch,
and dunes and raccoons and tidal runes of whorls in sand remain.

Fifth Goat-Song

The Cotton Field, a Little Corn

On Left and Right Respectively

Some Black Workers There in Stoops and Walks

Armed Demi-Overseers in Drawled Marches

Lynch in the Path between the Crops

Surveying

Trifoliate Chorus

Chorus First: Either human is the well that slakes the universal thirst,
the liquid substance of us
feeding and converting all,
some coming human with a rise or raise,
some drooping from it with a fall,
its radial geometry dispensing all praise,

Chorus Second: or the human is a rhizome node,
lateral and fractal in the world
as the stumped brain of the toad,
our central substance dreams just vain screens,
artifice on which we play our striving brains,

Chorus Third: or the thing that drifts mutual between.
I am the thing that happens after humans,
the fly's eye is all between.
We'll leave behind birth and the born.

Lynch: The cottons look like primordial curly skulls
in separate green shafts of plant
that have not fused into round, full bone and flesh,
its brain in separate stem-enwombed bits,
that will glom and coalesce when the plant becomes an animal.

Chorus First: Either human is the well that slakes the universal thirst,
the liquid substance of us
feeding and converting all,

some coming human with a rise or raise,
some drooping from it with a fall,
its radial geometry dispensing all praise,

Chorus Second: or the human is a rhizome node,
lateral and fractal in the world
as the stumped brain of the toad,
our central substance dreams just vain screens,
artifice on which we play our striving brains,

Chorus Third: or the thing that drifts mutual between.
I am the thing that happens after humans,
the fly's eye is all between.
We'll leave behind birth and the born.

Lynch: Everything looks human to me now,
and at other bright blots in my memory,
in the process of arriving at the human focus,
or of leaving that quotidian effulgence,
with haggard or new steps from that hearth -
the corn an arm whose kernels haven't flattened into skin.

Chorus First: Either human is the well that slakes the universal thirst,
the liquid substance of us
feeding and converting all,
some coming human with a rise or raise,
some drooping from it with a fall,
its radial geometry dispensing all praise,

Chorus Second: or the human is a rhizome node,
lateral and fractal in the world
as the stumped brain of the toad,
our central substance dreams just vain screens,
artifice on which we play our striving brains,

Chorus Third: or the thing that drifts mutual between.
I am the thing that happens after humans,
the fly's eye is all between.
We'll leave behind birth and the born.

Lynch: The monkey grass the springing blast of submerged heads
exuberant with thick stalks,
the radishes red eyes that still remember how to look in earth,

to whom black soil is a diaphane construed,
the eggplants livers plump with primal energy
all organs have before the body.

Enter De Crevecoeur and Lynch Jr from Cotton Left

Walking Among Former Lynch Jr Colleagues

And here's one leaving or already over,
a visual smear after all light has left.

They Approach the Actual Lynch

Continuous Lynch

The execution didn't take, I see.

De Crevecoeur: It did, actually. Feel his heart.

He Feels His Heart

Lynch: You're right, it isn't there.

De Crevecoeur: He's a walking dead, has lost his soul, is a draugr. Because of this, we're here for his release.

Lynch: I don't see how his death releases him.

De Crevecoeur: What do you mean?

Lynch: Well, can he work?

De Crevecoeur: He can.

Lynch: Well, I bought him to work, not to live.

De Crevecoeur: What?

Lynch: As long as he can work, his ability to live is irrelevant to me. He seems fit.

De Crevecoeur: You purchased him as living, and with a soul. He's something different now.

Lynch: If you buy the egg, you're entitled to the accidental chicken.

De Crevecoeur: But he most probably no longer has a soul.

Lynch: This purchasing has nothing to do with soul. In fact, it presupposed a lack of negro soul. Perhaps a stunted half-soul like a plant or antelope. Something coming. Now he's something leaving.

Lynch Jr: Not even suicide's an option anymore.

De Crevecoeur: This is *unreal*.

Lynch: What do you mean by that?

De Crevecoeur: I mean that it is unlike the real.

Lynch: Realism is the joining of a theory of reality, of the interpretive apparatus operative in the society of origin, to descriptions of simple experience, in a way that the society of origin would be totally unconscious of. A realistic story is one deemed conceptually possible according to the assumptions of the society of origin, including in particular concepts of the variety of permissible causalities.

Hence our words for unreality or untruth tend to derive from the terms for absolute truth in foreign or more generally misunderstood cultural and religious traditions. *Magic* derives from the *magi*, merely Zoroastrian priests. *Hocus pocus* is a corruption of *Hoc est corpus*, by medieval illiterate Christians who could not understand the Latin mass. *Supernatural* and *metaphysical* mean the same thing in Latin and Greek respectively: *above or after the born things*. While *myth* and *saga* mean the same thing, in Greek and Old Icelandic respectively: *speech-act* (of neutral, or probably positive, truth-value). The *g* was pronounced as a *y* sound; *saga* is actually the origin of the word *say* or *saying*. It is a trick of history and cultural distance that turns the saying into the myth.

There is no such thing as *unlike the real*. Its just a variety of gods, that make a multifoliate absolute. I am real. You just have no words for me, so you can't talk to me, De Crevecoeur. We live in different parts of god. I am real.

Chorus First: Lynch rides a sidereal effulgence from before his birth,
blackened cerulean light of animating swath,
which can run on currents dark
as winter oceans, with submerged and plural forks.

Chorus Second: His soul a seed to find a plant,
a device for turning dirt to green veins

that dryness has strained,
De Crevecoeur's aborted beyond the husk,
a still-birth in the green,
living in the paralytic center of the light.

Chorus Third: Lynch Jr. rides the belly of the stars
beneath their light.
He's just a suite
of occupations, not a mind,
plural and sideways as dirt,
an are.

Conjoined Chora: In a cosmos of fine separation found in an insect
eye,
in folios of vision bent at awkward angles,
they collided inarticulate in ordained intersects
in their god of precarious prism-dangles,
and die
somewhat, and change.

The Action Goes as Said:

The deputation of demi-overseers, some former executioners,
surround a Lynch lithe beyond his wounds,
who acquiesces to their offering of nervous ropes,
submits to the slow social contract of the musket,
while other slaves glance elliptically up.

Chorus First: Lynch rides a sidereal effulgence from before his birth,
blackened cerulean light of animating swath,
which can run on currents dark
as winter oceans, with submerged and plural forks.

Chorus Second: His soul a seed to find a plant,
a device for turning dirt to green veins
that dryness has strained,
De Crevecoeur's aborted beyond the husk,
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eye,
in folios of vision bent at awkward angles,
they collided inarticulate in ordained intersects
in their god of precarious prism-dangles,
and die
somewhat, and change.

The Action Goes as Said:

The musket legislates the walk, a leash on the comet,
Lynch Jr. on a course, with deputation streaming,
whose mystery bristles the field with slave-mumbles,
and they waver flimsy hands above the crops,
anticipating some new climax to their thoughts.

Chorus First: Lynch rides a sidereal effulgence from before his birth,
blackened cerulean light of animating swath,
which can run on currents dark
as winter oceans, with submerged and plural forks.

Chorus Second: His soul a seed to find a plant,
a device for turning dirt to green veins
that dryness has strained,
De Crevecoeur's aborted beyond the husk,
a still-birth in the green,
living in the paralytic center of the light.

Chorus Third: Lynch Jr. rides the belly of the stars
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Conjoined Chora: In a cosmos of fine separation found in an insect
eye,
in folios of vision bent at awkward angles,
they collided inarticulate in ordained intersects

in their god of precarious prism-dangles,
and die
somewhat, and change.

The Action Goes as Said:

The permanent expulsion of De Crevecoeur from the plantation
finds plant-silent expression in a polite Lynch-wave,
so many roots beneath. The clergy walks
with uncomprehending feet on a separating path
between the ineluctable farmers,
the furrows in his head recording currents
in the thoughts above him, brushing him,
like the residual whorls in gullies tallying
the aqueous motions over them,
and he carries that slow rune slowly into town.

An Epilogue

The Wetlands at Duck Creek

1

The wave attenuates to foam it leaves behind
when small and dying, the limit froth and white after -
to live a life of trace like that, I've had that kind.
The hinge that turns the wax to smoke, an exhaust and drifter,
I just can't quit it with all my heading West.
Through dead yellow hills and Arkansas',
black necrotic Iowa creeks' frozen months of rusty trashed saws,
Nevada's branchless sky, punctuated by a wrist,
always the bubble liquid exploring, exhausting by its empty,
alive only by it, burst by it, broken back to flat water,
no longer pregnant and split with the tiring air.
I did not endure. I need this to be done. It's tempting:
to make a cove and liquid holding of myself far
from distance, and be my own boat and habitation there.

2

Wetlands aren't that wet around here- here are
the suites of gnarled stumps sweating solid salt;
the soil around stuck in churn, salt crusted and clotted
on furrows to museum-still them; rough brown mountains clear
from the duckful-ground and February-yellow reeds
in valley's pit. Len, you smudge your feet in seldom clay,
and catch it between the nuggets of your paw,
rough digits that wad insinuating pods of weeds.
Leonard, your dog-life and dog-eyes have never known
a green unlike Nevada, and the wetlands here are
wet to you, ducks fully ducks, sky clear
not like invasion, but open and unfrightening like home.
Clearly from Duck Creek I see Mt. Charleston storm,
a cataract that takes the air as Alps to churn.

3

Clay cogs the essence - you can't fight that.
The vague personal fog of us uses cogs as splints,
a mechanism with mist, the fire and consanguine flint
that finds life at the joint where flint and fire split.
Promethean arson lives in the pit of puffy flesh behind the knee,
the spirit descends even to bundled elbow skin,
and similar inglorious puckers of women and men -
cog and fog pit in swollen flesh of the little toe's belly.

All the Mormons here mumble of desert blooms
in the sweaty lockers of casino changing rooms.
The wetlands, though, are a similarly arid loom,
hopeless nasty sand that hosts a humid spume.
The salt rosettes that coat the dirt crumble
in occasional storms only. Here, weather keeps me humble.

4

Enough with gritting through histories lurid and complete,
where crimes won't leave, but shift to other pressures,
my brain's pulpy sculptures: done poems, Arab thoughts in closer deserts,
law-torture in old Carolina, personal Appalachian deceit.

I took with those a lake for my clay, monuments
as short and frigid-pungent as mercury current,
the water disobedient on fingers, an oxygen in splint;
recompense the shivering of pebbled flesh and blue dents.

For what? To parrot without progress the old mistakes.
To abide in silence of sensation seamlessly articulate,
put together beyond speech and mere rehearsal of past action,
past crimes; to be not the shaping, but the lake,
the light in the ripple's plate before the lapping splits,
and alright - I need to write as inarticulate as red mud on a shin.

5

There's no salvation in the plural, salvation comes
in small numbers. I think that was my mistake.
If I could live an Alps, Manfred-green and streamed,
where water poses in ice and mosses, curls rest in frozen lakes
and other frigid flesh, and even granite sweats
and rimes with a Mosaic fluency, and in the night a mist
insists itself into the alpine plants, buds unwhorl green clasps-
They are all in the club of the fluid and wet-
then I could not be between, or could be an unbetween,
instead of skimming it as ignorable joint
to something else. I just want water. I want anointment.
A plane churns beneath the cotton of too much air
between. Len, you chew your paw for lodged spoors.
At the rims of dusty water, ducks nestle in greens.

6

But is this a permanent a livable arrangement?
To live from the shifts of these joint moments.
Can the one some branch bloom plural? Can Nevada

be two things? How can I live here? I already did.

How did I? These joints and cogs and churns?

The storm above Mt. Charleston has the look of milk that burns.

And I will enter it tomorrow in the morning,

and Nevada will bloom plural in the snow, special storming

hard as sculpture. Len, you'll mash ragged fingers in frigid powder

that with attendant air and rivers solders

shut the mountain. We have once already,

you slid on rotten trunks frozen back to a completion,

scratched ice from your eyes when it lit in pine-sun.

Paws saturated all the rocks with progress, there and steady.

Participating Godlike Food,

The First Four Episodes

*And what are gods that man may not become
As they, participating godlike food?*

John Milton

A Metro Police search and rescue team is investigating at the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area after hikers found human remains Thursday afternoon.

Police were notified at 2:36 p.m. by Bureau of Land Management authorities that part of a human spine wrapped in a T-shirt was found at Black Velvet Canyon near the Prince of Darkness rock climbing area. The hikers first notified visitor's center staff and park rangers, then Metro was called, police said.

Police said the search and rescue team will determine whether the area is the scene of a crime.

Las Vegas Sun, November 2010

*The spinal cord of JFK
wrapped in Marilyn Monroe's negligee,
I give to you.*

Nick Cave

Episode One

1

Intelligential efflorescence of the pictured scene,
alien image in gorilla soil, not real but unreal,
and glomming to reality with other speaking,
vimana-made in human agriculture, show
a human spine wrapped in a cloth, squat on a salt flat,
in clear arterial circuit of wind down the alien valley,
a blue-light lilac, omen-colored, sprung from saline crystals,
a contusion-blue-ened finger on a white-embroidered table,
and Krishna after, the cartels, the pirates with the pyramid,
and I will arrange their speech in frequent resonance.

2

Cloth squashed and curled into a rope wrapped imperfectly around it. The wet and yellow white that teeth get, that dank and stinking-looking dun of it peaked through in volutes incompletely covered by the cloth's blue rope, and where the cloth ran out and stopped wrapping the formulaic discs and ridges stood out more yellow against the brilliant white of the salt, bottomed by dusky mud. The wind rattled the sloppy wraps of the cloth, and howled a monopoly on sound, and the yellowed wet column rocked sometimes in the wind, and wet salt crystals broken off spun and flaked in minute gullies. The two of them stared at it.

“Man, that is a goddamned human spine,” he said

“It does seem big for something else,” she said

“And why would you wrap a pig spine in a teeshirt? No one needs to hide a pig spine.”

“Why would you have a pig on a salt flat even?”

“I corroborate.”

“How do you know it’s a teeshirt?”

“You’re right, it probably isn’t.” It seems to me to be a medical type of cloth, blue with anesthetic checkers like graph paper.

“Do you think it was an accident?”

“I, uh, you know, think homicide. ‘d be a fuck of an accident.”

“A really impressive suicide, too.”

The mountains zoomed the eyes out disoriented after close attention to the spine, the sfumato-ed snow of peaks, the elaborate red silts spilling down them, and neon ozone above, all on one plane without depth or meaning or relation. Still they troughed the wind on them, wrapping the manic quivers of their clothes on them, driving their hair from all unattached skin into sprawls in air. He was in a black shirt with a faded Coke design, and athletic shorts and some New Balance, an old torn Pearl Jam shirt come by honestly and collegiately, judging by tentative grey starts from his scalp. She was dressed similarly for a hike, a white teeshirt with a ridiculous decorative pocket on the tit, the work of Gap no doubt, someone *came up* with that idea, green running shorts with the scalloped hem and white line at the sides, and pair of blue imitation retro shoes, like something a kid from E. T. would wear. What did their faces look like? Divoted and vague. I can’t see their faces now, only mutilated blankness in this thing that is their past and my present. Their small black dog, pointy with athleticism, pulled toward the complex of nerve-braided, nerve united bones. Dazzled and suspicious of distance, he turned back to the spine. He

grabbed the tip of the shirt and started to slowly jerk it up, juggling the spine free from the shirt.

“So I say two things are possible,” she said.

“O yeah, what are they?” he asked.

“Vegas mafia, or drug cartels. You know, like Zetas and La Familia, and shit like that.”

“Is the mob in Vegas anymore?”

“The mayor for the past ten years was a mob lawyer. I’d say so.”

“Is he still the mayor?”

“Does it matter?”

In the distance of their squints, a shimmer lights up in alternating spasms and of red and blue.

“Is that the police?” she asked.

“So it seems.”

It is, I know, I am video.

2

Thirty-seven years later she will say,

“You go back to her,
and I go back to earth.”

To him? I cannot see. Not even the features of the how, just a blankness-gouged mouth. Here two humming birds fighting collide, like butterflies making the rusty hinge sound.

The glimmer laved itself out into a car, the car swelled like a filling balloon to adult car proportions, and came to a rest with that liquid distention, cracked and popped in the discrete flakes of the doors, and out bounced men as lazy waves, who flowed with curly wandering strides across the flat to our two attracted to the spine. I have been given this language, but I don't know exactly whether our first two or the two cops are attracted. Inspiration is only a document, eventually.)

The cop who seemed like he told people what to do, bent his knee to the salt, cracked it wet observing.

"That seems to be a human spine," the top cop said.

"I told her so," said the man we first saw.

"So is this yall's spine?"

"No, we both have our spines."

"Yes, but is it a spine of someone else over which you maintain ownership?"

"Naw, I would imagine not."

"Is this spine associated with you in any way?"

"Yeah, like- spatially. It's right there,"

"But not like in a causal or murdering way."

"No, I would imagine not. I'd be surprised, let's say."

"Great, that makes this easier."

"Okay, I'm the lawyer here, I'll take this over," said the woman from at first.

“I thought you were a stewardess,” said the Man.

“That isn’t even true,” said the top cop.

The other silent cop thought this, as these others talked:

The red gurgle of the rose, the seed regurgitated,
the body came from this rhizome-bloated Florida of nerves
all living by connections the electric agitated
in the embryo’s resting and smeared curves.

I guess the stem implodes again, sucks the fluff
of rose back in, small fecund turret replete with the plan -
what shape or color will suggestive slough cough
out into next time, what small spinal seeds of what man?

I feel myself pucker in already toward my spine,
that electric shaft of fish-smart cells that froth mind.
Like a clumsy crop of errant bovine ducks,
we’ll crowd around this gristled stem, then drop it in the truck.

4

I’m getting a redaction , not of vision but of audition. Now I hear it as:

“You have your hearth,
I have my earth.”

Here where I am as a present that will someday have a past, not this past that is
always present where I now live, here where I glory on the big earth burp of earthworm,
the planet dirt bursting with wriggling bits of itself.

5, a Play

PLAYERS:

Man

Woman

Top Cop

Bottom, or at least **Lower Cop**, who thinks of spines

[In the cop car driving. How to approximate this on the stage: a car which is not just cross-sectioned, but ripped violently apart, as if by jaws of life or a back hoe. On the back wall of the stage, behind the car, a screen plays scenes from the Mojave, but not like in old movies where its just a weak approximation of mimesis, instead zooming into close ups, out to panoramas, discontinuous jump-cuts, reversals of direction, ideally some close-up shots of a green caterpillar worm squinching in red Mojave sand, I have some on my phone if you need it, and interspersed with that footage of Cartel corpse messaging, decaying coyotes, traffic accidents, the customers at my Alberston's, that sort of thing, all of a southwestern origin. The acting style should approximate an episode of Dick Van Dyke.]

Top Cop: *[He picks up the radio bristling with stray wires, stained and sticky with spray paint]* Let's call this in as a possible suicide? we should look for the rest of what this came from. What are yall's names?

Bottom Cop: Shouldn't we have brought that in with us?

Top Cop: its getting kind of dark, we'll get it in the morning

Bottom Cop: Kids and animals love that sort of thing.

Top Cop: How old of a kid are you talking about.

Woman: I'm the attorney here. No names for no one.

[The lighting above switches to red]

Top Cop: what are your names?

Woman: He's Tommy Somebody

Top Cop: What are your names?

Woman: Reggie Nobody.

Top Cop: Your names?

[The car begins convulsing. Top Cop Turns around begins to grab the woman by the throat, slams her against, I don't know, whatever's around, (that has not been specified to me, the events of the stage to me in general are pretty vague to me, though I finally see faces, only the actors faces, not the real individuals I am talking about, but I finally have access to something other than a plenum of skin undivorced by eyes in every face) and screams his coming lines:]

Woman: *[Gurgling like the rose-spine]* His name is Bart Brinkman.

Top Cop: What is his name?

Woman: Jack Juggling.

Top Cop: You realize we have like computers and shit?

Man: This all makes me feel a little bit sick, or bad or sad.

[Convulsion of the car stops. Top Cop unhands the woman, returns back to the front seat, and a realist demeanor.]

Top Cop: Do emotions even exist or is that just an outmoded way of describing what happens in us, as us, like explaining epilepsy as demonic possession? Have you ever thought about that?

Man: Of course I've thought of that. Why wouldn't I have thought of that?

Top Cop: Anything eventually becomes an affair of chemical Have you ever thought of that?

Man: Of course I've thought of that. I've thought of that. Who do you think you're talking to?

6

A redaction, an audition:

“You have your hurt,
I have my dearth.”

7

A redaction, a revision, I see it this way now:

The glimmer grew into two hearts of color; red and blue flutters, which mitosised out into metallic white and black of car, striated with writing, which gave birth in its stopping to two walkers uncomfortable in tan and boots of government issue and tissue, who crunched in wind on flats.

The moment happens for me again, the same but different, this now a later now though the now it is *of* is the same, was the same will be the same always.

8

They turned onto Rue Descartes, Top Cop and Bottom, Man and Woman, (though perhaps this formulation of the issue does not please, for while the hierarchy implied by the ordering of the agents of the polis is undeniable and made tangible by pay-grades, having Man come before Woman may seem capricious if not retrograde, though putting Woman first merely reverse the direction of the same mistake. I will look into a method of simultaneous expression. “They”? But who are “they”? The Man and the Woman or the Woman and the Man? It all depends on the hierarchy of the antecedent explanation.)

Like a still bleeding eye bristling with tubes of recent connection, but abstracted now on a metal table, medical and separate from its body, a thin slab of medieval Parisian architecture, one slim restaurant from an old continuous elided stone block, was apparently torn from its surroundings, retrofitted pipes and cords and wires dripping and sparking from the violence, and plopped down on that street in something like Nevada. Even the slope of the street from the *Quartier latin* was maintained, and on the slope, the

patio outside smeared on the widest swath of old stone sidewalk, with its pliable canvas and plastic walls and clipped on lights and space heaters. The title of the restaurant in a vaguely medieval Gothic script: Le Method. Below it in smaller letters, in a blotchy Declaration-of-Independence-type cursive: *Discours sur le method sur le rue Descartes*.

The Bottom Cop parked the car, and the Top Cop said:

“You should let your dog go. This is gonna take awhile.”

“Like forever? to live here?” asked the Woman.

“The dog need not live here. The canine does not attain the level of mental competency required for legal culpability.”

“Don’t you tell me about legal culpability.”

“I’m a cop, that’s my business.”

“Wait,” said the Man, “so the dog doesn’t need to live here?”

“No,” answers the Bottom Cop.

“Perhaps. It depends on how complicated this turns out to be,” continued the Top Cop. “We’re taking you to sign your lease right now.”

“At this abstracted restaurant?” asked the woman, reinserting herself into the conversation anxiously.

“No. Here we’re gonna eat.”

“Why?”

“Because they do this good thing where they feed a baby pig nothing but milk in its admittedly truncated life and then I eat it.”

“But why can’t we keep the dog?”

“It says so on the lease.”

“But we haven’t signed the lease.”

“But you don’t exactly have a choice. You saw a human spine outside of its skin and human. That’s serious.”

“What about kenneling?”

“This is the town, we are in the town, our town. You’ll probably see him again. Unless he joins the Coyotes.”

“Why did you capitalize that? Are they not literal coyotes?”

“No, they’re literal coyotes. I don’t know, there’s a particular gang of them, it seemed right.” Top Cop then sighed and pulled out his gun awkwardly, the angle he sat at puffing his gut over the holster. His face a total horrible fullness of flesh, no gouges of sight or taste or hearing or sound. At least to me. He said, “Now let him go or I’ll have to old yell him.”

The They opened the car door, which made the sound of a mouth smacking, and the little black dog bounced out among the desiccated points of plant in the sick-yellow Mojave.

9

I think this is perhaps an addition, rather than audition or revision. Now she said, or says, she always says, thirty-seven years from now,

“You transport by hurt,
and I by hearse.”

Not one statement revised, or all in sequence but all are imperfect appearances of one absolute statement. Here in the wind of a desert autumn, the trees shrug with the lethargy of their firmness.

10

The climate of autumnal France laved off the chunk of Le Method, the air shrinking skin to bumps, and leading the light as in glass, churned in streams and strings out like the freezing melt from the submerged ice cube curling into Sprite.

They entered Le Method, full of close wintery browns, shining aged wood, exposed stone walls, rubbed smooth by centuries of fingers. Several other costumers sat scattered at small tables, finished deserts with textures like fur coats, began unrecognizable dishes with fluorescent shells, drank from snifters filled with a sticky liquid like amber thawing. All the costumers (Do I mean customers? I don't think so) had pale cheeks stretched thin and red rubs around their eyes and all were dressed in gowns of the medicinal graph paper from the spine. They sat down near the window.

“Everyone has the gown on that was on the spine,” said the Man.

“Oh Really?” said the talkative cop.

“Yes, really,” said the Woman.

“I'll take that into consideration.”

“That's, like, a lead, at least?” asked the Man.

“I'll have to vet my sources first.”

“Me?”

“You. Yes.”

“I mean, you saw it.”

“I have a method for this sort of thing.”

“Are these people patients?”

“Yes, of a sort.”

“I can’t remember the rest of this street.”

“Sure, okay.”

An older woman in a papery, nursely blue uniform, real diner-cough voice, scratches out “Have y’all dined here before?” as if the sounds were a side-effect of the expulsion of mucus.

“We haves” said the main cop, indicating himself and his partner. “They haven’t,” he pointed across the table.

“Okay,” began the phlegmy, nurse-similar desert-faced woman, “let me just explain a little bit about how we run things here, how we make your experience as a customer as special as possible.

“Working off the assumptions of this street’s namesake, but in a different direction, we are of the opinion that: as the existence of an omniscient, omnipotent, and omnibenevolent God does not manifest itself to us with either clarity or distinctness, all gustatory and other sensations are non veridical, exist only *qua* sensation, not *qua* representation, and so anything is permitted culinarily. Cannibalism is not cannibalism if the other person is mere sign without signification. “In addition to that, we believe the unreal manifests itself as a sense perception, and so on the same plane as the

real, as neither are veridical sense-datum. The real and the unreal both happen and don't happen to the exact same extent. There are births of our imagination in this food.

Therefore, we serve morally and physically impossible dishes.

“Like what?” asked the Man.

“Like basilisk egg omelet with gruyere and chopped ten year old Chinese factory worker fingers.”

“The owner of the fingers is ten years old or the fingers have been aged for ten years, like stinky tofu or something.”

“Yeah, it's a ten year old kid- their fingers.

“When in Rome. I'll have it. How does it work exactly?”

“You'll find out in a second. We have elaborate instructions.”

11

Outside, as they left Le Method, the redundant mechanism of the Old Mormon ghost plays numinous around them. I enter the miasma of his past when they enter the locus of his ritual mind.

The Old German Mormon Mashburn- I see him scraping and smearing bruise-colored mud from a murky blue sliver in the red rock, like a slightly open eyelid with black sight beneath. He sifts that sediment in a near stream and dark crystals remain.

I see him enter the cave and fear the gurgle beneath, desert blind in the dark, and looks down at the black water in the bottom, watches it drain with the lunar slowness of

the sea, shifts his head back and forth to catch glints with black behind them and the small of sand and glisters with gold-thickness, nugget-larger.

I see him come at his friend's face by the fire with red gritty boulder, miss the skull and catch the chin, rip the cheeks pull back and sloppily snap his bottom jaw in uneven half.

I see the Old German Mormon get a bullet in the neck from the friend's dying, tooth-crushed fumbles.

I see Mashburn make his way down out of the McCullough Mountains, begin to empty and desiccate with lack of blood, see him empty blackly onto his own shirt, fall off his donkey onto the salt flat, and wither with months.

This happens all around them on their way back to the station, the two cops and Man and Woman, as the drive through a mind reduced by death to the mechanism and circle of a ritual.

12

I woke up to walk the dogs, boiled the water, bubbled the brown caffeine in the French press, stumbled among the moving boxes on my floor, put the record player on its purring scratch in the middle of the room.

Then suddenly the images occurred to me in flakes, these bits of how things were in that then and that just above was how I arranged those sibylline filaments.

I think there are four possible construals of my images: allegory, vision, pure fiction, literal description of the transcendent.

It could be an allegory my concept of life given image in unconscious coalescences. Yes, but as Dante says, all real allegories are literally true, they are polysemous not metaphorical, simultaneously the case on the literal, allegorical, moral and anagogical level. One does not represent the other, one is the other, and everything is the case.

The second possibility, that of vision can subdivide into four: dream, waking, herbal stimulant, the holy light of the imagination, and are all those either veridical or non veridical, which makes it eight possibilities. It could be the dream vision, I could receive outside information in my dreams like Joseph. It could be the waking vision, I could be hit by a waking vibration like the Quakers, Boehme staring at his shiny pot. It could be the herbal stimulant, like the Oracle at Delphi huffing those hallucinogenic fumes from vents in the earth, and knowing it to be the effluence of Apollo. I have certainly absorbed many chemicals in this desert. Or I could know it by the holy light of the imagination. Because if god is the substance of light, and the Father is the Splendor, and the Son the Resplendence, then the holy ghost is the light that happens in my head when I'm presented images, and what I've seen is given me by the substance of God. I cannot tell anymore if I am waking or sleeping, if I have imbibed some desert chemicals or I just imagine with the substance of God. They all could be true.

It is possibly pure fiction: Perhaps I am just making this up? If I am, I am not aware of it. I have not made this I have found this. Regardless, this seems to beg the

question. How does one make anything up? *Nihil ex nihilo fit*. You are getting it from somewhere. Tell me where!

It also, of course, could be a literal description of the transcendent. It happened, but in the irreal realm. I actually experience an irreal object, all of these irreal events, and just describe it and them. I think this last is the most likely.

13

I follow a purpose;
you lead something far worse.

14

Officer Samuel Wingfield Interviewing Anonymous Female Subject #1

April --, 20--

OFFWING: So why were you standing over a human spine?

FEMSUB: I think that's a fair question.

OFFWING: It is.

FEMSUB: See, we had this friend from Mexico who couldn't procure proper papers, and we were going to immigrate him all illegal-like, but we figured it would be easier to take him apart piecemeal down there, then transport him in small doses, then put him back together in Albuquerque.

OFFWING: Why Albuquerque?

FEMSUB: Why not?

[Gurgling sound, perhaps from the water cooler. I doubt its significance]

OFFWING: So why were you standing over a human spine on a salt flat?

FEMSUB: We had a friend who had horrible experiments done to him in World War II, which made him part jellyfish, gelatinous and liquid, and he just evaporated in this Mojave air, leaving only the spine, the last portion of his origins in man.

[The sound of lips on styrofoam. adjustment of papers and cloth]

OFFWING: Ma'am- Can I call you Ma'am?

FEMSUB: No.

OFFWING: Ma'am, why were you standing over a human spine, with an apparent lover?

FEMSUB: Apparent lover? Yeah, well, we wait tables in Vegas, a little Italian restaurant in Sumerlin, and we recently started dating, decided to go for a little bit of a car trip and a hike this weekend, saw something flapping as we passed a salt flap, checked it out and came upon a spine wrapped in a medical gown, were arrested by two cops who refused to acknowledge that the cloth came from their local hospital,

OFFWING: Patients, not a hospital.

FEMSUB: Patients, then. And then the quieter, more retarded cop started interviewing me.

OFFWING: Are you a smoker?

FEMSUB: Yes.

OFFWING: A user of intravenous drugs?

FEMSUB: Yes.

OFFWING: Do you drink alcohol?

FEMSUB: Often.

OFFWING: Have you ever committed a felony?

FEMSUB: Yes.

OFFWING: What?

FEMSUB: Often.

OFFWING: We can do this all day.

FEMSUB: I hope so. I know.

[The strangle and crack of the tape turning off]

15

Vision comes in different formats, is always specific.

The tape's stored on a silver disc, patterns of light compressed into plastic and reflecting codes. I put it into the machine that reads the light with light.

Screen balloons dimly from a dot and lightens slowly. A left blotch of grey and face looks to the right one, the left blur official in its outlines, the right more sloppy, arms white with the informal, both with mutable ink for mouths, and all the black objects in the room look more soup than solid.

The informal blotch says, after adjustment sounds of seats and pages: "It seems to be November here."

"In the tired cleft of your drawling eyes, the white stutter in your hair, the volute mumbles of your ears,

you fail to articulate - you're a waste. What's your name?"

asks the formal blur.

"Listen, I feel like we've totally gotten off on the wrong foot. I'm not tryin' to be hard. Lucy just has this thing about cops, and she's hard to talk over, you know?"

"Lucy?"

"Her name's Lucy."

"The other one?"

"Yeah."

"Lucy what?"

"Lucy, I don't know her last name. Lucy I-don't-know-her-that-well."

"That's the best you can do?"

"Actually, I think it's Lucy Collins."

"What's your name?"

"It's Bart Brinkman, man." He moves forward like India ink in a ziplock bag.

"I'm here to cooperate. Ask and I'll answer. Mr. Cooperative."

"Black crystals in black mud disguised by sequence, wearing obscure integument of close elision, they hide in plain sight by befriending mud. She told the truth and lies?"

the lighter-colored, formal blotch said, and seemed to darken and enlarge like a tree's shadow at dusk.

"Um, yeah. She told the truth in the car. She just told a lot of lies around it, too, I guess."

"So she was really telling the truth?"

“She just kinda primed you to think it was a lie. I think that’s like her.”

“You don’t know.”

“I don’t know her that well, but she seems to do it a lot.”

“So how do you know her, how well? Tell me why you were looking at a spine.”

“What’s your name?”

“You can call me Officer John Wilmot.”

“Okay, John.”

“Officer Wilmot.”

“Okay.”

“So the thing is we’re co-workers. We wait tables in Las Vegas. We both work at this little Cajun place on Charleston, up kind of in the rundown artsy part of Vegas, right where 95 and the 15 meet. We just have similar senses of humor. She started working there a couple months ago. At like two o’clock when things were slow, I was talking about wanting to go hiking and on a car trip and she was like, ‘Sign me up!’ So this is the first time we hung out outside of work.”

“Why did you say she was a stewardess?”

“I think she used to be. But maybe she used to be a lawyer. I really don’t know her that well. And I’m kind of spacey.”

“How did you come to be in the proximity of an abstracted human spine?”

“We just, you know, saw it. Lucy saw something flapping, asked me to pull over. We walked out. You were kinda there for the rest of it. It was weird. I don’t know.”

“Two skins, I have twin skins here - but which covers which? Which is the snake, and which rubs off in a reptile itch?”

said the formal blot, a traveling ray of dark, the shadow of an airplane in a Vegas sunset
in the autumn.

Previously on *Participating Godlike Food*:

Episode One: Bart and Lucy found a spine in something like Nevada. Officers Wilmot and Wingfield took them into custody; forced them to leave their dog in the desert. They went to a restaurant, Le Method, which was weird. Bart and Lucy were interrogated. They lied.

Episode Two

1

In the basement in the stairs,
in milk-murk air down there,
a limit liquid, gaseous, able,
a sideways-porous table,

*I can see the door
but not what it's been used for*

that paradise put flat
meets with metamorphic smack,
the slosh of soma and ghee
stumbling with liquid glow

*I can see the door
but not what it's been used for*

to a casino-basement Agni
piercing the flat with ignition
as Amen
a Blake-begin

*I can see the door
but not what it's been used for*

2

What do salt crystals mean?

A refrain of the earth on dead grass and trees and donkey bones, equivocally.

3

Outside the police station stood an inchoate pyramid of heads redly abstracted from their bodies, sticky puddles crusting blackly below and in eye sockets and ear whorls. Each head had turned a cheekless warp of skin that wandered loose without responsibility to the body below, hair drifting in the air some places, and heavy with clotting in others.

“Was this like this when we came in?” asked Officer John Wilmot.

“Most certainly not,” replied a spacey Officer Wingfield. “Almost certainly not.”

“We should radio this in.”

“We’re right outside, let’s just walk in.”

“Let’s radio. I wanna go. I don’t particularly wanna know.”

This cold shape of heads to talk to stars, geometry to contact the norm, wobbled and crumbled a little in the wind. : a few heads fell off to the side. Officers Wilmot and Wingfield, and Bart and Lucy walked past with skittish legs.

“This is apparently pretty SOP?” asked Lucy.

“Who knows what’s the standard anymore,” answered rueful Wingfield.

“I mean, obviously, it’s not, like, optimal,” said Wilmot, in an elegiac surfer’s mumble.

“And we’re going to sign the lease now?” asked Lucy.

“You are,” said Wilmot, perking.

“And we’re not under suspicion?”

“No more than anyone else.”

“But we’re of interest.”

“I guess.”

“Are we?”

“You are.” Wilmot rubbed the crust the desert makes from the corner of his lips before continuing, “You have the privledge of witness.”

“Okay.”

“You seem to be slow on getting this stuff.”

“You’re just not very good at communicating with your public.”

“When their government is a code that they must master, a citizen is truly diligent and engaged.”

The sun cooked the bits of red desert dust, shoe rubber, and plastic wrappers of old food that littered the car carpet into a smell that made Bart sleepy when he opened the door.

“So that’s cartels, right?” he gestured toward the heads, not wanting to get in.

“How long have you been a waiter?” asked Wilmot.

“Not long. Are those cartel heads? I mean, I feel like that’s the primary source of pyramidally stacked severed heads in America, I would assume.”

“Yes, probably.”

“What does it mean? Is it a message? Are they mad at us?”

A sort of anatomical heiroglyph, a speech of higher things, at least farther, and I see the shape of the meaning, but not what it points to, the mere geometry of things which explains nothing in its simple visibility undivorced by pointing’s ghosts, a rumble-ghost, a poltergiest, the efficacious spirit of the gesture understood.

“Do people mention Bart Simpson to you alot?” asked Wilmot.

“No, it’s usually Saint Bartholemew.”

4

The salt itself now seems significant, to have been signed by the creator of its purpose, if I can only discern the pattern of their cursive geology. They seem now a crytal ensemble excretion of the earth, to represent earth’s stomach to me.

What do salt crystals mean? They highlight as they foam it shut.

5

I can see her face, a swirling black mask of loose skin in the future, she is taut of shoulder and stomach, but the skin hangs from her face like stubborn cloth, she tamps a heave of heavy breath and says,

“You go back to Bart,
and I slog around in birth.”

And to the left of my eyes a mirror smashes with a harsh, marginal glimmer.

6

By signing this lease, you admit a certain complicity. Let me quote from the text:

This lease is for a term commencing on 09/07/20--, and ending on 09/06/20-- at noon, the "Term."

Let's start with the "term," a pod containing both termination and terminology, the locus of the limit in duration and meaning, this is both a threat and promise that something significant will happen to you in this baggy interim, related through false etymology and homophony to "berm," the limit of this road you will be traveling. Do you understand me, Bart? That is Officer, or Officer Wilmot to you. Put that down. I quod that bulle againe:

The holding over by Resident with the consent of Landlord shall be deemed to create a sixty day tenancy.

To begin with, you will never have my consent. To achieve any sort of true salvation, you must attain it without a public consent. This holding over is the key, pierce through the veil of these words, and know that it is a holding over me. This town is hieroglyph, and you must seprate the phonetic from determintive, in order to enter the penetralia of Nevada. Bart leave her breasts alone.

You are in a sort of public. You will have a period of Paradise,
a Persian enclosure, if within the limits of your terms
and terminations, you can discover how to hold it
over. Is this clear? I didn't ask you, Lucy. You have been
uncooperative. More lease:

All terms and conditions of the Lease shall remain in full force and effect
during any holdover period; provided that the Landlord may increase the rent
reserved hereunder during any holdover period after not less than sixty (60) days
prior written notice to Resident.

Again, rend the cloth wall, and enter closer
into the temple. There is government in heaven,
and especially earthly privledged enclosures, and it is
a government of force and effect, angels are always
eagles and buzzard. Furthermore, my access to your life and particularly
to your thought and the instruments of interior
extraction will increase in Paradise and its
enclosure. Salvation is an action, and lasts
as long as its comission, and must be reneacted
constantly. Hence the possibilty of near usurious
rental practices after the perfect term of sixty days. We must
have written interpenetration. The poltergiest
of meaning will save you.

Listen, this will take several more hours, but long
story short, you have an actual chance
at something here. Salvation in an obstacle course.
Here let's turn quickly to this part about the early
termination of your lease, by far the most important
part. What? There's a T. J. Maxx in town for new clothes.
Here is the node of your salvation:

Resident shall pay Landlord a fee of \$15,000.00 concurrently with
Resident's delivery of the termination notice to Landlord (together with the Final
Rent Payment, collectively, the "Termination with Notice Fee"); and Resident
shall pay Landlord the one-time concession offered by Landlord to resident upon
the execution of this Lease Agreement in the Amount of \$0.00 (the Concession
Repayment) on or before the new termination date.

All legal documents are allegories and this here

means - wait-

I *had* to hit you.

That *isn't* too much blood.

I *do* know.

I know *a lot* about blood.

So here's the question: what sort of thing is Hamlet's sadness? A natural thing like mine? A thing that isn't? But if it is true of it that it doesn't exist then it has a nature, a piece of which is its lack of existence, and I have known that nature.

Is Shakespeare the man's personal emotion related to the emotions of Hamlet by cause or by reference or some third poltergeist? Do the words *These but the trapping and the suits of woe, but I have that within which passeth show*, refer to Shakespeare's past and sadness? And if not, then to what do they refer?

Is it merely a historical record? Certainly not of Hamlet the historical figure, whose world would be more like Beowulf's. But of Shakespeare? On what do we base this? Why is Shakespeare not recording himself in Falstaff or Lady Macbeth? How do we know what is true Shakespeare and false Shakespeare?

Is Hamlet a *composition*? Does the performance of the play not actually matter, and only Shakespeare feeling it first mattered? Let me ask the same question another way: when and where is the Ninth symphony? We call it a *composition*, but this privileges the moment of composing, and makes every actual performance, every time the music was actually music, a mere, weak echo and approximation of a moment that happened in essential silence. Is it any one particular performance? The first perhaps? Glen Gould's Bach is *the* Bach? or Bach's Bach? in which case no one alive has ever heard Bach before. If these are all the Ninth, then that leaves us with a very peculiar type of thing, *ding, onta, res*.

It can exist in two spaces at one time, there can be two performances at one, all the accidents and properties of which are totally distinct, Hamlet as Nineteenth-Century royal, Hamlet as 90's slacker. The chain of its causality seems outside of the chain of greater causality, Hamlet is motivated to kill Claudius on a sort of perenial purgatorial loop outside of know tides of cause. It doesn't seem to take up any time or any space, Hamlet exists even when not being performed. Though in someways we can say that Hamlet doesn't exist, we can also say of Hamlet that he would be unlikely to dance or be obsequious, we can postulate that he was probably an arrogant student. If someone asks, Did Hamlet shoot Laertes with a gun? we can answer a definitive, No. Despite the fact that in some productions he does. Things that don't exist do not have natures, but Hamlet has a nature.

We must abandon cause and reference, and enter the unreal.

And still my little black dog burrows circular beside me.

And still it comes in shimmers and darkness, not in my mind but in itself like that.

8

In their new apartment complex, the homeless drank the liquid guts of batteries on the side streets, and school children skinned endless stray dogs to teach themselves anatomy and cruelty, and screamed curse words to security guards, while diabetics bulged from their Rascals on the way to their slots at the CVS, and a grown man with a tattooed face fucked teenaged girls in the park using only the official condom of hip-hop kulture,

and the elderly neighbor more used to suburban near-perfect silence beat his barking neighbor to death with a satellite dish and impunity. The shadows all fell at Kafka-angles.

The inside of their apartment was anesthetic in its empty, and tooth-colored. That thick cigarette-butt lace of dark orange light and cancer-black came in the window with that evening. It flecked to black, and burnt cotton.

Bart rubbed at the dust made greasy on his ankles, and it came off like small rolled cigarettes. Dried blood rubbed black trails from his left temple.

“So what are the terms of the lease again?” he asked.

“I wasn’t really listening,” Lucy said, shaking impatient hair out.

“Me, either.

“Yeah, I hate it when people talk like that. It’s arrogant. Like he’s so fucking smart. He’s a fucking cop. I know exactly how smart he is.”

“I mean, can we leave?”

“I don’t know, that’s sort of what I’m asking.”

“I mean we have to be able to leave. We don’t have any food.”

“We could always order out, though.”

“This is insane! They can’t do this to us.”

“We should get like a blowup mattress from Walmart.

“Are you listening to me?”

“Yeah, I mean, I’m listening enough. But somebody has to be responsible here.”

“Didn’t he say we had to not do what he says anyway?”

“But wouldn’t that just be doing what he says, which is doing what he doesn’t want us to do?”

“Shut up Bart.”

“Okay, whatever, then don’t talk to me,” Bart sighs, deflating. He pokes his head with a careful finger, comes back with black crackles of blood.

“How’s your head?” asks Lucy.

“Its, ah, you know, integrity has been breached.”

“What do you wanna do?”

“Like right now?”

“Like about this, about all this.”

I think we need to do two things: find Leonard, then go back to Le Method, and find out what that spine has to do with those hospital shirts.”

“Who’s Leonard?”

“My dog.”

9

Talking to a woman with baggy linen for a face, she says, in seconds before the mirror divorces itself with rough sound,

“I put myself into a purse
by crawling back to birth.”

10

What does salt crystal mean?

The only ice the bottoms of Nevada can maintain.

11

Officer Wingfield is aware of the the ghosts always surrounding him. How to represent this on camera? We will get back to that. Notes welcome.

Open on a shot of the dashboard clock. Green, digital: 7:45 PM.

Open back up to a shot of the apartment building we understand belongs to Bart and Lucy.

Back to the ghosts. emanations from the old violent world of glistening nuggets, and cracked leather bags, and acts of primordial violence in the McCollough mountains of a not so distant Nevada, surround Wingfield's conciousness cosntantly. How's this? Flip the angle of the shot, we see his lips moving and also ghost lips, but no sound from either mouth as they are now beneath car-glass

When we get to the dog telepathy, that will be a challenge, too.

We need physical gestures as a sort of kabuki hieroglyphic for his mind. He sighs, dribbles his lips like a frustrated horse, slumps back in his seat like a petulant teenager, eats a piece of dried pizza and throws it disgustedly back into the box, he drums his fingers on the dashboard, a reach since he is in a petulant slump, he looks at a picture of his family, we should decide whether or not he has a family, he pulls out a deck of cards and plays an entire game of solitaire in real time, perhaps on the middle console, his slumping makes this difficult also. All this means: He is bored.

OFFICER WINGFIELD

Fuuuuuuck.

Why is he so bored when there are so many ghosts? We will work on that. Slight inconsistnecy. Maybe he's used to them? Look into ghosts.

He thinks to himself in poetry. In voice over? Or with his camera mouth?

OFFICER WINGFIELD

From the coagulating spine of them, these two
who grow together, as back-bone in segmented spheres
enables nerves to make electric, thinking glue,
I know that soon they'll do, and leave here.

How to represent this on camera. Perhaps an animated sequence? A CGI
graphic rendering of a spine accruing electric points of sensation? For the
duration of a voice over? Does the cost justify the minuteness of the moment?
Perhaps a cartoon is best? In that psychedelic, nostalgic style?

Shot of Wingfield's face, taut suddenly with attention.

Shot of Bart and Lucy leaving what is obviously their apartment.

Consciousness of poltergiest miasma. How to represent this on camera?
Look into dry ice.

12

To the woman with a scalp like the stomach of a bat, she drawled between drinks
in her sick bed,

“I died twice,
they put me on ice,
that's why the climate here's so nice.”

Then bat-scalp broke the looking-glass, the sideways-porous.

13

What do salt crystals mean?

Ice happens in the weather, higher, on the mountains. The salt means also that contrast.

14

Stage Bare Except for Stairs and Door

Noise of the Casino Above

Stairs Black like a Diagonal Bat

Wilmot Lonely and Loitering on Them

A Sort of Lambent Door Beneath Them,

Almost in Them

Mostly in Them

Representing This on Stage May Be Difficult

Chorus Crowds Around the Lambent Door

Chorus: I always wear this costume
to enact
divine salvation spumes
of my superior's intent.

Wilmot: The salt flat flecks my mind with light,
remembered and windy,
thought deflected by the senses
toughing redundant white.
I can never stop that salt flat,
or those har circular nerves,
their medical flap.

Chorus: I always wear this costume
to enact
divine salvation spumes
of my superior's intent.

Wilmot: I think of my house,
the beer that separates in bubbles
on my tongue and laves,
the cheap, dog-darkened carpet that I love,
colored like pearls shivered to strips,
but the drift of ind toward similars
slips me back into that trap
of the wide, white salt and human scar.

Chorus: I always wear this costume
to enact
divine salvation spumes
of my superior's intent.

Wilmot: Like a bat's
sticky yellow vomit tangled thick
with licked hairs
and liquid elsewhere,
he'll come out human
from this black.

A Man Dressed in a Suit

But With His Hair Fraying from Exhaustion

Enters from the Luminous Door Beneath the Stair

That's Almost Stairs

That's Mostly Stairs

A Bit of the Stairs Comes off with the Opening

He Circles up to Wilmot on the Stairs

Jostling the Chorus Rudely

Well-Dressed Man: Updates?

Wilmot: They seem to be lying about their past. But only slightly for some reason.

Well-Dressed Man: We know about their past.

Wilmot: I don't.

Well-Dressed Man: You will.

Wilmot: Soon?

Well-Dressed Man: Yes. Have they signed the lease?

Wilmot: They have. But with confusion.

Well-Dressed Man: How else should they do it?

Wilmot: I guess.

Well-Dressed Man: Where are they now?

Wilmot: On the way to Le Method.

Well-Dressed Man: How do you know?

Wilmot: Wingfield.

Well-Dressed Man: Are we set up?

Wilmot: Cordelia's in place.

Well-Dressed Man: Keep me informed.

Wilmot: Inevitably.

Well-Dressed Man Exits at the Top of the Stairs

Blacken Stage

15

With the skittering domination of a bat making trace-veins in eyes in evening,
speed-made stains of itself blackening the pink texture of clouds, the woman stood above
the sick bed, and said,

“I live in the split,
and the bruise-like after-spurt
of hearse-birth.”

16

Salt crystal puckers and pocks in rain. I mean: rarely.

17

Returning to the rue Descartes, they still cannot remember seeing it on entering
Le Method. Perhaps I haven't? Seen it yet. Though, no I'm certain I could see it easily,
it's latent and waiting, I'm sure. The exact same costumers sit at the exact same seats that
that wonderful autumnal blend of browns. The Nursey Waitress approaches them again.

“You shouldn't be here. I happen to know.”

“Oh, really? What do you know?” asked Lucy.

“You've signed your lease. You should be home.”

“That isn't part of the lease agreement. Occupation of the domicile is possible,
rather than compulsory or necessary.”

“That isn't true.”

“How is it you are privy to our lease agreement? We’ve lease only with police.”

“You can only eat in this restaurant once.”

“Once ever?”

“Once today.”

“What happens?”

“Don’t find out. You won’t find out.”

“Um, hello, waitress,” said Bart leaning himself awkwardly into the conversation.

“ I have thought of a problem with your restaurant. If non-veridical perceptions maintain the same ontological status as images of the unreal and imaginary, and all perceptions are therefore on a depthless plane of perception, then doesn’t that make even the imagination culpable?”

“I’m feeling very cannibally right now.”

“You eat your own food?”

“I do.”

“Oh. Hmmm. Well, I myself am a naive realist, and have realized that solipsism and eventually collapses into naive realism, as the *Tractatus* points out, and therefore are for moral purposes, identical. Your realizations, as a foodservice franchise, should only lead you to believe that even imagination is a locus of responsibility, to the exact same extent as perception. The imagination is not a mental event, but an event of the world. The unreal world.”

“Okay, okay you’ve got me. Maybe we eat people.”

“It’s an honest mistake.”

“As honest as one can get, I guess.”

“I guess. Could we please just this one have a second table?”

“Alright. In recompense for past sins, only.” She picked up the arcane menus and led them through autumnal France in essence to new seats.

18

Even the air outside the windows looked tamped with black like autumn is. They asked for complimentary wool sweaters which were provided for them. They requested time with the menu voices transformed somewhat with the vague, rustic redolence of Bretagne, harsh gray water in it.

Beside them a woman in medical blue fidgeted her fingers around her coffee cup, running greasy prints in bumpy stutters over porcelain. She stared at Bart and Lucy as they sat down, but feigned absorption in the nothing she was doing, when they looked her way.

“I know her from somewhere,” said Bart.

“What’s your name?” Lucy leaned conspiratorially toward her, and said.

“I don’t know that I can tell you,” said the woman.

“Your supposed to tell us. We have been told to operate without consent, which is a different type of permission.”

“I guess.”

“So tell us.”

“Cordelia Aberdeen.”

“We have a question.”

“Only one?”

“There should be more?”

“There should.”

“Of course. I guess there are, but for right now I have just one.”

“That will makes the other ones come.”

“Of course.”

“So ask.”

“This thing you’re wearing, this medical thing. We found it wrapped around a spine in the middle of the salt flat.”

“Oh, that. You’ll want to go to the basement in the stairs.”

“Oh, yeah?”

“And you’ll want to see the pyramid eventually. It won’t make sense without that.”

“Where’s the pyramid?”

“Underground.”

“With its own sovereign stars and sun?” asked Bart?

“Yes,” answered Cordelia.

“Of course. Where’s the basement in the stairs?”

“That door back there,” said Cordelia, pointing to the back of the restaurant.

Bart and Lucy rose slowly from low seats,
shed sweaters like indefinate snakes

the imagination gave fuzzed and baggy pleats.
They skittered shimmering in gold flakes

to the door at the back, went slack
with lack of nerves, wobbled open the knob
on stairs etched a geometric gray into the black.
They started down stairs' raw pine sobs.

“I know where I know her from!” ignited Bart.

“Cordelia?” asked Lucy, bodyless in the dark.

“Yeah! She was one of the heads in the pyramid.”

“No way.”

“I swear!”

A blow from behind made his brain
white, austere, God-suitable.
He fell down the stairs with catatonic plan;
the contusion turned his mind to hospital.

He woke to nurse, and no Lucy.

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Episode Three

1

In panorama bubbles, the police coil circuits and tubes,
latent veins of polity, in uniforms in cooled cubes,
cubicles that hold their information, oughts, and codes.
They save the town in cubicle episodes.

Medicinal suspensions cool in hospital fridges,
dazed and amputated patients feel new, sore edges,
and liquids plunged in IVs smell like icicles
a vaulting altar of angles across town in one hospital.

An apartment burns, and blue lights scramble
to wet flames, and pull blind children from fire.
Like lungs familiar with tobacco, blackly disassembled,
the apartment changed dark, accidents wiped entirely.

Fanatics with sun-starched hair on Rue Descartes
stumble in blue cloaks into slackly cool air,
and eat the curviship of a privately human heart,
feel violated faults in them cleanse and repair.

The pyramid Euclidian beneath the flat,
inviolate, rigid curves of it beneath the salt,
pulsing lambent to terrarium stars and exact,
will show itself to muddy fingers digging its fault.

2

I see him now with bloody knees staining salt, peeling his fingernails on
unpredicted rocks, scraping farther into the dirt, the crust of salt dsipatched, where once
there was a spine.

3

I've figured it out! I've finally figured out the the thirty-seven year redaction. It's Lucy in the hospital now, at my now though. I'm in this now with Bart now, and will be in this now with Lucy only later.

I was apparently, as best as I can tell, imagining the events in the hospital from exactly thirty-seven years earlier, on the day of Lucy's birth, looking forward to her still birth, and the distance within the distance caused the blurriness, the vision within the vision. It seems obvious now.

4

And he said:
"This pyramid held
the pattern the stars slid"

5

"Tahiti chihuahua spaghetti," thought Leonard.

6

In the hospital, all the IVs' yellow and crackle with age, healing liquids darken like bad water in an oasis in all the cases, glasses break in windows with mesh beneath

the brittle, and all the staff and floors look desert-stiffened and exhausted, and non-subjective.

Bart woke up to a blur that clears, like seeing that world through a nervous droplet of water then surfacing. He sees someone who looks exactly like Cordelia Aberdeen, but dressed more nurse than patient, and with new black hair. What does does Cordelia look like? I can't tell, but I can feel in Bart the mechanical smack of recognition, the sound of the new sight notching in congruence with an older memory.

"I've seen you with your head cut off, but also at a restaurant after," says Bart

"Oh really?" she turns from tending the tubes, purses her whole face quizzical.

"We may have you in the wrong type of hospital, sir," answers the Cordelia-similar nurse.

"Is your name Cordelia Aberdeen?"

"My name is Piece Denise, nee deceased."

"Really?"

"No. My name is Heather Nadine."

"Really? That sounds like two first name put together?"

"It could be so. that happens. I once knew an Andrew Thomas."

"But are you Cordelia?"

"I couldn't be. I don't even know that name, and I am sure that I would know my own name."

"What is your name for real though?"

"Camellia Olympia."

"Is that a pickled dog's head?"

“It is.”

“What am I in here for?”

“You suffered a withering and ultimate cominution of the skull and as a result we had to perform a skull trasnplant. We have provided you with a prosthesis of the skull, a magnetic skull simulacrum that alters the polarities of the brain.”

“Yeah, well, I’ve got no cuts or even pain, so I doubt really seriously that.”

“Oh really?”

“I feel like I could tell if I’d had a skull transplant, and I can’t.”

“Is that the only reason you doubt it.”

“No.”

Bart begins to pop bloody and monitoring needles from his veins.

“There are spiders in the bees,” says Camellia.

“What?”

“Nothing.”

“Alright. I’m leaving. That’s enough.”

“Alright.”

“Can I leave?”

“I guess.”

“Do you guess right?”

“It never occured to me that someone would flee from their somatic salvation.”

“Well, watch me flee, lady.”

Lucy woke to a window, as for interrogation or medical observation. Bart was in that window, in a hospital bed. He talked to a woman, who's angle occluded her. Lucy's room was filled with sand and salt corrosion, as if the beach had invaded the hospital in unwatched years, sand on plastic tables, sea brittle rubber pumps. Even the dripping pins in her arms were covered with saline rust, white and orange in competing rosettes. She ripped them out.

She pivoted on her gut as if to get up, but didn't - Cordelia Aberdeen walked in, peroxide blond, and nurse-clothed.

"You hit us," said Lucy

"I doubt that," said the Nurse.

"I doubt your doubt."

"I'm here to help."

"Well, with help like that, who needs to get cocked down?"

"Cocked down?"

"It's like a prison thing. It's a thing, trust me."

"Who do you think I am?"

"Cordelia Aberdeen."

"Try Amelia Spokane. You need to rest. and not pull things violently out of yourself. You've had a still birth."

“Oh really? I think I’d notice. I think I could tell if I’d still birthed recently.”

“The rates of life and death are different here than elsewhere.”

“And that’s why I feel fine?”

“In part.”

“Then show me my old baby.”

“I can’t.”

“Then show me my scars.”

“I can’t.”

“Then show me more Bart.”

“I can’t.”

“Take me to Bart.”

“He’s hurt. You’re hurt.”

“I’m not.

Tell me all about Bart,
and tell me more about my birth.
Tell me about Bart,
and about my birth.”

Lucy crunched shut on her belly again to test for birth-sores, and swiveled herself off the bed, walked raucous to the window and slammed.

8

Bart’s window started to shiver and yell and swell. He sat up in his bed, and Camellia turned quick, like the two things were one reflex.

“See, I don’t even know what that means, but I bet it means you’re lying. It’s got
Lucy’s voice.”

9

He:
“This pyramid held
the years we said.”

10

Officer Wingfield drove tot he flat white salt heart of the desert, and thought

My job, this divot-ridden badge, is like a crop that I invent
and then administer, but that brims back
on me in suffocating green tents of plant
metastasis that pins me on the latent black.

A smug Poseidon in the business of whirlpools,
I make a web and traction out of things,
and think myself immune from suction’s tools,
but end in sunken wood and dark weed of sea dregs.

Then they will empty me into the pyramid,
so many used up nodes and grids.

You see here that Officer Wingfield is comparing himself, in his duties as an officer of the
law, and as a complicit extension of this apparent conspiracy or paegent, to a farmer
who’s crops have overtaken him, emphasizing how an initially fecund or propitious
situation that he had hope for has essentially turned against him. By referring to the
ground beneath him as latent, he seems to suggest some other and concurrent threat that
might and will take him as his own works keep him subdued. We can only assume that he

goes to meet ultimately or fix to some extent this over-brimming fructifying of his work, in the flat white heart of the desert.

In the second stanza he presents the same idea with a different figure. With the Poseidon who is made ironic by his smugness and business-ness, again the instruments rebel and fall back violently upon their manipulator. The sea Poseidon whirls circularly as a weapon, sucks him drowning to the bottom. This stanza is essentially an elaboration of the last, rather than new ground broken, although perhaps a shade darker: instead of fresh and pregnant dirt, you have dead logs wet beyond buoyancy and weeds too dark to grow.

In the final truncated stanza which functions like the closing couplet in a Shakespearean sonnet, Officer Wingfield brings up a literal or figurative pyramid, which “they”(members of the conspiracy pageant?) will empty him into upon his death. Apart from the ambiguity of whether the pyramid is figure or literal referent (as it is only mentioned once and no referent/figure pairing is suggested like it is in the job and crop of the first line), the most puzzling aspect of the line is what exactly “empty” means: what is the vessel and what is the content? Is the world the vessel and the body the content? The body the vessel and the organs the content, in good old Egyptian fashion? Or are the body and the organs the vessel and some third strange thing, electric, spiritual or otherwise, the content the pyramid demands?

The third choice suggests itself most strongly, as the nodes and grid of the last line seem to suggest the nervous system, the effable strings of an ineffable system.

As Wilmot folded a new spine in a new shirt of standard hospital issue, he thought to him self in something lower than his mind, in the fire that produces the smoke of the mind, in Biblical folds,

In the white and antispetic center of the hospital
 Among the hypodermic needles like experimental fish
 noses that traffic in organic liquids and requiting chemicals
 in this un-tropics
 In walls washed numb and white of old gore and body-color
 Among humans whose openings and joints yellow with cancer
 Among the frigid smells of saline injections
 Among open bones shown air for the first time ever
 by the educated
 and swathed with the life of staph

With their comminuted skull
 With their null birth
 With their ancient comminuted ankles
 With their old adolescent abortions

I will show them other ways of doing the human
 I will show them the secret that walks in public
 I will show them that human nature reverses
 when the polarities reverse
 I will do deranged medical reports on Bart and Lucy
 I will show them this spine

And they will see me with this spine as I design it
 And they will follow me with it
 And they will plot by it,
 Cartesian and questioning in ignorance on the salt flat

This next part will be of interest only to gentlemen philosophers, but: I'm sure someone is thinking, "What about the theory of definite descriptions?!" with both terminal diacritical marks indicating nuances of consciousness.

Here's what about it: The theory of definite descriptions amounts eventually to a tautology. To say that the imaginary object does not exist is merely to say that it does not exist. It assumes that the present bald king of France does not exist, and then looks for a proper expression of this in the suitably rigorous language of Frege's logical notations, that this is a set to which no members belong, basically. The real question that Meinong was asking: Does the present bald king of France (or things like him. For us, does Hamlet?) exist and if so, then how do we characterize his being, his *onta*. Russell sidesteps the whole issue, pretends it already has been solved. He has merely shown that it is possible to talk about a thing that does not exist. He has in no way proven that it does not exist.

Also, Russell does not address public events of the imagination, like Macbeth, although he does put Hamlet in the same boat as the bald French non-person. A distinction should have been made. And his present bald king of France has been made into an object by his using him so famously, he is an object whose only property beyond present french baldness, is his non existence. And he's a King.

A purely logical explanation of the 9th Symphony will eventually have to claim that it does not exist, *qua* thing, *qua* *onta*, but rather as merely a logical fiction, a misunderstanding of purely physical processes. It's really just a big causal chain that

started with Beethoven's breakfast. The notion that there is music being performed amounts to a vision of the chimera of Satan over the body of the epileptic.

I think even the more skeptical and philistine among us might blanch and balk at that conclusion. I, for one, know the 9th exists. I've met it, and I've met this spine, and its friends after, these public events of the unreal, which are, of course, God.

P. S. A sort of post-thought: Whatever sort of thing memory is, it *isn't* an accurate re-presentation, or else we would all have eidetic memories.

It is perhaps a thing like allegory, where the essential truth (factual import?) remains, but everything else, all particulars have been changed. Changed by who? With intention? Is this related? Is this January snot in my nose related? Is this January pain in my old broken leg related?

13

He said:
"This pyramid holds
the things we did
as things told."

[The man we know as the Well-Dressed Man sits at table on a stage made to look like an office of executive importance. The plaque on the table says "Cairo Jones", though his real name is Jason Williams. He reads a report that must be visually indicated to be a medical report. He picks dim black sheets of X-rays out of it. Puts them down.]

Cairo Jones: The big south country of my youth. The Big Sur. The King of the Mountain. My kindergarten in the kelp of Monterey. The Spanish patina over all the sonambulant California hills. Walking secret to the beach. The stink of kelp at night. From the bluff above. Cold lunar glister of ocean water on the rocks. From that bluff above. That night.

[He shuffles the papers in a disinterested fashion. Picks one up.]

Slipping down the loose rocks and dry clods. Such poor architecture. Foot catching and the body overtaking it. The ankle and overwhelmed pivot. Swelling white and burning and a sound like chewing granola going through my body. It broke and felt so hot. Such poor architecture. The only light and the only heat in that night.

[He reads from the selected sheet:]

“The patient’s stated name is Bartholemew Brinkman. He states that he is twenty-four, and appears his stated age, and is a charming man.”

Remaining charming with his foot a heap of materials in unusable format now. And then he didn’t walk for eight months. Charming.

[He reads again:]

“Patient presents with swelling and discoloration of the right ankle. Fingerprints hold their shape in the skin. He cannot walk on it or flex it. Structural problems prevent tonicity. X-Rays indicate that tibia has fractured, and fibula has comminuted. The first surgical attempt at reconciliation of the bone has failed.”

And her with her abortion. The teenage Collins. Where is her sheet. Brown spots of age on it that I imagine to be bloodspots brown with age. like their fingers went directly from the procedure to the report. Contrapasso in our imaginings. In the nightmare diversions we design. Their life has been my life, too.

[He searches repeatedly for the sheet. The stage dims like an X-ray.]

John Wilmot's wife dreamed this, in a lonely desert cul-de-sac:

*You went out for a walk and came back with
a crow. you were holding it by its feet like
a bunch of flowers so that you could draw
its face. [You were an artist.] You were in
my office, about halfway to the balcony door;
and let him go because I got mad and
said you were hurting him. An hour later
you said, "Look at this." We peeked out and
the crow was on the eave of the house across
the street. There was a man on the balcony and
he was on a ladder. The bird died and fell
off the roof and landed on the street where
everyone had been watching it. Everyone
was upset and you felt guilty, so we went
down to tell them it was probably you who
killed it and it was an accident. We tried
to explain as the crowd thinned. A ghetto man
gave you the address of a place where you
could get good crows cheap. No, thank you.
[As we walked back in, I noticed a keypad on*

(They were expecting him to die)

*the side of the house and asked the ghetto man,
“Does that open the front gate?” and he said yes.
I told you and we thought it was neat and
weird we never noticed it before. The keys were
big and glowed green like a phone for an
old person.]*

*When we got back inside I was mad that
you caught a crow and let it go inside the house
so I said no more birds in the house. You became
smug and defiant and rolled out this giant
bird cage like from PetSmart. “How did I not
notice this? Do people help you?!?” I asked sarcastically.
You got smug-er and brought down this whole troop
of people from the attic. You were so pleased you lied
and I had no idea that you even really like birds
that much, like that was the big secret - the bird
interest. I said we had to break up and sat outside on
the back steps. [It’s Granny’s house now].*

Lucy poured sloppy and chunky from her room like a sangria with fraying wedges of fruit clotting it. she came out half dressed and continued in the hall, but dropped a shoe, and looked into the wall across from her. From my vantage in the hall I couldn't see the window or the picture of the wall at all but assumed that picytures or screens or distnaced people happened there. Lucy was disgusted with an open mouth, chin dripping from her face, slurping amorphous back into her neck, like a turtle's head in reflex. Bart opened the door, tried to put on his shoe and walk at the same time, failed in both endeavors.

"That's him with the spine, I swear it!" cried Lucy, choking on her atmpmt to lower her own volume.

"What? No fucking way!" Bart said from the ground.

"I saw him wrap it! The same!"he grunted as she helped him up.

"The cop? You saw him wrap a spine?"

"I did!"

"You just sat there?"

"It was quick, I was interested, I thought you'd understand."

"The same spine?"

"Naw, this one looked much meatier and juicier. Thing was fresh."

"Huuu- I ritually enact a gag- gross. So he wrapped it what in?"

"Like some gauze and then some plasitc and them put it in this big awkward biohazard bag- and then guess what? He looks at me! Right at me."

“He was in the nursery and I was looking in the window. He looked right at me after.

“A Nursery? what is a spine doing in a nursery? What nursery?”

“This one right here.”

“This nursery?”

“Yes! Jesus, yes.”

“He looked at me and smiled, all coy, wry cowboy style, and walked on. He mouthed parking area E. Or maybe A. I couldn’t translate his mouth exactly.”

“Well then lets go to parking lot E.”

“I know.”

“I’ll follow. He must want us to follow.”

“I know.”

17

Wilmot’s wife dreams repeatedly, yearns for Wingfield’s touch, and her fingers flop sonambulent on mystery novels on the side table:

Mini Dream: I feel asleep reading

A Christmas Carol and in the dream

I see myself sleeping in bed while the

author talks to me. Then, I’m on the

set of the story but it’s like the

characters are somewhere else- it’s

*empty, dark. I must be holding a lantern,
because spaces light up as I walk
into them. I can still hear the author
and he's saying, "The house looks almost
exactly the same as when he (main char.)
and his dad were living here right
after the mom dies." That's when I realize
that time has passed, the dad has just
died, and I'm going to walk in on the
coffin. I expect it so I'm not so scared
when I do. I start to go up the stairs,
which is scarier than the coffin, but then I
wake up! I start reading A Christmas
Carol upon waking and there's this small 4 line
poem about real sensation happening when
you fall asleep reading. That's the real
reading experience. I turn to the author
by my bed and say "That's what I
just did now! And that's what I was
trying to say!" But I never tried to say
that to anyone.*

He said, not literally, but as a thought represented in compressed lyric sinews,
chiming, tight thew :

“This pyramid can hold
and say
the layers
of the things we did.”

On the Roman-simulacrum catwalk, cartoon bulbous over the Strip, at the exit to the hospital, the homelss plopped out and open their various saleble skills for Bart and Lucy. The advertisment of girls the poor playing of an alman brothers song, a fraudulent shuffling of card, the legal freedom, for five dollars, to kick a kid in his balls with all the force one might or ought to muster (This guy makes more in a night than I do in a month. He makes like well-respected stripper money. It’s obscene.) But a crowd had especially gathered around a medicinal gurney in the middle. One among them, a middleaged man with the tan, gold, and polyseter accutrement of New Jersey, performed a Prometheus castration. A young man lay on the gurney, bracing himself as the slightly drunk Garden Stater wobbled starts of cuts and larger slashes into the cringing, wrinkling scrotum. New Jersey reached in and little blood retched out of the bag. He pulled a testicle out and it popped taut on its vein before the older man expected it to. His face curdled and wrinkled, scrotum-similar, in curiosity. He cut the blood-engorged gristle-string. He held it up in triumph

“Fuckin, buchiach!” Jersey bellowed, and much lazy unfocused clapping followed. Then the crowd dispersed. what do I do with this testicle? asked the man, and he dropped it on the bed, walked away.

Bart and lucy walked slowly to the bloody bed in the noon sun.

“So you just let people cut your balls off professionally?” Bart asked.

The man seemed a little dazed and wobbled his head slightly before in landed firmly on Bart: “Well yeah. My letting not their cutting is the profession. Clarify your syntax.”

“Jesus.”

“I know right? His sacrifice,” and the testicleless-man bowed, made a Catholic air-cross.

“Okay. But isn’t that sort of a one time thing? or I guess a two time thing.”

“Oh, actually I’m partially divine, so it grows back everyday. I’m the great nephew, or I guess *a* great nephew of Yama, the katachthonic Vedic deity.”

“Partially divine? really?”

“Yeah. It’s pretty crazy.”

“So having it grow back, does that make it better or worse?”

“Everything makes everything worse. Only nothingness is any good. only nothingness is any God.”

“Okay. Does this pay well?”

“You know, pretty well. It depends on the season. I have other jobs.”

“What jobs?”

“Well I play bass in a The Who cover band, who tries to reinterpret the implicit substance/accident, subject/object Aristotelean distinctions of the original material in accordance with a process based, non-egological event ontology. We’re called The How.”

“I can’t say that sounds interesting.”

“I’m also currently in a rethinking of The Winter’s Tale from the point of view of the bear. It’s ecocritical. I play the bear’s family.”

“The whole family?”

“All of them. It’s playing at the Onyx.”

“I’m sorry,” interjected Lucy, “but we have to go, bart gets distracted, we’re following a man with a spine. Where’s parking area E?”

The young man pointed a shakey finger west, anemic heiroglyphic.

20

It is Samuel Wingfield. He will soon be know as Mr. Tray Bone. He was the man on the flat I saw and see. He stripped the salt and wetter dirt to a joint beneath the flat, frayed and spintered fingers off. He pulled out his gun, and dug the butt into the the soil chunky with geology and old volcanoes. He thought all the poems I have seen him think. A door in the desert showed beneath the dirt. He opened it with exhausted thighs shaking, and bloody hands shaking, salt-flecked sweat-cheeks shaking. I could see on his face that he saw below the pyramid, that anxious heirglyph. And he walked beneath the desert.

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They lied.

Episode Two: Bart and Lucy and the Officers W saw severed heads stacked outside the police station. They signed a lease on a local apartment. Bart and Lucy went looking for their dog, and back to Le Method for some answers about the spine. Bart was hit in the brain and all went black.

Episode Three: Bart and Lucy wake in staggered chapters in the hospital, with suspiciously quickly healed injuries: a comminuted skull and still birth, respectively. The cop Wingifeld drives into the desert. The cop Wilmot considers something. We meet Wilmot's wife in the symbols of her dreams. Lucy sees Wilmot wrapping a spine for transport, and Bart and her decide to follow. They meet a man who lets others castrate him professionally. They continue to follow Wilmot. Wilmot opens a hole in the bottom of the desert, in the spot on the flat where the spine had been, and he descends beneath the desert, to view and feel the pyramid.

Episode Four

1

Someone is stealing cars again
and the trashcans blow wildly down the street,
scratching
in the spring wind in the desert,
and the hard dots of ember that can mash between fingers
are ripped from the sockets of cigarettes
and dragged in frays, in bouncing sparks down sidewalks
and asphalt pasted with the black residue of summer heat,
dark scum that sticks to feet in cold spring rain.
A million shards of paper brittle with desert-pressures,
pizza menus, crab shack sheets, little laminate cards
for whores blow swirls and burst themselves against walls,
and I, Wilmot, perform in this wind. I wait for them
in area E. The coffee cools
to thick, fickle brackish.

Outside,
a pimp shoots up a Mazzeratti with an uzzi, and it explodes
a taxi in dangerous tangent to it, and it makes
some news;
a woman razor blades the face of a black jack dealer
in dark jags and chokes her infant daughter
to death after; frat guys break the neck
of a rare Russian flamingo
and toss it like a floppy ball between them
in the eleveator. Another guest stabs them to death.
I don't mind, or diminish, or change.

I only want tenacity like the billboard peeling slowly in the wind,
ripping its message against drivng in floods,
like the skin resorted to a bag on the face of the homeless drinker,
like the styrofoam in desert sand dry and permanent
against the chainlink fence of Nellis
in the wind.

I maintain in area E.

Below the bulidings, in the parking area E they finally found, Bart and Lucy approached Wilmot. He stood under sickly flourescent fickel-bursts. He bounced the biohazard bag against the bumper of the cruiser. Bart and Lucy moved toward him with the slightly sideways walk of indescision, as if their feet mumbled.

“Why the fuck are you doing this to us? And what even, too?”

“Big words for such little dealers,” answered Wilmot with a lazy smile, rising to fall again like a bubble in black Guinness.

Bart and Lucy paused, stare mutually, and looked back to Wilmot showing with the symbols of their heads and their behaviors that they wondered how much he actually knows.

“Oh I know the whole thing,” said Wilmot, turing to open the trunk “don’t get bent out of shape” he dropped the biohazard bag in. “I am even a collogue of your employers. Though you may not even know your employer, I guess.” He looked back up at them with a redundant squint in the flourescent light.

“Cops can’t do what you’re doing,” said Lucy, with a square, blunt bulldog expression.

“But I’m doing it, and am a cop,” answered Wilmot.

“And so?”

“So cops can do that since I am and do.”

“That’s circular reasoning.”

“No, it’s a circular structure of being.”

“Fuck off.”

“Let’s say that your god is a rapist, is a Zeus, is a know and habitual rapist.”

“Okay, and bird.”

“Yes but irrelevant. Now what do good Grecians do? What do we see Achilles first do?”

“I have have no fucking clue, do I seem like a clueful person, or that I am of the stock of clueful people?”

“No, so I’ll tell you. He’s fighting over his rape-slave. And he is perfect.”

“I don’t get it.”

“Think better.”

“I don’t get it, are you saying god can sin?”

“I’m saying that if god does it, it isn’t a sin, by definition.”

“The Nixon defense. Nice. And you’re god in this?”

“I am.”

“Of course. Well what are we supposed to do about it.”

“Get in the car. The back seat. With your dog”

“Our dog?!” cried Lucy.

“Our Len!?” joined Bart. and they clambered to the cruiser window.

Leonard lay limp in the back seat, soft black ruffle on black hard beneath.

This is the story of Leonard the dog over the past day or so, in somewhat-brief, starting from where we last saw him in the car:

As he pawed cactus-cautious quick step in the desert away from his beloved Bart and Lucy, Leonard thought to himself, *tahiti chihuahua spaghetti*. those words over and over. He didn't know what they meant but Bart and Lucy used to say them to him all the time, and he became unaccountably excited by them, wagging barking gyrating totally his little black body. Something about the feeling of them in his ears. He loved them, and loved who said them. Bart and Lucy had repeated this mantra to him so many times, and always with such excitement that those sounds, abstract sensations in the ear and memory like a song, lived with him now always and as he thought about them, he determined he would get back to Bart and Lucy, to his parents.

He didn't know exactly what had happened, but he knew he was afraid of the man so fat in his cop suit that he looked like a tomato wrapped with bungee cords. He held up something. A thing to hit people with, a weapon. The look of it made Leonard's snout hurt with suspicion of its use. He'd known people like that man. Bart and Lucy would never leave him like this unless they had to. Maybe if he came back in an hour or two, everyone wouldn't be so mad and he could get back in the car. It was so hot out here. It wasn't so bad though. In the mean time, he had a lot of new stuff to pee on.

Tahiti chihuahua spaghetti.

Tahiti chihuahua spaghetti, he thought. Then he saw a good lizard to chase.

TO BE CONTINUED!

4

A woman stumbles numb-footed toward the hospital bed, and the man with sleep-splayed limbs.

“I felt it in my dream,
that you were dead,”
she said.

“I did something
else instead,”
he said,
as waking rolled his head -
“I went in the pyramid”

5

LEORARD’S STORY CONTINUED!

Len came back after the hour (a little bit longer actually, as dogs are bad with time and there were so many enticing deserts hares who could go almost as fast as the birds he so loved chasing), but the car wasn’t even there. He couldn’t process this, he couldn’t think. *He couldn’t - They were - But where were - but what do - but why!?* He stuttered his feet back and forth like a computer chip had broken in his thighs. They sort of broke at the knee into a pile of stick. He collapsed in despondency and shock that left his neck limp, and his head bobbed as he fell?what did I do? and what do I do now?

Tahiti chihuahua spaghetti.

Tahiti chihuahua spaghetti, he thought. It’ll be okay, I’ll figure this out. Then he heard the gummy sound of teeth eating trash behind the restaurant.

TO BE CONTINUED!

6

They clawed at the cruiser to get at black claws. Bart and Lucy opened the back door and awkwardly tried to put too many hugs on Leonard at once. He woke hazed, with drug-slitted eyes, and lolled out a dry tongue, which made a scratchy sound when he put it back in.

“What did you do to him,” screamed Bart.

“Whoa, lighten up, Bartholmew,” said Wilmot, disorientingly already in the front seat. “We had to tranq him, he was with some dangerous people.”

“And what did you do to the people?” asked Lucy.

“Worse than tranq.”

“He isn’t hurt?” asked Bart.

“Have you ever taken just a fuck-ton of barbituates?” asked Wilmot.

“Um, actually, yes.”

“I figured. Well, he’s like that. Sludgy and sleepy, but temporary.”

“If you give a dog melatonin, their hair will grow back.”

“Not helpful,” said the Cop. He started the car with a click and wheeze and red misted behind them.

“Well, why is it missing hair in the first place?” asked Bart.

“I was wondering the same thing,” said Cordelia Aberdeen, turning from the front seat to face them.

“Did you just get here?” asked Lucy.

“You’ve been a head, a patient, and a nurse, at least.”

“She was your nurse? She was totally mine, too!”

“Why do you happen everywhere? this is serious, persisted Bart

“Do I happen everywhere or are there more of me than there are of most?” replied

Cordelia.

“Just answer the question.”

Cordelia shot invisibly, as magnets shoot their force, into their minds, this thought: *My real name’s Pandora the Explorer. I am multilobate ubiquity, many leaved and everywhere, a plenum in human form. I am playfulness.*

At this, Leonard perked black ears, as this was the sort of talking he could understand.

Shot Bart back, using the same sort of matter that makes a phantom limb: *That both answers and disanswers.*

“Well, what do we call you?” said Lucy with her mouth.

“Call me Bonnie Day.”

Good idea,” said Wilmot, in the huff of a laugh.

“I’m gonna still call you Cordelia,” said Bart. “Well, and what are you?” he turned to the cop. “Are you a what or a who?”

“Me? I’m the rays that raise and raze. Just kidding. I’m a cop.”

“Well, where are we going?”

“To Nellis. For some San Pedro cactus occurrence.”

7

LEONARD'S STORY CONTINUED!

He turned the corner from the parking lot into the little alley of trash between the restaurant's unglamored back and the chainlink fence, and there they were: Coyotes, slightly feline in the eyes and trot, ripping with wolfy teeth. Leonard felt very awkward all of the sudden, like a private school kid in his collared shirt and khakis, trying suddenly to talk to public school kids. He arched the fur up straight strained at every cuticle and tremored his lips back off his biggest teeth. A slow grinding sound came from his throat. The biggest coyote perked up from the soiled plastic bags.

TO BE CONTINUED!

8

Officer Wingfield woke to a healing clicking in his skull. He opened his eyes and popped the slightly dried seal drugging leaves. He was in the same beach-decayed hospital room Lucy woke in earlier. What gap jumped him so quick to here, when he had just been reaching for the glowing spine in the center of the pyramid?

“Woah, woah, calm it, Sam,” said a said a doctor whose paunch had the down drooping cool curve of a grape. He drew a device, sheathed in that white plastic that seems to hold wires, and with a black and glowing rock in the center, over his skull repeatedly.

“What are you doing?”

“Just healing you, Sam?”

“Do I know you?”

“You do.”

“How?”

“Long familiarity, I suppose.”

“Well, what does that mean? You know me by you knowing me?”

“I guess that’s a way of saying it.”

“Well, what’s another way?”

“I guess we’re work colleagues.”

“You guess?”

“Well, you’re not a doctor and I’m not a cop, but you’re in here a lot. I consider you a friend.”

“In here? As patient?”

“And otherwise.”

“Fucking lying, man. I don’t remember any of this.”

“Well that’s too bad. I was actually hoping you could tell me some things.”

“Like what?”

“Like how you ended up with a smashed skull in the basement of Le Method.”

“I did?”

“You did.”

“Well, what the fuck are you doing to me?”

“Healing you, of course.”

“How?”

“With a magnet, of course. You really remember nothing.”

9

LEONARD’S STORY CONTINUED!

The coyotes were like the white trash of the dog world. absolutely no manners. he lived among them for several days, but his exceptional ability to pick out bits of English, the virtually medieval obedience he displayed, the paw-affections and licks, the eyes that suggested thought in their dark swirls of brown, which had all done him so well with his humans, all were no use among the coyotes. These animals rewarded violence and bad manners and viciousness, greed maquerading as bravery. They even lived in cave. They pooped in the alcoves and peed on its wall, then constantly complained that it stunk.

“Listen all you have to do is pee outside” he had said once. “You do realize that, don’t you?”

“Shut up, college boy,” had been the only response.

“That seems about right.”

He hardly got any food anymore. he didn’t get any of the good lady coyotes, though they all smelled a little homeless to him anyway.

Tahiti chihuahua spaghetti.

Tahitti chihuahua spaghetti, he thought. He had to get the fuck out of here.

TO BE CONTINUED!

10

“It neither reaches
nor unreaches
in this ruined similar-beach.”

11

*As Loki is to likeness,
as Loge is to lugner,*

thought Cordelia with that part of her of the matter of a phantom limb, and of course didn't finish her sentence.

12

*I was on the Gugliotta's front lawn, and
they weren't home, but there was this bird
that was hop-flying around. It was pretty
like a peacock, dense and didn't seem
like she could fly, but she was light
and could but wasn't really. Then a*

*tour bus pulled up on the lawn - a
tour bus for a country singer - not
real country, more like Toby Keith or
like Larry the Cable Guy if he was a
singer. They pull up and say "There
she is! Get her!" and they shout it from
the the windows but another bird flies
out and now there's 2 on the lawn,
and I don't know what to do
because I'm afraid the bus will run
us all over.*

*I woke up because the babies were
barking, but when I fell back
asleep I was in the Gugliotta's house
and it was a mess and Aunt Karen
needed help cleaning so I went to the
kitchen. but it was empty - no cabinets
or refrigerator or counters- it was
like a home under construction. In my
dream I thought of the old Grandmom
making spaghetti in her kitchen because*

*she lived with Grandmom in our neighborhood
so the kitchens were the same. Also, Mrs.
Trueheart who taught me piano and math
had that kitchen and she taught me percents
at the table. I did it and she wrote "V. G." in the corner.*

But that's what I thought not dreamt.

*All the Gugliotta's were back by now and
Meghan was really drunk and lying
across someone's lap in the family room.*

(Whose?)

*No one cared! I got her a water with
a lot of straws, but when I came back
it was Granny, and she wasn't drunk,
she was sick, dying. I gave her the
drink - I held it up to her mouth and
said, "Don't listen to them. Do what makes
you happy." That's why I got all the straws -
so she could choose what made her happy.
She drank and her head was lying on the
couch and I could tell that she was warm
and the water was helping her cool down
because she lied back and sighed and*

smiled.

And Wilmot's wife, Julia, woke, and knew Wingfield needed her in the beach-ruined room in the hospital. She would have to change, she had so much sleeping sweat.

13

Compare these quotes:

"The analogy was that of the catalyst. When the two gases previously mentioned are mixed in the presence of a filament of platinum, they form sulphurous acid. This combination takes place only if the platinum is present; nevertheless the newly formed acid contains no trace of platinum, and the platinum is apparently unaffected; has remained inert, neutral, and unchanged. The mind of the poet is the shred of platinum. It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself; but the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material," from Eliot, *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, famously, right.

And:

"Rasa is the cumulative result of vibhava (stimulus), anubhava (involuntary reaction) and Vyabhicari bhava (voluntary reaction). For example, just as when various condiments and sauces and herbs and other materials are mixed, a taste (different from the individual tastes of the components) is felt, or when the mixing of materials like

molasses with other materials produces six kinds of tastes, so also along with the different bhavas (emotions) the Sthayi-bhava becomes a ‘taste’ (rasa, flavour, feeling),” from Bharata’s *Natyasastra*, translated and abridged by Adya Rangacharya.

Admittedly this is an abridgment and translation, but the structure of the metaphor, of the paragraph even, seems to be identical to the point of lifting or borrowing, and the basic distinction between the ingredient emotions and the emergent property of the art emotion is also reproduced directly. This suggests to me a direct influence, which seems entirely possible as he had taken classes in Sanskrit, spent years on Patanjali, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and various *Upanishads*, and mentions Kalidasa specifically in his essay on Seneca. To read *Sakuntala* without a direct awareness of rasa theory would be like reading *Oedipus Tyrannus* without a concept of the tragic hero.

Eliot’s later and elusive distinctions between the emotion versus the feeling, the personal emotion versus the significant emotion are essentially a reproduction of the distinction between the various bhavas and the rasa, between component specific, particular emotions and the decontextualized art emotion which they produce in combination.

The real trick is in the ingredient/taste the distinction: the ingredient is a feature of the meal of the object, is the dish itself, but the taste is a feature of the taster, is the dish tasted - Which is not to say that it is not legitimately a feature of the dish, just the dish as subject-made-pure-object.

The art emotion is not the emotion, but the emotion tasted.

Your emotion is your sensation, but your taste is my sensation.

Rasa/taste is a feature of an object that finds its existence only in other subjects.

The rasa is the subject that has become pure object, and this is the essence of the
irreal

the visionary is be like this, the subject become all object, the human become irreal.

I feel myself unsubject in that spine. Soon I will lie quiet, and speak.

14

LEONARD'S STORY CONTINUED!

He'd had enough. Leonard would run. He would escape with a couple scraps of rabbit, while all those semidogs slept, and leave the ruffian coyotes behind. And he did at a midnight that mixed imperceptibly with the dark of the cave. he scurried across the desert, fast at first to escape all chase, but slower as he winded and began to suspect his solitude. They hadn't followed.

He saw a bright in the distance and approached it with the cautious sideways walk of a suspicious dog - which is to say, he approached it like himself. He saw sitting there a man eating from a scratched-dinged pan in clothes of an antiquity of which Leonard was unaware. he had yet to learn to read clothing for historical signifiers.

“Hello, come sit down, pup” said the old-clothed man.

“Don't mind if I do,” replied Leonard.

“Want some food?”

“What you eating?”

“Beans with bacon.”

Could you just pull me out some bacon?”

“Of course.”

Leonard then stopped, as if his mind caught on a bush. “Wait, why can we talk?

Are you a ghost?

“Well, of course I am. Have you ever talked with the living before?”

The old-clothed was the old German mormon Ghost, in fact.

Oh man, thought Leonard. This isn't good at all.

Tahiti chihuahua spaghetti

Tahiti chihuahua spaghetti. I will get back to them.

TO BE CONTINUED!

15

“But seriously, what the fuck are you doing to us,” Lucy started back up. There had been a long silence, as blocks indetical in architecture but idiosyncratic and dilapidation and dirt shuffled past the windows, and lots of desert became more frequent. Her speech broke skin congealed on everyone’s thoughts. She scratched Leonard’s stomach in long unconscious gyres.

“Like right now, or in general?” asked Wilmot.

“I don’t know. Both.”

“Well, what is the San Pedro cactus?”

“I don’t know. you know that. I obviously wouldn’t talk to you at all if I knew anything. Enough with the trivia, buddy.”

“It contains mescaline, okay? The substance in St. Peter’s husk is mescaline.”

“Okay, but what’s that got to do with us.”

“We will attend a little ritual here soon.”

“So that’s the right now explanation?”

“Yes.”

“Well, that sucked.”

“Would you like the general?”

“I would.”

“And Bart, would you?”

“I guess.”

“You only guess?”

“I’ve never found explanations very helpful.”

“Fair enough, but yes or no?”

“I guess a yes.”

“Just fucking say it, fat man,” breathed out Lucy like a badger with asthma.

“The discipline of ‘qua’ -” popped out the cop, slightly annoyed. “I allow you to see everything in all its ‘as’es. they are material hallucinations, what we might call opticals, manipulations of consciousness provided to put you through heuristic difficulties. Heuristic hallucinations made material.”

“Well, that’s nonsense,” sighed Bart. “And you help,” he turned to Cordelia.

“It’s more like he helps me,” answered Cordelia “And you haven’t even met Cairo Jones.”

16

LEONARD’S STORY CONTINUED!

And he learned to live with the ghost. He even learned to like him. Maybe love in time. he couldn’t eat the old German Mormon’s food as it was of the same frigid touchless spume as the rest of him, but there were plenty of desert rabbits, slower lizards, drowsing bird. He even tried to eat a tarantuala once, but it didn’t work out well. They would talk all night of their past, of their family, the finer points of Mormon theology, which it turned out Leonard had a very unrealistic concept. They became friends in those few days. Then one morning Leonard awoke to the Cop from the car, and he froze as if he’d seen a llama or something equally scary.

“You are fucking useless, you know that?” the cop said to the ghost. You’ve had the dog.

“I don’t work for you. I’m not even in the same dimension as you,” answered the ghost.

“Is he a ghost too,” Leonard asked the Mormon “Why can he see you?”

“He isn’t a ghost. He’s just had access to this pyramid-thing. It’s complicated.”

“There are still things that we can do to you,” grunted the cop, and chewed the grunt with gritted teeth.

“No, I really don’t think there are,” answered the German.

At this, the Cop pulled out a gun, and a quick hollow sucking sound coincided with a dart appearing in pain on Leonard’s neck. Len’s mind turned too black to think of Tahiti or chihuahua or spaghetti, but when he woke, slowly in slurs, he saw *them!* Bart and Lucy! and tried to kiss them, but his tongue didn’t work, and his neck still hurt, and he had to fall back asleep.

At this point the narrative rejoins the main stream of events, and its continuation is already a thing of the past.

17

“Julia! Well, I know I remember you!” exclaimed Wingfield, and Wilmot’s wife, Julia, shuffled sandaled feet over hospital sand, and fell into the patient. They kissed. Yes, they are lovers.

“I had a dream!” she sobbed “I thought you’d died! It told me to come here!”

“I almost did, apparently.”

“But where’d you go? Where have you been?”

“I went to the pyramid.”

“No way.”

“Yes way. I went inside the pyramid.”

“My God. Oh, my God. My God.” She seemed to think or count threads in her head, looked inward and down. She stared quick at him, “Was it like we’d thought?”

18

In the center of the pyramid, Wingfield had striped the vertebra to the electric-capable cord beneath, wrapped that around a magnetic filament made lambent with proximity. The water under splended. He walked into the water.

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RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Assistant Editor

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Guest Lecturer

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Public Reading

"Pine Creek Pindaric" and "Gaia Teknon," *Neon Lit*, Las Vegas, NV, February 2011

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AWARDS

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