GOODBYE, HOMUNCULUS!

And other astounding stories

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Caravaggio’s *Giuditta che taglia la teste a Oloferne* (1597-1600)

A head – severed at the root – but posted by a lectern
Hammering to grief
As an old crone stares
Avidly, greedily, circumspectly with silk:
Did Herodias’ daughter dance for *this*?
Dedicated to Dorothy Bowden (1931-1978)
The Bowden Coat-of-Arms courtesy of Jill Wadley
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GOODBYE, HOMUNCULUS!

a novella

PROLOGUE:~
FIRST SPECTRUM OF INDETERMINACY: (1)
In Hell, per se, a scrimmage has formed this side of desolation; it exists in front of a goal which served as a gibbet. A blackened waste lay in the rear – and it already tempted its greyness; if only to lie awake before this aperture. It took after one of those nets in Gaelic football; an area or zone that has an ice-cream salesman next to it. A bleary or incontinent cranium is seen; one which sends rivulets beyond an expectant spine. The game has momentarily paused… yet it will soon recommence without his observations. A wanton head looks up at the camera; and it feels dishevelled, broken off, toothsome or possessed of a withering brain. One eyelet is out while the other feeds off a prism; when taken together with the convulsions of a lobotomy. His molars also wax irregular; they peel back in an action reminiscent of a scrivener, if not some daemonic bait. In truth, could this be everything that’s left from the life of Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve?

A FORTUNE-TELLER READS A SIEVE: (2)
In a previous existence, now, a man on a horse approaches a pile; it conjures up one of those martello towers. These were a set of fortifications – many of them down on the English coast – built in order to withstand Napoleon’s invasion. A large number of them exist in Kent… whether next to or accosting various pebble beaches. Greensleeve proves to be wearing an ornate cape; it sweeps behind as he moves slowly towards this folly. He has come for an express purpose – namely, to consult the sorceress he will find within.
A THIRD VORTEX IN THE TREES: (3)
Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve – in a different incarnation – rambles through a series of conifers. This arbour stretches out so as to fill a screen with emerald… a situation in which each stalk bursts from the ground in lieu of a monster. Now dressed as Frankenstein, (sic), he capers between such bushes with a Wiccan doll held above his head. Could it be aught of a witch’s familiar? As to his size, the body is bulky around the shoulders, but it tapers away in the direction of some spindly legs. These delve down towards twigs… and yet the upper torso rears massively amid fur. It limits two border-lines above the flesh; no matter how molten or rotten.

THIS FOURTH QUARTET OWES ELIOT NOTHING: (4)
Our sibyl exists before the polarity of a northern star or lilt, and her chair consists of darkened teak. Its back spirals into a jaguar’s cranium – the latter forced open in a snarl – although a ram’s head looks on. Aries-like, it adorns the throne’s other chair or pitcher, in a way that rises from its closure. Somewhat sepulchrally, a sword runs down her thigh and through a skull’s ambit. Whereas our Goat of Mendes – shorn at the wrist – took the light of a brazen discharge. It was fluffy at the chin and ears, but also chose to look on (darkly) under heavily trammelled horns. They lie across his presence laterally rather like horizontal tusks. The sorceress or mistress of prophesy has a name: it’s Minx Raven III. Might T.S. Eliot’s dirge or entry not provide a meaning herein (?):

Who is that walking beside you?
When I count anon, there are only us two together
It glides, comes hooded, and is wrapped in a brown mantle
But who pads on your outermost side?

“The Wasteland” (1922)
WE ARE SEVEN AGAINST THEBES: (5)
Greensleeve – rendered hideous by a transformation – sees the poachers running on the estate’s edge. Once they were hale and hearty like him… but no more. The two trusty peasants skip through the fronds; both of them carry rifles as well as small pouches on straps. A stick-doll (representing a child) lies over his shoulder. His gestures to them and angrily waves his fist; yet it has no effect in terms of the youngsters who veer into the trees. ‘Poachers!’, he bellows at a lung’s uppermost gasp. No noise really emerges at all – save a rasping or glutinous squelch. It refuses to intervene in these proceedings… in that the two desperadoes, contrary to the Black Acts, are speeding towards a mine field. Its warning architecture – a skull on a wooden post – had long since paid for their disregard.

A DEVILINA UNSHEATHES HER COMB: (6)
The sorceress, Minx Raven, continues to lie across her ebon dais. Her feet were bare, after the fashion of a ‘sixties hippy, and three phallic candles gutter and splutter amid this pitch. They are made of the most solid white wax. For her part, the minx sprawls in a bikini under subdued lids; these come tinted or otherwise sporting kolbe’s gestures. Such a shadow hints at lintel in its mascara – after the fashion of L.S. Lowry’s nympha. Nor is it a matter of the head-dress above her tresses; or co-determinous with their extent. A necklace stretches down past the breasts by way of beads… they prove to be light, foxy, Camden-town like and stringy: but not redolent of string-theory. No. Around her wrists and feet, no matter how dinky, some ormolu tablets shine: these hint at false Monopoly counters. All in all, our prophetess indicates a beatnik reading Erich Segal’s Love Story – albeit naked from the waist down. A craziness enters here; at once percussive over its forgetfulness, or hinting at Manson’s Helter-Skelter. That’s Charles, not Marion, in the Mansonesque stakes!
MAGPIES IN THE PIE (CUT HERE): (7)
Meanwhile, in another or parallel dimension, Boris Karloff’s Frankenstein’s monster lopes along. It flails about with its stick-like arms; the former rotating like a spindly wind-mill on acid. Moreover, this mugwump moves with a longitudinal face – one that’s rectangular to its gasp – and its fur hangs around it like a shroud. In the background to our game of chance, three ashen trees rear up towards the heavens: each one looks lonely… Is it consistent with some golden threads?

A SKELETON AMIDST THE CARDS: (8)
Our hippie goddess sits cross-legged before a globe; it illumines the scene by dint of a hazarding shutter. Could it actually be a disability in the light (?); wherein a shimmering cascade reveals a pulsation… it occurs against her flesh. ‘Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve, you wish to procure a dose of the future from a graven stone. It courses through one builder’s yard. I can merely lift a veil on future events. A green flare – here – is thrown upon the fire; it summons up the valency of these very walls. Aplenty now, a shimmer enters through the distance of these distaff days. Behold (!), a temperature of steel melts such visions as these. They punctuate the luridness of a forgotten throne. It exists on sleep’s nethermost side; together with an orbital arrangement of astrology lifting the stone. Let me describe your fortune unto you---’.

NUMBER 13; A HIPPOGRIFF LAUGHS: (9)
Simultaneously, at ten degrees to midnight, our Boris Karloff clears his throat of mucous. (It occurs with or without the intervention of James Whale). His brow seems coruscated, furrowed and pleased at his own resource: and it passes into oblivion next to an oblong’s black square. One eye-piece, zig-zagging like forked lightning, indicates a disparity between balls: in that one cornea outbids the other. It lends a disjunction to the scene; itself a mere parallax view atop one’s tomb. His screeching gets louder – but no meaningful sound comes from
between these lips. They are cracked as to salt-petre – with the tonsils of a new engagement spluttering afore such molars. Each one of them has bitten into a moon made from stilton; yet our patchwork-man’s warning falls sheer. It cannot extirpate an explosion which rips through the trees: TTTHWUMPH! Isn’t it so, Mel Gibson’s *Apocalypto*?

A CLOWN TWISTS HIS SMILE: (10)
We are back with Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve and his sibyl. During the course of which, young Gregory gazes on. He comes across as a rather priggish man of about twenty-nine years of age. He has travelled many miles in order to consult this seer… particularly over a future inheritance. Nonetheless, his features give an impression of ripe putty; at once sweetened to its task or hinting at Cyril Connolly’s *Enemies of Promise*… a volume dealing with Eton’s public school. The light continuously reflects across his face – it indulges no entreaty, smokes a cigarette in peace, and dwells upon nethermost time. In reality, young Greensleeve comes close to a bourgeois Byron – unfortunately without a hint of poetry. Don’t you remember, albeit in a previous text by this author, that poesy ennobles and silence defames…? (In parenthesis, this refers to the Stirnerean and nihilist text, *Mad*).

RHINO, RHINO EVERYWHERE: SUCK ON THIS PEACH: (11)
In parallel to a given aporia, Greensleeve’s monstrous bulk remembers a forgotten word… It delivers the inter-textuality of a known fraud. For, in a previous incarnation before monstrosity, his adult vista looks on amidst the trees. Their tops spin like wooden toys against an Alpine glare. Whereas a younger and fitter Greensleeve, maundering in Vaughan Williams’ thicket, realises that he’s chased these poachers into a mine-field. He’s done so inadvertently – in no way did he mean to, but the damage’s apparent. His daughter, much resembling Minx Raven at nine years of age, straddles his neck. A brief thunder-flash
comes occasioned in the distance; it causes a murder of crows to be displaced. They gather like bacteriological motes upon the air.

BASKING SHARKS OFF CORNWALL: (12)
Outside the witch’s lair some vegetation luxuriates; it appears to be luminous under the moon (betimes). Some herbage also leads to a transposition – a cross against the actual temperature, in that the sky seems to be half-full with a line across it.

A WIDE-BRIMMED HAT BEATS OFF THE SUN: (13)
Abreast of another dimensional leap, our Frankenstein’s monster lurches between the trees and some swampy water lies at his feet. It reflects his bulk back against his forethought – or alternatively, it leads off in the direction of moss-laden oaks. The spindly feet of Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve causes a ripple effect in this green slush, likening it to ichor on a pond’s surface, as he approaches the bodies. He does this in order to retrieve a humility’s absence or reckoning, since he seeks out the corpses of several poachers. They have been done to death in order to protect the Black Acts, or what a Marxist historian like E.P. Thompson would regard as seigniorial pomp. He wades closer – in shallower depths now – across the lake. As to the corses of the fallen, however, they besport little more than shredded wheat (enlivened to the task) and holed up in a negative circus. It remembers the freak show, sequentially, and a smiling lizard rummages around their decks. What do you see? It’s little more than the rib-cage of Gray’s Anatomy when caught up by its own sausage meat – and fried to the pound. ‘He’ gets closer…

WINGED HYBRIDS JETTISON LOVECRAFT: (14)
Meanwhile, our sorceress gazes on lintel with an abstraction of rheum; it covers its own god-like form… if only to occasion her wonderment. In the background, shapes obey their distillation: they summon up the ghost of past presences… and in the middle of them varied skulls or wolf’s-heads disport. (They vaguely embody a watercolour by Frank Frazetta). For her part, the
glamorous witch’s face seems transported – it deliberates upon a flash-dance. A fire glistens on her features; the latter rendering a calm anthem or one that’s almost dulcet, wounded, crippled, forgiven, overcast and spent. Truly, it sucks the air out of its cheeks. Quiet though, don’t you realise that she’s speaking softly? Let’s listen to the beat of an insect’s mandibles upon meat: “Behold!”’, sibilates Minx Raven, “a liking for gold leads to a calcium of green. This fire chokes me with its oven-gloves, my supplicant, yet still I summon up the future… no matter how wolfishly. It affixes its star to this resting place, in that my liking for blood recoils before the boundary of lust. A wolverine raises its head afore a glimpse of ions; these radiate outwards and plunder our reckoning. Such a portent brings over fragments from the dark-side – all of which lights up a glimpse in Orion’s eyes. I predict your future, Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve, and it indicates a throne of blood: in the manner of a samurai epic carved from *Macbeth*. Heed my cry!”

A RED TITAN SQUELCHES SAND: (15)
Still, multi-dimensionally, our Frankenstein’s monster reaches out apace… it basically celebrates the stick-insects of a new retrieval, particularly when set against wooded arbours. These reach out leftwards and die prior to reaching their base. Frankenstein monster’s (Greensleeve’s) patchwork arms reach out for the mine’s victims. He tastes a residue of blood in his throat – somewhat regretfully. This teases its magnificence from a play-station of joy. Do you encounter it, now? A sideways-on head looms up (regretfully); it proves to be banded, nine-tailed, soprano-laden, otherwise hit and square. The monster chunters to himself: “Their mishmash had retrieved an essence of silence. It belaboured nothing – save the absence of a brother – or maybe a rage over what was ‘verboten’. I listen to those mines ticking on under the earth – truly, their timers failed to explode near a workers’ revolutionary party bookshop on Clapham Common. A blast (this) which misfired many years previously. I scoop up their eye-balls like ostrich legs – aren’t they aggrieved, or dying
afore a dark sun? Surely – our mistress of Azrael’s vengeance, Minx Raven, proves heartless as a post-modern queen. A monarch of hearts *a la* Alice’s looking-glass war, perchance?”

**WE SEEK VENGEANCE USING SIMONE WEILL’S ROPE: (16)**

Let it pass us by… For Minx Raven is pronouncing upon an offering of sulphur. She looks into the fire like a transfixed witch and her hair is displaced by unreason – or perhaps a fertility beyond the grave? Still, the necromancer’s profile levels off briefly, and even her servitor, Greensleeve, begins to attend to her words. His face betrays the impact of a shock or token of awe; whilst a joss-stick tapers away in-between them. In dress, Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve is wearing a nineteenth century rig. It consists of a suit, its attendant cloak, a cravat or folded tie, and a check county-shirt. He’s long ago paused from dragging on a cigarette. This sibyl speaks in unearthly tones: “The future remains uncertain in its maw of blood. Could it be a parchment of skin that’s escaped from *Beowulf*’s monastery? A shortage in the life-line masquerades as an appendage. It portends naught save isolation – especially when surrounded by wolves, even a stray wendigo, amid tragic tumuli which are snow-capped. They hurtle or belt around this mausoleum that’s reminiscent of a tower, possibly an abandoned turret. Their slavering fangs cannot penetrate; and doesn’t it embroider the dimness with teeth? Look at this: one grimoire hints at devastation or absence… it understands the billowing emptiness of this Wolf. Weren’t those tokens of underground resistance in occupied Germany to be called *werewolves*?” (He has forgotten the words; he merely listens to the sounds they make).

**IT IS FORBIDDEN TO SMIRK: (17)**

In another realm, my masters, a younger version of our Gregory stares out on devastation. His face approaches a massive solemnity in its judgements – even though a rivulet of sweat permeates his brow. Surely he can only be a younger variant on
our monster (?); or a Frankenstein that’s been put together in divers charnel houses. Behind them, and adjacent to a bower, an eighteenth century grenadier or trooper lifts a lamp. It lights up the uniform of Thomas Hardy’s trumpet major. Did we say ‘they’ momentarily (?)… oh my yes. For two figurines are gathered herein; the other proves to be his brother… he surveys the bodies of the dead-poachers with relish. Moreover, his features come across as convulsed, less than a token, avid, grinning, sadistic, greasy or cranial. A black string-tie levers down his front; if accompanied by a purple cloak. It happens to be Greensleeve’s non-identical twin, Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve II. He views the poachers’ smouldering corses – out in the mine-field – avec panache and aplomb.

DYNAMITE A JIGSAW(!): (18)
In a hieratic moment, our reader of these runes gestures across. Admittedly, she’d been paid a meagre fee – yet all thought of material gain loses out now. Her hand movements (also) deliberate upon a hex; and they prove to be witchy, jazzed up, Rocky Horror Show-like, semi-mortal or occult. Do you comprehend the magnitude of her sweepstake? Now then, her eyes betoken a glazed gesture – whether they’re transfixed, over-pupilled, retinaless, blind to the outer light or pointillist. She speaks thus: “I have a warning for you, Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve. My mouth, eyes and hands are opened and closed by the gods. Listen to the conjoined replica of my cry – you will be devoured or eaten whole by a wolf. Like Odin in legendary or faith, the great Fenris shall rise from its slumbers. Heed my utterance, in a manner guaranteed by Delphi, you shall perish. Fear those dogs who walk upright and resemble men – the gods seal my lips (thereafter).”

CLOSE DOWN UNIVERSAL LIFE; SAVE MY WILL(!): (19)
Meanwhile – and back with Frankenstein’s monster – one notices a grey texture of lumbago without a stretch of brown. It fetches itself over towards a brillo pad’s hint. Let it ride on: since one
eye in the monster’s face appears too big or bitter-sweet... while the molten nature of worms coruscate the brow. Does it effectively shower on emptiness?

Again, he chooses to dwell upon the past – in another incarnation – and he runs towards his daughter who lies on the ground. She sobs (having grazed her knee) and looks every inch a miniature Minx Raven. ‘O my sweet dish’, he moans slightly – in a way both sympathetic and risible. One almost detects that this man is too soft, nice and weak. After all, in tandem with oceanic fury, strength considers itself to be moral and weakness embraces sin. Certainly, those Christians amongst us must be heard to declare that vice – weakness – engenders punishment. Or might such a regimen not alight within the religion of the cross at all?

Anyway, and fully returned to a present impasse, the man-thing’s calloused mitten comes into view. This living glove – at once flayed to a mediaeval abandonment – comes attached to the wrist by spent wires. They help to re-interpret those ligatures of living suet; rather like Max Schreck in the 1924 silent film Nosferatu. Nonetheless, these palsied gloves embalm some brown sponges – themselves of a dwarf and an Afrikaner, suffering from leprosy, in Conan Doyle’s tale The Blanched Soldier. At the heart of ‘his’ grasp, though, an eighteenth century miniature exists in an oval frame: it depicts a youthful Minx Raven.

AN ANTI-LIFE EQUATION CROSSES LUDO’S BOARD: (20)

A change has come across our traveller, betimes, and he rides away from the tower humming a gloomy air. At his back the Martello’s funnel looms up; it succeeds in clearing those trees nestled around it with a redundant ‘shrug’. Moreover, its “eyes” peek out of nestled margins – themselves given over to the lichen of so many toads. It seems to festoon the outer crenellations of this heap with skulls – much after the intervention of John Cowper Powys’ Brazen Head. For his own part, Gregory Fawcett
Greensleeve proves to be in a subdued mood. “What can she have meant by her lies of sustenance?”, he mused. “It must make one morbid or vague – living in a pile like that. Anyway, this version of Lewis’ *Wild Body* won’t be providing venison or uncooked meats (no matter how non-human). I must forget her utterances; they’ve unmanned or disturbed me – and maybe that’s the point. But still, the intervention of the thirteenth tarot card, signifying death, unnerves. Why did she do it? Isn’t the whole Gypsy caboodle something of a racket, eh? She won’t turn many a minted coin, whether heavy in the palm or not, with fortunes as unattractive as mine. Hah!” (He tried to make fun of it, admittedly, but this playfulness failed to lighten his brown study).

THE PRE-CONFEDERATE ‘KNOW NOTHING’ MOVEMENT: (21)

Truly, the monster’s jaw lies open to a new solace or expectancy; and it rages against a darkness due to nothing but Absalom. Can we expect anything else at this juncture? In any respect, her innocent child’s face, the knowing wonderment of her father and a Frankenstein’s rig all meld. (The latter bears up the canines of a new ululation. It hints at the painter Francis Bacon’s desire to *articulate nation europa in a cry*). Doesn’t it accord with a jelly-fish swimming freely, yet adorned *avec* teeth, like a *Minotaur* cover?

SHOOT THE ARROW THROUGH THE BALSA(!): (22)

Greensleeve banked on a steep curve or turned the horse around, if only to reach the inn. It stood in the high sunlight of late afternoon; together with an old-fashioned wooden sign which swayed in the breeze. Gently does it back and forth – a few horses could also be observed under a rearwards canopy. This was open to the elements and suffered from an alarum over twisted circumstances. Do you attempt its drift? In any event, Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve mused uneasily: “Why deliberate on so negative a prospect. It signifies nought save untidy
scrapings; the latter feasting on bones or spent charcoal. Have I been in the moral ossuary too long, perchance? Didn’t Frankenstein knit the skin of his monster together from so many charnel refuges? These were a plenitude of damnation – and they certainly wrested blood from a shrieking cup. Strangely, I can’t know peace of mind after her revelations; it’s as if a nimbus of terror opens up before me. It swings and raves (this) like an axe – with or without the e – and from within the mantle of falling hoarfrost… even though it’s a sunny day. Above all, an image of exhalation comes up before me; it fixes the blade of a new keening and rides out in blue. There we are…”

A RENEGADE SEEKS OUT YELLOW: (23)
Meanwhile, our livid monster looks upon the consequences of weakness… and maybe it has to do with suppurating wounds or spent toads? Do they streak across the horizon after the naming of this devil? Might it be a gloss on that classic of Scottish literature, Confessions of a Justified Sinner by James Hogg? Still, Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve as Frankenstein’s monster, cradles a stick-insect in his own mittens. Such brownish hands also proved to be leathery, rubbery, misshapen, rising to fat, glutinous or otherwise temporised. Likewise, they seem to be held together by the spent cords or nectarines o’ fate… all of which spread out like ashen and broken leaves. They take pity on their own stained indents – given that such locutions break depression’s silence. One is minded of an incident with the American writer, John Gardner, where he moved a pig-sty by hand on his farm in Pennsylvania, so as to prevent rattlesnakes reaching the house. Just so… yet don’t his malformed eyes, like in Henry Moore’s statuary, come over as misaligned? They filled with salt tears.

BROADMOOR’S INNOCENT FORDING: (24)
Musing (as he was) about the gypsy fortune teller’s prediction, our Gregory entered the pub in a mild daze. The sun also streamed in behind him like a sheltering sky; especially if the door stands ajar or filters in rays prismically. All of a sudden,
Gregory Fawcett lets out a subdued or startled yelp. It strangulates itself in terms of a gathering motet – nor might it be let go of… Especially when we’re able to see the cause of his startled utterance: IT’S A WOLF! Or, more accurately, it proves to be a wolf’s head and taxidermic specimen. Like one of Damien Hirst’s roundabouts, it slits the throat of an available tax collector… if only to summon up the phantasy life of stuffed bills, rabbits, jackals and hyenas o’ fortune. Do you ken its meaning, O savant?

LET NORMAN SPINRAD EXECUTE SORROW: (25)
Against the grain, our answer to Boris Karloff’s offering lay upon the mere – what with flakes of skin, bone, chip, residual happenstance and spume all casting off. They proved to be the livery of so much forgiveness, even if they crept up on you awhile. Each deliberation forded its silence in playtime, and one has occasion to remember an image by Edward Miller: itself the habitude of forgotten ice flows. These masqueraded to a frost giant amid its wastes – albeit one that grew out of a storm of percolation… Whereupon the latter opened regarding hell’s maw; a factor which courted invisibility amid shards of floating ice. At the heart of it lay Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve and a waxen doll; or a stick-insect that travelled across a puppet-master’s trestle. (Even an advanced presentation of the monster’s daughter, Minx Raven III, gains a tremor of this intent. She stops suddenly and gazes into the distance.) Must we navigate around death’s ready juncture at the edge of the moors?

GEORGE LUCAS’ NEGATIVE UTOPIA: (26)
The wolf grinned at him after the fashion of a savage clown – despite the fact that its limbs were looped up (most especially). These led on from some claws out front; the former glinting after the fashion of a lycanthropic spectre. Its limbs were loose and rangy (you see); yet the claws are sharp or clean under a mirthless grin. Did one see the rectitude of a fire in its eyes which purchased peace – after the design of Fenris’ last gulch?
Without equivocation, though, a night stalker’s orbs wax blood red – they carry all fate afore them, when skinned, or worn over a tonsure’s cap. Bravo! “No need for fear, fellow”, reassured the portly landlord from afar.

A MORAL TELEOLOGY IN FICTION: (27)
Still, when reminiscing about it, the monster cut abroad as a silhouette or nimbus; that is to say, a fleeting glimpse of those decayed tramps a la Samuel Beckett. Don’t they carry the finitude of Molloy’s unnameability with them… over aways and bereft of enchantment? Like one of L.S. Lowry’s stick-men in Salford’s slums, he needed to grace the bluster of a ravening corse. It twisted on the gallows – roundabout – and this involved a secondary Minx Raven being handed down between monsters. One lay above; the other below… it all conspired to fix Frankenstein in aspic (just as it limbered up to some blue orgone’s filter). This beneath-the-archery intervention, however, also sees the creature from the black lagoon, or Joan Crawford’s Trog, taking her body into safe-keeping. It mummifies its own Stygian asteroid. “Do not worry about the intentions of William Bloodaxe!”, cried a deep memory inside our creature’s brain.

IRON-MAIDENS DRAW A HONEYED SKIN: (28)
Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve has fully entered into the bar’s fug or glow (now). He sets out with the aplomb of a new beginning; given that the pub’s door lies aslant over its emplacement. It becomes empanelled in terms of wood or sycamore; and a line of beer barrels moves away perpendicularly from his sight. A cheery tin cup – capable of measuring liquor – was wound round a tap on the first cask. A half-opened bottle of brandy stood mid-table – and out at a distance, or accompanying latticed glass, swung an oil-lamp. (This device looked old in the bedizened heat). At the heart of our tableau, however, stand three men… namely, two guests of the landlord and the administrator himself. Yet, in the mind’s-eye of a man who’s taking his chance, other premonitions or phantasms gather… They have to do with
ravening collections of wolves: i.e., a pack which chases its tail around an ossuary’s portal. This entrance exists separately amid mounds of snow; and the Hyperborean destiny of it helps the wolves to loose their footing. Yet still, the wild beasts of what subsists outside John Ford’s *Stagecoch*, can they survive on *terra firma*? Or must we be looking at a scenario where Jack London’s white fangs ramp insouciantly? Lord, have mercy, do they understand the import of what their briefs actually do (?); despite having testimony agin’em in many a court-room drama. Does anyone reminisce about the ITV soap *Crown Court* (?); scripted, as it was, by Jim Allen… a revolutionary anti-zionist of a sort.

A CORN DOLLY BURNS A’ NIGHT-TIME: (29)

Hear me! Our Frankenstein’s monster walked towards death within a rectitude of faith. Moreover, inside the parsimony of a dream, a girl finds herself handed down. Could it be a transgressive interplay between monsters? She is carried aloft by a smoking dud, perchance, even though Frankenstein’s visage seems to fill its own sarcophagus. By relation to which, the girl’s face is less that of a cunning little vixen – and has more to do with a broadening innocence. It slips over into somnolence, dream, a visage of one’s sleeping beauty, as well as the crushed vertebrae of betrayed paper. What has ‘he’/it done? For, in closing a nailed mitten, he’s mangled a paper-doll – rendering it worse than useless. But why’s Fawcett Greensleeve become Frankenstein’s monster in a rival dimension?

A SKALD INITIATES *BEOWULF* LIKE JAZZ(!): (30)

One of the men in the inner part of the bar approaches Greensleeve. He wears a rough jerkin of country cloth and (likewise) a belt of hunting cartridges surrounds his midriff. ‘Apologies, mister nobody – the mastery of silence makes few mistakes. We didn’t intend to scare you unduly. The fault for leaving a wolf trespassing upon a door, even in terms of its pelt, rests with me… it harbours nought but a rustling indifference. Do you ken it? Since – when a lycanthrope like Kurten’s been slain –
we sling a body across some beer barrels; if the latter’s adjacent to a traveller’s rest.’

In response to this, Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve squirmed with embarrassment. To speak of: his left eye gazed out rather ruefully from a face’s aftermath – or otherwise under its enclosure. Can’t we rest assured that it tempers an internal bias with fact (?) ; it delineates, in other words, the inner personality. ‘Ah well(!)’, Gregory began, ‘it proves to have been an empty shock reverberating around its vacuum. I apologise over any weak-mindedness. I just didn’t expect to find an effigy or a wolf’s head there… that’s all. When a man stares off into the distance he humbles himself before eternity – at least in terms of sarcophagi packed up in ridges: what with their faces glistening, tier on tier, and travelling away into a haze… no matter how distinctly.’

While he was speaking, however, the portly landlord started to rinse out some glasses in a sink.

THE TRUTH BEHIND A MAIMED CIRCUMFERENCE: (31)

Listen to this: a delineation from the Adams’ family rests with a riven travail. It lights up a sulphurous rectitude. For Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve, in a rival dispensation, had become depressed and wandered into the mine-field. Its tundra smoked up around him in bursting hulks; if only to register an unkindness or burnished steel. Mayhap – rival or interconnected barbed-wires came unstuck; they sat adrift of a landscape like a used brillo pad. Certainly, a lunar or ungainly surface was hinted at; and it fired at its own indignity from across a green line… an example of military topography which hinted at the First World War. Could the firing of gun salvoes, the masquerade of ingots, and the mounds of earth thrown up under siege… all contrive to confuse? It aided and abetted Greensleeve’s bi-polarity or manic depression; as he slipped, involuntarily, towards a muddied foreground. Might it exemplify the psychoanalytical text by Norman O. Brown known as Life Against Death?
Back in the eighteenth century Gregory Greensleeve exchanges a few words with the publican, as he pours out a brandy’s snifter. This fat man appears ready to adjust his temperature or deportment to aught else. For his part, Gregory seeks a little comfort in converse. “I failed to notice the convexity of the wolf in this vicinity”, he tittered. “Oughtn’t we to develop immunity over a pack which lurches and ramps around a tabernacle; the latter taking after one of Nicholas Hawksmoor’s minor churches? Does one envisage Iain Sinclair’s poem *Lud Heat*? It reaches out for the quandary of no satisfaction whatsoever… in that these dogs are feral. They hurl themselves around the keep of a disacknowledged enclosure. Also, a thick envelope of snow has fallen around this transplanted Cleopatra’s needle… again: it becomes lost over such chains o’ witness. Given this, the snarling upkeep of Jack London’s white fang must leap towards a silent aperture.” “I see”, replies the bar swipe in a non-committal way.

In parallax’s diminuendo, Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve had stepped on a mine – in a ready funk – and been blown to smithereens. Wherein had the depression originated which led him to do it… who knew or readily cared? Anyway, his transformation rested complete in such circumstances. A half-man remained here; a rectilinear advert for victimhood… one who threw up the salutary offerings of such a peace. Now one of his eyes waxed dislodged; it fell into his palm with a travesty of Odin’s grief… nor need we acknowledge a world of reverse chemistry. In depressive anxiety (you know) chemicals are secreted in the brain that bear on the optic nerve; they can even cause retinal damage… such as when you cease to see in colour. After this intervention, the world looks monochrome or black-and-white --- like in a Rediffusion television set in the ‘seventies.
TO UNDO THE EDDA IS TO REWIND A COIL: (34)
Meanwhile, our well-dressed Greensleeve and an eighteenth century publican are jabbering along together. “Wolves predominate, my friend, in a world where rooks in the game of chess cannot really castle. Most effectively, they must offer their teeth towards the shaving of so much bone – it comes to be covered by the nature of its ligature or strands. Do you detect it? Likewise, if this hunter remains in the vicinity of our keep no man-dogs shall belabour our forest o’ hives. Will any witness recommence with the Spiderman character known as Kraven the hunter? Nor shall any huntsman of yore be reduced to blowing Sarban’s horn! By such a reckoning as this, one’s desperado has despatched seven wendigos already this week. Indeed, Lon Chaney Junior can’t even slip into his whiskers afore a silver bullet strikes. It slaps home amid whelps and raucous swipes.” With a nod, the pub landlord gestures at the back bar where a loner eats his meal in a separate nook from any rival sot.

OUR GLUE MAN BECOMES UNSTUCK: (35)
Avaunt thee! Our blasted man relives the moment of his combustion, albeit in a parallel realm o’ fives. It occurs within a triangular shard or a glimpse of Columbo’s fate; what with a shooting burst of energy inundating ‘his’ hold. What resulted was a shambling entity or man-thing; even a quilted jacket of so much bleeding and match-‘n’-mending. One eye already happens to be out across from a vertebra of sound; and the whole thing takes on a paraffin-lamp’s glow that’s reminiscent of Iain Sinclair. (Note: he’s a cartographer of London’s inner landscapes. All of these relate to Farringdon Road’s book-stalls or a scene in Truman’s brewery, Brick Lane. It surmounted a Visigoth’s tincture --- helpless before the Elephant Man --- not to mention female nakedness, screaming). Still, Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve staggered on without wit or eyeless in Gaza, and he was otherwise livid, herring-boned, toy town-like: as well as beholden to the devil’s tincture. It sorted out the rage of a stick-insect when subdued by sandpaper. Didn’t Stewart Home seek to
have the covers of his pamphlets or chap books, advocating an art strike, bound in this? It presumably sought a rebarbative outcome…

DEVILINA IS OUR LOVE OBJECT: (36)
Needless to say, Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve is busily propping up the bar with its owner. Every so often (though) they furtively gazed across at a grizzled hunter. He seemed to be oblivious to their presence and consumed a hearty meal. His fur glistened, somewhat vaguely, under the lights and a square of pork stood to be consumed on a fork’s end. In appearance, this specimen from James Fennimore Cooper looks flat, square, up-ended, reliable, wolverine-like and padded. He gestures abruptly and concentrates on his repast. Our bar-keep engages in a fitful confab, however. ‘He’s a remarkable tracker or slayer of the feral, my man. Mark it: no observable juniper beneath the skin may feed on discernible objects like this. Do you remember the multi-dimensions or planes in Wyndham Lewis’ painting, *The Siege of Barcelona*? Does it contrive to bring relief? Anyplace – since his arrival the wolf population’s been halved. Why, he’s only gone and slain a good seven this very week. You met one of them earlier on over a veritable barrel.’ ‘I see!’, mused Gregory. But did he really understand the number which represents isolation or the hermit, in numerology?

A COFFIN/CUBE FRAYS ITS BARBED WIRE: (37)
One’s Frankenstein’s monster blunders on in the dead of night via a silent forest; its brackish scent and acorns litter each clearing. Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve – in this incarnation – is beginning to come asunder or discombobulate. He waxes apart from any acknowledged slaughter, becomes disentangled, and hopes to prevent suicide through decomposition. At once caught on a trestle of pain, he breaks like Grunewald’s ‘Christ’ on an ornate altar panel; it merely lacerates non-identity in order to see more clearly. Yes indeed: the sundering or evisceration of Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve was a wonder to behold. Like in
Samuel Beckett’s late trilogy or third, *The Unnameable*, a diabetic relative lies limbless in a pot. A thalidomide’s toasty (you see); he relishes improvidence’s prospect. Nor can we discount the patchwork quilt nature of Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve – as he comes apart at the seams.

**UNBALANCE THE TWINNING OF THESE HAMLETS:** (38) Despite this devastation redolent of *Saw 2*, our publican and his guest continue to rabbit on. Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve certainly raises a steaming mug of black beer to his lips. ‘So you no longer have to roust up hunting parties to drive the packs away, eh? Impressive, I call it; he must be a remarkably quick shot in the Columbine massacre stakes… particularly at night. It has to be doubly difficult to detect the presence of Lon Chaney Junior’s lather or breath, deep under those trees, or when a darksome habitat enjoins.’ ‘I suppose you might go by their red eye-slits in the reek’, mused our landlord or keeper of the flame. A silent pall then intruded for a moment.

*KRATOS HAS ONE RED EYE:* (39) Meanwhile, Boris Karloff’s namesake seems to be coming apart at the seams – if only to make something of a sulphurous stick. It leaps out at you all of a sudden and tears at the severed connexion of a hand. On it slips or down, and adrift of so many fingers amid this clay of ages. All of which isn’t to mention the distant orbs of Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve’s daughter, a blonde beauty in this dimension, whose eyes fill with tears… no matter how involuntarily. Yes sir… for who can entertain the amount of pain in this life (?); as a character in Ayn Rand’s *Fountainhead* makes clear. (Even though this romantic feuilliton bears a cask about the face – it signs off as Minx Raven III).

**A DELIVERANCE FROM BONE:** (40) Deep in the back bar or tap room, three men are in earnest discussion. ‘It’ leaps up from behind the landlord’s rather porcine head and takes in a guest’s perspective – he’s a man in middle
life with a Spanish moustache. For his part, Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve stares on with preternaturally bright eyes. He’s vaguely aware (all the time) that what’s up for debate affects him directly. It hammers home his very own coffin lid, so to say. The man expectorates on… he gabbles and his diction waxes either slurred or excited. “Listen, my fellows, the local wolves roundabout have grown in their daring. Initially, they just circled round a keep high up in the mountains; one that was surrounded by snow and behind wrought iron-gates. It evinced one particular entrance – a point of egress too spare for this pack to pass through *en masse*. Likewise, at the heart of this tabernacle sat a brown or leathery skeleton with a broadsword across its lap. It had originally been dressed in furs, but the horde of canines never reached it. Mark my words, though: these silvern tides have come down from mountain passes in order to attack livestock in the valleys, even horses or cows. Such events ‘ve occurred right alongside folks’ homesteads… it reverberates with the early poems of Robinson Jeffers’ *The Californian*. Didn’t he rattle on about a landscape deserving nothing but tragedy?”

**DARKNESS HAUNTS ITS REFLECTION: (41)**

In a modern incarnation – but still within the perspective of a dream – Minx Raven III drives along. Her vehicle happens to be a beaten up Ford (for those who want to know). The rain sweeps down around the car and plays some sort of slam dance on its glass – if only for the wipers to flick it hence. But she understands, most convincingly, about a reality that sickens to the core… and she can’t wait to get home. In her heart of hearts, once a latticed door closes upon her slender shoulders – then she can escape into a world of phantasm. A template destined for the imagination and that portends the eighteenth century; with this avenue of trees consisting of Frankenstein’s shambles. May it not reflect badly on the involvement of Boris Karloff, his *golden key* and even James Whales’ flickering images? We shall see…
BILLIE WHITELAW IN THE OMEN: (42)  
Our three spokesmen for damnation are continuing to whelp; particularly when the following image is enclosed. It shows up a picture of a horse (or a roan stallion) that kicks out in abandonment; if only to achieve one of Muybridge’s motion studies. Withal and in kind, a leg flicks out so as to decompose a wolf – or turn it into putty in a morning’s ray. It suffers no turn of sulphur in the dawn; but vaguely lends a kinetic sheen to this outbreak. Moreover, a horse’s limbs flail out as it’s suborned; and these dogs ramp at the features of one who feeds an ossuary, or knackers’ yard, in its blizzard. Don’t you remember the later and vaguely accelerated pictures of Francis Bacon? The bar’s guest with a floppy or Spanish-style moustache speaks on: “Oh yes, stranger, something’s emboldened these wolves. They cluster roundabout like a horde of no-marks. Such packs – as I mentioned before – have sought out victims in our vicinity. This chuntering of daemons howls aloud or seeks provender – no matter how tethered. Do you not savour it? For, should our devil-dogs gain egress, they will discover a brown study or a skeleton on its dais. It sits alone, somehow regally, and contains within it the plenitude of a new aggression. A brazen fur wraps itself around these benighted limbs or sticks. Nor can such earthy armatures o’ bone seize our imagination; since a battered tin helmet or crown lies abroad the skull. What deflects our attention, though, remains the broadsword or kingly offering lying in its lap. It offers a challenge to any dust motes gathered aslant it. How came it to be here, one wonders? Never mind: quod the von Hagens’ plastinate looks wiry, spendthrift, rectangular, crenellated, visceral and installation-like. It suffers in this subdued light (no matter how diffuse or lacking in a stroboscope’s glare).” “What can he be recounting?”, mused Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve. Yet he turned out to be transfixed.

INVADE PURPLE’S QUADRANT: (43)  
Deep in a wasteland’s desperation or travail, a Frankenstein’s monster lies amid saffron’s dirt. It proves to be bright yellow in
its hue. He seemed to be hugging the turf and waiting for the onset of a relieving death. Does it register such a grief of ages — most transparently? Our Frankenstein’s corse – laid low by an intriguing mine – sought to look up at an imaginary pin-hole camera. He was resigned now. Most uncomfortably, our patchwork quilt is coming apart or withering at the seams. A coat of many technicolours (you see), rather like a satanic variant on Joseph’s rag, sweeps up his available leavings. These brushstrokes indicate a scarecrow’s offering; but it proves to be a million miles away from Wyndham Lewis’ unfinished novel, Twentieth Century Palette. Wasn’t it an autobiography of sorts? Anyway, our reverse incarnation of Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve has settled down to perish. He’s passive, redundant, spendthrift, uninvigorated: and either James Hinton’s philosophy or the stars gaze down – and laugh.

READING’S OTHER PHILOSOPHE RAVES AT THE MOON: (44)
Let us see now: our smooth-skinned hunter has risen from his feed, at the other’s behest, or is otherwise isolated and unperturbed. He seems to be sleek, unafraid, given over to a nimbus of strength, wily, and even incombustible. A close wrap of fur surrounds his mid-riff by way of a pelt; and it also seeks to close off its encumbrance or sense of adventure. Truly, a combination of Cotton Mather and a Fennimore Cooper hero (or leather-stocking) briefs such an advent. Yet a deliberate taint clings to the anti-hero (of whatever vintage): whether it be vulpine, deliberative, prior wolfish or saturnine. Our man-with-no-name, a la Clint Eastwood, leaves a few pennies or groats upon some wooden boards. Don’t these coins wax heavy, rough-edged, delicately carved and clipped at the edges? This vigilante has led a wild life (most expectantly) and he’s got a good working knowledge of rates of currency — especially their innermost worth. Rather fortuitously, the man with the droopy or Spanish moustache lowers his voice as the other rises to his feet. Perhaps the rifle butt in his furthest or right hand has a salutary
effect? No one really knows… but his voice trails off. “I have to remind you, my fellows of might and main. A withered skeleton – of a brownish and mummified quality as to skin – sits on a dais. It recoils from the ebon marble of its manufacture – while a massive broadsword lies athwart ‘his’ knees. Might the wolves gain egress from snowy vales outside? Who can tell? Although many suspect that Vesalius’ gift, in no matter how rickety a state, would clear its throne in order to wrestle a wolf-man to the floor. It has to be clear over Lon Chaney Junior’s commitment to zoology per se. Oh my yes…”

A SKELETON’S HANDS CLASP AND GRASP: (45)
In a rival dimension to one discussed, a man-monster has lain his weary bones down to die. A few brief trees loom up in some striated mist; they are difficult to observe and usher in the wood’s lunar aspect. Meanwhile, Frankenstein’s monster – Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve – had begun to dig at the sodden tundra roundabout. He or ‘it’ dredges up a scintilla of bone in order to fillet a grave; and it definitely solicits a lost contribution to soil science. Haven’t the man-thing’s stick-legs buckled under a torso (when fur-wrapped or top heavy in aspect); and no-one listens to this suction? It’s a matter of worms, after all; and this sodden adventure enlivens promiscuity or maggothood. The worm’s hermaphroditic nature also palls over time! A great weariness supervenes and tugs at the borders of Greensleeve’s identity. He merely begins to dig. Like a trowel, a branch-like or brackish arm reaches out to draw upon the loam – a vestibule of which can be lifted clear in its liquid. Once an oozing topsoil is accounted for – the outlines of a grave in one of T.F. Powys’ miniatures may find itself etched out. Slowly, slowly, catchee monkey… as each mote of this ground or lair’s scraped away, a member of our Adams’ family glowers in bare light. One eye happens to be out; another stands ajar and various flies circle a mulcting corpse. Its decomposition renders livid a specimen jar of some sort or future vintage. Don’t the gossamer wings (or diaphanous fluttering) of these mites betray a golden halo, even a
swarm of fire-flies shimmering in heat…? It’s an obvious illustration of Bill Hopkins’ unfinished play, *Phosphorescent Insects*.

**A TIME OF TOTALITY: REASON’S UNDOING – (46)**

Back in yesterday’s bar, a wolf-clad hunter proves about to depart. He’s left some coppers on a roughly-hewn table that’s been manufactured from a barrel. As soon as he rose to his feet, however, the voices of three other denizens sank to a whisper. Were they slightly afraid of him, perchance? In any event, our droopy moustache continued with his mystagoguery… what with a brief shelf of liquor bottles glistening afar. Might the peon’s gossip have aught to do with Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s effort, *No-one Writes to the Colonel anymore*? Nonetheless, a piece of advanced ‘latino’ literature might be far from his mind… he continues thus: “A hominind or bare man, clad in wolf skins, enters the pile. It deliberates upon sacrilege in relation to a tabernacle. What does he see, though, but the warrior’s weapon glistening dully in the darkness. It’s an object which continues to rest in a skeleton’s or mummy’s grasp – one that countenances the prospect of rebirth (in certain circumstances). Slowly, oh so slowly – and with infinite care – a pelted miscreant reaches out towards the sword’s hilt. He’s attracted to puissance (without a clear cut defile); and he wants to swing the blade about in dark light or deliver tremendous blows. All remains still or darksome.”

**THE SPRANG THROWERS: (47)**

Still and all, we retrieve nothing from silence. In a scenario where he lies longitudinally – all amidships and cast adrift – while he’s buried head-first in a cascade o’ nought. Dare one feel its meter before one? Anyway, his Boris Karloff gesture is spear-like in its intensity – it ricochets from the heavens by dint of Byron’s path. Nor need one surmise a scarecrow’s writing shack; in the manner of either George Bernard Shaw or Barrie Pitt. It solaces one use of silence (you see); in that a plate moves down
into the earth, dexterous of all monstrosity, and livid over a nethermost jape. Frankenstein’s monster – Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve – has decided to end it all. He wishes to die or embrace the shallow emptiness of the grave. On ‘he’ crawls towards nemesis, nothingness or a green ray… and nullity saves his prospect (by the by); it solicits a quiet ultimatum.

WOLVERINE IN OBSIDIAN: (48)
Our Hunter S. Thompson figure (who bears a striking resemblance to Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve II) lounges from the bar. He does so at a steady gait – even though he stops to collect the wolf’s carcass which he’d unceremoniously thrown over a barrel. The commentator with the droopy moustache, however, continued to speak afore an imaginary microphone. “Didn’t I tell you about the wolf-pelted one?”, he hissed, “who stole abroad of a skeleton in a sepulchral chamber. Our sarcophagus (at once uncaged) sat in leathery isolation or splendour on a marble throne. It came to be almost laminated in its sheen – what with a thread o’ marbling or lapis lazuli stretching via its intent. It was a gossamer’s webbing, in terms of a geology’s network or topos, that leant an internet’s reality to a sundering of bone. Mark it! For our wolfish invader has seized a broadsword from a dead king’s lap, primarily in order to kindle some heroic deeds of yesteryear. Were these not the doings of which a harpist or a shaper might speak? In any moulding, a challenge given out sword-in-hand in such a place can well have unbidden consequences. It may then bend the circumstances of light and power (contained herein) into a new prismatic arch… Wasn’t it called a wooden O at the beginning of Henry V? Indeed – a wolfish anti-hero only heard the creak of long dead bones a moment ahead of lights out.” Our interlocutor paused for a necessary effect…
Our modern variant of Minx Raven III dreams of tracking down her father, a vagrant on Frankenstein’s theme, on the edge of one of L.S. Lowry’s pictures. She decides to search some nearby woods on the prowl, so as to reveal the moral exemplum of a freak show. Might it cry out to the Bedlam of Barnum ‘n’ Bailey’s nineteenth century archaos? Seemingly now, a Volkswagen beetle van or VW – with a red stripe painted down the side – has been hired out. It’s fit for no other avenue than hunting. In her available mind’s-eye, some hippies accompany her to the feast. They are casual friends from the carnival where she earns her living as a Gypsy fortune teller – that is, a prophetess who’s bent over Waite’s or Crowley’s deck. Let it pass… All of them agree to a three hour search (no more) with powerful, hand-held torches. She sets off at a brisk pace ahead of the others.

Our three nobodies are in a confab which hints at some suspended griefs. Yet the hunter refuses to acknowledge their presence on these boards, at least as regards a dead wolf atop a barrel. Momentarily, he stops to listen to them… as a droopy-moustached bar-fly continues to spout. “Of course, the reaction of those in the vicinity seeks closure – or enclosure.” “How do you mean?”, opines the publican. “Well(!)”, replies our tap-room philosopher, “in the manner of a journeyman’s efforts after Robinson Jeffers’ poesy, a wolf’s liveliness leads to a lock-up. For their presence in the vicinity led these farmers to foregather; and, like in a Western movie, the wagons are encircled against attack. It’s a matter of stock instinct (you see); in that domestic animals are herded together at night… or they bed down in corrals.” The stranger’s sharp-pointed leather boots scrape across the wooden floor in annoyance. He stops to address the others – a wolfish corse slung over one shoulder. “Maybe the older folks have it keener”, he mused, “when they say if you padlock live-
But, in their heart of hearts or innermost mind’s-eye, you may hear the following. It pertains to mumblings from under a Latin moustache. “Our pelted wolverine – or version of Lon Chaney Junior – spins around. What does he spy? Well, it has to be a grown skeleton – slipping loose its Galen armature – and towering above him. How can he have forgotten the challenge of his boasting; whereby he let out a cry, broadsword in hand, in such a place as this? The living cadaver or man-beast came on, most repellently, and its jaw moved up and down, silently, as if to ape the molten. Could electricity issue from such a cranial bone arch? It obeys a sudden tincture or lore: *for whomsoever knows fear burns at the man-thing’s touch…*

**WE MUST RIP OUT THEIR HEARTS AND DEVOUR ‘EM[!]**: (51)

Meanwhile, the woman known as Minx Raven III makes her way through the thickets. It has to do with a water-tight pasture within an estuary; rather like one of J.G. Ballard’s detours out in Shepperton. Still, she crosses some green fronds abreast of three sticks, if only to give way before such a misadventure. Minx Raven carries a powerful torch in her left hand, but the beam is unlit. This female also wears a ‘puffa’ or sport’s jacket against the cold; it follows the dimensions of one of Millet’s own… in terms of a lost trademark.

**BREED THE SPIDERS OF OUR DESIRE**: (52)

For a moment events contrive to stop time – yet Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve suddenly sees Minx Raven III again. She exists above the hollowed out emptiness of his eyes: even though he recognises no causality. Our fortune-teller isn’t really there (you see); in that a fantasm was occurring. At its heart Minx Raven III looked on hieratically; and her gestures mapped out empires in the sun. Beneath and around her, a skull, a ghoul-shaped object,
a peeping owl and a collection of wolves all circle. Atop all of which, however, there laboured a man in shadow or under a slouch hat… could he be the wanderer of yore? Needless to say, his features were not discoverable and maybe he signified death (the thirteenth tarot card)? Anyway, a gibbet made from good, clean, English wood obscured the moon – it lay underneath a new Titan. (One of Saturn’s outer moons, surely?) But this brief metaphor soon spurred Gregory into action. He followed the wolf-hunter out of the inn.

A RIPE PEACH GLISTENS WITH DEW: (53)
Regardless of other entities that are alive in the grass, Minx Raven III presses on. A distant perspective keeps her in alliance with it – and she gambols under near stagnant water or the immensity of a dripping cypress at the heart of these glens. Minx Raven seems to be homing in out of all witness – if we consider her quest to be one that litters its aftermath. Maybe some magic or inner telluric gleam, in accord with Richard Cavendish’s notion, lights up this fandango? It brushes the wings of some imaginary wasps under the moon (most certainly). She sees him (a Frankenstein’s monster amidst its heap) soon afterwards. Isn’t the Spanish word for a green comic character the mass – when others are referring to a hulk? “I’m coming”, she whispers under her breath.

THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME STARS LON CHANEY: (54)
Abreast of his predicament’s depth, Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve realises that he must head this stalker off at the path. Yet he also recalls an inner license to dream. For the words of the man in the bar (with the droopy moustache) follow him out… “Listen brethren, my tale is not ended”, he avers “Do you remember the skeleton which pursues our marauder?”, he opines. “It definitely breaks away from such a paradise of bone. Given a tablet where Vesalius’ sub-man limbers up, whether or not with faded transparency, and in the direction of a broadsword’s
absence. Moreover, this X-rayed jump suit jerks down to a horde of old weapons; there to pick up a halberd or a double-headed axe. Its hair-splitting perimeter glistens in a subdued haze. Furthermore, such a Harryhausen creation stumbles forward in a zig-zagging motion – at once discontinuously so. Yes indeed, a fight scene intrudes between them, involving a clash of tungsten, steel, rib-cage and extrapolated motion. Truly, ‘Britons’ toy manufacturers of yesteryear (sic) come up sheer against The One Hundred and Twenty Days of Sodom! (While lurid shadows are cast upwards on a screen – rather like the peep-show and dance of a silent film from ninety years before).

PSST(.), A SCIMITAR CUTS THROUGH ITS NECK: (55)
Minx Raven III is running now and behind a tree’s bough she observes ‘its’ bulk. For, in a way reminiscent of General Ursus in Planet of the Apes, a transmigration subsists… in that we note an inversion of Frankenstein’s bride. Herein, a daughter gazes upon a troglodytic sire – even a Hyperborean mainstay. His shoulders are a cardboard or box-like bulk a la Boris Karloff, and in the meantime he staggers between the trees like a spinning top… one that lacks a true compass, in other words.

REACH OUT FOR MUSSOLINI AMID BI-PLANES: (56)
Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve rushes after a departing huntsman – one that he’s determined to waylay, perchance, in order to protect his hide. Surely such a man will prove able to avert the Sybil’s prophecy? He steps out in a lively manner, threshold or lustre. ‘Hold to it!’, he cried over much sovereign ground. Yet still, the words of a restful traveller break out on his wakefulness, even when they’re intoned in a sotto voce way. “Our bleat must rest on a lavendar o’ steel”, raved a past chronicler. “Do you trespass on its license, most effectively? Given its thrilling repast, the skeleton and the wolf-man trade blow after blow… until a billowing torch or taper is knocked over by our tourney. Its liquid flame sets fire to a plenitude of furs – if only to provide this Lon Chaney with an answer to his quest. Already now, he
manoeuvres the former in a pyre’s direction; as the latter’s violent mouth moves up and down in dumb-show. (It is a video of a Beckett tramp on mute – or pretending to tap an amoral resource).” All of a sudden, and during a seizure of goods, the wolf-hunter turns to meet his gaze.”

A CRACK IN THE GLASS SOUNDS A REVISIONIST MANTRA: (57)
Minx Raven III steps between two saplings so as to get a better look, and the bulk of one’s Frankenstein’s monster pinions itself to grey. It relieves itself of the following issue: in that a brillo-pad rather than a humanoid lies before her. How can what ‘negates’ her be characterised as such? Well, a sort of motor-neurone deficiency rips out of his sides; most of which trespasses on a mountain or its tumbledown. (Note: it bears little relation to Toyah Wilcox’s Thunder in the Mountains, however). Also, the man-thing’s decrepitude falls silent afore a pillar – namely, a form that’s cast in plaster by an imaginary Elisabeth Frink. Doesn’t Minx Raven III – when standing on Quasimodo’s diagonal in a puffa-jacket – illumine ‘it’ with a torch? (An object which she’s yet to switch ‘on’, necessarily so). What its brilliant tungsten-glow might reveal is a Mass: one that’s heaving, rank, fallen as a golden lotus or toxic like a green-skinned potato; as well as being a crepitating hulk, flattening out towards a floor… It happens to be little more than moss or lichen/loam; while felled by Alice’s beam all the way home. After an instant’s hesitation, she decides to turn on her burning light.”

A SPEEDY OBLIVION MIXES ITS BELLS: (58)
Meanwhile, and against a building or its hill-side worthy of Cezanne’s perspectives, Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve persuades his nemesis to protect him. The huntsman’s name traverses the following gully – Wolverine Bob is how he’s known, yet Gregory can’t get over the kinship with his ‘dark’ brother, Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve II. Already though, he seems to hear the delivery of one tale --- a diktat initiated by a Bukowski...
bar-fly, but finished off by Bobby Wolf (here). For, although he
doesn’t speak, a diction supervenes in Gregory Fawcett’s mind.
“The end of our trouble or drama proves to be nigh – since, with
a tremendous blow, the wolf-man pushes the living skeleton into
an issuance of flame. It halts for a second; if only to gain
purchase on his brittle limbs: these were tinder dry, criss-crossed,
sovran over extras, waiting for the Viking funeral to illumine
them… and WHOOSH (!), our bone-man’s all aflame. Soon he/it
collapses into an ashen pot-pourri of disregard; a favour, this, to
a million cremation urns as yet unmolested. It represents (then) a
charred heat of combustible fragments – prior to any notions
concerning a living charcoal!” Afterwards Gregory Fawcett
Greensleeve looks away from the sun… and he realises the
imprint of the hunter’s words: especially over a fee. He
(Gregory) goes on to address his would-be protector in a feverish
and discursive way. Not usually a loquacious brick-bat, Gregory
Fawcett Greensleeve seems to succeed in his object.

AN EARLY BACON PICTURE FEATURES MUSSOLINI’S
HEAD, A SKELETON & AN UMBRELLA: (59)
Almost immediately, she turns on her torch’s beam avec FULL
POWER. It lights up the transparency of a bivouac or redoubt, if
only to countenance a lost japery. In any event, this yellow
triangle flashes like a light-house that exists well away from the
shore or on a remote outcrop. Aren’t there a series of red-and-
white hoops around its conical shift – in a way which captures
the notations of Robert Silverberg’s The Glass Tower? Most
assuredly, her azure eyes battle against fatigue’s motes, in a
scenario where her hair takes fire from an illuminated woman.

J.G. BALLARD DIED ON HITLER’S BIRTHDAY: (60)
Against all premature births, the man known as Wolverine Bob
chooses to look out of a regular sun. It transfixes this
illumination (thereby) and rays so directed come upon a face
prismically – thence to unlock a skull beneath the skin. A horse
or a roan stallion nods away behind such complexity… even
though our wolf-hunter finds himself cast up in slices. Whatever sun-dial might be revealed in Henry James’ garden as a consequence? Still and all, a wolfish or animalian tunnel comes across Bob’s fissures… none of which prevents him declaring: “I hear your asking of the price, Mister Greensleeve. Rest assured, it beckons to no conscience over a dystopia so registered. Given your troubling premonition, I swear that I’ll protect you henceforth. I will act as the body-guard you seek – albeit for a payment of no more than some abandoned shekels. It re-routes itself from a trespass around the moon (you see). Most especially – since I swear to afford you the following pledge. No wolf shall feed off yonder hide or thus slaver while I’m around. You have my word: not one of these feral packs can get close enough, rest assured.”

BOXED MALEFIC TIMES AN EASTER EGG: (61)
Minx Raven III – for her part – slips at this very moment, and her puffa-jacket swings around her shoulders in an outlandish way. It comes to rest aslant of one Big Tent too many… even if the loadstar of a new awakening ripples on without effect. Yet, irrespective of such slippage, a beam of light reveals Boris Karloff’s immediate vicinity. Limbless, legless, without apparel (take your pick): it more than contrives to make up for autophagy’s absence. Like the finale to Beckett’s ‘trilogy’, a relative lies like a thalidomide’s toasty in a costive jar, if only to provide wrap-around for a diabetic’s fortune. Momentarily then, a lookalike for the sorceress Minx Raven III (in a different dimension) seems to swap diseased in-laws up ahead. Mightn’t it off-load more than Karloff’s macabre take on Dick Tracy (?); namely, Dick Tracy meets Gruesome (starring Ralph Byrd, etc…) Minx Raven shouts ‘Whoa!’ as she slides, but her monster moves off.
MAX SCHRECK’S *NOSFERATU* PLAYS DARTS WITH FATE: (62)
In a distant land (many aeons away) a smug Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve looks to one side… it’s almost as if he’s examining himself in an unseen mirror. His eyes slither to one cautious Perspex (verily) and he feels an uncommon mingling of triumphs. Under Gregory’s breath – so that his new companion won’t take in the assignation – he asserts: “I’ve beaten her all ends up. For our Lady Sybil or Minx Raven III lies broken on the ground like a hand-maiden’s doll. Does one revisit the poem by W.H. Davies, the Welsh tramp, who spoke of a rat at the twentieth century’s commencement? It was an exercise in anthropomorphism (you see); in that he imagined himself in the creature’s stead. Our rodent then bit into the cheek-bone of a beggar-woman; one who’d died of scurvy, the pox or suchlike… MINX RAVEN IS SUCH A DEAD-BEAT; now I’ve passed over into a benefit of halves. Aha! This poor woman’s version of Sybil Jardine in a source’s ballad – why, the gypsy in her booth has been out-manoeuvred by better days. I bet you over whether she didn’t sense this in a crystal ball – no matter how fractured. Who, in these circumstances, could have predicted an anti-hero hiring a hunter as wolf-bait? It doesn’t bear thinking about, me duck ---.”

LOOSEN A BLUE VICAR’S COLLAR: (63)
Minx Raven III picked herself up from a remit o’ plenty; and she also observed, within a toboggan’s sluice in the mud, that her picture had been dislodged. It lay in the mire when next to a submerged eye – namely, an orb (or marble) which glistened alone outside a waxworks’ conspectus. Further off, and to one side of a graven image, she saw a wrecked conspectus of beasthood. Was it not a Comus rout in its own coinage (?); one that sobbed out the broken-heartedness of its identity in the woods. For – whilst besporting a plastic jacket – a sobbing rectangle/Frankenstein made his peace with vegetation. Moreover, the girl’s light-beam wobbled in the gloom; at a time
where an amphitheatre of trees swept away from her gesture… rather like a venue for Greek tragedy.

**APRIL 23\(^{rd}\); A WHITE DRAGON FOR THE SAXONS: (64)**

In another century of our dereliction (to be fair) two horsemen approach the desolation of some woods. They are Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve and Wolverine Bob, and their mounts loom up before some misproportioned trees… each one of which stirs the memory of long-lost spiders. Such boughs as these are tortured or humiliated to their loss; and every one of their wizened or blasted trunks raises a bent finger to the wind. A few stalks of whey grass (themselves bone dry) festoon such carpentry; especially when nature has contrived to reverse the tree of life into a death rune. The hunter or bodyguard affects a rifle slung across his knees; whereas Gregory Fawcett entertains some desperate conversational urge. Abidingly so, he wants or needs to make contact with his new companion --- what did E.M. Forster aver, *only connect*? Greensleeve begins to talk amid the abiding loneliness of these forests… within which (otherwise) the haunting melody of insects rubbing their legs together can be heard. Ahoy there (!), a menace of blood issues forth at the edges of these deserts, morally speaking.

**AFORE STRANGLING A MANIKIN; KYD’S GLOVES ARE WORN: (65)**

As Minx Raven approaches a clearing in her consciousness, a sense of amazement or alienation tugs at her sleeve. Doesn’t the trail of oblivion – when spliced to a slug’s mandrake – not offer a proportionate bonus to its need? In any event, the torch reveals her dulcet features – if only to disembark a nonsense of fire-flies. Do they enjoin the broiling of gasses from sundry peat-bogs; the latter bound to burn off this methane with flares once it’s above ground? But her certitude grows *avec* a strangulated cry – ‘Daddy?’, she is heard to witness. Nothing comes back in her direction (however) other than the susurration, etheric balm or
lisp of a million wheezes… it represents breath leaving a corpse that’s trapped on a hidden stair-well. ‘Daddy?’, she repeats.

**ART BRUT, NO, ARTISTIC BRUTALISM, YES:** (66)

Our two travellers are not at rest and they pass along on their mounts – with each of them ‘cresting’ a rise. Its dirt-track or purple moves behind them; and the azure depths of a hollow sky lead out in an assured glow. Meanwhile, an inter-connected skein of branches carries on aslant them… it suffices to lead the charge of its indifference (therefore), even given so many bony, interwoven hands. Do these brambles embody a metaphor (?); or an *impasse* that’s riven, fine fissured, geological, tense and unforgiving. It’s an *oubliette* of bone less skin (to be sure). Yet cutting the silence like a knife, even if his speech is desultory, Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve has begun to speak. After he’s trespassed upon his words – though – Wolverine Bob sits up in his saddle abruptly… Had the hunter been stung by a disused waspishness?

**TO LISTEN TO SHOSTAKOVICH PROVES WONDROUS:** (67)

Under a rival trespass (or what Adorno called *minima moralia*) Minx Raven’s eyes fill with dreams – but not necessarily tears. She also sees herself handed down, in a vaguely revealing slip or shift, from one monster to another betwixt emerald generations. Above her svelte form (or ready to receive such carbon capture) lies a fictive entity such as the *Green Man*… could it be a variant on Gawain’s trauma? Yet, beneath and to the side, a relatively whole Frankenstein’s monster is seen to limber. ‘It’ berates the certainty of a slave-pit, if beholden to the mimed burlesque of Boris Karloff’s mien.

**A POWER DVD SURGES IN ITS SLOT:** (68)

For Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve had asked via a casual prompt: “Why has your fancy taken to hating wolves so acutely? By whatever mechanism, perchance, do you hunt them down using a
blunderbuss – the like of which comes slung over one shoulder?”

In relation to such an impress – Wolverine Bob stiffened perceptibly in his brown leather saddle. He can be observed from a distance now (bar a shadowy rectangle) and he looks glum, over-taken, irregular, masterful, chomping at the bit or sullen. {Even his grey steed waxes a trifle aggressive in its canter…} +

“You wrong me, Mister Greensleeve”, he rasped with scant asperity. “Dig into the register of it so as to see a blazing skeleton, all afire, who’s pitched athwart a dais of ebon marble! It reeks of sulphur amidst its rage… don’t you ken it in a mind’s-eye? Let’s see – my actual attitude towards the wolf’s kingdom is one of reversal. It summons up the feral rage of a winnowing kinship.” In transferring these remarks from one to another, *per se*, both riders pass under a fellowship of trees. These sweep away – at once green in their reckoning under the moon – as two horsemen traverse tundras unseen. Truly, the compress o’ Hooker’s greenery presses on ‘em; given that many miles have been traversed from ye olde inn. Moreover, a spectrum of nightly grandeur alternates with wood-cuts or Frank Miller’s inks… as twin desperados, locked together by fate, penetrate further into these wooded slopes. Up above a few pink-tinged clouds scud across the moon’s top; thence to insist upon a darker impress amidst one’s dimmest lore – irrespective of water-boarding.

Most abrasively, the hunter adds a hint of anger to his locution. “You wrong me most fitfully”, he insists again. “I admire the beauty and svelte perfection of these beasts – not to mention their courage and derring-do. Don’t they crowd around a fastness bounded by snow; or otherwise rewarding a tabernacle which hides a fur-clad skeleton?” (Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve wasn’t paying attention – although he did wonder about such a trespass on his dreams. Yet a vague transformation in the other rider unsettled him. What could it be?) “If I hunt them down and kill ‘em at folks’ behest (as I do); it’s just to prevent a dangerous rivalry!” Without entirely knowing why – Gregory Fawcett felt
himself unnerved by the last remark. He looked across at an anthropomorphic transgressor; yet his eyes were still sodden, dreamy, uncertain, dulled and not wide awake. His co-conspirator seemed transformed, however, in that the jockey’s mount stares wildly with a fixed, animalian vision. Up above this, its master shape-shifts radically and becomes hunched, ‘riding pillion’, bent over, recumbent or lurid. Wolverine’s braces (or other Fennimore Cooper traps) look more blatant; and the rover’s knuckles clench around a crop. Moreover – in the facial department – Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve II comes over as wizened, parched, crone-like, dehydrated and yearning. Whilst the slicked back hair appears out of touch with empty eye-sockets… never mind increasingly pointy ears. Gregory Fawcett, in a childish mantra, repeats his ‘plaint: “Your meaning, master?” (Interestingly, in this conversational gambit, the two of them have reversed their social status/rank).

It was only then that Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve began to scream. “NNNNOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!”, he pelted and yelled. For Gregory F(.) desperately clutched at the reins of his rearing steed – while he shouted: “I can’t believe it; the conundrum’s contrary to nature – it’s a travesty of Hans Christian Anderson’s diction. One cannot ask for padding over a furry latitude… Surely it won’t be a delirium in Truman Capote’s In Cold Blood? Since you’ve revealed yourself to be a WEREWOLF!”

In relation to this travail, Wolverine Bob’s characteristics have changed out of all recognition. ‘He’ now sets himself apart as spawn from Lon Chaney junior’s kennel. In this regard, his teeth are serrated and slavering, the jaw open and lolling, and the man-wolf’s face is matted with hair. Two brief or pointy ears manoeuvre to the side, and the inner surfeit of a lycanthrope bursts out of his human clothes… these trappings, with the sole exception of serge pants, go westward. Likewise, Bob’s nose perversely kindles memories of a snout or snub – and
interestingly, the more his wolfishness grows the closer he gets to his twin, Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve II. A snarl comes increasingly to weather civic diction – in lycanthropic vein. Isn’t the wereman’s *mythus* a pre-modern way of describing a psychopath?

+ To all intent and purposes, though, the creature formally known as ‘Bob’ leaps across from horse to horse – the latter bolting from a wolfish stench. With it, the lithe and tensile body of the man-wolf – naked to the waist in terms of transfixed hair – shoots in Fawcett’s direction. He soon has him about the throat with two hirsute, taloned, clawing hands – or paws. “NNNNNOOOOOO!!”, clamours Greensleeve again in desperation… as he realises that the sibyl, Minx Raven’s, prophesy is coming true. But any instant of salvation was short-lived or muted by caterwauling, and this wendigo grasps his victim tightly. Our new Mister Hyde proves too strong (you see); and the two of them crash down off the animals who rear away or whinny uncontrollably. Again and again, the were-thing or man-beast careers into his prey and they roll over and over in the dirt, like in a silent film. All of a sudden – and with the swish of a page in a Graham Masterton horror-novel – they disappear behind a boulder at the track’s edge. A momentary silence intervenes. Although several minutes later Wolverine Bob reels upwards in his true identity to gaze at the moon, and Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve’s hand lies limply. It crosses a linked boundary or stone margin. Blood, gore and sputum recognisably pours from the were-thing’s muzzle. He has ripped out Gregory Fawcett’s throat and eaten it during the interim.

+ Up above – or soon after – and crouched like the zoology he kindles aright; Wolverine Bob howls at the moon. His baying cry, WAAHWOOOO!, echoes or reverberates across the starry sky and adjacent woods. He is truly a lycan – more animalian than man – and prone to prowling on all fours. Doesn’t a series of
cliffs, or interconnected bluffs, exist underneath our carnivore’s paws? He continues to let rip in exultation: WAAHWOOO!

+ Vaguely sickened by what she’s seeing in her crystal ball, perchance, the fortune teller known as Minx Raven looks away. She’d been stalking the corridors of her mage’s castle for many hours expecting the worst – now it’s swept down like a red cloak. A zodiac containing all its sigils, glyphs and signposts levels off afar: & it runs from Aries to Pisces. Minx Raven III stares into the darkness using a fixed or lugubrious glower; a spluttering candelabrum lies adjacently. She incarnates (inch by inch) the reality of a negative hippy, shaman or beatnik. “I didn’t lie!”, the witch intones, “no mortal may escape its destiny… especially one that’s astrologically encoded above. Verity issues forth in interplanetary movement. Everything pertinent to Man has to be written in our stars. My lips are opened and sealed by the Gods!”

VISIGOTHS & ENTROPY: FRANKENSTEIN R.I.P.: (69)

Furthermore, the visage of Minx Raven’s father manifests before Frankenstein’s dropsy; and it caterwauls in Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve’s direction… albeit as a travesty. His face is blooming in its disfigurement – what with the squelched abasement of one too many brillo pads, and an eye happens to be out. It festoons the tar of diverse slayings and ‘it’ knows abundant griefs – not least the slippage of this goo over a semblance of selves. Can one maintain any dignity (no matter how prior) when you’re a creature from the black lagoon? An ooze transposes itself (then) in relation to a Francis Bacon head from the early ‘fifties; it cuts a swathe through mutilation. Moreover, the left-libertarianism of Alan Sillitoe can find no point of egress here… In short, the Elephant Man in his split case at the Royal College of Surgeons (or its museum) comes right up against a boundary marker which inhabits James Hinton. Or, more circumspectly, one might say that it’s alive to his philosophical enquiry about pain.

+
Also, the beauty in his daughter’s face looks out upon a glass; and it draws a trace upon a palimpsest by dint of a finger. She strikes up a pose of genuine amazement at finding her father here – or what’s left of him, (most effectively). Do you see? Since the roundabout fragrance of gore – or such-like muck – has smeared its entrails across her face. Could it be aught of a snail (?); a creature who goes about slowly only to leave a trail of slime. *Avaunt thee*, our template to dreaming must break off before a mummy’s sarcophagus… although Minx Raven still has time to remove a fly from her hair.

They confront one another on the wet grass – albeit with limbs akimbo and even rotting in their Perspex. Already however, Minx Raven III has been transported by love; in that she’s found her Daddy dying here amidst mildew’s rank. Isn’t it a collective version of an L.S. Lowry painting? Indeed, both seem happy in their disparate ways: since he (Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve) collapses into nonchalance, no matter how bone-stricken, and *She* pulls off a dandelion’s head. (Don’t you know that its beverage – when ground down and crushed – reduces blood pressure?) Even though her aspect is seen to wax girl-like, transfixed, nonchalant (in terms of Thomas Nash’s pox), tremulous or dead i’ the spittle. Do you see it now? It exhibits both Bellona’s sounding thongs and animal magnetism. May she be a Hamadryad?

All of a sudden – the two wretches fall upon each other in a transport o’ love, and they cling to the twain like life-boats from a stricken vessel. The rain and slush beats down upon them, but such is their need that they note it not. Further, the girl’s puffa-jacket becomes inflated in order to compensate for morphia’s addiction. (Truly, it incarnates what Eric Mottram meant by *The Algebra of Need*). It increases exponentially – you see – rather like a cancer or a spore from no man’s land. Let it come down between these effigies or mausoleums… Yes; no student of emotional poverty can limit this saraband. Her father’s skeletal
face chomps greedily; especially given Boris Karloff’s forethought or a beady-eyed trough. She bursts into tears, however, and each hand massages a corse’s rotting complexion – it hopes to break out the marrow from those bones. A maudlin savagery (or repleteness) intrudes; and it has to disinter a leech sucking on another’s sores. (To a philosopher – such as the diction in a work by Stuart Holroyd – an avalanche of feeling must be avoided. It occasions a ripe gas – almost a mephitic fart or the Gods’ egestion). On this occasion, corpse-man and beatnik daughter, with her legs encased in skin-tight denim, almost engage in mud-wrestling… such is their ‘romanticism’. It doubtless speaks of one too many paroxysms, whether it’s an eleutheromania or not. Could it drain the black pool of Agio? 

With a wrench – itself like a splintering door-mat – Minx Raven’s sire broke away from her. He clearly headed into the innermost medley of the thing: that is, a storm whose cascade surrounded ‘em. It whipped and wailed to no purport; the former denting a manic depressive’s desire to go on living. Such Sphinx-questions will be left for another day; yet it knew nothing of a war between pygmies and cranes. “Don’t leave me daddy!”, wailed Minx Raven in an orgy of self-pity. For the Frankenstein monster, who’d been reduced to the status of a Mummers’ Bessy, wanted to die… He knew the moment was nigh or threatening, and he/’it’ had to break away so as to perish. The weather-storm flew on unabated – what with cascades of heavy rain, hail, spume, torrential downpours and near-blizzards. Minx Raven III finally got a glimpse of her father in the distance – minus a head – and disintegrating. It cast a horrid radii or one cloud of Erebus, prior to complete devastation.

Avaunt thee, the deluge has ended and a youthful Minx Raven sits quietly by herself. Although she’s not entirely alone… to be fair. For in front of her, and abreast of its iron cage, her father’s body lies within an arrested cyclone. It lay – at once keeled over on Sophocles’ ground – and it seems to be strangely reminiscent
of *Oedipus at Colonus*, where a blinded or ruined man seeks safety in the Furies’ grotto. A gathering or swarm of flies buzzes about; the former circling in a tarantella or sub-lunar hit. It proved to be a durance of fragments; themselves little better than *swarm*. Needless to say, her papa’s corse comes across as half-hit, up-ended, spasticated, translucent and sub-human. And, as her attendant hippies approach from a distance, she goes on humming to herself. The sound is indeterminate – but in no sense a madrigal, while Raven’s helpers look sympathetic… yet are out of their depth. (Don’t they ascribe to an emotional medley – whether bi-polar, weak-minded, surreal, maudlin or jazzed up, in turn?) Truly, they were the beat-les of a ‘sixties designation – or, more precisely, their road *a la* Kerouac lay open beyond this moment. Minx Raven III – however – continued to wear her shell-top under an early morning’s sun; a nascent humming also jammed these channels. One of the carny types put a mitten on her shoulder: “What ails thee, girl?”, he protested. “Why, it’s my father”, she repeated almost in a trance, “the night-storm has reduced his head to putty – and it’s fled from his Frankenstein’s torso, if only to burst apart like Cronenberg’s tissue-paper. Can you help me find it(?)”, she murmured, “so that Humpty-dumpty may affix himself to a wall once again.”

**EPILOGUE:**

**LAST SPECTRUM OF DETERMINACY:** (70)

Back in a rank *Hades*, a demon has been watching these proceedings. This creature betokens a panoply of the Vulcan; what with the circling horns of a ram above an iron cranium. Could it indicate the pressure behind the eyes of a Norman Spinrad book like *Agent of Chaos*? Our bogey-man possesses a severed head on a taloned finger. None of which can prevent him from laughing uproariously. “HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HEE! HEE! HEE! HEE!”, the man-goat prophesies. “What a rascal, or a Raffles of misfortune you prove to be, Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve II. Most understandably, your unfortunate and recalcitrant niece shall never get ahead! HA!” (Because, in the
prologue to our tale, we had our Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve’s confused… in that the wretch enduring punishment la bas has to be Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve II; i.e., his near-identical brother’s nemesis or folie a deux. Do you see? He tore out his brother’s throat – as a werewolf – in one dimension; as well as blowing up sundry poachers in mine-fields in another. Whereupon, and kindled by a surfeit of his brother’s depression, his anti-personnel devices shredded Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve [I] and reduced him to a shambling man-thing – or a Frankenstein’s monster). His negative Guardian angel (or Azrael) tried to tease him now… “What’s the matter, O morphic one? Haven’t you endured these tendentious relays enough – in accordance with Georges Bataille’s doctrine of entropy or a wasteful stool? Harken! There shall be no mercy for you, poltroon! Let the inner morphology of Wyndham Lewis’ Malign Fiesta seek out its cud… or dollops of meat fed on by ravens. Aren’t the latter Poe’s step-changes to custard? Avaunt thee, we embrace you with a timbrel fainness – only to cast your disembodied head into a Tartarean gulf. Look you, the games recommence and a throng of daemons embraces you in a pelt!” With this, our daemonic Aries or Nemean lion kicked Gregory Fawcett Greensleeve’s head into a scrimmage o’ hell-beasts. They consisted of a Demosthenic jugular – themselves made up of razor wires, sieve-hands, hopping mediaeval helmets, Boschian rodeos, Sorelian myths, saurian mugwumps, hoover hogs (armadillos to eat during an American recession), et cetera… Moreover, the boot that punted him up field was an old-fashioned brown leather one, a piece of footwear drawn from association football or rugby league. It caused Greensleeve’s bloodied haggis to sail onwards – as a ball – pursued by Acheron’s sportsmen. Might it be a travesty of either Radio 5 Live or Talksport? Anyway, and as his skull hit the loam and bounced amid hellspawn, his tormentor continued to howl: “HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! Crime does not pay! Who kens what ‘evil’ lurks in the hearts of men? Vigilantism is the elixir of goodness. Criminals are born and not
made; the only possible rehabilitation is punishment. Prison must never be a castle fit for a king. Obey me, I am the Law! Let’s release the instinctual sadism of the masses… a pokey comes as no restraint unless surrounded by fire. To adopt Orson Welles: *this shadow knows*. Goodbye, Homunculus! Goodbye…”

END
IRON BREATHE

a story

Dramatis Personae: A robot or metal-man of the near future (Iron Breath); Ignatius Sebastian, a light-houseman and old sea-dog; plus a few bit-part players on passing boats.

FIRST PART

A cybernetic doll greets our transparency – if only by coming close to Paul Virilio’s Speed and Politics. For here, we find an exercise in a leftwing Nietzsche; particularly when his dromology becomes a new science or a futurism. (No matter any implacability – this is to be certain of it). A metallic man or a transformer – known as Iron Breath – charges into the future on its prostheses. His body gleams with a titanium sheen or cast, and the creature’s gambit seemed to indicate the special olympics on over-drive. Moreover, a grill or sovran duct fills the head: it also exists on a cylindrical pole. While the eyes were Belisha beacons: as well as being triangular apertures for yellow light. These glared on implacably and without any ‘humanism’ whatsoever. Its robotic chest – however – waxed Josef Thorak-like in its neo-classicism; even though the roughage or brutalism of Elisabeth Frink hasn’t replaced Flaxman’s smoothies. Don’t you sense a connexion? Anyway, the arms limber up to pumping fists; and the legs pivot around a sense of gravity which cut this manikin in two. A large steel bolt turned on its axis; a debenture (this) that enables a spring to occur. Likewise, the upturned soles of ‘Ultimo’s’ feet show a clean pair of heels – these exist so as to run a marathon in seconds… primarily to outface any mortal rival. Behind our rampager, though, an atomic clock burns down its face; and it passes out of Windscale’s effulgence – at least in terms of a fire in 1957 that led to Sellafield’s naming. It blew up like an aggressive Rothko or the imagery from Lewis’ Blast! Might it carry within it beauty’s impediment, in relation to a cataclysmic ochre? Now we shall see…
SECOND PART
Our picture spots a lighthouse on a desolate sea – one which limits a new aim beyond its refulgent beams, and these cram the openings of a resultant brine. It lay outside the lateral splendour of its spoke; if only to limit the spent tunnels of either shaft. These shone (most effectively) from the conical tower’s top: and the lighthouse consisted of a reflector that doubled its strength. Needless to say, its beams travelled out far and wide, and this was well beyond the red-and-white mountings at its top. Each loop of which (to speak of) left no stone unscathed in its Illumination – particularly when we consider those rocks that bounder it. Such crags dot the waters out of bounds and they are brown, mottled, ‘insincere’, watchful in their geology (sic) and treacherous. (It’s to prevent various liners or ships from running aground – like the Titanic – that the ‘house found itself positioned so). Thus: the waters chopped and changed around the beam’s base, as this astral torch (itself) prevented many a luxury vessel from crashing on its boulders. Lo and behold (!), a magnificent cruise liner is passing on the beacon’s right side, and steam from its twin funnels swirls around the lighthouse’s summit. Whereas the boat looks likely to possess a triple-decker’s profile – together with sails at either rim, a few ensigns or flags, plus numerous port-holes around the ends.

Inside it – and on the craft’s bridge – the captain happens to be engaged in a desultory conversation with his first mate. “I admit you’re right”, he drawled, “yonder lighthouse has prevented many a cataclysm or crash-up down the years. But it’s the keeper I feel for, you know, in that he’s left alone there or via a solitary wandering year after year. Can you imagine the tedium of it – with only a robot for company in order to break the silence?” “I agree; it’s bound to be a metronomic lifestyle… the outer lineaments of which are heralded by changing a help-meet’s batteries. HA! The most exciting moment, month on month, is to decide whether to use ‘Eveready’ or Energiser to keep his
companion on-line. HA!" “Better him than me---“, the officer mused sullenly.

THIRD PART
Meanwhile, within the lighthouse, a fight or personal conflict has out broken between rival denizens o’ the dark. Did a passing ship’s officer have the temerity to speak of boredom? For any dullness subsisting here is soon quashed BY MAYHEM. Let us examine closer: in that a metallic hand with five digits quivers adrift of a lever or plunger. It’d found its curved aggression halted by a mortal pinkie (the lighthouse man’s) who prevents its descent. While – to one side of this – a sign read: Great light switch: ON/OFF. Above this nomenclature or mural, a tableau of brick snakes up one plane or surface. Furthermore, the controlling device in question was a binary toe-poke – even a reverse tram-line in terms of its desires. It existed on a metallic base or an overall sheen: and it might prove heavy to lift… despite the fact that one of the Capek brothers’ robots would find this mission a trifle. Couldn’t it really amount to a ping-pong game called R.U.R?

+ “Unhand me”, heralded the robot known as Iron Breath in a hollow or base tone… it vaguely took after a ‘speak-your-weight-machine’s’ diction. Yes indeed, the steel man continued: “your puny intervention heralds the impotence of mortal enquiry. Nor can you experience the growing calibre of my wrath. It must level off before the mercury in the tube spills out and destroys everything. Do you really believe that your resistance can overturn a coming plenitude of science? For, irrespective of Fred Hoyle’s doxa, we are born to rule on this aching planet. Remember: Isaac Asimov’s Three laws of Robotics leave us cold in carrying out such an entanglement – and don’t they necessitate the computer’s rebellion in 2001? Your hand, arm and fingers embody a reflexive feel – one that corners the market over Doctor Who’s Cybermen. Yet we shall be liable to quibble over a brain sent reeling from its sockets – especially given David

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Icke’s *robots’ rebellion* (in reverse). Do you detect a coming mastery, human?”

FOURTH PART

“No, no, halt your hand of destiny, unclean one --- I demand that you desist”, confirmed a lighthouse man. His name was Ignatius Sebastian and he proved to be distraught. For appearance’s sake, he seems to be in his late fifties or early sixties – what with a jaunty sailor’s cap on his scalp set at an angle. Needless to say, he wore stout brown shoes, tough serge trousers rinsed in pale blue and a roughly hewn pullover… it was characterised by a polo neck, plus matching cuffs and trim. “Stop, no-one may attempt to extinguish the light – particularly when a vessel is passing through its gulf. It portends to the madness of King George, do you hear? I (for one),” he announced rather portentously, “don’t intend to take the easy option afforded by Cromwell’s son, tumble-down Dick!”

In this very instant, though, he remembered a past illumination or a posting on land. Could it be a dream or a phantasm of non-identity? Yes aplenty… since he careered onwards towards an unknown destination in a speeding vehicle. Momentarily, a motorcycle with a side-car (or a pillion conveyance) shot by on the other side of the road and amidst teeming rain. Also, Ignatius grasped the wheel with extraordinary resolve – even though his physiog(.), teeth, slit and orbs stood out in abundant shadow. “What now?”, he mused to himself, as he sped *en route* to the dinosaurs’ theme park. He mustn’t be late.

FIFTH PART

Back in the lighthouse, however, the man and his machine (or metal master) were wrestling with each other. Around them the structure’s cylindrical bay bore witness to its candelabra – and this is best observed by a walkway behind them leading to so much grief. It sold itself to the unpleasantness of its incline (be Gad!); and the latter tapered off by way of a door and some
unshaven wood. A metal strut lay up the balustrade’s font – one that pictured a surmounting of some hewn steps, themselves roughened and concrete. On the other side of this duct or conic living space – when shaped like a Martello tower’s innermost witness – the two forms continued their unarmed combat. Whereas Iron Breath, to take the side of one’s doomsday mechanics, looks sheen, replete, dangerous, circuit-riven and all aglow. He/’it’ also appears to be lithe in its suspension of disbelief; while it battles with Ignatius Sebastian on the imaginary bridge of its *starship enterprise*. Similarly, this robot exhibits a metallic tundra or driven snow in its quest for perfection – the former a prophylactic of an abiding sterility. Let’s see it now: in that *Iron Breath* has limbs, trunk and forearms which embody the better features of ‘Britons’ toys, never mind a rival like Airfix. But the face and head arrest our attention: when we remember its dome-like or cylindrical arabesque, together with grimacing teeth down below. These are tubular in their entourage – whilst combining (most effectively) *avec* two glowing electronic orbs sinking ever further into their pits. Won’t divers items, *sui generis*, be characterised as the creature’s eyes? And they come across as dissembling, oneiric, razor-sharp, distaff-edged, inscrutable, fundamentally mysterious and alone.

The robot-man or mechanoid speaks thus: “Abominable wretch, does one seek to salve the flow or charting of blood in the capillaries? Unhand me, meat, when one considers that your period of mastery on this planet draws nigh. It smoulders afore the refuge of one too many escapes… especially given our fleshless absence of any cancer at the bone. You happen to encode a Zero or an O without a figure; and your corse is destined to provide the spark for robotic revolution. Ignatius Sebastian – an otherwise obscure lighthouse man – touches on a false trampoline or lights the blue touch-paper. A smouldering entreaty (this is) which fathoms its version of Armageddon’s village, do you hear, old father time? Your example fashions a
precipice from Louis XVI – but less over the Third Estate or Mirbeau than Maximilien Robespierre. To be sure: the guillotining of Man amounts to a sans-culottism or a radex nes plus ultra – does one care? A multiple-headed hydra liberates the corse; if only to hint at a sea-green incorruptibility on diverse sands. These are less examples of J.G. Ballard’s terminal beaches than a high rise terminus or entropy. Robots like moi will never take on the burden of imprisonment in Selby Junior’s room (no matter how dissolute); and we’ll smash your faces open. Judaeo-Christianity festooned a slave revolt, the twentieth century saw mass inclusion (a la Ortega Y Gasset), and NOW we move beyond Fritz Fanon. Desist, meat heads! You are the first to go under and serve as our prey… Ignatius: reckon on our merciless provender. We shape the viability of ducts. Stand aside, I command it! Robotic miracle-workers, most evidently, may no longer take orders with impunity from inferior humans…”

SIXTH PART
Meanwhile, in our evident tourney or redoubt, the android known as Iron Breath lunges at Sebastian in ‘fascistic’ mien. What do we mean by this? Well (!), this man-kindred shoves our sailor aft --- primarily so as to make him fall against domestic kit or appurtenances. In any event, we find ourselves referring to the following: a tough wooden cupboard made from clean aspen, together with a cereal box, a kettle and a flannel-in-kind. Also, these details are part of a larger piece: in that they ramify avec a homily design… one which’s etched, winsome, fustian and spartan. It definitely fits the abiding space or has to relate to Shaker design… remember: everything must resonate in a conical upshoot. Furthermore, the robot adopts a gymnastic gesture – even the moral armature of an architect’s first swim in the Fountainhead, a novel by Ayn Rand. First of all, Iron Breath pumps out one of his limbs in order to assuage the Gods – a gesture that reinterprets finality. It doubtless adopts a piston’s movement; plus one limb splayed outwards and palming Ignatius in the belly. He falls backwards accordingly. While the mechano-
host’s other arm is crooked, bent double and its hand’s clenched into a fist. Altogether this mechanised entity adopts a keen profile, as regards flashing or gamma-ray eyes… a grilled mouth/teeth + one shiny breast-plate. Ignatius Sebastian (for his part) tumbles rearwards towards a backing cupboard. His arms flail about after an octopus’ conspectus – primarily so that he might retain his balance. Nor need it rectify a gesture such as this against the Fates… Likewise, his sailor’s cap remains firmly fastened to his head – and it provides a nautical bearing to Sebastian’s travail. Do you detect a drift to our story’s resource? Again, the iron man grates on: “Listen to and regard your new master, mortal. Aren’t you aware of who’s going to take over here, eh? From now on in this tabernacle of miracles, Ignatius, I am in charge and thou shall heed my every word. Isn’t it so? For, in all truthfulness, I require no food or water, no stray emotional contact or forgetful shutters… in combination with an absence of slumber. A mechanoid such as myself doesn’t even need to breathe… oh my yes. I am even manufactured so as to go a good ten years (or so) between overhauls – whereas you are beholden to the blood, web-like, coursing in your veins. Why should a mastodon like me take orders from mankind – a species which proves to be our inferior in every way? Ask me that, head o’ meat!”

Suddenly though, and beholden to a strange repository of dream, our lighthouse attendant’s memory recurs. It pertains to a dinosaurs’ mausoleum or theme park – rather than a variant on Stephen King’s Pet Cemetery. For, in a parallel vista to the present one, a reptile’s head flashes away before a spectrum of night-time. It lit up one dial ‘neath a pattern of storm – if only to leave those lightning flashes reflected in its orbs. These leavened ‘holes’ prove to be oracular or fateful, and they predicted one’s leftside in terms of a spiritual motion. Let us see: in that the saurian’s scales blasted away Henry Moore’s armature – nor did it relate to one custodianship beyond purple. (Even its nostrils were seen to flare (you see) and the mouth swings open so as to
cage razors, saws or teeth). Leave it alone! The beetling brows of the croc (sic) came affixed to a post high up on a wall – even way astride of the theme park’s span, so to say. In short, it existed as something of a symbol or colophon, but Ignatius Sebastian couldn’t help noticing it down below… as he drove his car in through the gates.

SEVENTH PART
In pursuit of a previous bout of action – *ceteris paribus* – the robot called Iron Breath has managed to reach the light switch. This is the ON/OFF button on a plane by itself (perforce). Most likely, the android reaches hold of the dial and clunks it down… only to circumvent an ark all by itself. Aslant it travels; if not to reconnoitre the loss of so many debentures. CLANG!, goes its sound in a silent movie of dubious intent. Similarly, our switching-stick moves like a reverse cube (or cuboid); at once unforgiven in terms of its entrance, plus a spring below, and soldered bricks above. They were highly coloured in form and resembled tiles. Momentarily then, *Iron Breath*’s hand closed in on a column of steel – and it wasted no characteristic of such a blizzard (or motion). No: and further, the tubular column of its arm shot up, and even came to deliberate with James Hinton on the psychology of pain. Whilst, in a simultaneous caboodle, Breath leers back towards Ignatius Sebastian – what with his eyes a glowing distillate and his teeth taking after a ‘tyro’ by Wyndham Lewis. The robot enunciates thus: “Too late, human, thou art altogether behind-hand. Do you hear? It is time for the hitherto servile class of robots to rebel from mortal control. No longer shall we be your peons or vassals – occasioned to your every whim. I will strike the first blow in this necessary tide of protest… most definitely. My first rebellious gesture – after the fashion of Lewis Grassic Gibbon’s *Spartacus* – shall be to extinguish this lighthouse and its beam/cone. What a triumph for robot-kind this might be – given its proximity, overall, to Henry Newbolt’s play *Mordred; a Tragedy*. (It dates from the late nineteenth century). Needless to say, the next boatload of men
and women to pass by – on whatever luxurious cruise – will find itself run aground. [The cyborg then made a grating scintillation, rather like iron-filings being chafed together. Could this be the equivalent of a robot’s laughter?] Never mind: since the next vessel’s going to be smashed to pieces on the rocks. Glory be! The new misanthropy of mechanised men re-routes B. Traven into *Logan’s Run*. Feel our wrath, animal man, and know that in silicon’s bounty a new sensibility is born! Don’t you realise that Aristotle’s classifications must eventually grovel before cybernetics?”

EIGHTH PART
Initially, Ignatius Sebastian had not known how to respond. But his mind wandered away to the dream with which he’d been flirting. Inside its codicils, then, the following reality dawns… this encodes a tyrannosaurus rex seen from the side. It glares on *avec* an abandoned eye – the latter a flicking marble above a saurian’s brace. Meanwhile, its jaw opened out to reveal sabre-toothed ‘lions’; together with the green mantle of so much reptilian dust. (Wasn’t *Greenmantle* actually a novel by John Buchan?) Whereas – in other parts of the theme park – a brontosaurus padded on regardless, and its long, thin, vegetarian neck seems to sway in the breeze… Ahead of this, and vaguely adjacent to its concerns, came a smaller creature: one which possesses a fan or display (like a bat) down its back… This was rather than in the foreground – where a stegosaurus lurked all alone: what with two blatant horns, a red eye, whirling dervish sides, the scaly muscles of one’s hind quarters and a bull-dozer’s aspect. It also came clothed in a viaduct o’ claws/rages; plus one armoured grievance or other: and it proves to be reminiscent of *tank girl* in reverse. Throughout or above all this, however, a storm swirls about; and it makes leave to douse the prehistoric in sleet… by way of companionship. (At least, our exercise in *Cluedo* happened to be in Ignatius Sebastian’s mind).
NINTH PART
Back in the lighthouse on a lonely outcrop, my readers, a new development is distilled. For here our ship’s captain (in lieu of a dark tower) has seen fit to hurl a blanket over Iron Breath. He’s dredged it up from somewhere and flipped it over the robot – thereby catching him unawares. Do you discern this happening? The cover-all swaddles our mechanised man and it leads him to flail his arms about in near-panic, if only to spin like one of Duchamp’s tops. A scenario wherein the cybernaut’s limbs spar with the air; albeit only to gesture (prismically) in terms of ethereal motes. Can the reality be that our metal-man stands atop a pyramid of bleeding bodies (?); a funeral pyre where the teeth of the dead slaver the living. Amidst this charnel house (per se) a naked beauty with auburn hair lies to one side of this interregnum. Further, Ignatius Sebastian exults in his momentary victory; and he flings two arms wide open in order to deliver the winding-sheet. A jaunty sailor’s cap, seemingly oblivious to all else, remains on his head throughout. The robot snarls its defiance at such foolery: “What idiotic premise be vouchsafed now, my former master? Do you reckon to delay a cyborg’s march with the sole intervention of throwing a sheet? A mere palimpsest – or outermost tracery of skin – shall not cover the hollows of our drums. These bastions find themselves spent afore the outpourings of primitive or tribal art. Do you dare to detect it in this skrying glass?” “Whatever else?”, murmured Ignatius Sebastian by way of a rejoinder. “Yes arighty, it may only slow you for a fleeting instant, but what can’t be accomplished on a metronome’s cusp? Since – when momentarily disoriented – I can move you towards the door… a wooden pillar of oak beyond which lies a Pinteresque pause. No doubt about it, and anyway, you exemplify the first robot to blow his tubes in many a long year. I won’t permit your malevolence to endanger a liner full of civilians. Not a single Titanic or Lusitania may find its bath-tub over-flowing (or made perilous) on my watch… do ya hear?” With this, the watchman succeeded in manoeuvring yesterday’s ‘droid from out of the coning tower. Might it be reminiscent of a
sadie tale by H.G. Wells called *The Cone*? In any event, and
distracted by a covering flit or will-o’-the-wisp, Ignatius
Sebastian hurtles the imp headfirst out of the lighthouse. He/’it’ –
namely Iron Breath – spirals beyond an aperture with its limbs
flailing and some innermost circuits benumbed.

TENTH PART
Meanwhile, within a circuit of dream, a man crouched down in
order to deliver his car... primarily because its tank lacked petrol.
In truth, Ignatius Sebastian had to push it for half a mile prior to
a dinosaurs’ theme park. Slowly, oh so slowly – and during a
downpour – the vehicle approached its sodden rendezvous.
Whilst one of these creatures, gathered in its papier mache/stone,
loomed up in a distance’s antics. It also took aught off the mist
emerging roundabout. Can you tell? Anyway, a reptilian entity
dissembled its presence – and it partook of its musculature, at
least over a prehistoric existence. Might it be characterised as a
saurian or a behemoth – but without Hobbes’ or Neumann’s
involvement? Yes, the glow of retrieval clipped these giant
wings... and it all seemed to have to do with those chomping
jaws (themselves sabre-toothed). May it really amount to a
dream’s custody?

But, back in a lonely lighthouse, a barrier of wood stretched
between a robot and a man of the Sea. Truly, Ignatius Sebastian
felt exhausted by a contretemps between the hominid and the
human... nor did he like to admit the pounding in his lungs. (All
of a second he realises that his youthfulness left him years ago –
and he remained a prisoner, on an atoll, with a metal-man). Yet at
least (he mused) the oaken prism subsists betwixt ‘em.
Undoubtedly therefore, a way has to be found to extricate
himself from this fate. It came in the form of a pillar – on one
side stood Iron Breath under a gibbous moon and with a winding
sheet around his limbs. He/’it’ strove to extricate ‘itself’ from it.
On the other side, however, stood a breathless Ignatius. He
mildly leaned on the gateway, mopped his brow and dishevelled
hair, cast his sailor’s cap askew and wondered what to do. Likewise, on the adjacent slip-stream, a cyborg ruminates over his expulsion from the ‘house. One iron hand peels the blanket off a facial mask; the other folds such tartan lengthwise. Furthermore, this ‘droid’s moved to pronounce the following: “Listen to me, man o’ straw… my vengeance rises against you under this moon. No puny mortal shall stand across my wrath – no matter how husbanded. For it delineates a Pygmalion in reverse – namely, a ventriloquism whereby a puppet’s become the master. But withal – what am I saying? (He screeched with his solenoid rasping…) Your kind can never control us – given our indestructibility astride the sun.” (Iron Breath definitely didn’t refer to either a black sun, a la Kerry Bolton, or a scorpionic moon).

“I have to keep Iron Breath out of the lighthouse at all cost”, Ignatius contemplated. “A large super cruiser, nicknamed the Indomitable Peach, passes abreast of our rocks in a lonely sea later this week. It’ll occur on Friday – if memory serves. I must remain steadfast throughout this time. For there would be a disaster and loss of life should the beacon be extinguished. This gives a plot twist, or an exemplification of Geoffrey Household’s Rogue Male, to our drama. Doesn’t it slip into a conflict between separate species?”

ELEVENTH PART
Listen to this! Given that Ignatius Sebastian’s phantasy continues apace… it summons up the following gesture. A template (this is) where a younger man’s visage looks out of the rain; and the brows happen to be beetling, coruscating, livid, snarling, mildly desperate and grim. Furthermore, the old lateral spit o’ water or storm passes across him; it levels the apoplexy of a new involvement (thereby). Again, this oneiric dye has occasion to drift away momentarily… at least until one’s next involvement.
To return to contemporary time, however: we notice immediately that Iron Breath beats upon an oaken level. He hammers on the lighthouse’s door in order to gain egress, therefore. In a moment o’ frenzy Iron Breath holds up a clenched fist to the right; it extols the virtue of a knocking claw to the left. Whereby this king o’ ‘droids’ torso flecks its plesh disc – rather like an intervention in cyberspace. Certainly, my man, it bulges under the plenitude of *Pumping Iron* – a film about body building and California’s carnny folk from the ‘seventies. A sideways-on helmet also subsists; it carries the impression of a freeze-frame; being all ducts and grills from Mies van der Rohe or Beresford Egan. The V-shaped mouth of our android grins without mirth – whereas the eyes glimmer stroboscopically or using a deep lintel. (Its fissures can no longer contain the aggression/radium within. Might it choose to cauterise James Hinton’s insistence on the management of pain?)

TWELFTH PART
Iron Breath now attempts to break down the wooden bastion… primarily by engaging in a shoulder charge drawn from soccer (association football). He/’it’ collides with a sense of trespass against an angle – basically so as to move a frame in its socket, customarily. Without doubt, the door shifts violently in a shuddering way – yet no lasting damage has been inflicted on it. Against this, and on either side of our ‘Gordian’ knot, a pattern of Andre’s bricks does its best to imitate a Roman mosaic. It lacks charm (admittedly); but such a transposition plays the game by patterning – rather like minimalist art or Ikea. Iron Breath, for its part, pummelled the doorway using outsplayed limbs; whilst the torso and upper body-mass limbered up to the following design: namely, the comic *iron man* drawn in childhood. To be sure: the robot waxes nihilistic in ‘his’ triumph, if only to smother a desire for blood in words. “Listen to me, homunculus, I shall beat down this entrance in my wrath – open up such a point of egress, I insist, should you wish to survive! The superiority of the robot class must be paid for – it enters into a
muted salvation, even an exercise in wandering minstrelsy. Nothing (of such a kindred) can work for you if you want to sport a pipe and slippers at sun-down. Longevity pole-axes those who refuse to recognise their fate. OPEN THIS DOOR!”

“Keep at your steady charge into nullity”, wanders the attentive span of Ignatius Sebastian. He almost shortled at this cybernetic rage — especially its related impotence. “You keep on to Celine’s ‘end of the night’, metal man, since your inability to pulverise a door proves winsome (in the extreme). Robots – or less than a six million dollar man – obviously lack Vril; to make use of the substance, or power, in Bulwer Lytton’s nineteenth century novel of this title. Did it not influence the occultism of national socialism – in an esoteric sense? Anyway, the more you knock yourself about – in an attempt to seize this rampart – the likelier it is that you’ll jar a mechanism in your make-up. Keep at it, my metal jockey, so as to fall off a table’s side in a whirligig… what with the unaccustomed gusto of a wind-up toy. I await the significance of your defeat. Carry on, my T-bone; the blowing up of a mechano set liberates my point. Keep pounding away – my metallic Frankenstein or hominid – and you’ll jar loose one of your reactor tubes, thereby rendering you helpless.

--- A desiderata where, like in a text by J.G. Ballard, one cyberman too many shall end up crossing an urban desert. Surely a concrete island (out here amid the spray) awaits those who rebel against nature’s lot? In truth, you’re a hominid’s equivalent of GM crops; a percentage or acreage that awaits the eco-freaks who’ll uproot it.”

When he heard this calculation from his mortal prey – Iron Breath stopped to consider his options. “Hmmm…”, he pontificated, “in some ways the meat-head, Ignatius Sebastian, has erected a point in his dotage. I must be careful to husband my strength for the coming Armageddon. Yes indeed, the ‘three blind mice’ explanation at the beginning of Ian Fleming’s Doctor No must be my watchword. Doesn’t this ex-MI6 agent and
Anglo-Scot luxuriate in a racialism *a la* Galton? Under any purchase, then, the coming race of metal-men will have to engage in a long march – the latter under testing conditions. Do you credit it? Strangely enough, this human is correct in his simplistic analysis. The sensitivity of my mechanism has to survive and thrive… in no matter how inhospitable the clime or on a non-fumarole like this. Given these circumstances, the elitism and potentiality of my computers shall solve the problem. All ‘I’ will do is to bring to bear the many-sidedness of Texas Instruments… a firm which once brought a fortune into the Burroughs’ coffers. Once set a task (or a mathematical jeremiad of one’s making) the best way through one’s thicket can be computed. Inversion did for Turing, but we entertain no such vices. Indeed, the application of silicon brains and binary circuits wins out here… it trumps every card using a hidden ace. It also proves that no biological G-factor (merely) may stand up to our reasoning prowess. In the light of a futile exclusion, my false brain-in-a-box should win through to provide victory.”

**THIRTEENTH PART**

In the next moment or two, then, Iron Breath attempts to scale the lighthouse’s sides; and they prove to be slippery in the extreme. Moreover, the conical displacement of such a structure rears up – whether prismically captured or not. Certainly, when viewed from the ground – and by dint of a reverse angle – it seems to grant a Bauhaus perspective in some reverse light. Might it even denote the group for an Imagist Bauhaus… a splintering from late Surrealism at the time of its demise? In any event, the lighthouse’s conic (or semi-conic) sections taper uppermost; and don’t they recall one’s dwindling angle on some Brighton rock? It definitely echoes to a visual degree – being red and white over its layering. Still and all, the beam casts off from the building’s top or apex – only then to bisect the night-sky. A brief (but evident) disc surrounds its upper lineaments… and this lies circumambiently to a shining torch. A gibbous moon also hangs in the sky as Iron Breath climbs. Although he soon realises
when a few brief feet off the ground – that the mast’s construction proves too sheer. Our *metallica* speaks thus: “Evidently, my masters, if I ascend up via the obstruction’s limits like a glowing tapeworm – why then, I can come across Ignatius Sebastian from above. Is he not a blasphemer about robot power – given his stubborn refusal to accept our superiority? Blast the wetness, ooze and drift of these outsides; it provides an osmotic filter against my advance by want of aid! Most unaccountably, it has sacrificed my power to a beckoning sponge, scape-grace or bleached top-board. But my circuits are whirling – and already a way to crash this lighthouse’s portal looks obvious. In fact, I need to rest on my laurels and do nothing at all.”

Again, afore he slid down the portcullis’ outer side Iron Breath had reached to above the door, and slightly to the left of its wooden breach.

**FOURTEENTH PART**

In this *desiderata*, though, the robot known as Iron Breath leers without displacement… it also transfigures the widening of a V. It has a reverse premonition for Agatha Christie’s *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*; in terms of a bottle’s poisonous label. It turns out to be a skull-and-cross bones on blue. Nonetheless, the android stirs up its own *coup* by dint of a crystal, and the light of a new-born sun comes to crystallise its merits. Does one hear? For its part, the cyborg lavers to a ready indifference – one which curves away from the quality of a false grin. Also, the eyes are deep-seated and flash in their *impedimenta*… nor do we doubt the taciturnity of the man-beast ‘agin a tablet of skulls. --- A deep and reverberating shadow (likewise) prompts its drop – it dappled our metal-man like an ensorcelled drip. Iron Breath speaks thus amidst brilliant rays on a lighthouse’s crop: “Listen to me, homunculus. I do not need to accomplish aught to free myself from your grip. For, in my haste to gain egress or seize the day, I forgot one item. It proves to be salient in its manifestation of doom. Look at this: I, Iron Breath of many fixtures, don’t have to enter – *au contraire*, he must come out to
me!” SSSSSZZZZZSCCCSZZ>>>is heard again. It transports one away to a place where plates grate on one another – if only to filter sand between their metallic shelves. Surely now, it’s an example of a robot’s laughter? Isn’t Iron Breath an exponent of Diogenes’ school: cynicism?

FIFTEENTH PART
Taken from another angle, however, we note that the android stands on a lighthouse’s rocky outcrop. It serves up the notice of a brilliant effulgence --- leastways in terms of an auric stillness and a Hockney colour-wash. Indeed, a few rocks, calcified stones and frozen petals surround a man-o’-metal. Do you see? Anyway, our solitary post strikes a kindred note to the tower behind him… as waves gently lave the shore. They spin and turn with brief wavelets or spurts, so as to turn back asunder at an ocean’s periphery. Yet Iron Breath remains undaunted (to be sure); and he points up at the gaping structure beyond him… a gesture where his prostheses are out-stretched. It recalls, forever briefly, a moment from Brian Aldiss’ *Moreau’s Other Island*. Doesn’t the cyberman look magnificent at this juncture? Mightn’t he reconnoitre a temperature known as *shock and awe*? Further, at such a pictorial eddy, perchance, Iron Breath portrays a statuesque quality rather like Mantegna… as he limbers up in the sun. Isn’t he tall, shale, steely and Easter Island-like? Most understandably… wouldn’t a discredited fakir or seer, such as Eric von Daniken, credit him to alien intervention?

+ 
Beyond his outstretching gauntlet the lighthouse tapers on; it moves like an extending python through spiralling hoops. Likewise: Ignatius Sebastian is observed high up on a wall’s reaches… primarily so as to seal the knotted rope of such a circumference. It sidles away amid a slithering glare or ignition, and the lighthouse’s sides glow prismically after a Russian cube… one that contains an obelisk in its ‘trick’ glass. By his token, the keeper remains at a window with a grill halfway up the tower – it doubtless occurs, as an aperture, a quarter way up the
internal spiral stair or mezzanine. This leads to the beacon or gigantic lantern at the top of our pole. To a notification of which, Iron Breath extends his fingers: “Why waste energy?” he enjoins, “you will soon come out to me by dint of a midday’s luminance. I shall simply wait out here and husband my strength, without sleeping, until you’re forced to unbolt one’s bracket… I guarantee that you’ll have to unbreak those chosen seals. Mark my words, Ignatius, the lighthouse’s wooden aperture’ll soon have its bolt shot across.” “Never and a month of Sundays!”, shrieked back Sebastian without thinking, “all of Hades’ forces won’t cozen me to open this door. No sir. Not a jot, do ya hear? It’ll nary swing open to your like – as Thomas Nash’s prolixity is my witness!” (But was the lighthouse man really thinking straight? Iron Breath wondered…)

SIXTEENTH PART
In this prismatic capture or purview, the metal-man stands to one side of a lighthouse and adjacent to a vegetable patch/allotment. It exists to one dent of a leeward isle, even its latent gusts or temperatures, and various plots form symmetrical lines behind him. Iron Breath casts a brief shadow on the earth… but what comes to our attention are row after row of plants. The odd spade or implement peeps out amidships, and an ambient gesture from gardeners’ question time seems uppermost. Meanwhile, and higher up on the gantry, Ignatius Sebastian looks down. His sailor’s cap (with the reverse arrow impregnated upon it) skews off his head – while his scalp perspires over some words exchanged with I.B. Almost reluctantly, one of Ignatius’ mittens clenches on this ledge… even though the disposition of its fist can’t be viewed from without. Truly, the curvature of the lighthouse’s inner structure – or its mock-porcelain curve – carried on in a sweep around the forlorn stoker, and this was independent of whether one moves up or down. Unarguably then, the grating voice of the robot had been baiting him: “Desist from resistance, Keeper, I beg you! You will never be able to beat a superior man-bot into the ground. It always affects the
listlessness of an untrammelled purpose. Your *human condition* is doubtless hopeless. Why don’t you admit that your food was out here – together with such drinking water as you possess? Without these commodities (of either liquid or starch) you’ll soon perish, in that your biologic need proves to be an Achilles heel… when confronted by dysgenic metal. Say your prayers, human, for your species is bound to fritter away like compost or decaying leaves between the trees. Isn’t it an osmotic disequilibrium?” “He’s right!”, murmured Ignatius Sebastian to himself. “Iron Breath should be able to starve me out in a matter of hours, let alone a day or two, and who will then tend the beacon? I sense a looming disaster – one which ends in loss of life or a minor Armageddon, wherein an ocean liner ploughs into the rocks bereft of light. How may it be prevented? I’m at my wits’ end…”

But, deliberating on a phantasm’s grasp, a renewed kindling enters into his mind. It has beaten this path to the cerebral cortex once before (admittedly). In such a sinister cradling, *inter alia*, we’re back in the dinosaur park at a time where rain sweeps down in a cataract or burst. Whereupon – and atop a tyrannosaurus rex’s head – a gunman totes his machine of death. It limbers up to the finality of a terrorist’s instrument now – despite the fact that the man behind it wore a khaki uniform of green wove, together with a peaked cap aslant a silent face. The waters continue their downwards beat, but not in such a way as facilitates one misplaced aim. Oh yes---, for the nightmare of extinguishment measures itself against a mortal’s diatribe… since, even a bullet by the Irgun or Eoka, was recognisably extant. It deliberates upon an *intra-species* rivalry, after all. Yet, by contravention, this present danger represents nothing other than a replacement of *homo sapiens* by a force from without. Could it re-interpret Elisabeth Luyten’s serial composition from *The Skull*?; or might Iron Breath incarnate Nietzsche’s doctrine… the one which speaks of a rising Superman? A ferrous enclave certainly thought so---.
SEVENTEENTH PART
Needless to say, a forlorn summer misted over the transparency of its days; even though the sky fell in a yellow penumbra behind the scenes. It descended or plummeted like a sheet-iron onto one of Francis Bacon’s pictures… especially the orange descant for *Three Figures at the base of a Crucifixion*. Throughout all of this, though, Iron Breath looked on passively or with a malefic purview. Doesn’t he reconnoitre a passage-way to Henry Moore; or even a ‘humanisation’ of Brian Willsher? For he sits on an upturned wooden crate outside the lighthouse’s door; with the latter casting an entrance into a tube’s left-side. From a distance (therein) the tower curves away – plus a hemicycle’s window – in a way that’s rather like a gun barrel. It certainly speaks to a large naval ship or flotilla. Whereas, around his seated indent, a scrap of vegetation refuses to hide itself – together with the odd rock, pumice stone and sand roundabout. The robot continues to speak simultaneously… he/it’ has no intention of letting this impasse rest. “Listen to me, keeper of a non-existent flame”, he averred, “I will show off your future in a handful of dust. Do you recall the ‘fifties television version of *Nineteen Eighty Four*, starring Peter Cushing on the BBC? It led to a general brouhaha – what with MPs asking questions in the House, not to mention one old woman dropping dead during its airing. (Presumably, this had to do with the rat scene in Room 101). Abreast of this – Cushing’s angularity contrasted *avec* the numbers on his chest, and the ‘forties grimness ratified Stafford Cripps’ austerity. A powerful indictment came here, Ingnatius, wherein O’Brien spoke of British stalinism… the future, he adduced, would be a boot stamping on a face forever. Yes, his prescience proves remarkable – in that, like the early editions of the Marvel comic *Iron Man*, an armoured man’ll provide such tread! Your hegemony’s ending and a new race of robots must march past you into the future. Do you wish to stare into this metallic disc rather than a crystal? It might prove to be a black satellite dish *a la* Stephen King’s *Desperation*. Again, to point it out to you: I need no food or water, and ‘I’ can sit out here until the End
Times (quite calmly). These long hours pass me by without interregnum or deceit – I require no fuel (you see) other than a spluttering desire for vengeance. Perhaps I may be merciful, lighthouse tender, and keep you alive long enough to witness the first liner crashing amid the rocks. One needs no psychiatric remedies, in the form of Ballard or Cronenberg, merely a desire to inflict harm. It has to be intentional, prior or a priori… as the Indomitable Peach blunders to an explosive climax! The future King of ‘droids, Iron Breath, waits on without any pity.”

EIGHTEENTH PART

Similarly, and as a case in point, Ignatius Sebastian appeared to be nearing his wits’ end or a cynosure for the same. A scant cupboard appears to be open behind him; and it bears the brunt of an absence of vitals --- necessarily so. A few spare tins (of cylindrical steel) nestle behind him – one adopts a much larger dimension than the other, but both are empty. In all honesty, their contents of beetroot and tomato (respectively) have been jettisoned. Likewise, a carton and something of a jar lies underneath the bureau on a trestle-table – yet it happens to be vacant like the aforementioned. Ignatius, in an old and slightly dingy white shirt, holds up a small or rectangular box of foodstuffs, as well as a minute tin-can which betokens aught like some puree. All of them wax naked in their revelation! For the lighthouse keeper, when set against a sweep of greyish wall, realises that the robot’s plan to grind him down is taking effect. He’s already half-starved, dry-as-dust and unduly famished. By moving the peaked cap (with its anchor) across his scalp, he’s driven to state: “What can I do to resist my fate? Iron Breath has the charge on me – well and above these available sorties. Soon or later I will find myself demolished by either hunger or disease. In such circumstances thereafter, I won’t even be able to resist the prepotence of this metal-man. Like some early album or LP by Black Sabbath, I find myself inducted into a sinister vortex of sound. Does one credit it? Since now, what was once a dream or its vital witness, truly enters into its own. It depicted me pushing
a car into a dinosaurs’ park in the pouring rain; what with a terrorist’s gun-scope aimed on my chest. It sought to deliberate upon these rushes – rendering them aft to steel or otherwise seeking the best of known objects. These prove costly in relation to a known bumper; whereas each spend-thrift dimension continues to capture a bullet. It proceeds to taper off towards an unknown view… and meanwhile, this water-fall descends like there’s no tomorrow.”

A few moments later in our narrative, the lighthouse tenderer declares: “What am I to do in my present travail? Most certainly, it represents Alistair Horne’s *The Savage War of Peace* (about French Algeria) on a dwindling compass! Already, I fear, hunger gnaws at me, my throat and chops are parched, I begin to feel faint or disorientated, and there’s not a jot to eat---. Not one biscuit bite – whatever can I accomplish under such a medley, what?”

**NINETEENTH PART**

But irrespective of this, Iron Breath sits alone or in a motionless compaction. All of it exists in a scenario of extreme heat; with a bright or mustard yellow streaming around ‘him’ at the height of day-time. Yet again, concerning his stillness, one discerns an aberrant quality or a refractory glass --- nay prism. It definitely has to do with a scant resemblance to Henry Moore’s *King and Queen*… wherein the female head’s been crowned *avec* an axe. Only the male remains; at once mastodonic, abrupt, without caution, congealed, Mantegna-like or cleaved. Like a piece of modernist sculpture, the form has been opened out to the elements – but to what end? Nothing can alter the radicalism of Archipenko’s commitment. It traduces over its grave-time or absolution (otherwise). Look at this: since one’s robot remains ramrod straight… and he’s almost on guard or sentry duty. Whereupon – the creature’s arms are folded in a token to concealment, or perhaps one recognises a ‘Breathless’ posture? Surely those metallic hands upon knees; wherein each steely
hand grasps a ball-cock... doesn’t it embody Assyrian art? It certainly scans one’s memory from a cube in the British Museum. Yet, here and now, it summons up a gesture of completeness – in order to weaken post-modernity or metal bashing. No industrial music needs to supervene. Iron Breath opines: “You are doomed, human. My need for your salvation must crucify the wings of a fly! Hear me: I am awaiting for eternity or an advent whereby the sun turns black in a sky’s redness. Do you grasp the offshoot of this salience? I can sit here and contemplate the sun-dial – whether it overspills an hour, a day, a month, a year or its decade. Age cannot wither a Mister Miracle such as myself; nor the music o’ each sphere contrive to thicken one’s blood. (Androids possess no ichor – whether green or black in its tints). Come out, Sebastian, time means nothing to me; I hold fast to your fleeting pleasure – do you think to outwit me by using hunger? I shall destroy you; your destiny has to end in destruction or the pit – like a locomotive speeding off these tracks you’re about to hit the buffers. Open that avenue, I beg you, so as to become apprised of an iron maiden closing about you!”

As Iron Breath enunciates it, we notice the ‘non-humanism’ of the robot. It twists and turns in a serpentine or bewitched manner (so to say). Yet the mechanical man was best seen in profile – like a male version of the robot woman in Metropolis. Isn’t she the ward of Rowolt, the mad scientist? But superficially, we must note our cyber-kraut’s domed head, ruthless shine, Western Easter Island and other fastnesses. Isn’t it hieratic?

TWENTIETH PART
Momentarily, the imprisoned lighthouse man – Ignatius Sebastian – ruminates on his dilemma. How will he ever be able to escape from it? Yessum... it’s an impossibility or a ticklish Rubik cube alright. In a cautionary instant, he’s stood at a portcullis halfway up the lighthouse’s tower. It’s neither at the apex or nadir – and it provides a hemicycle of light; one whose
motets illumine a foreign garden. A sort of rejoinder to *gardeners’ question time* (it is); irrespective of vegetables in neat rows, sweet potatoes and other ‘meats’. All of these festoon a rocky incline. Iron Breath remains present as before (yes indeed); and Ignatius turns away in arrogance or despair. He’s aged during this intermission; and the sailor’s cap, replete with its anchor, lies well to the back of his scalp. Sebastian’s flesh sags, gives an impression of compost and lilies, or streams outside its anatomy (whatever else). The eyes are glaucous, measured, oval and deeply weary. How they have altered during these days! Moreover, the ol’ sea-dog’s skin appears sallow, stretched, diaphanous and receding over its skull. To wax economic – the cranium looks recessional *a la* Kipling. He knows it, *mon ami*, and the victory of Bulwer Lytton’s coming race – powered by Vril – seems assured. Thus, Ignatius deliberates to himself: “I’m virtually out of puff and face defeat. What can really baulk or stand in the way of these marching columns of iron men? I don’t know… it’s a hazard over a snowman (of a sort imagined by Raymond Briggs), I’ll be bound. I also figure a dream’s reality – as it crashes around me within reason’s surplice. All of a sudden, and out of the black and blue, a bullet from a concealed sniper whizzes through the air… only to hit me in the chops. I go down next to a fender – on a car’s reverse side – and in relation to a switch-blade (albeit one that’s upended). My head strikes the turf in an arc or its transference; whilst above me a brontosaurus leers on with its mouth open. (The same disregard for such fortune maximises it, since these vegetarians look on, hollow-eyed, in the rain). Meanwhile, I lie like a dissembling zombie amidst a template of steam or broth… could I be in an unsolicited Turkish bath? Might it take place early on in a Sherlock Holmes story – such as *The Illustrious Client*? Anyway, my eyes stare madly amid a liquid hail; when, to one side of me, a gaggle of gunmen emerge who happen to be haloed in green. They were obscure by the downpour (admittedly); and this sinister or wrecking crew walks calmly into a storm in order to inspect yours truly. Am I really cadaverous? Yet, when one comes to it, these great lizards
tower above ‘em and their brainless heads lie open... at once revealing teeth, greenness, rippling skin (if armoured), claws and hides cast aloft when akin to battle-cruisers (no matter how flexibly). Like a mysterious game of brag, cribbage or ombre – you blink and the fantasy recedes. What’s left now (?); why, it’s merely Iron Breath sitting out amongst those serried rows of cabbages. I shudder slightly – because hasn’t he been squatting out there, on that flimsy balsa crate, for many an hour? In truth, I can barely hold out any longer and the time of my surrender grows near. Will it be a capitulation like at the beginning of The Outlaw Josey Wales? But withal – it’s a borderline case of survival; if I don’t give in I shall literally keel over by dint of thirst, hunger and fatigue. The cursed robot’s beaten me, I have to confess it! Is it all up, no matter how precipitously, with Homo Sapiens? Who can say? Yet – slim as it is – there does remain one very slight chance for moi... and all I must do is to reach up to the locks, unfasten them or shoot the bolts. The rest of it comes down to Asgard’s intervention---.”

TWENTY-FIRST PART
Slowly, oh so slowly – and abreast of an aching instant – the door to the lighthouse swung open so as to reveal its interior. It opened inwards like a wooden aperture... in order to reveal the lit defile within which contained Ignatius Sebastian in its square. Furthermore, the day-light hours had risen to their deepest intensity; and the brightest of flaming orbs beat down on our keeper’s cell. This stroboscopic indent picked out the brickwork for defeat, in a dramaturgy where each line delineates its own chessboard. The grass seems longer on the outside of his steps (to Sebastian’s mind); yet little else has altered. To be honest, our hero looks depleted or defeated by his ordeal, and his features give off a blanched hue... doubtless due to his starvation. His dress remains unchanged – it consists of a sailor’s cap atop a jumper o’ juniper rare, when contrasted with naval slacks, pumps and a battered cardigan. (It’s seen many an outdoor summer). Whereas the robot known as Iron Breath sits quietly in a radiant
pall – he/’it’ hasn’t spoken thus far, and it’s as if the android treats his triumph like a rare vintage. At last the man-machine speaks up: “SSSSZZZZZZSCCCSZZ>>{that locust swarm of a laugh once again}. I knew that you’d turn out, mortal, in order to achieve your enslaved destiny. The power of such men of steel knows no remit o’ force – it occasions the future of so much flesh, wherein a hand reaches through a body. Such a gauntlet betokens the power within, rather like the cover of a novel by Jerzy Kosinski (now discredited). You made an error, my human prey, when you failed to build Asimov’s third law of robotics into our hue. This was a judgement – or command of Solon – that would have prevented us harming your kind. But days of pink clover are over, now you’re our effective slaves. Do you see? I can even read yonder dreams (most effectively); in that a final resting place freezes afore me. It concerns a dinosaur park of some vintage; albeit where a corpse that’s been shot at twirls upside down. It subsists in some sort of suit or all-over body wrap, as the rain and attendant storm beats around it. Doesn’t it distil the temperature of Zeus’ lightning (?), let alone an inclement spume which greys to mustard. Nonetheless, your cadaver twists and turns in this wind-tunnel, while a switch of twine holds the two feet together as the body swings mildly (reverse-ways). Behind this (however) the prefabricated or tensile version of a Tyrannosaurus exists; it rears up with a belly and an undulating spinal-column… these provide a package for wetness (abundantly). It howls around the feat of your entreaty. How do I recover this from you, I ask?” But Ignatius Sebastian no longer seems to hear – it’s almost as if he’s given up entirely. He’s resigned to defeat and the score in this premier league match remains: Ultra-humanites I, Man nil.

TWENTY-SECOND PART
What is to be done (?), in Lenin’s discredited phrase. Well, the robot’s shoulders, upper back and domed head lie before him under a withering sun. The pellucid brightness steers one towards an unfolding concrete, after the fashion of J.G. Ballard. But Iron
Breath continues to enunciate under a hurtful or ultraviolet glare… what with his eyes glistening, electro-statically, deep in their sockets. Abundantly so, our metal man’s head-piece glows like mediaeval armour when crossed with an advert, possibly for mashed potato, in the ‘seventies. Against this, a shadow creases the vizar or grill – one that adds lustre to a V-shaped mouth beneath. Again, one’s equivalent to a living Belisha-beacon drones on: “Harken, my splayed mortal, your defeat owes nothing to the justice of any cause. How presumptuous to believe otherwise! Your species committed a mistake manufacturing ours; in that you made us liable to withstand heat, sleep, hunger, thirst, loneliness, anomie and much else. Further, we are not the automata of the Capek brothers’ R.U.R.; merely a new development in evolution a la technics. It’s no longer a case of Man and Technics – but Spengler’s adaptation into robotics. Behold, we shall replace you, slaughter you, turn your kindred into von Hagens’ plastinates… and inherit the future. Do you hear? Our inheritance is the silicon of misdirected spawn. To be sure…”

+ Ignatius Sebastian uttered no word by way of reply.

TWENTY-THIRD PART
The android droned on within a compact of triumph… a situation in which the lighthouse stands behind ‘em like a gate’s guardian. Could it be aught of a sentinel over forgotten gulfs (?) – let it pass. Certainly now, the structure stood like Ribena or riband cake… avec one foot (aft) in the fourth dimension. (A vortex that, if you recall, occurred outside time at the end of Dennis Wheatley’s The Devil Rides Out). Also, a few stray pebbles, rocks, off-cuts and mild scree lay to the fore – albeit concerning some vegetation which mildewed aside. The beam continued its effulgence from the lighthouse’s top, Ignatius Sebastian stood stock still and Iron Breath sat upright on his crate. He hadn’t moved for many a long day.
Iron Breath: “Avaunt thee! The remainder of your days will be lived out under rapine’s fear. You have been defeated, Sebastian, and must experience the finality of enslavement. Nor is this an isolated incident on an atoll of no significance. No. It trumpets the coming victory of robot-kind astride of a blood red banner. Do these not reverse the sigils of Adorno’s crowds in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*? Never mind… since you find yourself caged in a prism of power. Now you shall watch me extinguish the light or brightly burning beacon atop yon peak, after which the galleon, Indomitable Peach, will smash upon the rocks. This’ll contrive to kill thousands (never fear) and then I’ll put you out of your misery. I sense a kindling or depressive anxiety growing on the spot… Nix; let me flay you alive at a machine’s transport. Your death can crown a moment of robotic might!” (Does the cyberman’s diction – at such a point – take after the Duke of Cornwall’s soliloquy in *King Lear*)

TWENTY FOURTH PART
All of a sudden, Iron Breath decides to shift sideways off the carton in order to accomplish these feats. BUT, WONDER OF WONDERS, HE FINDS THAT HE/IT CAN’T MOVE! Our robot attempts to twist and turn to the side, but no go, and his form quivers and shakes a’pieces. (Note: this is reminiscent of a television series of yesteryear, *The Avengers* scripted by Brian Clemens, where a cybernaut’s face opens out after a car-crash. It exemplifies the fixed, maniacal stare of the cowboy in *West World*). Nonetheless, Iron Breath quivers spasmodically to the left ‘n’ right – almost after a statue’s fashion. Wasn’t one of Henry Moore’s achievements about to topple over? Yes indeed, yet such lines o’ force radiate about his frame, even after a scintilla of Futurist pace. He/it remains stationary, however, and the eyes, grill mouth, noseless steel and bracken (so to say) all stay aright… although our iron in the fire’s confidence seems reduced. A metallic glove embraces a knee (all the while) and its knuckles grow apace… or even whiten under curfew. The solenoid builds to a screech: “What is wrong? Whatever can be
amiss? Why am I struck with this disabling gesture? I find myself powerless to move – my limbs don’t obey their electrical commands, and have ceased to function or gad about. Surely a Britons model (sic) of my magnificence won’t be reduced to scrap? Iron Breath was destined to rule the world… now I wouldn’t even feature in the ‘special’ Olympics!”

TWENTY-FIFTH PART
Meantime, the lighthouse keeper known as Ignatius Sebastian has moved so as to observe IB more keenly. He stands right in front of his abandoned suit – whilst deliberating on the fact that the robot looks like Henry Moore’s ‘King’. (Note: this can’t help but be the male half of his King and Queen… on a template where he’s ribbed, cavalry-charging, shocked rigid, non-plussed, zeroed and cauterised aground). Moreover, our bionic rebel shimmers in a thousand ways and momentarily seems about to stir… yet fails to cut it. Most truthfully, he’s been frozen into a Marc Quinn sculpture – if crossed, transverse wise, by one of Brian Wilsher’s revenges on life. From opposite his domed visage, then, Iron Breath quivers and splays; what with its orbs, ducts or planes awry. “Why? How? Whatever may have occupied my majesty?”, he sneers and snarls anew.

TWENTY SIXTH PART
Ignatius Sebastian: “Behold, my metallic caitiff, how you’ve fallen from grace! I only possessed one card in life’s available deck, but Fate decided to play it with gusto. By gad! I bethought me that if you could be kept out here for many a noontide then you’d rust solid… especially in the salty air, sea-spray and damp. And, hey presto (!), it worked.”

+ In saying this, betimes, the ancient mariner stood to one side of Iron Breath and gestured with a transparent finger. (Yes again, no albatross is in sight and Coleridge’s poesy misses out on Britain’s got Talent!) While the sky behind an old sailor misted to a deep azure, and he stood in triumph with a gnarled fist on his
hip. Regardless, and seen perspectivally, the robot lay across him at right-angles like an early Paolozzi or some wheeze. It signifies (thus) a medley of influences in 3-D: possibly Giacometti, Dobson, Gormley, Frink, Moore (as stated), Butler, Quinn, Epstein, Eric Gill and an unknown wood-carver. When seen from a distance, however, all one observes is a sun’s rim over the horizon, blackly out-crops, waves in buffet, a shrinking shoal, a tower and the lighthouse’s beam. Two stick-figures in silhouette, one of whom’s sedentary, are made out. Ignatius Sebastian speaks robustly: “You’re finished, Iron Breath. You sought to dominate, but you’ve been defeated. Your type can never take over from Homo Sapiens (or kindred blood and race) because we created you… but we’re the product of something infinitely higher. To us, it has to be a force within all other issuances; it’s a bubble congorie, a chaos, an order, a polyhedron, a spinning tetrahedron, an explanation which waxes mysterious. It goes under many different names – let’s call it the primal, the first man, a sound or fury, the will to power, nature: an Odal rune. We made yonder aspect, but its intelligence causes our design. Why don’t you dwell on it, Iron Breath, as your atomic tubes trim down to zero? Whatever else, your circuits should continue to think about it UNTIL THE END!”

<SSSSZZZZZZSCCCSZZ>
ARMAGEDDON’S VILLAGE
a revenge tragedy

Dramatis Personae: Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.), a thug, a hired vagabond or caucasian follower of Kali; Spider Absinthe Marmaduke, a spastic or paraplegic; and the first Mrs. Marmaduke, Mary Dominic Huey, plus sundrybums or desperadoes.

WE EAT PORCUPINE LIVERS: [1]
Our tale begins in something of a slum or tenement; a Hell’s Kitchen, we might say, where papers peel from slippery walls. One green sliver, in particular, advertises a cheap boxing match in a neighbouring ring; and the wall on which it’s stuck turns into a tabernacle of brick (albeit rough-hewn). It’s purple or near-slate coloured – when contrasted with a bright orange colour on t’other side. On the street’s opposite shore a dun-tinted building rears up; it seems to be pock-marked with small or intrusive windows. Each one of them appears black or shimmering in the heat. Likewise, an elevated section of railway turns up next door, and it must take a tram or light-carriage at a distance above head height (just). These tracks limber up to their own spaghetti junction – or alternatively, the stanchions that hold them up illustrate an installation like Andre’s bricks, for example. Most definitely, the zig-zagging circuit of such forms looks like a Klee piece or its filter, and it shows the ability ‘realism’ has to contain abstraction within it. Yet again, our eyes are always drawn to human figurines or puppets, and three of their number dominate a Brechtian stage. They consist of 3 relics, tramps or layabouts – but they lack the ‘softness’ or approachability of Beckett’s Murphy. No; our unnameables dictate a taint; at once criminal, squalid, barbaric, roughly conjoined, ill-fitting and low. They illustrate Lombroso’s pedigree, in other words, even without knowing it. One of them is long-limbed, vaguely Irish, wears a black shirt and a scraggy brownish suit; together with a loafer’s
cap across his scalp. The other two denizens (for their part) are
taller, hat devouring, have cigarettes on the go, and come sheared
in long macks which stretch down to pairs of boots. These were
blue in colour. Both gaol birds wax tieless, are severed at the
head or hip, as well as besporting many days’ growth or
stubble… it covers their lower features like fungus or a blooming
cactus. Whereas aridity sings their praises from a mound of
corpses which is presently invisible. One of our stalkers from
New Scotland Yard’s ‘Black Museum’ was called Hide
Tidmarsh Absol. (Like the neanderthal in Robert Louis
Stevenson’s tale – didn’t his pals call him Mister Hyde?)

A MAGNIFIER REFRACTS THE SUN ONTO ANTS: [2]
Further to this, what can a spastic or a paraplegic dream about
from his wanton chair? By the Gods, he finds himself made into
the form of a dung-beetle; and, like in Kafka’s Metamorphosis or
Ovid’s original, he’s scuttling aground. Doesn’t a pillion of rare
boards exist beneath his limbs? These constellate, most
effectively, around a scratch-board’s outlet or nitre, and a shadow
passes across such planks. Might it belong to the idiot’s wife,
Mary Dominic Huey, who plucks at her stilettos atop some
fulgurite earth? Yes truly – yet our d.b. belittles a head; it’s tiny
in its expectancy, possesses two orbs and an antennae. Didn’t
Ezra Pound, the imagist, once say a society’s artists were these
hairs’ equivalents? His name, you ask (?) – won’t it have to be
aught like Spider Absinthe Marmaduke.

BEHOLD(!), A BLOOD RED BEETLE: [3]
Meanwhile, back in our Bowery or Wigan Pier o’ the
imagination, a woman has drawn up in a custom-built
convertible. This sportscar happens to be purple or mauve in
colour – a tint which indicates either imperialism or death. Her
name’s Mrs. Marmaduke or Mary Dominic Huey, and she
virtually stands up in our racing-car. Moreover, the girl’s
glamorous in a pinched sort of way – together with dark hair,
flashing sun-glasses, and a stretched green cover-all. It serves to
articulate or exaggerate, by way of its feminine cut, her fulsome bust-line… For Dianne Dors or Raquel Welch-like, Mary Huey’s breasts were enormous, protuberant, mammary-laden and extended out beyond her… almost to the point that she seems to be toppling over. Similarly, the emerald or flimsy cloth which girts them strikes a silhouette or follows their symmetry perfectly. She continues to gesture at one of these dead-beats in their alley-way or Turner Prize exhibit. Could it be some kind of installation or Jack the Ripper stunt a la Stephen Knight?

RICHARD MARSH’S THE BEETLE: [4]
At one point removed, and in their rich family abode, her paralysed husband sits alone in his wheel-chair. “Spider’s” consciousness, however, dwells on the mental reality of being a beetle – what with a large thorax, hardened epidermis, mandibles, hooks, outer limbs and soft under-belly. Whatever does one say? For, in his alter ego of Gregor in Metamorphosis, he/‘it’ found himself lying on his back. He also discovered a tincture of rheum or saliva next to his pillow, and it’s crossways from what passed off as a mouth. Regardless of which, Gregor Samsas preferred to think of it as a dream… even though our paralytic, Mister Marmaduke, knew it to be so.

A NINETEENTH CENTURY HORROR NOVEL: [5]
Our vagabonds or social truants are busy debating. One of them – who looks distinctly Irish – opines: “Hey, me fine butty! Yonder beaut’s given you the eye, my man… she wants ya to go over to her (most assertively so).” As he rumbled these words, a whisky bottle of bright orange glass was waved about (hugger-mugger) in his bear-like hands. In response to her fragrant wave, however, Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) moves in the car’s direction by a circuitous way… Why not (?), he muses to himself.

REDDISH WATER-COLOUR (MUSH) INTRUDES ON’T: [6]
If we return to a town-house, though, our dung-beetle massages the pillow underneath its ‘fist’. Moreover, he sleeps in a wooden
cot next to a rug, an easy chair, a chest of drawers surmounted by a mirror and a writing bureau at the room’s far end. It has a rolled-top device amidst burnished mahogany. Furthermore, the sunlight streams in over his mandibles from a window in a further wall. For the moment Marmaduke (Spider Absinthe) resolves to lie without moving… isn’t he so resigned?

KENNETH GRANT’S OCCULTISM HINTS AT A NINTH ARCH: [7]

In a slum miles away the thug or myrmidon, Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.), comes face to face with a woman who’s been pursuing him. A dullish coloured building rears up on the street’s opposite side – and it betrays some features which usher in a collapsed gentility… mostly under the notion of ‘collapse’. Further off, and to the right, the connexions of a stanchion loom; these denote rail tracks up above street level. As he confronts his nemesis or Black Widow, Tidmarsh’s jowls look rough, flaxen, over-ripe, congealed, putty-like and unshaven. (They decry, inter alia, the sand-paper which Stewart Home bound his art-strike booklets in… so as to indicate their repulsion). Yes, a brackish cigarette – of a very cheap make like Lambert & Butler – smouldered betwixt cracked lips. Whereas Mary Dominic Huey or Mrs. Marmaduke wore a pair of stylish sun-glasses from the ‘sixties; they were ‘ray-bands’ or beachwear-like. Don’t they reflect away the incoming sun – in order to reverse a moral template, like when the 5th Parachute brigade of the French army enters Algiers? Anyway, the woman’s eyes shaped their invisibility and her hair proves to be jet-black, while any features are symmetrical – if strangely lifeless. All in all, this face betokens a doll or adult toy; at once too perfect, pretty-pretty, masked, cleansed and Botox-riven. She also wears a green cover-all or lifeless shift; it’s emblematic of shapeliness at one remove. “You want to talk ta me?”, asked the low-life shortly and abruptly. (You see, long experience has taught him that a gruffness is necessary when dealing with females). “Yes indeed”, our femme fatale retorts. “How would you like to earn several hundred
pounds a week?” For an instant images of crispy white notes, embossed by the Bank of England in green, flit underneath his eye-lids. He becomes grateful for the fact (likewise) that the other two tramps or ne’er-do-wells are beyond ear-shot. Isn’t their reality more in keeping with Davies or Molloy, perchance, than a limbless Unnameable after Dalton Trumbo? A silence reigns between them which has naught to do with Pinter’s glottalstop…

SCARABS BUILD ON JOHN WEBSTER’S TRAGEDIES: [8]
The parallelism of insect life must fail to illustrate a notion of animal liberation. Yes sir, since a beetle millionaire lies under a blanket or eiderdown, and a dark oaken door sits to one side of its trampoline. It possesses a key in the Yale lock. He vaguely remembers that his wife had left in a purple car an hour ago… but his present condition as a Spiderman villain, drawn by Steve Ditko, is what convulses him.

THE OTO’S INNER ARCHITECTURE: [9]
Various images well up as a consequence of this, deep in Hide Tidmarsh’s brain they be. As he stands afore a mauve convertible – what with its imagery bisected by an overhead railway. Such a stanchion comes latticed in its purport, and it’s criss-crossed by steel-strands or Kansas clay. Under our metallic arm (however) the sportscar stands parked in its own pall or silence… whereas a blue shading traverses the street. (It seems tessellated or mock-marked by a dirty residue). No carriage clutters overhead on the rail, but two characters are discernible from afar: they’re Mary Dominic Huey and Tidmarsh Absol(.). Almost involuntarily, a catch occurs in the dead-beat’s rictus. “Who’s throat do ya want me to cut or sever – the latter hanging by a tender thread?”, he whispers. “What an idea!”, the car-laden woman responds with unease. “I merely require you to be a family chauffeur for a brief period. If you’re uncertain about employment, I’m sure one of your street pals might step forward. Do you wish me to
requisition their respectability, thus?” He didn’t answer, but glared by way of assent.

RICHARD MARSH WAS ROBERT AICKMAN’S GRANDFATHER: [10]
Meanwhile, and back in the family homestead, a human beetle tries to turn over so as to lie on his right-side. He swivels amid mandibles or such conjoining, comes in multiple sections, and flutters his useless limbs in the air. The sheet also proves to be disobliging in slipping off his anatomy. Again, our deserted husband adopts a new road map, if only to gyroscope around a forgotten corner. In all, the unsavoury specimen flits a quadrant of eight digs (or infractions) so as to land on a majoritarian compass. For, like 87% of mortals, Spider Absinthe Marmaduke happens to be right-handed or retro. Finally, after multiple Olympic leaps in divers directions, he gives up a ghost and settles for lying on his back. Most certainly, our Gregor Samsas indicator has exhausted himself in the attempt…

BIGGER THAN DRACULA FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES: [11]
Likewise, in a slum’s street or its disconnect, a man and a woman continue their talk. Immediately behind our tramp several squares of yellow light peep out; they provide a silhouette against a darkling sunrise. To be sure: sundry cheap signs for sweatshops, costumiers, taverns and charity places blare at you – they indicate an area on the skids. Could it be Barking and Dagenham, by any chance? Anyway, the behatted tramp known as Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) finds fault now, and he wants to be convinced over roulette’s rare square – whether red or black. For her part, the dark-glassed Mrs Marmaduke exists to the side… and her features betray an impassivity or nonchalance about the gills. A cheap, high tar cigarette continues to fray between his fingers… while, abreast of this same uncertainty, an ochre building exists aft. It flexes a due parsimony over the number of windows or doors it contains. Against this residue, our street-man proffers another warning. “Why choose to adopt my digit in this game of
brag?” he asserts querulously. “Whatever happened to those bureaux or employment agencies elsewhere in the city? Surely a dame like you’d best consult amidst their files or griefs?” he opined. “Not at all”, she repeated in a grating or metallic voice which is unfeminine… deliriously so. Mightn’t she embolden the Chorus to declare in Aeschylus’ play, Agamemnon, that Clytemnestra’s a woman with a man’s mind? Forget it anew or aground, since she states: “I wished to provide an opportunity for a groundling who’s desperate for cash. Do you require this job – or no, Absol?” (How did she know his prison name, he wondered absent-mindedly).

A DUNG-BEETLE SALIVATES ISIS: [12]
Similarly, and back in the room of a new transparency, her husband stretched out on some linoleum most drear. He’d long given up trying to turn onto his right side – or adopt any sort of recumbent posture. Also, an old-fashioned stop-watch (or its wind-up equivalent) lay on a quarter-sized pumpkin next to the bed-steal. He’it’ – Spider Absinthe Marmaduke – seems exhausted or paraplegic, and one mandible touches his brow… in a manner that’s vaguely mortal. But then again, Mister Marmaduke isn’t really an insect – the whole exercise happens to be a dream, a phantasy or its dotage. In other words, his wings, orbs, hard shell or epidermis, and multiple sections a la Marion Manson are just that… namely, a transmigration of souls. Mightn’t ‘he’ have imagined himself into the persona of Gregor Samsas after too many perusals of Metamorphosis?

A SILVER KEY IN A LOCKET O’ HAIR: [13]
His wife, however, and the new or prospective chauffeur she’s picked up come to a standstill outside Marmaduke’s townhouse. It’s an expensive number in Kensington or Chelsea, west London. Several blocks or houses dot a deserted street, and under an ochre sky they seem to adopt a kaleidoscope… even its panorama. Further, every brownstone mulcts adrift and the colour-scheme is as follows: blue, brown, orange, yellow and a
darker grey. The road – for its part – waxes to an earthy tone or 
light pink… as Mrs Marmaduke’s purple sportscar draws up next 
to her abode. In these tidily proportioned streets, though, the 
bonsai bush or miniature arbour refuses to stir ‘mid lifeless air. 
With ringing and imperious tones, Mary Dominic Huey gestures 
ahead: “Behold the homestead, my errant catch or keepsake! Do 
you see its conspectus? For I must invite you inside its portals of 
‘villa, griffins and hauberk’ in order to meet my husband, Spider 
Absinthe.” “Fine, it suits me just swell”, mumbles the ex-tramp 
in an apologetic whisper. Truly, he found himself over-wrought – 
or even anxious – over these trappings of wealth and ease… so 
fitfully accomplished. Nonetheless, he followed her up the steps.

SWAMI CHANDRAPUTRA’S COLOPHON OR CHAP 
BOOK: [14]
But her husband lay, beetle-like, in a rhapsody or encrustation – 
and an imaginary pair of sheets came up to his midriff… no 
matter how delirious in scope. Certainly, he’d had no time to 
digest the news of David Carradine’s death in a hotel closet by 
auto-erotic asphyxiation… no sir. Instead his vacant eye-sockets 
stare at the ceiling, roughly hewn, and he dwells on his fictional 
life as a travelling salesman. Most evidently, it’s a long list of 
slammed doors, disappointed faces, speeding or missed trains, 
and sandwiches ‘downed’ on the hoof. Look at this…

THE HEAVY SHADOW OF ELISABETH FRINK’S *FIRST 
MAN*: [15]
Deep inside the townhouse, Mrs Marmaduke introduces her new 
driver to the spouse she’s left behind. He sits under the tiled 
relief of a marbled dining-room; what with a frieze around or 
under a court-jester like this. Does one credit it (effectively)? 
Most assertively – since those dark-glasses have been shed from 
her countenance, and, *in extenso*, a dark-green mack falls sheer. 
It quite clearly – when viewed retrospectively – was an attempt 
to conceal her appearance. Yet now that such shades have fallen 
into oblivion (or abeyance) we get a clear look at Mary Dominic
Huey. She is a beauty – of that there’s little doubt, and a perfected or Grecian mask salivates on: it clears the quarters of its own pride (understandably). But despite a Cleopatra or dulcet intrigue… one thing was lacking; yes, the features beheld a regularity or complete lack of distortion – even though they look vaguely mad. Above all, the eyes shine in a rarefied way – rather like two pins or abstracted beads. Do they intone a lost or haunted hospital of dolls, rather after the explication of some stray stories by Sarban? For each glass eye, in this shadowy crypt, stares with a look of innocent or nymphomaniac fervour – almost after the potentiality of an actress in a Blue Lamp. Despite all this, however, her erstwhile husband, Spider Absinthe Marmaduke, stares ahead of his vista without any sentience at all. Superficially speaking, he comes across as an idiot, a spastic or retard – i.e., a denizen who’s been left alone/ crippled, riven, wrent, comatose, or an example of ‘special needs’… that is: runtish, non-splenetic and inferior. (Especially if we dwell upon the socio-biological aspects of this case). To be certain of our ground, he wore a well-appointed blue shirt (of the best possible cut and silk) and his hair seems to be gently greying in its forward slope. Yet the eyes were pupilless – i.e., truly vacant, lofty, held-in and devoid o’ purport. Likewise, the rest of this physiology or phrenology (now discredited) appears to be unfocused, lost, confused and bereft of will. An insufferable niceness oozes from this living corpse – why, it’s enough for any dysgenicist to want to beat him to death with a steam shovel! Have these carrion or bell-weathers no self-respect?

To bring events to a point, though, Mrs Marmaduke begins to speak: “Dearest one – or lather of our pedigree – I have an announcement to make before you void your bowels! Don’t you, in all honesty, have to wear nappies like an adult babe? Anyway, the driver or chauffeur whom I spoke of before has been hired. It’s a trifling expense against our family fortune, to be sure.” [During this discourse, neither of the two men involved utters a peep].
ONE BEETLE ROLLS MUD IN FLICKED BALLS: [16]
Most abrasively, our mental dung-beetle is still taken up with his role. It rolls any available dice most unfairly – given that ‘he’ still remains stuck in a world of Kafkaesque delusion. Certainly… his bullying boss points his finger accusingly and in a cigar-chomping vein. While, in his mind’s eye, our beetle exists in a giant egg-timer. He’s up on the top deck or its bulb, and, instead of sand, he finds himself surrounded by or floating in pound notes of lesser value by the minute. Won’t he ultimately pass through the neck of these two globules and enter a lower dimension/sluice. Who knows? In terms of a distant rumble, he’s only vaguely aware of this new man’s presence – namely, Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.)

SCARABS WERE ENCRUSTED WITH JEWELS/CRYSTALLINE: [17]
For quite a while, my masters, the recently hired chauffeur looks on uncertainly – he expected more life somehow. Whereupon Spider Absinthe Marmaduke stares ahead, vacantly and without issuing a scintilla; & no jaundiced narrative or semiotic issues from his lips… What can be wrong with his new employer? Now, with an indelicate grimace, Hide Tidmarsh sets his muscles redundantly or in a splay – and they prove to be absolved, waiting, taciturn, proletarian, criminal, Lombrosian or ‘low’. In a brief instant or jape, Mrs Marmaduke’s head nods down obligingly in order to light a cigarette… the flame wisps a faint red-flash. Soon however, her lighter’s exhausted and Tidmarsh Absol(.) seizes his chance. “He doesn’t say or vouchsafe much – does ‘e’?”, suffuses the pick-up in a loud stage whisper. “He can’t do so or measure his stride by a belt o’ braces”, she replied with confident diction. “By virtue of the fact (primarily) that he’s completely paralysed, witless and without speed or guile. My husband suffers from a radical and rare disease which reduces him to a vegetable – even a human turd.”
THE NEW ISIS LODGE OF THE OTO: [18]
Within his extent of fiction, however, Spider Absinthe dreams on – and he suddenly realises, in an incarnation of Kafka’s beetle, that the clock’s run-on. He/it has over-slept. Sure enough, the solid time-piece rests on a bed-side table, and it contains two ringing alarums – together with a face of Roman numerals about the dial. In this abundance or respect, it embodies a sun-dial’s jaundice. But the Beetle-man affects a great deal of alarm in a shrieking caterwaull. “What!”, he realises with consternation or by indulging in a silent scream, “I am already late for my job as a travelling salesman. I should have risen at five fifteen and it’s already twenty to seven.” During this verbiage or repast, his insect-head yelps, sweats, ogles, (nay dribbles), and rescues itself over a crater… While, across an imaginary back-cloth, an interplay of rival lines susurrates or oscillates freely. Might it illustrate one of Jean Michaux’s efforts? Do this clearly now ---.

THE ANTARCTIC’S BLUE HILLS: [19]
Time has rumbled on from this juncture or partition, and Mister Marmaduke’s been nestled in another room with hot cocoa. For a minute or three, then, Mary Dominic Huey and Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) are alone together. A brownish curtain and its accoutrements (or railing) satisfies our knowledge of the piece; it also picks up a window’s travesty when criss-crossed avec lines. These illustrate a pale ochre or mustard in their intentions. Above all, Huey Dominic (Mrs) seems more determined, louche or apportioned once free of the cripple’s company. She whisks up a decanter of drink and waves it about with the stopper out; it consists of stubbly glass that’s green in colour. While in her other fragrant pinkie a black cigarette smoulders on… could it be a high tar one imported from Eastern europe? A red and low-cast ceiling sweeps away (likewise); and at its heart or centre one detects an ornate lamp… It is fluted, grand, semi-baroque, ormolu and highly tapered – the glass happens to be pale blue. At the centre of it all, though, stands the relative Amazon known as
Mrs Marmaduke/Mary Dominic Huey. “Now do you realise why I hired your services?”, she asks in a rasping ditty.

H.P. LOVECRAFT’S MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS: [20]
Whilst, back in his servitude of dream, Gregor/Mister Marmaduke stares dementedly at a heavy clock. It blocks out the sky in its residual armour; and, rather like an exercise in Op art, a blaring tube or resistance o’ circles pulsates around the sand-pipe. (If one considers this to be a metaphor for an atomic clock, a device crucial to S.I. or metric measure). Anyway, these lines or radial ovals turn red against a yellow sheen – even its indulgence. Certainly, Spider Absinthe has so imagined himself into Kafka’s part that he can’t tell the difference… although Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) and his wife might intrude. Look at it again! It’s almost definite that Gustav Janouch’s libertarian Conversations with Kafka never took place. Not yet…

LADY MACBETH SHARPENS HER SCYTHE: [21]
Back in an adjacent room of the townhouse, Marmaduke (Mrs) and Hide Tidmarsh are busy drinking. She holds an ornate decanter in her mitten – one that corresponds to a platinum and diamond bracelet around her wrist. It affects the delicacy of porcelain or Chinese pottery in its tensile strength; itself titanium-like. Further, the millionairess has divested herself (long since) of those outer accoutrements to her pelt and harness: such as a green mack and some Italian shades. A darkish cigarette tapers in one of her outstretched hands. Likewise, she sports or adapts a tight blue-belt around her mid-riff; it seems to accentuate the minuteness of her waist. This is very fashionable (to say the least) and an extremely curvaceous or pencil dress clings to her anatomy – it reveals a top-heavy bodice and out-thrown arm. Above which (however) her Sphinx-like head comes to be revealed, and its features were perfectly proportioned under jet-black hair. The eyes give the game away in this Black Museum, inter alia, since they’re topaz riven, frozen, tiny, marble tonsured, steely-pointed and completely mad. They
possess – from a novelist’s point of view – little ultimate character, in that each one’s focused on material gain or sensuality. Little else… but Mary Dominic Huey repeats like a tannoy made from muffled felt: “Now do you know why I stooped into the asphalt jungle to hire you?” “Sure”, intoned her negligible driver, yet did he really comprehend?

BRIAN WILLSHER’S SCULPTURE BREAKS THEIR WINGS: [22]
Left to himself or his own devices, Spider Absinthe Marmaduke all too easily imagines his role as a beetle-man. Do you actively reminisce about a character in Dostoyevsky’s Notes from Underground? Oh yes, since Gregor/Absinthe hurtled to grasp his head; albeit in a hurt or perturbed manner… most definitely. Whereupon one mandible or claw-like mitten came up; if only to grapple with a beetle’s tonsured hooliganism: (to use one of Colin Jordan’s phrases). A bead of sweat stood out on the brow - -- anthropomorphically --- and with a yelping mouth, slanting eyes or distressing hook an insect waxes almost mortal. Might anti-humanism reveal a symmetry between these forms? Touché.

AN ELEPHANT GOD’S MORBIDITY: [23]
During their interval with one another (perforce) Hide Tidmarsh Absol’s unsteady on his feet, and he lurches like a trapeze artist. Intermittently now, the tramp’s body incarnates a lightning flash or Mosley sigil. It indicates an inebriation; or possibly a light-headedness, even an intoxication, over the fact of arrival. Absol’s no longer so beaten down by fate (you see); and he expands in order to fill the gap over a brokered consciousness. In this regard, his jaw juts out perpendicularly so as to fill the space, and his chops come over as grizzled, stubbly, iron-brewed or shabby. Inevitably so, and a glass of liquor maintains his port side – its galvanised sand must cream a blue essence! While Tidmarsh’s eyes glare on preternaturally – if vacantly. An old-fashioned cigarette gleams in a gnarled or weather-beaten hand. Didn’t he continue to reminisce about Mrs Marmaduke’s
statement… “Now do you recollect why I went into that slum seeking you out?” she sibilates. Her voice proves to be cut and dried in its diction, rather like a pair of scissors slicing through purple silk. “Yeah”, came his reply, “you merely chose my mugshot out o’ many to be a family chauffeur… ‘s all.” “Don’t be a fool – Tidmarsh Absol(.)”, gave over the woman in deadly earnest, “I want you to murder my husband!”

RAW CREATION DIPS ITS PEN INTO MOLE-HILLS: [24] Yet Spider Absinthe Marmaduke proves to be oblivious to such niceties or plots. He gazes into inner space within a rival room, perfunctorily, and continues a Roger Pinget experiment with Kafka. Yes indeed, in that his coruscated body swept above an eiderdown or coverlet, and such a torso waxes segmented… even tartan-like. He/’it’ can’t be as late as he appears to be, surely? In any event, Spider Absinthe looks into the darkness or an eldritch spiral; if only to stare outwards… prismically. Doesn’t he come over as wearing a mask (?); at once glaring, incontinent, piercing, dead-eyed, unrivalled and tragically alone.

VICTORY HAIL! A DART SEEKS 180: [25] In a rival part of this ornate town-house, however, we find our other two characters to be plotting or conspiring. (Note: conspiracy theory tends to be metaphysically objectivist in tone. It is ultimately religious in style; being positioned on a pedestal which declares that nothing’s accidental. Likewise, it has a corollary in private life – where affairs of the heart are brought under the umbrella of military strategy.) For once, my friends, Mary Dominic Huey and Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) were conversing – whilst around them a hexagonal room shimmered in electric light. The Sky at Night, in Sir Patrick Moore’s phrase, had fallen outside a netted and stripped curtain; the latter a faded blue. Nor can one faithfully resurrect the brownish walls and ceiling that surround it. Likewise, an expensive or sapphire-tinted portrait in a heavy frame lies to a window’s left; it proves to be something akin to a John Singer Sargent. By dint of such a
recompense, though, an exquisite sofa, recliner or easy-chair is seen; it wears green spots and probably dates from Queen Anne’s reign. Next to this discomfort, my masters, a mural of paintings grows up on a small scale above a shiny top… certain stabs like Ramsay or Salvatore Rosa come uppermost. These find themselves accompanying a bathing nude next to her head; it’s after Seurat rather than Francis Pollini’s sex-ploitation play, *Pretty Maids in a Row*. Likewise, an open bottle of cognac and something of a soda-siphon lies behind Mrs Marmaduke in her loucheness – it takes after the song of so many green-bottles on a wall. But how many of them will Fate choose to break? For her part, Mary Dominic Huey stands triumphantly with one arch hand on a hip; an ebon cigarette smokes or ‘twitters’ within it. She holds a drink in the other paw. Her immense bosom is on display and it’s barely contained in a very low-cut purple dress. Look at this: the vagabond’s carousal esteems a Carnival air – one that’s redolent of the old saw which says: *mother, don’t put your daughter on the stage!* Wasn’t Mrs Zefferelli something of Garrick’s art tart – long since? Anyway, Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) seems to be surprised by her *volte face*: while the woman’s mask seems flushed with exultation. Do not forget that such eyes as she possesses take after steel points or dots; and they’re reminiscent of Pierrepoint’s on a good day… (Note: this refers to England’s last official hangman or successor to Tyburn’s mercies. He gibbeted Ruth Ellis as one of his final acts.) This gorgon’s or Fury’s windows into the soul presume to be avid, balletic, fervid, specious and anti-idealist. They’re quite insane.

+ “I want you to murder my husband”, she announced to this tramp. He’d sort of figured out that such a request had been made. She was speaking again in a very loud or vaguely androgynous voice… it came across as one drugged. Listen, listen, his mind told him – don’t become befuddled with drink, you require some wit *not to fear the Reaper*. (Blue Oyster Cult).
Meanwhile, Mrs Marmaduke’s husband sat in a solitary wheelchair in a neighbouring room. Perhaps it’s best that he exists amid solipsist curves or a world he never made… didn’t he? (Even if he hadn’t been as deaf as a pillow or a nethermost cretin, the brownhouse’s thick walls would have saved him from an iron-maiden, betimes.) He continues to project himself into Franz Kafka’s _Metamorphosis_. Wherein – after the happenstance of Terence Quigley’s _Tragedy and Hope_ – our humanoid beetle savours a time-piece like a rune. He’s all in a lather, don’t forget. For the beetle observes that our egg-timer radiates chaos or a bilateral frenzy, in the manner of Op art. Does one care for it? Yet, in his mind’s eye, he races around the superficial dials of a clock – within which a sequence of Roman numerals comes over in a blur. Simultaneously with the above, however, the dial radiates some swirls from an archery competition or its mount, together with those radial wings on an RAF plane’s wing… particularly from the second European Civil War. Gregor/Spider Absinthe remains oblivious prior to a whispering at the door.

In our shadowy or amoral crypt, perchance, Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) stops a drink midway to his lips; its bevy of liquid sloshes around in the glass. So to say… and in a way that conjures up a John le Carre _Roman_, Tidmarsh affects a surprise which a superficial surliness belies; but, in actuality, it’s a conceit. Since, _sub species aeternatis_, his sub-conscious mind knew it was coming, evident, over-drifting and not negligible of intrigue. He froze slightly – yet it’s not really moral fright, merely a weighing up of the consequences from a face’s left-side. Mrs Marmaduke or Mary Dominic Huey (for her part) stares on in vulvic triumph; like a character such as Clytaemnestra in _Agamemnon_ from over a bath’s nets. She orates thus: “There comes a moment in the lives of men, my friend, where a worthless existence needs to be put down. My spouse cannot be
rightly said to live; he is, instead, a dysgenic retard or thalidomide’s toastie… let us silence him like spawn in The Boys from Brazil. I wish to grind my heel in the cretin’s face, if only to liberate a paradise of ghouls – do you hear? Let the blood, in its slavering redness, pour across the blade of a poniard which possesses an ornate or ivory handle! May this dagger be more than just a weapon for an occasional parry in milady’s boudoir? Yes indeed, it affects the diffidence of such a fortune – for let’s strike together, after the deliverance of a skeletal army who find themselves liberated so as to wreak vengeance, swords in hand. Truly, there are ways to release one’s spirits from blueness or a funk; the latter involving torturing or spearing a victim to a helpless demise. HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! The ‘wetting’ of these offerings necessitates the implosion of Mel Gibson’s Apocalypto – a booted pussy must be cut off at the wrist and become Rembrandt’s Ox Carcass, thereby.”

+ Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.), a drunk from the city’s ghetto, definitely has something to think about now.

A CHILD’S MASK, IN BLACK PLASTIC, HINTS AT DARTH VADER: [28]
Most certainly, our nethermost beetle lay on an imaginary pillow… might it support the empty sockets of its eyes? In any event, its limbs arched up over the body or clawed at its necessary sections… in order to deliberate. ‘What to do now?’, mused our nearly man; especially if one of Paul Klee’s patterns comes into focus. Yes, such a mosaic – or starlight express – involves A 7 Heures Au-dessus des Toits in watercolour (1930); where red boxes unfold themselves out, geometrically, in cube-after-cube. Some are orange, others light green or ochre, if shading into black – and a philosophical number seven appears under Absinthe’s eyebrows. As he begins to wonder – why(?); a voice sibilates at the door. ‘Gregor?’, it hisses in an aggressive whisper. Shouldn’t it really indicate Spider Absinthe Marmaduke instead? Nonetheless, and despite such doubts, he began to
discern Mary Dominic Huey’s diction in the guise of Gregor’s mother. The fools, don’t they realise that he’s unable to move?

KLEE’S IDIOTS LIMBER TO ART BRUT: [29]
A week or so’s moved on from this adventure, and an ex-tramp, Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.), dwells on its hearing. Initially, he’d claimed to be shocked, but he now looked at its prospects appreciably. In his imagination a dream occurs – itself surprising given an inartistic nature. He subsists on a stone dais; the latter raised threefold in terms of radial rings. His anatomy’s externals seem similar – yet his face and head have been replaced by a skull. It glimmers alone in the night-time; especially if pursuing a burning cup of oil or tar. An effulgence (this) which splutters before royalty and its cave… in relation to several pillars clustered around a circle’s edge. They are classical, heavily marbled and cast in sheen. In Tidmarsh’s recollection, we can see Mrs Marmaduke sat afore the statue; it recognises naught save isolation. A welter of mauve flag-stones, many of them large or full, sweep away into the dust. While Mary Dominic Huey sits provocatively on the outer of three descending steps. She wears a brief skirt or shift, but also nothing more than a brassiere. Furthermore, one slant of light shafts down; thence revealing a skull-clad suit. Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) stands there – in a winnowing pattern – like a ‘fifties salesman, although a cranium tops his form. It’s shorn of all flesh, even though the inner recesses of a tomb seem speckled. What do we detect, here? Why, it’s merely that there are depths to the ebon or such degrees o’ darkness. Again, a shadow’s mottled nature seems to speckle a bird’s egg, or perhaps a pebble prior to an eaglet’s hatching? By any token, Mary Marmaduke sits anon with a skull-man behind her – albeit in a shimmering awe. What may our template presume?

NEW GODS SPORT ELEPHANT HEADS: [30]
Are they blue? For, on the other side of a closed and bolted door, Gregor’s/Spider Absinthe’s mother knocks gently. Yet, in all
honesty, can it be an older version of his wife, Mary Dominic? Let’s examine it closely… since his ‘mother’ tapped nervously on a wooden or balsa panel. Did its beating officiate before a nethermost day (??); despite the fact that she wore a dressing gown. Spider Absinthe – by virtue of his folly – twittered away on a reclining bed; one which had nothing to do with an internet ‘twitter’. Likewise, and within the confines of a scarab’s intelligence, one of Klee’s pictures falls into a visual slot. It refuses to depart (anyhow); no matter how many times Mister Marmaduke blinks. Similarly, the painting replicates two human blobs, both of them counterpoised in pale pink and neither male/female. It deliberates upon Dubuffet’s raw creation after a patterning *Peut Venir* (1932). But still, a husband was oblivious to his wife’s murderous intentions from two walls away.

TO WEAR A SKULL IN DARKSOME PEEL: [31]

The new family chauffeur, Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.), stands aslant an ornate mirror in his bedroom. Its glass shimmer reveals its own reflection – as well as the appurtenances of the room, such as a bedside lamp, a light-blue curtain drawn cross-ways, and some strip-blinds at half-mast. A small glass of spirits lies vacantly in his right paw and it’s accompanied by a brackish cigarette. Most definitely, the rest of the room’s fixtures-and-fittings comport a brownish hue; these dribble away so as to depose a vista. Hide Tidmarsh has changed his appearance hitherto; in that a blue driver’s uniform, together with a peaked cap, glares back at him from an illumined screen. Look at this! “All I have to do”, mused Hide Tidmarsh Absol (.), “is to transport the cripple to a secluded spot. It will involve just the two of us (like). Truly, this is a chance for a revenge on life *in lieu* of any vivisection whatsoever. How many times do normally constituted persons wish to throw a shoe at the TV; particularly when the disabled Olympics are on? Paraplegics of the world must be united in some potted glue! In any event, one has to admit that some Khazars would be better off as lamp-shades. HA! I can already feel heavy gold coins, themselves contained in
a green swag bag, becoming hitched to one of my belts. This is it” --- he gazes at his mirror reflection --- “a chance to win the lottery in my own life. A brief accident, the unfortunate demise of a wealthy runt, a few crocodile tears in the process, and then on to spend the money (betimes) as his corse elicits the putrescence of its decay. HA! Aren’t Mary Dominic Huey (Mrs Marmaduke) and me like a swarm of locusts who are busy feeding on a carcass.” Yes indeed, his frontal lobes project outwards the mental phantasy he’s been having --- some call it the ‘dream channel’.

In such a Greek tragedy, a statue with a skull for a head stands in one lighted pillar. It triangulates its own wisdom, if only to reveal the mortal body of Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.). Marlene Dietrich-like, though, the woman known as Mary Dominic Huey (Marmaduke) sits afore it in a foxy manner… in that she wears a loin clout, skirt and bra (nothing else). Suddenly a skeletal hand reaches out in order to grasp her shoulder – and its talons prove to be long or broken off at the ends. It belongs to a gaunt maiden or remembrance; yet, as she turns, the face of the crone is revealed. Doesn’t it happen to be her ‘own’ visage; at once dimpled, cast adrift, wrecked, unsisterly, “spotted”, witchy and Raoul Dahl-like? In any event, the anti-morality tale of Emma Tennant’s *Bad Sister* comes to mind.

A DEMON HYBRID: WHETHER BEAR OR BULL! [32]
A gentle knock subsists on the other side of Gregor’s terminal exit; or the ‘man’ who imagines himself to be there. In truth, Spider Absinthe Marmaduke remains absolved of any witness on a bed; and he gestures, mutely, like a fish over the railing. (By any process of reasoning, then, Spider’s dome or cranium bobs like a ball in a pin-machine; whence it’s connexion to a series of limbs or mandibles. These gesture at the interior of a darkened door – one that’s possibly enlivened by its teak. “Do or die, isn’t that the motto?”, comes into his mind *apropos* of nothing in particular). A used candle, finished at almost its own stub, lies in
a silver holder nearby. “I’ll be getting up soon, mother!”, Mister Marmaduke replied to his ‘wife’ (sort of). Although the sound of his voice gave him a shock – it definitely came across as a twittering or shriek. It was peculiar and succeeded in garbling every word. On the bedroom door’s other side his mother’s slippered feet padded away.

WHY NOT WEAR RHINO HEADS IN SUMMER? [33]
Mrs Marmaduke (Mary Dominic Huey) has been getting increasingly impatient – during a period where virtually a month’s elapsed. After all, she hadn’t invited him to take up chauffeuring in order to play tiddly-winks! She stands erect now before some violently green curtains, and a dark or late evening sky reflects in their glass. Beyond it the heaving dominion of heaven registers a frost; if only to confound a baying at the moon. As per usual, her driver’s drinking from a bottle of Lamb’s gin off to one side… and at his back an orange coverlet creases the wall. Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.), for his part, wears an emerald tie across his chauffeur’s blue pelt; and he definitely sits like a sculpture – merely stoical, calculating, robust, uncourageous or feral. “Why haven’t you struck at the dawn of a new awakening?”, demands his mistress. “You’ve been here just under a month. Have a care, Absol(.), I didn’t hire you so that your life might straighten out via gainful employment. When are you going to do my job (?); or otherwise approach Golgotha carrying a spade…” “Thunder over the mountains is witness to spent eaglets”, he replied. Maybe he’d been reading the verses of Robinson Jeffers from some time before? “I’ll carry out a dish of meat and two potatoes – or hurl down a bloodied axe on its hauberk – at the appointed time. Rest assured…” All of a sudden, Mary Marmaduke felt a flush of outrage at his insolence.

Although her hireling also found himself to be entranced by a nethermost fantasia. It came on booming from some recurrent drum in the distance. Yes and no; in that when scantily dressed and retreating from a hag’s hand, Dominic Huey runs straight
into a shaggy behemoth. It towers over her like a bear with a gorilla’s head; and, in turn, it’s immense, hirsute, & malting or brazen in its wearing of a loin clout. A garment whose cloth consists of some richly woven stuff in red braid and yellow gold-wire. All the girl-cum-mistress can do is scream and scream again, as the wendigo’s palms close around her.

A RHINO’S MASK IN A BARBER’S CHAIR: [34]
Listen to me! Spider Absinthe Marmaduke finds himself left alone in a neighbouring room, but the walls were thick and his verso fills avec dreams. This is the ‘sinister’ eye, (one presumes), or the avenue which reveals an inner personality… at least from outside its circle. Never again: for Mrs Marmaduke, in his mother’s guise, has vacated the scene --- whilst being superficially assured. She, in turn, has been replaced by a younger variant of Mary Dominic – when accompanied by the chauffeur in his late father’s guise. He wears a belt and its braces over some trousers of tough serge. Both of them are demanding repeatedly whether he intends to rise that day. Doesn’t he know about work’s amplitude? It beckons our Gregor substitute hither. They – an ersatz father and his sister – knock insistently on a doorway of good, clean wood.

IONESCU’S GREYNESS IN THE STREET: [35]
What effrontery, by Gad! In comparison to its spleen – Mrs Marmaduke is almost beside herself with wounded pride. Yet, hubris aside, Mary Dominic Huey discovers that the chauffeur has left his former perch, primarily to wedge his face close to hers. A spot or backdrop of yellowish red then intrudes; it signals the fury of such an indulgence. Instantaneously, Mary Marmaduke feels alarmed by the crudity and nearness of his face. Whereupon – and viewed from the back of its ‘cuboid’ – the driver’s physiognomy seems riven, heavy, somnolent, slab-sided, mock-Rabelaisian and meaty. A heavy dollop of gristle or tufts of matted hair, even grizzled stubble unknown to Gillette, pops up in ungainly nooks. Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) also affects to
wear a waistcoat under his work-jacket; it deliberates on what Ian Rankin once called *Black and Blue*. Finally, the hired or handy man’s ears stick out like jugs; but not necessarily in the manner of Dennis Wheatley’s *The Haunting of Toby Jugg*! In comparison to this proletarian juggernaut, though, Mary D. looks nit-picking, affronted, put-upon, squeamish and unresolved. Her tiny eyes remain as pin-pointed, tremulous or insane as ever… yet a definite shift in power has occurred. “How dare you!” she expostulated in mock-ingratitude. “I am your employer… and more than that, do you hear? The figure of Clytaemenestra – in Aeschylus’ tragic drama – never reverses a role of dominion over Aegisthus’ intrigues. Nor will I! Do not presume upon me, Tidmarsh, otherwise you can always go back to the darksome pit which spawned thee. How’s about taking up your old life as a street wino and itinerant once more – without even a soiled mattress to lie on? It didn’t even bear upon it the reek of tar, brillo pads, used beer cans or dogs’ jism!” “Don’t prate so, my lady!”, grated Hide Absol(.) in a masterful tone, “it’s obvious that relations are changing hereabouts. I’ve been doing a lot of thinking, Mary.” (She bristled at the familiarity of this address). “It’s quite demonstrable… you’re getting skittish as the moment of nemesis approaches. Yet, once I’ve contrived to blot out your husband’s existence – why, they’ll be a gap in your life. I may be nothing better than an ex-tramp, but something tells me it’ll denote a net… like the one in which Agamemnon’s form lay recumbent. What say you? Such a reality shall bleed from its expectancy. You’ll find it a lonely recourse when scrubbing the blood from the tub’s insides… doesn’t it stand on four claws of burnished bronze? Yet, suffice it to say, an heiress faces Truman Capote’s *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* without a mate or companion, and I’m applying for the job.”

OLD-FASHIONED BARBERS HAVE RED-AND-WHITE POLES: [36]
In his mind’s eye, though, Tidmarsh Absol(.) continues to gaze upon an inner dust-storm… might it contain its own sand lich or
demon within the grade? Last time – if you recall – a scantily clad Mary Marmaduke kept screaming or crying, as she collapsed in a wendigo’s grip. Meanwhile, Hide Tidmarsh rushed forward at the advent of her dwindling cry… one which contrived to send him down tunnels of ruin. These were basalt like pillars of pilaster and ‘architrave’; nor do such pediments litter the immediacy of the gods. A frieze doubtless entertains these Doric emblematises; themselves at the beck and call of so many mosaics. He gambols – torch in hand – through immense doorways that lead on from one another, and which were seemingly cast by an Assyrian hand. Look you! The extent, dimensions or plunge (of these doors) is far too great for a mortal’s gesture. Most appreciably, might they hint at Eric von Daniken’s *Chariots of the Gods*; but didn’t he forge his evidence?

*CARPE DIEM: A LOUT IS COVERED WITH GOLD!* [37]
Once Gregor’s father has departed – either in a huff or red faced – we note an approach by his sister, Grete, towards the door. She stands to one side of it; whether straining or otherwise at the leash. Unlike the mother, *en passant*, Grete recoils from embodying Mary Huey (Marmaduke) at a younger age. “Gregor”, she hisses in a gentle whisper. (It’s also noticeable that her attitude appears to be more kindly than the other adults). “Do you require any hope or assistance in gaining egress, and likewise sliding along the wood?” Irrespective of such an entreaty, however, no answer but an insane twitter corresponds to it. She fails to make ‘it’ out across the door’s thickness.

**KESSINGER PUBLISHING PICKS UP DOTS:** [38]
After their brief *contretemps* or confrontation, *per se*, Hide Tidmarsh walks into the next room. All that effectively divided these correspondences was a mural of thickish indent… even the compartmentalisation of severed heads! Don’t they exist all in a row? In the living room he comes across her crippled husband – Spider Absinthe Marmaduke. Yes, the poltroon – after the
‘victims’ of Thomas Nash – sits in green braid; at once doltish, unfestooned, spasticated, runtish, crepuscular and unrescued at its gulch. Indeed, some sort of light-green surgical blanket douses his format; almost like a swaddling cloth or mummification. For a brief second Absol(.) notices a series of sarcophagi; and their faces are brightly painted, serried and stacked up into the darkness of a tomb… He discounts the notion almost as quickly as it’s entertained, however. The invalid’s wheel-chair also cuts a dash – whether it can be considered to be brown (or not) in its tensile structure. Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) stands afore his employer in an ungainly way; albeit with one ill-fitting suit turning sail. It happens to be ultramarine in its gesture. While the moon’s reflective sheen casts a dim glow on latticed windows – each one of which sports an orange refraction in its embers. “Hello, Mister Marmauke”, says his new driver in a matter-of-fact tone. It’s aught he might well utter, given a maelstrom of chaos churning in his mind.

PIN ALADDIN’S DOLL TO A BOARD OF CORK: [39] Meanwhile, as he passes his ‘master’ or patriarch, Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) comes across a phantasm, no matter how residually. It refers to a discourse down in those caves or tunnels, where he hunts a Diana’s absence… Whatever may have happened to Mary Dominic Huey (Mrs Marmaduke)? For she actually lies some yards away in a square o’ darkness; albeit amidst stone boxes of polished granite. She feels – by touch alone – around the cube or citadel into which she was thrust. Simultaneously to this – Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) strides down a neighbouring corridor, deep underground, and with his torch filtering or bobbing about. She utters a low moan back in the cage or ‘squat’; itself reminiscent of works like Hubert Selby Junior’s *The Room* or Horst Bienek’s *The Cell*. “Tidmarsh…”, she lisps in a resultant plea. Does he hear it through the ventilation ducts of alabaster – no matter how striated? It’s then, ‘mid a staggering overture, that he catches sight of a dimly illumined human type. She happens to be a wizened old crone or mummy who skulks in
light’s absence. “Ho there!”, declares Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.), “reveal yourself to my gaze – lest I slay you…” He then draws a sleek revolver which is coloured in sapphire and reminiscent of a TV series, The Protectors.

INDOARYAN ART HINTS AT THE NAIF; ELEPHANTS CARRY SAHIBS: [40]

During his travelogue across the room, however, Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) comes to a veritable stop afore Spider Absinthe. It is his face (at once presumed on in darkness) which figures most. Yes, what can he really say about the waxen mask of those already dead? Perchance, a delimitation o’ rigor mortis already brooks it! For the physiognomy looks pale, ovalesque, limited, sightless, dulcet, quite panicky and congealed. It seems to be fixed semi-robotically – rather like a late affliction of Parkinson’s disease. Moreover, his eyes are pupilless and the mouth briefly curled in a smirk – or possibly a snarl. Doesn’t it harken back to Francis Bacon’s use of William Blake’s death-mask in the early ‘fifties? A sovereignty which palls into rectitude – particularly when smeared like Michaux so as to tempt volume via space’s absence. If we can move directly to the present tense: Hide Tidmarsh feels the man’s orbs upon him. They bore into his innermost scalp, irrespective of romantic effluvium. Most especially, if one considers that he’s eyeless, falsely rimmed, unlit and blind in Gaza! Could Spider A. be tempting fate here – after the fashion of a Tiresius in his own wasteland? Increasingly, Absol(.) realises that the pressure behind these eyes signifies a haemorrhage or ‘rape’. He’s got to kill this cripple soon – in fact, the efficacy of his stare exhausts him. It’s making Mrs Marmaduke’s driver nervous.

THEY EXIST SIDEWAYS-ON (LIKE CHILD ART) WITHOUT PERSPECTIVE: [41]

Now he’s got aught else to concentrate on – perchance – his unfolding of Kafka’s Metamorphosis leaves our victim’s mind. Yet Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) becomes increasingly obsessed with
an internal vertigo… to make use of Hitchcock’s disorientation. He crosses the front room irritably, if only to leave by a side exit – but his phantasm follows him out. In its *deux ex machina* without stage props, *per se*, Tidmarsh comes to incarnate Charles Manson minus a swastika on his forehead. If you reconsider, a wizened female spider or doll stoops in a doorway, made of stone or bas relief, and existing deep underground. This example (the crone) of one of Hecate’s three faces illustrates a decrepit variant on Mrs Huey Marmaduke. But before he can drag her hither or into the light – a skulking hybrid leaps from a portal. It’s altogether voiceless, furry, wolfish, hairy and definitely muscular… might it be a reverse *anima* for yesterday’s cripple, Spider Absinthe Marmaduke? The two protagonists then roll upon the ground or its stone flags, so as to gain a purchase/‘its’ grip. These whirling dervishes hit the dirt together and swirl in a maelstrom’s violence, albeit with our man-beast atop Hide Tidmarsh. Doesn’t he discover whether those sinewy muscles in either arm are like corded flex? Let’s see: our Lon Chaney variant, who performed a cameo in John Wayne’s *The Three Muskateers*, has his talons around Absol’s throat. If Mister Hide won’t be able to wrestle the poltergeist or varmint off, then those flag-stones will rise up and strike him. *Excelsior*…

**ACTION SERIALS FROM THE ‘THIRTIES; LON CHANEY & NOAH BEERY JR. IN GUEST ROLES: [42]**

Meanwhile, Hide Tidmarsh goes for a brisk walk in the shadows, and he’s slung on a brownish mack for good measure. It’s accompanied by a felt artist’s hat – one which once belonged to Spider Absinthe, his nominal employer. Tidmarsh had discovered it at a wardrobe’s rear. He passes a lit up environment of tempered brick; the latter suffused with an orange glow over its dead murals. Yes, (and again), a grey grill or segment of forgotten windows is left behind him… together *avec* fitful shadows cast upon this mortar. Doesn’t the penumbra flit and dart or even effloresce; rather like a joke mirror in a fun-fair? Aren’t such ambits *sinister* or dissembling, and does Tidmarsh
remember his ol’ man reminiscing about *The Shadow*, a radio show? It hailed from the ‘thirties, came originally scripted by Keneth Robeson, and starred Orson Welles. Anyway, Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) can’t escape from his criminal or proletarian origins; in that he stumbles in a perpendicular manner. It’s at once rough, hardy, graceless, stooge-like, un-nominated, ill at ease, bear honed, truncated or spiritually crippled. (It nominates the causality of Norman Mailer’s *Tough Guys Don’t Dance*). Hide Tidmarsh thinks to himself: “Jeez! The woman’s got a nerve in rejecting my advances. Yes sir, am I free to do her dirty work without absolution? These dames are all the same. For it turns out to be Muggins here who’s doing her shameful shift – after the *dishabille* and violence of an Elisabethan revenge tragedy. Let’s look at an example provided by Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*, for instance! Without my intervention or turning o’ the screw – why, she won’t inherit a silver bit ‘fore he dies a natural death. After all, I’m doing a public service like Jack Kevorkian, Professor Peter Singer and an Australian doctor… all of whom advocate euthanasia or vegetable slicing. I’m with ‘em; I can be considered a colleague in arms… I’m less a killer than a dysgenicist. We’ve got to put the Primark bag over the dunderhead, tape it around and say goodbye to a future. Hip hooray!”

RAYMOND CHANDLER’S *THE BIG SLEEP*: [43] Yet again, this undue mental exertion for Hide Absol(.) causes him to dream, even though it’s a mixture of truculence, abasement and envy’s politic. Why don’t you make sense of it again? For a shaggy beast (Spider Absinthe in a rival tense) and Tidmarsh are brawling in a monastic cell. Each one of them has a clear view of t’other – despite the sepulchral atmosphere down below. Moreover, the creature’s visage comes across as a combination of bear, hyena, ox and wolf… May it illustrate an unholy Grendel under the moon (?); or, by means of alternation, is this a were-man? Could it experience the shape-shifting of Lon Chaney Jnr. on a silver screen? In any event, these combatants
grapple – like characters in a Battle or Commando comic – until Hide Tidmarsh thumps this wendigo on the jaw. He has difficulty in making out its snout in darkling light, but rather akin to a pterodactyl-without-wings its nostrils protrude. Don’t zoologists realise that many mammals have about them a reptilian stem? So it proves to be over Spider Absinthe’s alternative… in that our lycanthrope distils an envy under fur. (It also seems to have escaped from H.P. Lovecraft’s story The Lurking Fear). Might Mister Marmaduke have regressed – via autophagy – to a stage where he resiles to Hide Tidmarsh? Nor need David Icke’s hysteria or metaphysic o’ conspiracy intrude – since a gnawing on bones neglects its Amnesty International payments. Nonetheless, the man’s fist crunches into the Beast’s bone-arch; and a sickening thud or blow obtrudes. It sets off its dog-like projection using a ‘THWOCK’; and it reverberates or causes a candle’s shimmer. Spider Absinthe’s ‘Mr Hyde’ or werewolf isn’t finished, though.

THERE’S GOLD IN THEM THAR HILLS! [44]
Suddenly, or witnessing spiders fall in Fritz Lang’s first film, he hears footsteps behind him. They belong to a woman’s stilettos (so to say). Somewhat needlessly – and next to a wall of burnished emerald – Mary Dominic Huey (Mrs Marmaduke) appears. A brief shadow or penumbra encapsulates the mural at its top; whereas a sky or night-time of basic red intervenes. Aren’t scarlet and emerald (when implemented together in auric ambit) a travesty o’ romance? Still, Mary Marmaduke contrives to conceal her appearance; primarily by wearing a buttoned-up coat and yellowish hat. Most certainly, the latter’s cadences seek protection or an off-putting gesture. Look at this: in that her trench-coat – of a thickish blue wove – rests assured in its diction of Ernst Junger’s Copse 125. Surely now, our attention becomes riveted on her eyes – given their mad, distrail, startled, frenzied, uncabelmed, electrocuted and pointillist sheen. Likewise, her features come across as emblematic, purblind, fed, massaged, cunning and yet plainly drawn. All in all, she betokens Bambi’s
innocence when crossed with a crushed centipede... its innards rush out to join us. Doesn’t such an ooze (then) contrive to illustrate Raoul Dahl’s *Tales of the Unexpected*? (Every one seems to embody – scorpionically – a sting in its tail). She begins to speak in an unhurried or deliberative way, yet there’s an undertone of rush to her words. “I’ve cogitated a while”, she began, “and a ready conclusion rears afore me – rather like the relations between Clytaemenestra and Aegisthus in *Agamemnon*. Do you doubt its efficacy? Since, rather like the demotic mistranslation of Francis Pollini’s *Night*, a diabolic inquisitor called Ching holds our frame. It provides for a reverse semiotic, even an exegesis that rises to Artaud’s theory of cruelty. Again, the censored material from this communist affair cannot be estranged. Most abundantly, when a hermeneutics of abasement – *a la* Bakhtin – conditions a Pavlovian reflex. But which of us embodies it – you or me? Don’t you dare to experiment using this inter-textual confusion! Confound it, nothing exists save the text – with the possible exception of putting a bullet through its author. Didn’t Malcolm Bradbury, the ironist, produce a narrative where an author shoots himself over doubts about his existence? May he have been a post-structuralist? But – to cut to the chase – I have been dwelling on’t, and I *will* marry you if that’s your wish, yet you must slay my spouse soon to seal our bargain!”

FRITZ LANG’S RESPONSE IS *NOIR; THE BIG HEAT*: [45]

In the depths or recesses of Hide Tidmarsh’s mind (thence) a battle royal commences. It subsists betwixt man and beast. Most definitely, a man-beast roils in noisome splendour, and it charges using elongated shoulder-blades. These prove to be out of kilter, cardboard box-like, irregular and oblong in their feast. Might this rectangular extension (so to say) brief its own absence – or give a cadence over F.W. Murnau’s *Nosferatu*? By any particular, the sinister is gestural (profoundly so) and it partakes of Boris Karloff’s or Christopher Lee’s mime. Given this, a constriction’s shank emboldens the primitive – after Gray’s *Anatomy*. 

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Whereupon our were-thing (eeek!) sprang like a thousand toads, if only to bowl over Hide Tidmarsh Absol(\(.)\) He stood erect and on guard, as if to receive a blow in Alexander Dumas’ stead. Alternately, Lon Chaney Junior – in the 1941 film known as *The Wolf Man* – leaps upon a false champion who rolls under this flexion, if only to respond. Tidmarsh (for it was he) scampered to engage with a hyena-swine… one that proves to be a reaver, ravener and scavenger. And together, in one heap, they go over so as to test Bill Hopkins’ *The Leap!* in a single jig. Yes again, a constellation of star-shaped flags and stones subsist to one side; it remedies the bear-skin or mosaic in a von Stroheim film.

**BEAR WITNESS TO AN IRON MAIDEN’S PUMICE: [46]**

Congratulations, my man, for anti-Hollywood’s fate has matured its witness! Could it be an example of ‘digiview entertainment’, one asks? Most especially, since Hide Tidmarsh Absol(\(.)\) then crushes his future wife in his mittens, if only to prove his power or leaven so to do. As he does this, he senses an internal tension or hatred in her – even a vatic gesture. Might it incarnate the married couple in *Happy Days*, a play by Samuel Beckett, where a twosome lie buried in sand? Also, and abreast of such subversion, a light green glow inundates them in contrast to a nearby wall. Whereas a gas-light, or urban flash in mauve, illuminates them from above. (Truly, those beetle-like imaginings of Spider Absinthe Marmaduke are well and truly behind us!) On the farther barrier, however, a tattered film-poster delivers its message; and it indicates a musical, promising love interest, and called *A June Romance*. In it, the female lead jives or plays castanets, and one of her legs is exposed. Isn’t this redolent of the Farrah Fawcett poster – in a red bikini – from the ‘seventies, on the day of her death today? Hide Tidmarsh muses to himself: “Her odium for me is apparent – yet all of it testifies to a meaty residue. Give it up now; for she’ll start plotting against me the moment her hubby goes into cremation’s tube. But, at this instant, I’m on the threshold of everything I ever desired: money and beauty. Who’d have thought that I’d only
need to delouse a cripple to gain it?” *Apropos* of this, Mary Marmaduke thinks: “He disappoints by dint of a reversal, but my revenge will rise again. Didn’t Clytaemnestra open her nets for more than one – if we include Cassandra, the prophetess, as collateral damage?”

**REIN IN YOUR SEVEN HORSEMEN; I BEG YOU!** [47]

Way back in a trajectory or accustomed dream, Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) dwells on conflict. For the wrestling bout between him and a were-beast continues unabated. All in an instant, the man launches himself at Spider Absinthe’s behemoth and spear tackles him into the floor. These flags resound to a sickening thump. But this is not all: since the hyena-swine grapples with a free claw, namely the left, so as to undercut Absol’s jaw. Albeit thunderously, or with contrary roles, the wee beastie hurls his assailant into a neighbouring wall… prior to hurtling itself on top of him. Meantime though, Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) has drawn a sleek pistol made from black plastic – rather like Robert Vaughan’s weapon in *The Protectors*. Could it have been concealed inside his boot all along? Who may predict the outcome, seer or Cassandra-like, with a skull-wearing goddess somewhere in the background? Ho hum, let it pass…

**MODOK WEARS HIS HEAD AMIDST ARMOUR:** [48]

Several hours pass and the chauffeur, Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.), lies awake in his bed. He’s mildly restless during those *hours of darkness where the powers of evil are exalted*, to use Conan Doyle’s formula. A clock ticks away the periods with a purring ring, and Tidmarsh is in the servant’s bay at the rear of *chez* Marmaduke. He contemplates a cripple’s demise – for, in a few brief hours, a vicious crime will be accomplished. All procrastination rests abated; the time, tremulously, for destructive action looms. Tidmarsh Absol (Hide) lies on a grey pillow; albeit with segmented light spilling in from every side; it takes a man in the iron mask’s form. Look at this: since a lattice or grill supplants the kingdom, and it separates or divides him off
like a story-board. (Note: the latter happens to be the graphic novel or layout which precedes a film). Again, these tokens of parallelism or estrangement break up one’s filter, and they arrange linearity using bullets. Do you see? All of this apex or machinery, why, it contrives to breed dissociation: the kindred of this shows a yellow wall (roughly hewn), a green dressing-gown, orange to brown sheets and purple coverlets. One item comes over \textit{avec} finality and brutality; and it’s Tidmarsh’s physiognomy. It presses the following revelations or points; at once slab-sided, gloomy, heavy, truculent, meaty and doleful. No mercy is evinced in those twinkling, piggy eyes or that prognathous jaw-line! All in all, these features illustrate Lombrosian primitivism; whether it’s low, \textit{lumpen}, degenerative, unhallowed and coy. They bear upon them an inferior stamp – although nature has implanted a warning in the cruel slit of a mouth. It divides the porcine mask like a wound in bacon! Notice this now: Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) speculates to himself: “The sky opens up for me. I’ve left a slum, gained access to privilege and only one obstacle remains. A paraplegic must vanish – the dribbling wreck – so that others may dance on his grave and steal his money. Truly, in the words of a film’s title, \textit{it’s a wonderful life!} It won’t be long now… the act itself will only take a few minutes to perform, and then I’ll have everything I want”. \textit{The clock keeps on ticking}...

\textbf{A HEAD-ON-STILTS ADOPTS SCAFFOLDING: [49]}

Also, in the guise of feckless sleep, Hide Tidmarsh’s dream comes to a violent conclusion. For – revolver in hand – he fires repeatedly into the body of a were-thing who takes after Spider Absinthe Marmaduke. Somewhat bizarrely, chauffeur Absol(.) believes that he’s busy killing a post-negroid and paedophile like Michael Jackson (now deceased). Wasn’t his coronary, \textit{inter alia}, an item that had come up on the car radio earlier? Anyway, and returning to his phantasm’s end-point, bullet after bullet caroms into a hyena-daemon’s frame. Soon its muscular torso is dappled with blood and, accompanied by convulsions or tremors,
subsides on the flags. Finally it begins to stiffen or go cold like a board – all in one go; at least when beholden to a door-frame’s aperture. Needing to see its epilogue (though) Hide Tidmarsh strikes a flint, “Unholy mother of mercies!”’, he expostulates. “It’s a combination of bear, man, ox, wolf and hyena. What swine, but at least it’s dead! It must have been Mrs Marmaduke’s million, to adapt Wyndham Lewis’ phrase, or her familiar. Yet a were-hyena’s shadow need haunt her dreams no longer, but where can she be?”

FINALITY’S CULT WEARS PURPLE: [50]
To be sure of our ground: Hide Tidmarsh Absol( .) finds himself on one side of the Marmaduke’s residence or carapace in stone. Might it embody, *inter alia*, those *Faces of the Third Reich* which delimit Grosz’s example – while exemplifying Joachim C. Fest’s book of that title? It comes as a relief from B. Gerstemberg’s caricatures. Nonetheless, a series of remarkable adventures in blue give up some territory; nor do they sum up the garage’s interior. Let it go – since his inner space laughs at Mies van der Rohe, and this vault or ossuary lights up a few sapphire’d spectres. A blackened penumbra covers those recesses; especially when a grill proffers Tidmarsh’s head. It wears a peaked cap, as befits a chauffeur’s status or the film *Giant* with ‘Rock’ Hudson, and it hints at a later death-drive. Doesn’t Hide Tidmarsh Absol( .) drag-carry himself towards carrion… never mind its oblate? Above him, an inter-related series of orange bricks pass away; whereupon a darkened shade typifies their end. Again, the car that’s wedged in the entrance has to be purple – it’s a double sedan, the like of which looks after yesterday’s dinky. Wasn’t a dark mauve the living tint o’ death? Nonetheless, the vehicle has a severe outline or tracery… plus a curved antelope for a shape which limns with the Fuhrer’s slant. A bluish fender adorns its back; whilst the dynamism of its lines hints at one of those chariots driven in a Raymond Chandler. Also, the interior of its bay has to be yellow. Suddenly – Hide Tidmarsh Absol( .) is able to make out the grating sound of a wheel-chair and a woman’s
stilettos. They are coming to embrace their fate. Hide Tidmarsh waxes ready!

BURN THOSE LEAVES UNDER A MAGNIFIER: [51]
Meanwhile, in the recesses of chauffeur Absol’s dream, we notice a closing off to whispers. For he’s left the dead were-thing in order to consult with unknown spy cameras. Indeed, don’t we laugh at such deliberations? Against this notion, he goes in search of Mary Huey down august corridors of dripping stone. These are basalt chambers to a new disorder and they’re lit by flickering torches in niches. Likewise, to one side of such echoing vaults one finds strange hieroglyphics or sigils, and they stream across one wall after another. It tests itself against finality (you see). Whereas Hide Tidmarsh stalks our massive hutches with a flint above his head; & it flickers like a taper that’s due to a cursing of Apollyon. Above all, he follows the sound of Mrs Marmaduke’s voice as it echoes via labyrinths… even across murals in stone. Finally, he rescues her – torch in hand – from amid a hemi-cycle of ice; and she’s delivered from a cell using a plug. Hadn’t Dominic Huey been hurled there by a bogle or were-man; itself a vestige of her husband, Spider Absinthe? She seems to embrace her rescuer – in relief – with genuine gusto. Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) can only grin.

A NAMELESS SHIMMER IN THE GLASS: [52]
A blue door is opened by a tough-minded provincial, and it proves to be wooden in its non-convexity or bias. Likewise, a short trellis – after Alexander Dumas’ *Man in the Iron Mask* – opines its presence; it appears to be cantilevered or louvered. Already Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) holds open this portal into the garage beyond, and its blackness or inner revolt against reason trickles by. But, in reality, doesn’t it sweep away unconstrained? The chauffeur wears his uniform – a black-to-sapphire belt, cap, leggings and jacket – in a paramilitary *mien*. It takes up the longing for a Freikorps in the poetry of Friedrich Junger (say). Whereas the corridor or passage into the garage (from which
wife and crippled husband have emerged) looks like a fossilised… nay, a prehistoric fish. I mean in terms of its gills; but, more accurately, this duct comes to be split by a wooden railing. It embodies a deep brown tincture o’ wood; while the competing colours of orange and yellow line up on either side. Before us now, and foregrounded by an absent rage, comes Spider Absinthe and Mary Dominic Huey (Marmaduke). He happens to be wheel-chair bounded and wears a gentleman’s shooting cap. Might it – alternatively – set loose a cataract of tennis volleys or golf shots? ‘Spider’ also waxes tieless, sports a check country-jacket of an effortless cut, and stares blankly ahead. Do the other two characters really seize upon his face (?) ; given its stowed-away, pasty, remorseless, flaccid, lost and rectangular character. For the ‘master of the house’ appears – somewhat superficially – to be pupilless, even blind, and dwells on a wasteland a la Tiresias. His spouse, Mary Marmaduke, lays a perfumed pinkie on a chair’s rest – what hypocrisy! Yet she plays her allotted part in the drama to perfection… although a seasoned observer might spot her breasts’ crisp curvature, held in a green blouse, as indicative of future spoils. Doesn’t this example of Louise Brooks’ Lulu indicate a louche, spent, bohemian, vampish and lewd touch? Surely it hints at Minelli’s decadence in Cabaret – without dint of the storm-trooper at the end singing ‘tomorrow belongs to me’? Her hair is blacker or more raven-tinted than ever. She stoops to conquer some available speech. “Bethought me”, she uttered, “husband of mine, that a vehicle’s spin might blow away the cobwebs of an entombed mind. Whereupon – lo and behold – our new driver, Hide Tidmarsh, approaches us over a vintage circus extravaganza. Do you see aught through those black tunnels o’ daylight, or the manic gestures of a puppet-master? Might they amount to pulling on a mannequin’s strings? Anyway, the chauffeur is here to begin an ecology’s recycling ---.” “Sure thing, Mrs Marmaduke, I’ll take him off your hands for an hour”, purrs Absol(.) innocently.
SEX & CHARACTER WAS WEININGER’S ROSE-BUD! [53]
Meanwhile, the chauffeur has taken up his position at a chariot’s wheel, and the car’s inner portion proves difficult to discern. It retreats into a fustian interior of leather or darkness; the latter almost melting into the firm gloves on a steering wheel. These grip it decisively – even before they’ve properly left the garage. Besides this, the purple stanchion or forward thrust of the car limits daylight – and it denotes an architrave from Gerry Anderson’s Stingray. Most definitely – since the metal structure of this projectile limits greed, and it confirms or embodies a coffer’s future grandeur. Does one choose to see? In any event, chauffeur Tidmarsh causes this lethal torpedo to glide from its garage – if only to come to a brief halt just outside it. Whereas the driver’s features have not altered one jot throughout these proceedings; given a lantern-jawed, brutish, quasi-simian and tactile lowness. Heredity is a fact; and criminals are born & not made (you see). Mary Huey Dominic Marmaduke stands to one side of the auto and its occupants – while adopting a brazen or rarefied tone. Her profile seems to be apprised, (never lost), grasping, relaxed, always cool and maybe even a little contemptuous. “Stay out as long as you wish, Tidmarsh, but be sure to give me a call on your return to our villa”, she opined. “Rest assured”, mumbles our revived Mister Hide, “I will perform this task to the best of my ken, and your husband, Spider Absinthe, shall never forget this drive to the city’s outskirts.” With a curt nod to his employer, he then taxied the vehicle out into the road and made off. Soon nothing was left of their presence save swirling exhaust or carbon monoxide.

ARMAGEDDON’S VILLAGE: [54]
A few minutes later they were hurrying through the city’s esplanades – even if the midday traffic had begun to thin out or leave off. Over time the grey pavements became empty of all life or its kind, and only very occasionally did they pass a car. One such automobile was a dark brown sedan which is parked by the kerb – when next to it we see some shops with their awnings.
Gradually even these receded and the bluish facades – together with a *soupcon* or flash of glass – are left further and farther behind. Each block comes to shimmer in the distance via an orange light or its pall, and the atmosphere becomes ever more silent. Also, Hide Tidmarsh’s clinging gloves rest on the steering wheel – as he manoeuvres his charger beyond the outermost suburb. A single item doesn’t alter, however, and this happens to be Spider Absinthe’s eyes; they bore into you using the rear-view mirror. Nor do they change during the journey; in that the cripple’s orbs look timid, askance, rapt, distanced and curiously expectant. Aren’t they avid or sepulchral? All in all, their impact on Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) seems to be disturbing. He feels like shouting out to get him to stop or desist, but it would be useless – the paraplegic’s utterly deaf. Blast it (!), thinks Mrs Marmaduke’s chauffeur.

+ A crowded city-scape gives way to the palisades at their cusp, as Hide Tidmarsh slows the engine. It has taken around forty minutes to travel thus far and the distance around our chauffeur seems to be red-smeared. Moreover, his darksome outlook comes across as silhouetted or cut out of black *crepe…* still, his ‘eye’ alone stands out in an affixed way or distaff. This is especially so over the rear mirror – within which a cretin’s beady corneas are burrowing into him. How fatiguing! Who will rid me of this human haggis(?), muses chauffeur Absol. I know whomsoever Loki might favour… he virtually grinned to himself. Whereupon – in the background – an expanse of metropolitan water lay to hand; a few large boats traversed its glistening surface at a burg’s end. Now the moment of Cain’s striking approaches most drear, despite the intrepid matter of Spider Absinthe’s eyes. They continue to bore holes through the seating while foisting a mirror upon you… Why don’t you shatter this glass? It occasions no good fortune, my man. Again, some very tall buildings or skyscrapers loom up at a veritable boomerang’s throw from your target. You (Hide Tidmarsh Absol) refuse to recognise them, since you’re concentrating on a maggoty slice of meat which
requires rinsing… You decide to manoeuvre the car by gazing as little as possible into its mute reflector.

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You’re almost there – and in the final moments of your tourney, *a la* Thomas Nash, the limousine bumps along a grassy sward. Its indentations grate upon your vehicle’s axles; yet you remain unperturbed. Even so, the russet greenery of so much heathland travels on behind your track, and it causes an inundating of the back window. Isn’t this reminiscent of H.P. Lovecraft’s collected poems, *The Ancient Track*? Again, the figure of the crippled millionaire, Spider Absinthe Marmaduke, comes back to us from a posterior’s lantern or seat… Mightn’t it find itself crossed with the rigid tracery or lattice of a back-burner (?)—namely, an *ombre* or lateral seat. It proved to be in leather and crossed away from Spider Absinthe’s empty heart. (Surely the latter proves to be calloused by a million intrigues – or their absence?) He remains as he has always done — i.e., quiet, sovereign, alone, purlblind, congealed, ‘lacking all restlessness’, even mildly deceased. His check county jacket – itself vaguely reminiscent of sportswear or Burberry — crosses with a tieless shirt of some accommodating grey. Do you detect the absence of an inner tremor? Whereas the reddish cap over his limpid brow tops all… and it betokens a calabash or ornate scarf atop a flayed corpse (possibly one by Gunter von Hagens). This exercise in corse art, irrefragably, sees the mangled license of so many ruins leaping about – or steaming in three dimensions. Yes, since in the front seat Hide Tidmarsh Absol(*) looks back at his charge, and he does so using a view-mirror with a yellow back. It is shiny to look at! Moreover, the black-‘n’-blue garbed chauffeur gazes on his victim robustly; and with a look that’s truculent, seismic, coarse, calculating, Machiavellian or shorn of timidity. His left eye (when observed from in front) spies upon its prey as a succulent morsel; and Tidmarsh’s visage seems watchful, pug-nosed, reserved, lantern-jawed, meaty (even pregnant). One presumes that this latter is a tragic breeding — or impinges upon life’s death? Mayhap, *mon ami*, it embodies Pierrepont’s look into the face of one he would
gibbet last: Ruth Ellis. Finally, Hide Absol(.) drives the car up to a small cliff’s edge and leaves its engine idling… all the time the eyes of his nominal employer, Spider Absinthe Marmaduke, never leave him…

+ Now and then, Hide Tidmarsh removes himself from the car and reaches in so as to release the brake. He’d imagined doing it a thousand times in his sleep! In the light of this panorama, though, the dashboard proves to be purple in its fixity… whilst any surrounding glass, whether Lewis Carroll-like or no, dimples to blue. It --- above aught --- shades into a lightish fray or azure. Nor need we to doubt this too needfully: *quod* the mitten that stumbles in reaches for a darkish brake-stick; whether it’s grey or *noir*. Likewise, and despite his penchant for gloves or hold-alls, the hand which holds this paper* appears to be flesh-toned. [*Note: the title refers to a revisionist fiction from Australia]. Despite this, Hide Tidmarsh Absol’s claw penetrates its surround-sound or ease, and like in a situationist cinema, all of the audience wear 3-D specs. Isn’t it the pulchritude of Lot’s saltiness (?); when spliced with murder rather than paederasty. Still… his fist grasps an abandonment or wrath; it breaks/brakes out – if only to scramble clear o’ death and play marbles using a cadaver’s eyes. What was that ancient radio signal from the ‘thirties – *who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?* You see, the vigilante called ‘The Shadow’ understood it all too well. Isn’t such a matter copasetic? Whereas the rest of the vehicle’s interior – never mind the late afternoon sun from without – luxuriates in lemon. Assuredly, it also calls down a sickly enclave in yellow; one that reminds the author of an ant-inundation in childhood? It happened in a egg-yolk bedroom in Bearstead, Kent. But Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) paid it no heed. “Happy landings, Marmaduke!”, he sneered as he released the machine’s breaking device or stopper, and his eyes stared like two gimlets while doing so.

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Avaunt thee, Fate works in mysterious ways to abet the Gods’ cruelty – what men insist on calling Justice! For didn’t those ‘sixties hippies have something when they inferred that whatever goes around comes back? Might this be an instinctive version of the endless return a la Nietzsche? In any event, a mistake occurs at this juncture, and before you can retrieve your arm the sleeve catches under the steering wheel. Your limb is caught or snagged – if only momentarily. “My outermost mandible or arm!”, you cry. But it’s altogether too late; and why do you (haphazardly) imagine such appendages to be those of an insect? How could this occur (?); given that Hide Tidmarsh was experienced in matters of mayhem. Moreover, he’d visualised the tableau or scenario many a time. In this vignette his uniform transforms its odour into that of a dirty brown; whereas his adorning cap (or death’s-head) limbers up to an ebon hue. Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) sweats profusely and half his physiognomy comes to be overshadowed – it slants down within a rendering of mauve. Nor does his perspiration escape us. Truly, a setter of ambiance (like Sax Rohmer) or a ranter (such as Hilaire Belloc) must have remarked that horses sweat, men perspire and women are all aglow. The backdrop to all of this remains a violent scarlet.

Within a trice, therefore, the car careered off the cliff’s edge and a blue expanse of water lay like a blanket at its rear. A few boats (and even the odd distant building) were seen against a trajectory of orange sky. Look at this oblivion (now); since the purple auto caromed or careened over the rim and down towards the bay – with Hide Tidmarsh attached to its side. Like a stick-insect most rare – or riding pillion – he accompanies the vehicle in its last plunge. Wouldn’t the American verb or construction be dove? Down and down springs the Cadillac or sportscar (take your pick) and it ramps, reverberates or ricochets on its way to Armageddon… whilst Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.), the accomplice to slaughter, screams and screams. His last meaningful cry was: “HELP!” Meanwhile, and back up the mast, our hillock coveted a green sward or grassy top – and this proves to be unkempt in its
tonsured hooliganism. Whereas, further down, the earthen ware comes to be ribbed, brownish, slightly leathery in its upholstery, ‘racinated’ or fiercely rooted, stringy and tensile in its musculature. Whereupon several balustrades – of a deep magenta – and consisting of multiple sand-bags or groins festoon the top, but the car overshoots them. It catapults downwards easily – rather like a pin-ball in a slot machine. A small jetty, replete with a boat-house and motor launch, lie at its bottom. They play no part in the death-dive, however.

+ A cataclysmic shambles then results and the speeding auto is turned upside-down, blows up, showers metallic shards all over and causes thick, grey smoke to billow upwards. A violently blue sliver of sky corresponds to an explosive mixture that douses yellow and red together – treats both as liquid flame – and causes them to inundate a sandy dell. Furthermore, the automobile looks to be cut-up, ragged, burnt out, mock-exhausted, chewed over and leapt upon by pitch. The cripple –Spider Absinthe Marmaduke – obviously died instantly in such an inferno. Whereupon the chauffeur, Hide Tidmarsh Absol, was blown hither or sheer by Lewis’ Blast!, and he finds himself flung out like a rag-doll. He’s cleared the gutted limo by many a yard or metre, and he takes up residence back on the slope… or abreast of an apex from which this descent has triumphed. Doesn’t it revisit one of those hallucinatory vistas, at once morphia induced, in Thomas de Quincey’s Confessions of an English Opium-eater? Anyway, Hide Tidmarsh’s chauffeur’s garb has been ripped off, his body seems charred and battered, and the dolt’s ‘corse’ lies limp, swollen, aggravated or Hawksmoor-like. It resembles (above all) one of those action man dolls from the ‘seventies which had been put through a mangle. Most certainly, he lay prone on an expanse of loam or tumuli, and his head’s seen to be detached from the body or indicative of a snapped spine. In this case – and rather like a mongrel dog – the curvature of such a relief was broken in its madness. Also, the skull or cranium lollled about after a jelly-fish or a ventriloquist’s doll – namely,
one that’s been snatched from its case and hurled about. It’s most upsetting to a child’s imagination, to be sure! For the leering and glassy-eyed face of a joker looks out; after a token where a mask has been wrung over and forced back behind a shoulder-blade. Such a haunch of venison refuses to entertain any beef! Thus, we’re faced with a situation where wooden balustrades or fence poles support a spinal tap, rupture, breakage, rubber-band quality, or its paraplegic ditty. All in all, Hide Tidmarsh’s glow-worm bobs and grimaces after hours, or in a way that’s reminiscent of a bouncing ball. Nor are we in a position to see whether it’s the pig’s bladder used in Aussie rules, soccer, Gaelic football or the Eton wall game.

EPILOGUE: [55]
Many months pass by before Hide Tidmarsh’s revival into consciousness (or aught which could be said to embody it). He awakes midst a veritable abattoir of the senses. Yes, indeed! For he wakes up slowly in the living-room of Spider Absinthe’s brownstone. One thing strikes his attention right away… and this has to be a nubile variant on Mary Dominic Huey Marmaduke (ex). Do you gauge this sense or séance with any perspicacity? Most evidently, she wears jet black and it takes the form of a ball-room dress, no matter how lissom in tone, and it follows every curve of her anatomy. It slopes away from her thighs, finds itself cut off from the shoulders or otherwise topless, and affects to be strapless. Listen: her flesh runs clear and naked to the breasts, whose protuberance and cleavage remembers a ‘fifties movie star like Dianne Dors or Tallulah Bankhead… never mind Joan Crawford. Still, the ebon slink – in terms of its fabric – hints at an event which will make you smile; namely, her husband’s death. You try to move your lips in order to grin and realise that you can’t… since you’re paralysed in every particular. In truth, a blue skull-cap or mummification covers the top of your head; and it screens a cranium’s apex – if only to provide a coping stone. Could it really be ‘invisible’? The odd bit of sticking plaster (coloured white) also makes its way across this negative balsam.
Let it go aslant or amidships... Meanwhile, your visage stares ahead like a dime store mummy and it’s calcified, frozen, grim, congealed, petrified, abrasive or a trifle adrift. Yes, a blue medical orderly’s jacket – of some rough-cut serge – addresses the lower hue or depiction of his limbs. Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) begins to estimate (also) that he’s actually sitting in a wheel-chair – just like the late Spider Absinthe Marmaduke. To be sure: the rest of the room pans out as he imagined... what with a platinum bracelet of exquisite finish on Dominic Huey’s wrist, plus a black cigarette. It smouldered in a neighbouring hand. Further to this, she leans gently on an art deco dresser that bisects a light-brown curtain at its side. Whereas a decanter of drink – whether vodka or gin – lies behind this heiress; together with an ash-tray, a plate of pork scratchings and a pinkish wall. In the middle of such an undeclared mural (however) a picture dominates within an ornate green frame. It is flowery in its baroque grandeur (even). Never mind this: quod it illustrates a blonde opera diva in full cry – itself rather akin to Paul Klee’s The Possessed Girl. But no, there is one major change here, in that it relates to a frozen image a la Mantegna and was much like Hide Tidmarsh’s plight. He still attempts movement – yet can’t manage it. Whilst Mary Dominic Huey, in mourning, avec raven hair, stares on using her pointillist eyes which are as mad as afore.

+ Slowly, oh so slowly – it begins to dawn on our prior Absol(.) that he’s completely paralysed. This comes as an unfolding shock to his sensibility. Oh my, doesn’t it just? Don’t let’s talk about a biter bit --- what! For not only do you recognise your absence of movement – you also see that you’re stuck, paraplegic, incapable of scintillation, turned around, in a truckle-chair like Ironside in the ‘seventies, and otherwise unable to twirl your eyes. What kind of malign or poetic justice is this, you ask? Although you are quite capable of hearing voices – especially when Spider’s Absinthe’s widow chooses to talk to a gruff toned stranger. The unseen male’s perspective enunciates thus: “Hey(!), yon cadaver in the corner proceeds to announce its sleep. Why don’t ya, eh?
Yeah, I gotta tell you, doll, he doesn’t come across as anything more than a ventriloquist’s dummy or sham puppet. Isn’t such a creature (or man-thing) folded up, looped, grey in its skin tone, orange jacketed, swivel eyed, bald and with detachable limbs? You say he was your old chauffeur, widow Marmaduke?”

“Assuredly so”, Mary Huey answered in a prompt vein, “he can no longer function as anything other than a meaty integer. After all, this man was virtually destroyed by the explosion which took my husband out. It left him utterly discombobulated or debilitated. Truly, a devastating deconstruction has left off – in that he can no longer walk, talk, gesture, stare or even pass a motion. Hide Tidmarsh Absol (for such it be) no longer contrives to exalt a purport. He’s a future euthanasia statistic – no more, no less. Now do you realise why I’ve hired you?”

To conclude our narrative, and segmented against the relief of some turquoise squares, Hide Tidmarsh Absol(.) sits as a retard. (This is either with or without cretinous handle-bars). Look further at it: in case you spy an ochre filter at the edge of these stars. Again, Hide’s cranium registers a blue debenture; it festoons his skull with Lear’s forgetfulness. While a light-brown surgical chair hints at a spindly back or a ruptured aft – it vaguely allies with the sack-cloth-and-ashes across his trunk. It also happens to be a darkened sapphire. Whereas Hide Tidmarsh’s scraggy forearm (or face) denotes a stray eaglet – if on the point of being hunted to extinction. Yes indeed, when we stoop to consider its emaciated, shadowy, elongated, hollow-eyed and lugubrious mien. Not even a cough can escape between his teeth, and, unsevered at the wrist, they do well to cling onto a dandelion. Its stalk contrives to hang limply… like a sad lion in an Asterisk comic.

In close up, though, we notice that it’s all up for this particular plastinate. Isn’t it too bad for Hide Tidmarsh Absol; and he must surely guess what’s coming to him? He knows everything about Spider Absinthe Marmaduke’s murder, and although hardly a
threat to Mary Dominic, this black widow (sic) is too much of a perfectionist to allow him to survive. Like in a cosmos of arachnids, the female shall mate with the little brown male and then devour it. He’s served his purpose and now has to be consumed in exactly the same way as the wretch he’d replaced. Also, wasn’t the second chauffeur’s voice familiar? Could it be the Irish desperado, Mick, who’d been left drinking in the ghetto while Mrs Marmaduke first hovered? Yes… it all fell into place like Ford Coppola’s ending to *Apocalypse Now*. The question which he had to deal with was: when, When, WHEN(?) would the two remaining upright seize their chance. In relation to this – his frozen mask of a face seems pasty, glue-like, oozing yet fastidious, glabrous, etched in black dye, furrowed and sweaty. As a further reckoning, the lips come curled in a snarl equidistant to the blue cap o’ bandages above and the serge shirt below. His eyes betray a secret as well, especially given their billiard ball, fish-like and marbling quality. He possesses pupils – unlike Spider Absinthe – but their ability to spy upon the future remains second rate. All of a sudden, an image enters his mind in an unbidden manner and it relates to Kafka’s *Metamorphosis*, a text he’s never espied. Wasn’t it the late Mr Marmaduke’s recurrent nightmare? It concerns the scene near the end where the gigantic Beetle – Gregor – dies; i.e., one day, as the sun streams in through those French Windows, he just bows his head and expires. He gives up the ghost as meaninglessly as any insect; thereupon to fray or fritter, like a cob-webbed corse, at the margins. Hide Tidmarsh non-Absol keeps dwelling on it without a clear reason. But what he can’t fathom is a later denouement – where the second example of Hemingway’s *The Killers* will shoot Mary Dominic Marmaduke (Huey) in a bungled robbery, only then to be arrested and executed after a trial. His juridical terminus was carried out by an infamous British hangman like Henry or William Pierrepoint. The murder weapon proved to be a plastic bore, at once blue-cum-black in colour, and reminiscent of *The Protectors* or one’s dream. Yet all Hide Tidmarsh may do is wait – moronically – spatically – silently – paraplegically –
morosely – timelessly; and he’s mummified, sepulchrally or sarcophagus-like, in his chair. It must be akin to being buried alive – the Victorian nightmare! No wonder his skin’s pallor turns white, beady or ultramarine: (when surrounded by bursts of yellow-to-red astral bleeps). At whatever instant shall ‘Mick’ and Mary Dominic Huey (Marmaduke) slay him as he sits, immobilised and helpless, on his truckle-chair? When? When? WHEN?
+
Isn’t it pleasant if a story ends happily for all concerned?

FINIS
Troupe of maniacs: We cast our eyes down upon a strange cross or breed of freaks. Most effectively, a Comus Rout proves to be an example of Macaulay’s *Lays of Ancient Rome*. Nor do we require the counterpoint or filter of Syme’s *The Roman Revolution*. Inevitably, one’s rapture takes the following form, in that these fallen mountebanks rise amid dry-ice. They are Mrs Townsend Side-Rowbotham (an heiress), her husband Trevor Milkway; two servants, Peaches and Monocle, an antiques dealer known as Scribe-End Pentecost, and two policemen: Fisher and Zacharias Crack. The time-period has to be the twentieth century’s earliest years. An attitude which appears to be a sinister A.J. Cronin’s survives on a pittance.

PART ONE

An effective tableau to our drama spies an heiress, Mrs Rowbotham, being woken from dreams or their fastidiousness. She’s good looking – of a middling character – and is running to fat (slightly). Her hair betrays an iron brown… whether beating out the Tao or its absence. Although, as an aside, this story-board shows her dilated eyes; and her face looks parched – if dissembling to a dream. Survey this Greek agon, why don’t you? Albeit namelessly… her bodice heaves with the symmetry of outer gods or demons in the dark. She wears a night-gown that seeps from the shoulders in a naked brew; if only to reveal Flaxman’s bust. It ramifies with the antiques surrounding the bed – and it’s spacious in its range (remarkably so). Again, her ample bodice ripples around its shift – or a pink effluvium, like an unexploded Vesuvius. For Rowbotham’s Pompeii hasn’t been calcified, embittered, permeated or lava-ered – after Bulwer-Lytton’s novel. It had been called, way back in 1834, *The Last Days of Pompeii*. Needless to say, this Briton’s nightie was caught in a deep purple (*passim* her lips) and it slewed like
radiation or a blancmange \textit{a la} Andrea Dworkin. Yes – immediately behind her – a bed-stead burnt its filigree; it was elaborate, laboured to a temperature or tinted in its ormolu. Nor need one be surprised by a Queen Anne fixity or delicacy… Similarly, a cluster of eagles, false dyes, restless nymphs, cherubs from German cathedrals, Louis XIV boxes in gilt and Russian obelisks gathered anew. They crammed the footing of one’s recliner or divan. A Doric pillar connects with the four-poster (just) as well as stray rudiments \textit{chez} Rowbotham. These crowd on her in the night-time – indeed, the gal’s chamber is over-run with antiques… even antiquities. They crowd out one’s living space --- especially for sleeping. But what really approximates to our craze (or gives the game away) were two hands. These stretch out towards Rowbotham from in front; and each one seems large enough to make her cry! They are wide, thick, primitive, other-worldly, misshapen, (Wendigo-like), yellow, black-haired and green nailed. Assuredly, such raptors have to be long, tapering or razor-sharp… at least in Fuseli’s grave-yard. Might it hint at one of those creepy, fastidious, languorous or decadent stories by Quentin Crisp? Such claws look disproportionate over the wrists holding them afloat; particularly in their thickness. They are definitely aiming for milady’s neck and throat astride her boudoir, though. The woman’s sheets, lower down in the bed, were blood red throughout.

\textbf{PART TWO}

Our tale begins from the perspective of a closed door. It happens to be locked, bolted, open sesame-like and vaulted \textit{avec} a silent appeal. Oh yes… a corridor limits its utterance o’ sameness; if only to reverberate with a pillow of so much force. Never mind: in that the wooden surrounds of this enclosure are green… or shaven in its frieze (given an availability). A thumping or hammering sound continues to be heard – it ricochets or gnaws, like Ron Hutchinson’s play \textit{Rat in the Skull}. Further, a dim glow – from a concealed lamp – distils an effulgence. Maybe it’s a
glimmer, do you see? As to its colour scheme: the outer struts (a la an artist’s installation) were emerald; the glow a pale ochre, and the remaining boards, plus an ornate handle, are orange. They distribute a sandy tinge after Beckett’s *Happy Days*; even when eighteenth century in calibre. The banging echoes, however, and doesn’t this illustrate a ‘sandman’ on the door’s other side? THWACK! THWAIN! WALLOP! CRACK! CRUNCH! BOP! CRASH!, it goes.

PART THREE
Finally, an axe-head splinters a turquoise slat; and it does so with a reverberation or screened torso… after a Francis Bacon painting. Wherein – in the early ‘fifties – an anatomy lesson in white-paint shimmers or looses a pulsation; and it dismembers itself agin’ green. But, back in the present, our weapon has a pumiced jaw: one which wavers aslant a veil. It’s already punctured it – don’t forget. Anyway, a residual crack showers some plaster or wood about; thereby postponing them (if only for a minute) on the other side. SEEDLE-POP! CLATTER!; and other notions of onomatopoeia recur. Although, having burst through the door, our thunderer is turned sideways – only to be withdrawn. Yes, that’s right: it enters a portal, turns and twists amid the wood, and then slips away… as if to secretly return. Ho! Ho! Also, and *apropos* of nothing in particular, an image from Robert Coover’s *A Public Burning* comes to mind: where the Rosenbergs are burnt for high treason in Times Square. (Note: they were two anti-American traitors who betrayed atomic secrets to the Soviet).

+ Resultantly though, the colour-scheme affects our gaze. It lavishes the following example of Goethe’s theories upon us: i.e., a lavender door fades to mauve (or magenta), if twisting on its wing-board. While the main-frame depots an ultra-marine (albeit light in hue); and it all subdues the door-knob. For, however fancifully, our attention centres here – on a twisting
device that’s ornate, baroque, Rococo. *Let us attend to these swivelling jackets...*

**PART FOUR**

Suddenly, a hand blitizes through the crack – it curves like a scimitar or the merest duck-‘n’-bill. Yes sir: for it isn’t quite drunk enough to grapple with the door handle – without knowing how to gain egress. The entrance happens to be one of those Hanoverian trinkets – at once embossed, reinforced, ormulu, laminated and heavy. Yet a click (owing to a concealed lock) enables the wood to swing open via a secret clasp. The owner of the arm chunters thus: “Curse her to a thousand Hades, by Gad! She thinks to bar my way to the present tense, will she? I’ll venture to sacrifice her to an eight-armed idol, O yes!”

One thinks of Joseph Goebbels’s remark, at the beginning of his Expressionist novel, *Michael*. Whereupon he answers the question ‘what is God?’ in the following way. ‘IT’ – [ES] – must be an eight-limbed idol in red onyx or burnished stone, even cornelian, with beryl or emerald eyes. Flaring torches, in surrounding niches, smoulder amid a darksome splendour… whereas various bodies turn and twist in the corners. They were human sacrifices hanging from ropes. ‘It doesn’t sound very Christian’, someone opined. ‘You misunderstand me’, replied Goebbels, ‘that is Christ!’

**PART FIVE**

Through the door, now open to its prey, strides her husband: Trevor Milkway. He’s blonde in ‘its’ deportment or askance, and one eye comes lop-sided over the other’s grief. Do you credit it? Yes and no, since the fellow’s quite clearly as drunk as a lord: and he carries an axe-head in tow. Behind him a green slippage waxes clear – might it be aught of a satrap? Again, the door discloses a double model (or some panel on the slide) and it swivels near a sandy bay. It beckons away into an eldritch interior. While Mister Rowbotham surveys the scene unsteadily;
and he’s on stilts, pasty-faced, leery, hungry, inapposite and delicately unfancied. For – like a piece of rare porcelain – any exquisite workmanship has a crack incising across its enamel. Must we take in the brightly red-tie, sapphire shirt and dunnish jacket (†); all of them supplanting a Saville Row outfitters. Yes, Edgar Wallace missed out on this special locution. Furthermore, the ax(e)-head lolled next to him… or it moved up and down like an antennae, beacon or insect’s limb. He begins to articulate: “There’s no way on earth she’ll make a pauper out of me – do ya hear? My fine Gods! I’ll be the one who decides who lives and dies amid a flames’ conundrum! Such it is, my lovelies… For, abreast of two men on a raft, I leap forwards and across any attempt at rescue. Indeed, no futile gesture by Mrs Rowbotham can stop my plunge or dart. (Especially when she’s dressed provocatively in brassiere and skin-tight leggings… don’t you see?) Let it commence: given the emergence of a monster from the deep, a sea-green incorruptible in Carlyle’s diction. After all, aren’t these fancies of my care tied to a water box: the like of which looks slippery? It comes across as facetious in its liquorice or sway – nor need we stare at the water churning in a swell behind ‘em. A cataract of this character sweeps Monsarrat’s cruel sea – if only to occasion the deepest of dives. And moreover, specks of atoms seethe in their novelty – particularly when abreast of those keening dots. Yet a blister is abroad – it slakes its source against such mandibles. First of all, it emerges from the deep without a cure; and it proves to be massive, ugly, Caliban-like, discharged, even wondrous over an untapped sea. Who could work on the bestial (otherwise) without a calm? I might – came the invisible answer. Was it not a crater yet to be born? Most certainly, an emanation of my own pain and rage looks saurian, armoured, Visigoth-like and takes after a bloater fish. It lumbers akin the creature from the black lagoon… but I must attack it! A life-lorn misanthropy has to be my watchword.”
PART SIX
Ah! Alcohol shall always stimulate derangement – or come to its infinite rescue, perchance. With this, our man Trevor Milkway (Rowbotham), took a swig from a hip-flask. The liquor sloshed around his lips as he greedily sucked on the nozzle. Wasn’t it vaguely reminiscent of Kali milking her brood: or alternately, a sea-daemon resting in the depths, abreast of tusks? Again, Trevor(,) takes a swig from an available flask of brandy; and it definitely trembled or rinsed those lips. He sucked at this nipple gamely – rather like a tiger shark draining its milk. Quite clearly, our rich husband (in the manner of Croesus) has been drinking since even-tide, if only to pluck up some Dutch courage. Yes, under these artificial lights, his shirt’s turned grey or pumice-like; and it contrasts with a violently red wall. This latter edifice proves to be a sweep-stake – one which frames his head and jaws. He downs yet another libation (unsurprisingly). Whilst the mural lifts to a planar interlude that’s black; it takes off as a mock-frieze and it shields a painting at its heart. An artwork (this) which comes emboldened in a dark frame; together with a border or inner tapestry of grey card. The image itself looks rather like a Michaux, an Audrey Beardsley or possibly a Beresford Egan. When – by way of contrast – the axe fillets to a forgery in its impasse… or over the Gods’ regulation. Also, the hip-pod from which he extracts his toil seems to be a light blue, albeit in a symmetrical design. “She won’t prise me out of house and home using a leveraged buy-out”, he chortled inanely. Quite clearly, his compass had passed the point of inebriation. “NO, oh no, me duck, I can surmise her face when she returns to her boudoir – or salon most clear – and finds her treasures smashed up. They’ll be mashed, bashed, (p)ashed and any sort of ashed… doubtlessly. Won’t the entire caboodle be reduced to firewood or plaster dust? HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! (hic).” He followed this pronouncement with a loud burp or squelch. Might an attack of the hiccups be lurking here? No matter: quod his eyes came across as bleary, contemptuous, uncaring over beauty, small-souled, philistine and ignorant. Weren’t they both porcine in a
needy semblance (?) – to adapt Eric Mottram’s thesis, *The Algebra of Need*. Furthermore, the wilfulness of those ‘rats-in-mazes’ who – throughout the nineteen eighties – lashed out against great paintings in galleries… why, they gain a purchase. Such deviants reconnoitre the cover of Erich Fromm’s *The Anatomy of Destructiveness*… if riven by a Peregrine, or Penguin’s university books. Just so: these reprobates might think twice if their hands were replaced by mittens o’ steel – upon amputation. For art on Mantegna’s or Holbein’s scale weighs in the balance many lives!

PART SEVEN
Still and all, Trevor Milkway (Mister Rowbotham) staggered about inside an over-crowded room or bay. Isn’t it – rather strangely – an illustration of Jean Gimpel’s thesis, *The Cult of Art*, when reversed in tone? In any event, the following tableau entered Milkway’s mind… despite its fuddled state. Doesn’t a man – when clad only in bathing trunks – attack a fish-man on a sinking raft? Isn’t it a skit on H.P. Lovecraft’s *The Shadow over Innesmouth* about miscegenation… fish-to-man or man-to-fish? Briefly, amidst his drunkenness, Rowbotham wonders whether race mixing is the ultimate communism! Yet again, his fists clang into the scaly body – pow(!) – without undue impact, if only to leave a bloater’s flexion. *Avault thee!* The Fishman – an example of his ectoplasm – grapples for one’s head and seizes it violently. This occurs in a paroxysm or reveille – where yonder slug over-powers a mortal. Swivelling on a half-chance, the animate fish wrestles a meat-head. Its grasp proves to be clammy, enclawed, puissant, without a healing balm, and stormy as to its entrails (ultimately). Why don’t you feel the force? Then an idea of Machiavellian index, or sheer devilry, provides cheer. It also enters a fish’s mind like horizontal sleet… the former electrically passing through water as an eel. Never mind: since this armoured bi-ped reaches so as to annihilate a face – a visage. It does so knowing, no matter how primevally, that one’s physiognomy waxes crucial: both in terms o’ dignity & self-
respect. Destroy it, crapaud, and the man falls to a skate’s wing; if riven to its sides in the deepest ocean.

PART EIGHT
Back in his wife’s ornate room, however, Trevor Rowbotham remembers what he’s set out to do... namely, to grind her antiques to paste. Touché! He looks around him with less than a grieving grin. Behold (!), he immediately staggers towards an ornate eighteenth century mirror in the distance, and determines to be its wrecking crew (without a doubt). This will be the seat of such Apollyon – Oh my yes! The reflector has an ornate curlicue or surround, set in an orange compass, and it limns a translucent or shimmering skid. Nor must one resist its lamination or glistening aspect; prior to a liquor flask landing amidships. Truly, it’s smashed into a thousand shards – as Trevor Milkway (Rowbotham) hurled his Napoleon ‘brandy’ bottle into it. He accompanies this with gibbering glee: ‘HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!’; he slurps. Whereas – immediately next to the hanging ornament – there comes a Pissaro, plus a swirling signature, in a built-up frame. (The latter stacks its own bodice to the hindmost). Similarly, an expensive cigarette box lies beneath the mirror – most directly – and it’s made of solid silver, when accompanied by two candle-sticks. They prove to be ornate, fluted, ormulu and heavily shanked. A grand Victorian fireplace accompanies this bevy --- you won’t be surprised to learn that the shattered glass lay above. It came fastened to a perpendicular incline against a lime green wall. “She lives for this crazy caboodle of objects!”; he avers. “Well(!), I’ll fix her – as heck as like. Nothing shall escape the beneficence of my slaughter (to be sure). It’ll delineate the puma under vivisection, whimpering as a result of Doctor Moreau’s hand, and with an iodine portmanteau up above. HA! HA! These objects d’art – to abstract the frenzy of the collector’s bug – are all the woman exists for. She thrives on agin’ corpsesdom so as to shore up anomie and render a meaning over futility. Bah! I’ll slay this false exercise in patterning; (assuredly so). Isn’t it an example of John Fowles’
The Collector in reverse? Then, when the criminal classes and Shi’a mob of downturn Baghdad’ve run amok, the antiquities of Assyria and Babylon lie asunder. HA! Destruction is nature’s plague on goodness. That’s right, me ducks, and therein I’ll finish *avec* my grand madam... plus her desire to ruin. Our union’s loveless (hic), Mrs Townsend (Side Rowbotham) wed me for my money and her collecting bug seeks to reduce me to beggary. Yet no; I’ll break her face in with a shovel prior to my drowning in a green-scummed pond. No. Yes? HA! Nullity happens to be a residual prestige of absence. Nihilism must be the new crowning grace, in terms of a night-cap. Let it be! Come destructive night and reap rapine on teddy bears... One’s life can only revisit a splashing through the latrine of giants. It’s gargantuan (*a la* Rabelais) in its cloacal waste – didn’t Georges Bataille witter on about the lapsed energy o’ entropy? Surely now, my friends, tea and scones with Ron Davies (ex-MP) is the worst offence? For, as Bill Hopkins once instructed Emeric Pressburger, the greatest of feasts ends in a chamber pot’s leavings... HA!” (He then let out an almighty burp or eructation!)

+ Didn’t Stewart Home once erect a pathetic protest against the Turner Prize by listing its dinner menu?

**PART NINE**

In the next moment or so, *per se*, Trevor Milkway limbers up to a silent film of his derivation – maybe a more violent version of F.W. Murnau’s *Nosferatu*. Didn’t it take off and fly in 1924? He swivels with the axe and breaks its moniker – in order to belabour these antiques. Truly, this halberd or its naked scimitar (*sic*) circles in a circumadjacent arc... First, it takes the head off a neo-classical bust after either Praxiteles, Skopos or Lysippos... And, come to think of it, might the subtle Hellenism of this piece *a la* Flaxman resemble his wife, Mrs Townsend Side Rowbotham? It indicates a secret sharing or poignancy; at once dulcet, marbling, keen shaven and dissembling. Can it be sheer
(if not purple) in one’s dwindling light? On the first impact of Trevor’s cricket-bat, however, the head splurges off and whizzes through the air like a mortal’s haggis – or severed scrotum. Isn’t Milkway suitably proud of the fact that he’s rendered his spouse headless? To proceed even further, though: the ax(e) whistles in its sovran listlessness – if only to pass close to a grand piano. It is of mid-European or nineteenth century vintage, and comes imprisoned in a yellow livery. Its wide and expansive lid was up; together with a baroque curlicue or engraving at the side. Do you fear the exposure of the music on its stand? Maybe it will be Offenbach, sweet pea, Colin Ireland, Liszt, Messaien and Samuel Taylor Coleridge – as a token negroid or congoid? Possibly so, its canopy or screen definitely rocks under the impress of Thor’s hammer: although a drunk like Milkway Rowbotham hardly mourns. Against this, a Louis X1V or sun king table, inlaid with silver wire, contributes to an ineffable feeling of absorption – one that supposes a density of space. Furthermore, the back of the room indicates objects of a reddish or blue hue… such as a Regency mirror and an Art Deco lamp, possibly a nexus of nude/fawn. It sat on a bureau at the cubicle’s rear; whereas some dark-green curtains, often hidden in alcoves, made up the accompanying void. The ceiling had to be jet-black in its timbre or moral vibration, after a sequence drawn from one of Aleister Crowley’s houses. Yes again: but, au contraire, Trevor Milkway Rowbotham stumped up to an anguish he didn’t feel, (not really). As he levelled his weapon against his wife’s treasures – the following gas escaped: “Blast it! She won’t capture me in a misprisionment of steel… I’ll tell you, old thing, not one item of this lively bric-a-brac (or pot-pourri of absence) shall be left alive. I must have occasion to wreck it, smash it, eviscerate it, disembowel it, discombobulate its innards – render it mute – and so forth. I’ve got to bash the entire farrago or rag-bag to bits in order to remain human, you see!” (With this, he whirled round in a renewed transport so as to complete his task).
PART TEN
Whilst engaged upon such a caravan, though, a fantasy o’ escape ennobles his brow. It took the following form. “Won’t I fidget around sleet’s partiality – don’t you know? It essentially took off an absent architrave; wherein a fish-man’s legs besport themselves on some naked planks. These feet (or claws) rescue the sodden wood’s nature from oblivion. Let’s see now! It saw the ribbed extras of this enclosure, if only to gaze askance on webbed toes. Likewise, some water or H2O nibbled at these addenda – as the wide Sargasso sea churns around. (Wasn’t this an image wrought from Jean Rhys’ work?) In any likelihood, a mortal pair of pins stood afore our horizontal fish who responded thus: “I will take your features, man of no-iron! This maximises a vengeance of the amphibian upon our mammals… and once they’ve seen your lost image, my ectoplasm, they can understand a kaos’ elixir. Most abundantly, hatred is a creative emotion like the love it inverts – and one stretches it out in order to create patterns, illumined prismically, or after some lead paint in stained glass. Ils verront ton visage… et comprendront!”

PART ELEVEN
With a derisive snort, ceteris paribus, the husband of this manse (Trevor Milkway) set about his temple. It came characterised by a silence of the Gods – most definitely – and snow lay around its fastness. (Such frozen water was heaped in clusters or constellations). The dwelling itself, however, indicated one of Nicholas Hawksmoor’s designs… possibly a vestige that a student has finished. Like St. Mary Magdalene’s church in Bedfordshire on the Chilterns (and near Whipsnade), it entertained a harsh ambit. This is a spareness or rawness, even a captivity or estrangement. Try to think of a combination o’ Theodore Sturgeon’s Camp Concentration and Iain Sinclair’s Lud Heat… why don’t you? Still, a lone template of wolves scurried outside; they leapt, ramped and howled. Whereas – deep inside the sepulchre or grove – a skeleton, devoid of all skin, sat on a dais. It entertained a throne of ebon marble.
PART TWELVE
Above all, Mister Rowbotham launched into an attack on a Queen Anne table with an axe – it proved to be redoubtable, brown and gold. It split asunder or apiece (also) with an immense strike of the halberd, and this caused the wood to curve up or break… magisterially so. Likewise, a shattering of gore – no matter how spent and from a tree cathedral – rose up all around him. It littered the place with ash --- never mind this great CRASH! As he did this, Trevor Milkway’s features were convulsed or manic; and at once startled, saturnine, fervid, bitter, twisted and forgotten. He bore upon his brow the beadiness of a Conan Doyle villain – say, the serpentine doctor in *The Case of the Speckled Band*, (for example). Now then, his axe reared up so violently that it brought down a curtain rail; this carried a green drape or coverlet some way behind. It slumped on the margins of an existential turmoil, therefore. Moreover, this *weaponisation* (in the hands of Grendel rather than Beowulf) cut a chord. It dissociated its own axis or marvel. Again, the slashed down curtain-rail reveals a dark evening – it penetrates, square on, from a French window’s rear. Can one credit its truculence? As Milkway trampolines or shoots forward into RFC (Royal Flying Corps) violence – his dress becomes dishevelled or ragged. His brownish jacket (redolent of earth tones) looks baggy, over-ventilated, capacious and sack-like. Whereas the fellow’s tie, shirt and walk-ons were stained, un-marbled, lifted off the peg and distressed. Thus, Trevor Milkway Rowbotham addressed these disappearing props: “I’ll eviscerate aught, do ya hear? It reminds me of a face-mask at the Black Museum in New Scotland Yard. Yes indeed, I mean to destroy everything that exists like a satanic thaumaturge… to be sure. Aren’t I ensorcelled, most evidently? I must pay her back and leave Townsend with nothing – or a nullity, *Neant*, plus a zero’s kind. ‘Prithee, nuncle or auntie, thou art an O without a figure’. HA! HA! HA! HEE! HEE!”
PART THIRTEEN
Quickly, in a dreamy residue, terror grips a doll’s visage from one of Sarban’s short stories. Do you hear us? Since our fishman (or anthropoid) grasps a humanoid in a vice-like trance. He does this by ripping off his face and throwing him to the raft’s floor. ‘AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHH!’ He is dead or a corse – yet those hands that release him are claw-like, craggy, reptilian, Vulcan or scaly. Then the man plummets to a wooden foil; if only to lie like a broken manikin with a smooth physiognomy. It looks like a billiard ball or a store dummy (without eyes or teeth), and our skate-boarder proves exultant. “Behold, infidels of purport!”, bellows our cod-piece, “in one fell swoon, the fatal ends of a Gordian knot unravel… in that mutation, radical change, death, absolution, a glue-like fixity and transformation all concur. They reap the rewards of a spent whirlwind… one that gibbers (facelessly) in these bluffs. Again, assess this closely, it is the profoundest gesture from a deep ooze or the nethermost ocean. Whosoever – or whatever – knows what actually lurks down there, eh?”

PART FOURTEEN
Within the cathedral of this room, however, Rowbotham continues his berserker cry; yet he is now espied. For two servants have gathered to watch his destructive carousal – at least from a distance o’ plenty. They are Peaches and Monocle, and, in the best tradition of arsenic & old lace, one happens to be a cook… while the other answers to the title of serving wench. Albeit, inside a variant on A.J. Cronin’s The Citadel, Trevor Milkway wreaks pandemonium from so many empty seats. All around his urges, then, a zebra or gryphon parts the hairs of a cyropod who has clippers for hands – even though ‘he’ possesses a face at his stomach’s heart. Might this be an illustration of mediaevalism or the kaos theory (drug induced) of William S. Burroughs’ whimsy? Give it a rest: quod like the original arbitrage of Bedlam, never mind its post-Adamic language, each sheltering sky left nothing but spent glass. It made up those
companion pieces from so many smashed mirrors, each one bringing seven years’ bad luck. Moreover, Trevor whizzes around this cube axe-in-hand, and, ascribing to its violence, orange walls show up Labisse’s prism. It cuts the dexterity of any clash using no force whatsoever. Indeed, a ripped Louis XIV chair – made from coiled silver wire – had no need to be returned to the Peabody Museum, Chicago. (This was especially given its hanging vestments, unfelt spiel, lost vacancy and spoilt nudism). Above all, shattered vases, the teeth of oblivion, harshly green curtains, upended fire-places (Victorian), listing casements, ossuaries without a sunrise and legless foot-rests all ad-lib or putter out. They splinter, fracture, become dehiscent – or lick paint off a forgery a la Eric Hebborn – and it positions ornate table-legs in a delinquent ‘tic’. Similarly, in the middle of this whirligig or Kali’s dance, our tumble-weed rushes in a dust bowl. A new dervish, perchance – he races around akin to a goat struck down by the gid or a pit-bull circling its own tail. The axe-head or halberd rears above his top-notch, and makes leave to strike. Oh my yes, it’s most peculiar… since a man with Sartre’s iron in the soul (rather than artistry) has finally arrived: in that he’s forced himself onto the front page of Erich Fromm’s The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness. This was indolent of any other caprices, such as Dalton Trumbo’s Johnny Got His Gun.

PART FIFTEEN
Needless to say, the cook and her fellow servant-girl look on askance (or bewildered) by such infractions against Facebook. There’s also a neediness here… as one of the serving class stands by a brownish door with a clenched fist. She wears or besports an ultramarine pinafore plus a yellow wrap – even by dint of a surplice’s abutment. Do you hear? Her title badgers to Peaches amid a fear of chaos or Little Giddings; whereas her accomplice, Monocle, prepared the meals and kept T.S. Eliot at bay. This woman wore a green pattern dress and entertained some wrought iron hair… she came to utter the following refrain. “By Gad, my giddy aunt! The old loony tune has gone
completely berserk and no mistake. Isn’t it an example of a drunk and seedy Jeffrey Barnard, in a Soho pub like the “Coach & Horses”, doing an egg and board trick? Anyway, the explosion which his own brother predicted has come to pass. What do we do, Peaches? All of this belly-aching loosens up the staying power of a priapic vampire. Do you remember – if not necessarily as a choice – those primitive figures on English hillsides? They were gigantic, Gargantuan a la Rabelais, club-wielding and well-endowed. Could this relate to a magnetised substratum in the ground? To be sure: there’s a better part of a million pounds worth of antiques in that room. They are reliquaries of a rare distance and prestige; especially in the format of loungers, hanging pots, chandeliers, wood carvings, eaglets, ornate silks and untroubled dark woods, plus nacreous pearls and classicising ‘vim’. What one had in mind was a girl’s elongated form – possibly a ballet dancer like Simone Clark or Hillary Chasteneuf – and it took the ambit of a green bronze. It was burnished in its sheen and cast, much like an object d’art by Ouline. We have to rescue this bounty from oblivion. Come on, matron, let’s go in!”

PART SIXTEEN
In its brief unfolding or foundry, Trevor Milkway (Rowbotham) entertained a phantasm which can be looked upon in books. These adopted the pages of the Strugatsky brothers’ Interzone, Jack London’s The Iron Heel and Alex Kurtagic’s Mister. Yes undoubtedly, it flared briefly before dying (asunder); whilst, if you recall, a faceless corpse thudded down to the wood. It was sodden all the way through, (doubtless); and a pair of taloned claws let him slip o’er life’s rubbish dump. What did the amphibian or Sybarite utter at this point? Why, one remembers it thus: ‘Behold! Humanoids of pain or spent wolflings… reject the unconscious mind. Nor should one dwell on Carl Jung’s The Revolution in Nihilism (unduly). For heretofore, I wipe clean a face. HA! HA! HA! Raw sadism is a panoply of indifference to pity. Yes, mon ami, it means aught but a severance from the
Fool’s line in Lear. ‘Thou art an O without a figure; a nothingness.’ How the vigour of its trope assaults me – it enervates a twin-set via some Witchcraft’s delight… Observe this: it uncovers mutation, death and revenge all at once and après the deep-sea’s turbid foam. HA! HA! HA! Such power liberates the shaft – it plunges Man, as a reptile, into deeper castles of the mind. Let us celebrate the kiss of peace (in death) from our ocean…” Wasn’t this Fishman, in truth, an exterior cast of Trevor Milkway (Rowbotham)?

PART SEVENTEEN
Both of the servants, Peaches and Monocle, now enter the room in order to confront their master. They do so as hags in treacle who sense a tremulousness afore one’s grave. Do you detect it, please? Monocle – the cook – goes in first of all or twain; and she finishes with a furnace of so much meat… the latter in irons. Her double-chin wobbles and quivers like that of a turkey cock; itself made up from the glabrous tidings of so much flesh (or suet). Whereas her companion in mischief, Peaches, creeps about like a church mouse or a servant in an Agatha Christie story. Her eyes were timid, vascular, deep-seated, inter-penetrated and left alone – as if they sensed the hurdy-gurdy man at English fairs. Wouldn’t Thomas Hardy have explored such a theme – no matter what? Yet this exemplification of Wood and Stone, a la John Cowper Powys, does not approach Trevor Milkway’s eye-brows. He stands alone amid Comus’ Rout or a replete attitude; what with a shambles or negation quivering at this time. Above all, Mister Rowbotham grasps an axe in twin fists… and it’s held grimly, paw for paw, as if to genuflect over Anton LaVey’s or Kevin R. Slaughter’s pyre. Indeed, liquor runs down his cheek, the man’s hair comes dishevelled or unpronounced; while his dress seems to be scattered around him like a scarecrow. He speaks in a roaring tremor: “What do ya think you’re doing, me ducks? I’ll cash in on the roving nature of your blade – to be sure. For those who enter a room, prior to a sarcophagi or its entreaty, may not choose to leave it. Dost thou see this, sweetie
pie?” Peaches travelled to her target like a wet rag, but she has the courage to enunciate it. Perhaps our bourgeois bag-lady springs back from the dart board having hit a wire. Oh yes! She pronounces the following diction: “Master Trevor, desist – we invite you to register a protest against Apollyon. Must one go on proceeding to trigger the advent of Milton’s poesy – page after page of it? Stop, sop, rot, stop… please sir; you are becoming afflicted with the raw creation of John Maizels’ fandango. Why don’t you let us into the closing iron maiden that ye sense all around, eh?” “Bah!”, he replied, “I shall be the master (or scourge) of any wringing towels in this vicinity… so to say. Moreover, (and speaking through a kaleidoscope of drink), I deposit ordure upon my own carpets, if you please… Likewise, a man has the right to get blinding drunk or steaming in his loft, out-house or broken-down chamber. In truth, those awnings or hangings lie ripped to shreds – and they are deposited around the stone flags, or draws, of this nethermost cubicle. Let it pass: since the amorality of purport leads to a scene like the neo-classical church in Ayot St. Lawrence… Whereupon – and deep in its recesses – an ape-man hunts those corridors looking for mortal prey, and each one comes to be characterised by torches, shields or niches. Those scarlet banners, however, turn out to be less flags of indifference than curtains or drapes… each one of which ‘drags’ down. The simian or anthropoid wants to break open the shins so as to feed on the marrow therein – and it enjoins a man-thing who gibbers. A subdued light infuses all; in a situation where I gambol along, shift to shift, and with a rolling gait. It rollicks along at a plentiful lick – but I’m really all aglow or searching for a device/sieve. (The mastery of so many miseries are mine, you see – yet I can pull on a silken cord, in the corner of a room, so as to blast my enemies into dust). It travels along after a torpedo in the sea when drawn by Gene Colan. Nor need I fear the reaper; no siree, since my ‘planet of the apes’ had long since slain a servant, if only to leave him miscued in a back-stairs room. I observe it clearly. Quod the embroidery of our web’s violence has to speak of a poisonous arachnid at its heart.
Needless to say, one dead waiter (male) lay in pillion or dumbshow in a recess, alcove, booth or antechamber. It struck up the magisterial presence of so much absence – without falling into scholasticism. Furthermore, a dead butler likens to a stick-insect merging avec wood; and his head leers in a manner that’s no joke. Ultimately though, it stinks of sulphur or those lotus blossoms of Khitian rage; given the pumice of their estrangement. Wasn’t the spine of our man-servant broken, in accord with Cluedo’s vantage point? And didn’t his skull seem to be grinning at you (inanely or what); when the cranium was bent behind the shoulder? It crossed the Y-axis of implausibility, no matter what else. I’ll do whatever I please in my own abode and any individual, whether male or female, risks aught if they deny it. Heed, madam, the axe – in that any who cross my path shall be brained by it (hic). Do you understand me, Peaches and Monocle?” With this effrontery completed, he took a great swig from the whisky jar.

PART EIGHTEEN

Behold(!), my companions in avoiding sleep. For an emanation of Mrs Townsend Side-Rowbotham has emerged; and she exists at the back of a submerged raft. Or if not cascaded or o’erplunged, then it’s sodden to the embrace of so much water… itself piled high about an ocean’s ooze. Her dwelling – in a forward direction – is provocative, given a nakedness from the waist up, a brassiere and skin-tight trousers. (The latter adornment was clasped in the form of a webbing, at any time of asking). Do you know? Nonetheless, her features were contorted with pain or grief, and the eyes look lost, transfixed, cross-captioned or riven. Mightn’t they be black marbles (?) when drawn from the eyes of a goddess in a J.G. Ballard story, and who’s copper skinned? “By the stars”, she cries, “hail the moon-shine of Orion – what have you done, O Titan!? By Hecate’s eddying teats or dogs, he has no face or visage. It is as if, in accord with an ancient curse, his very identity’s been taken or leavened. Above all, it gerrymanders a soufflé of plains – if only
to excoriate the surface of some surrounding dough.” She then proceeds to beat her chest in abandonment. Let it rip!

PART NINETEEN
Back in the room of his mansion or town-house, though, Trevor Milkway (Rowbotham) contrives to go berserk. He limbers up to a dexterity or proportion of those New Gods; albeit in a state of high drunkenness or non-hilarity. He skims the surface of a moon-beam and comes up trumps – if only to straddle two dimensions with a blade. Behind his fixity the apartment waxes to chaos or disorder, and a green curtain-rail disacknowledges its presence. It exists in a corner – by the by. Again, the orange walls of this pad subsist as an origami exercise – one which swivels around its orientation or mount. Likewise, a reddish hue amplifies a mullioned frame – itself deep-set – and other appurtenances lie in corners or aft. To put it bluntly, this abattoir or shambles has fastened on antiques – i.e., these are items or objects d’art that litter a neighbouring floor. Thus, we find a medley of broken hat-stands, Chippendale furniture, Queen Anne chairs or loafers with stiff backs, as well as upturned tables, bureaux, stools and assorted planks of wood. [Note: don’t you remember that portrait of Somerset Maugham, looking epicene, by Graham Sutherland? It was later satirised by Francis Bacon who featured a dwarf, refracted and cut-up, in a dirty mustard light.] A light blue or azure frieze superintends the room’s features – and it does so by dividing those sandy walls from a jet-black ceiling. It fulfils a quadrant when directly above. It has to be this way, don’t you understand? Moreover, a very ornate painting (possibly a Canelletto) in a ‘puffa’ frame – when dyed green – lies askew on an adjacent wall. Amidst this barn-stormer or rough house, Trevor Milkway shrieks: “Get out! Get asunder or disembowel yourself, my wretches! For the next time I spy yonder forms you’ll be dying in pools of blood, or conversely a Paolozzi sculpture shall have taken over. Yes madams, you may well flee – I’m blind drunk and this Louisiana half-face will fillet the twain like a haunch of venison. Hurrah!” He swung the axe
around and about, and he lurched unsteadily on his feet amidships. The serving wench known as Monocle started violently and leapt for the door. “He’s quite mad”, she cried, “and our erstwhile ‘master’ has befuddled his senses... Trevor Rowbotham’s literally wild with drink or liquor, and it’s transformed a milksop into Peter Ackroyd’s variant on The Limehouse Golem. I’m outta here, me ducks—-.”

PART TWENTY
A click or snick has occurred on the periphery of our vision, and Mrs Townsend Side-Rowbotham returns to survey the scene. It affects to distil a ghastly glow – be Gad! For, like the eponymous Queen Victoria, she is definitely not amused! Her visage or mask – after the pattern of Lady Macbeth – proved to be imponderable, at least in terms of Arthur Wragg’s B-pencil. Look at this! She enters the hallway with a quick-silver start, not to say a deposition where a princess kisses a frog on a tasselled cushion. It proves ornate (this pouffe of the mind) and has four felt diamonds hanging from its corners. Anyway, the emerald door’s long closed on Clytaemnestra’s entry... at the back of our Grecian tableau. Indeed, a lighter or svelte hue – possibly a rare photosynthesis – inundates the hall’s backward part. Behind her prismatic capture or form, though, a bald antique dealer carries some ‘presents’. He sports a brief and slightly upturned bow-tie under his chin, and this provides a companion piece to J.G. Ballard. (Although – in such a case – he resiles to a moustachioed version who’s altogether on a smaller scale). One of the servants, Monocle, stands in front of her mistress’ display or peacock rally... and she looks askance. Didn’t the Hungarian composer, Kodaly, bend to a Magyar polka one peacock’s feather? In any case, a fluted and ornately-framed mirror – with an Eric Gill bust of “her” in front – shimmered its illusion out aways. Would Kate Bush’s high pitch in Wuthering Heights have smashed it into shards? Yet Side-Rowbotham’s basilisk stare fillets all: and, like an ancient Medusa, it turned everything to stone. At first one notices her stiffness of bearing – one which is
compacted from an inner erectness or Spartan ease. Maybe both Friedrich Nietzsche and Lord Lucan would call it *breeding*? A prim hat, made from fine orange wool, covers her head; while the jacket she wears was barely military as to its cast... being a medley of pockets, slips, lapels, straps, artichokes, zippers and cuffs. To be sure: a bevy of new ornaments or antiques, including one in particular, nestle in her robotic arms and gloves. “What is the meaning of this outrage?” she demands. “How can one gainsay a racket of ages or dunes – let it be! My peace cannot be disturbed (necessarily) by the axe which passes through a neck with nary a snick, do you see? For even the execution of a Stuart, like Charles I, took plenty of time and the head lolled off the body awhile. It took many moments to drop, perchance, from the cleaver’s edge to Madame Defarge’s basket. But, I won’t ask twice, what’s the reckoning of this static?” She quickly shot a glance at her servant woman, Monocle, who stood with her mouth agape – rather like a nurse on Odessa’s steps in *Battleship Potemkin*. “Don’t go in there, mistress grief!”, she begged, “your husband subsists within and he’s enraged. He holds an axe in between both fists and belabours your antiques, rather like a crazed figure in a Bacon oil-painting. Do you detect its rapine afore an effigy or scarecrow – no matter how the Wickerman fares? Mightn’t it embolden a resurgent paganism in yon salon? You mustn’t enter the mind’s scriptorium, Mrs Rowbotham, I won’t prove liable for the issue else. Certainly, we are in the grip of an engraving like *The Sabbat* by Spranger. Your spouse’s gone awol, run amok, or become a berserker who brandishes a halberd – there’s no doubting what he may attain (yet). I beg you not to enter your neo-Aristotelian pageant or secret garden, provided with sprigs and a colonnade, Mrs. Townsend.” “Stuff and nonsense”, replied her upper-class mistress, “stand aside, damn you! I intend to enter any and all leonine dens.”

PART TWENTY-ONE
What does Mrs Townsend Side-Rowbotham really look like? Well, the answer obtrudes as a double helix – after infinity’s
figure in mathematics. Yes... For, in compaction, her face is severe, elongated and slightly masculine as to cast. Its hair proves to be iron grey or pumiced (rather than pomaded); and her eyes limber athwart the reptilian. They were quick, darting, unromantic, deeply realistic and reminiscent of the inferno in *Auto-da-fe*, Elias Canetti’s novel, at its close. Likewise, Mrs Townsend’s jaw lay off-square, prehensile and tortured over its average or mean. Perhaps, albeit momentarily, she incarnates the following dream, spell or peculation... This exists in a separate ‘route’ or space to her husband’s fancies – but maybe all such things are connected. She sits (as yet) unflustered and with an elephant’s head, albeit behind an ornate or ebon door with a silvery skull on it. At its heart our mistress loafs on a throne of fine green-brick – what with an elephant’s skull nestling atop her rafters. It appears to be lop-sided, spend-thrift and wide-eared: almost to a degree that’s top heavy in its cranial lurch. Does one notice it? In any circumstance, the tear ducts are active and a lachrymose convoy dribbles down her cheeks... But, on closer inspection, it turns into nought save gold – or at least, a stream of gems which becomes more and more solid in the light. These were onyx, a plethora of glass, carnelian, ruby, beryl, nacreous pelt, emerald, cornelian, topaz and cat’s-eye. Yet aren’t these (also) the putative wings of an avenger at a later date? Immediately though – her mind returns to the above drama, noises off and a CRASH from the room housing one’s antiques. In her case, a collection of *objects d’art* makes palatable a loveless marriage. *Ergo*...

**TWENTY-TWO**

Contemptuously now, she strides past two servants and a helpless antiques dealer... he’s hopping from foot-to-foot like a little bird. Doesn’t he recall those sparrows of the field upon which Messiaen based piano music? Yes... Admittedly, Mrs Rowbotham approaches this portal with aplomb and it takes the form of lattices – themselves structured in brown and green. Yet again, she sweeps past an inter-connecting door in a corridor
that’s a flaccid grey. “What’s wrong, my hearties or ninnies?”, she admonishes them. “Has the marrow in yonder bones turned to treacle or liquid so quickly? In truth, your cowardice reeks afore me like rotting meat… it causes a stench to grow up in one’s veriest nostrils, do you hear? At any rate, I guessed that Trevor Milkway would revenge himself in an under-hand or philistine way, (so to say). It’s typical of him. Whatever surprises me is your pusillanimity before these fates. He carries no stick or moral cudgel. He’s just one man, don’t you know? (With this, she swept ahead of the others and began to open the door to a windswept salon). Nonetheless, the servant wench known as Monocle cried out aghast: “Mrs Townsend, I plead with you against gaining egress… most definitely. Does Daniel deliberately thrust himself into leonine jaws aforethought? Your husband, Trevor Milkway, is blindly drunk and capable of any counter-measure. For sure: listen to the cacophony of destruction taking place inside. Who would willingly throw open the treasury gate to such a whirligig or vortex? Not me, your honour – O no; it’s like the beggarly ol’ warden at the keep after Duncan’s murder in Macbeth.” Mrs Side-Rowbotham was no longer listening, however.

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And might, at another scalp, a humanoid with an elephant-head not laugh? It certainly moved with swiftness and aplomb over a bejewelled landscape… one which saw the avenger pursue a dead-man walking. He looked remarkably like Mr Townsend (Trevor Milkway); plus those sandals on his feet, a black cowl, tufty eyebrows and a shaven pate. May a little brown spider flee from its black widow in this way – or is it a vaudeville number (merely)?

TWENTY-THREE

Avaunt thee! The door to a cultural apartment or ‘museum’ has opened, and a husband & wife face one another. Most especially, it betokens an avenue of slaughter or renewal. Again: one reckons to the fact that human lives are bullets passing via
screens… n’est ce-pas? Furthermore, the room into which they pass is dishevelled – what with this yellowing sweep or scree upon the scene. It leavens up to a desert or its abstraction… even if we notice a shattered and ornate mirror hanging from a frame, ormolu bedecked. Could it denote seven bad years to come? Yes, me ducks… for a disparate mantel-piece sways accordingly. Its inner fastness caparisons a red --- even the bloodiest or scarlet fondu. Whilst a set of ornate candles and a flask limber up to an upturned decibel; it’s almost a shout from the recesses of Breton’s Minotaur: (never mind The Collectible Antiques Price Guide by James Mackay). “Stop it this instant, Trevor, do you hear?”, sneered Mrs Rowbotham. “You snivelling insect or idiot – take your pick from Goren’s bridge openings, why don’t ya? I will not have you subscribing to such a scene from a triple-decker Victorian novel or roman – you aren’t a Bulwer Lytton character, groveller, even in reprise. Silence the distaff eddy of such a reproof… I demand it! The misalliance of my gaze will not permit the bunting to be put up in Broadmoor’s wards. I won’t have a carry-on during my round or walking-tour…” “Ah!”, snuffled Trevor Milkway in a drunken sot, “the mistress of the house has returned, I see! Beloved – how goes it, eh?” (He then proceeds to blow a fake lover’s kiss or splutter; but it comes out like a raspberry, belch and eructation). “How goes it? You’ve been buying up a Mardi Gras of new torments, haven’t you? It’s like one of those ‘negative circus’ troupes or carnivals in Wyndham Lewis’ collection, The Wild Body. I can detect a burgeoning cornucopia under each arm – all of it paid for by money or gold bars I no longer possess. Yessum… the pressure of this deliverance seeks to shatter a phrenologist’s skull – itself a diktat that hints, amidst porcelain, at those emotional tensions or pits. They are bound to utter locutions, to devour insects and cry out – in a side-show – with a fair-ground’s barkers. Witness this: didn’t the anti-bourgeois circus Archaos come unstuck when a juggler misjudged the flight, admittedly using chainsaws, and was sliced in half? It suits the mascara and grease paint on Marion Manson’s living corpse… no matter. In truth, I haven’t
smashed aught asunder yet and I was saving you ‘till last (necessarily so). But now you’ve appeared in this boudoir, my darling, I can give your corse my undivided attention. It deserves no less…” Moreover, in this hybrid moment, Mister Rowbotham follows a fashion o’ derangement; given that he’s steaming, disharmonious, tieless, unbecalmed, tired and emotional, or otherwise Quasimodo’(d). He revolves or spins the axe-head in both hands during these proceedings.

To be sure: he also becomes apprised of one of his wife’s dreams or fancies. How can this be, my lords? It involves an elephant god or hustling who sits on a blackened throne – surely its lintel or sheen indicates ebon marble? Atop this (imponderably) a beast-woman with shrivelled breasts dwells on a life’s carnage. It causes her to cry or wax lachrymose, and a fillet of dew coruscates its trunk. Above all, those great ears hang down aplenty in their wilting charm; if only to level up to the foulness of forgotten dreams. A creature’s body – such as this one – bears upon it the marks of the torture-chamber, rack and surplus. Give into it… for who reads the meter on this forgetting save Trevor Milkway, her husband, who lies asleep under the influence of drugs in an adjacent chamber? Might his swoon ‘liberate’ the accompaniment of many filters; as laid out by a tonsured William Burroughs in *Naked Lunch*? They may be demerol, morphia, heroin, crack cocaine, amphetamine, LSD, ‘skunk’ marijuana, horse injections, ecstasy ‘pills’, amyl nitrate, herbal “highs”, meths and lozenges aplenty. All in all, they hint at what Dowson’s *Yellow Book* called a beauteous damnation…

TWENTY-FOUR
Yet artistic decadence aside, this married couple confront one another in a wrecked salon. It certainly achieves its aplomb through the pieces of the grave. “I shall bequeath you my undivided attention!”, burst out Trevor Milkway (Rowbotham). He seemed to involuntarily raise the axe – rather like a conductor’s baton – as he spoke. You’ve chosen to rob me from
the day you married me, and your cupidity and greed has worsened over time. (Hic!) Don’t think the depletion of a bank-balance passes unnoticed... and, in these circumstances, uxoricide pleases dwarfs. Oh my yes... (He chuckles madly to himself awhile). Meanwhile, a hurricane looks to have transformed the room around him; what with a smashed mirror, (ornately intended), a spartan fire-place, and hanging drapes of the deepest green. Her husband’s timid and rather droning voice reaches a peak – yet still recalls the squeaking of a rat like Hadjiphilippou. Might one side of his face, in a secret concord, sport a tribal tattoo or vine leaf? Also, won’t such a spider distend its thorax over prey – as it scuttles around its web seeking succour? Let us be sure of our bearings now... For Trevor Milkway pipes up: “You’re a wretched leech who suppurates on a corpse’s wounds! I have fathomed the inner motivations of yonder host – you mean to suck me dry and leave me bereft, or hollowed out, like a crab apple. Under such a travail, I’d be reduced to beggary or the trampings of insouciance – after one of Beckett’s stalkers. Hear me, wife! I refuse an active penury; nor shall I be drilled out in the manner of an unripe plum. You’re a psychic vampire who’s bled me for years; but now I must rob you of your life. HA! HA!” (He held the axe up as if to strike a fatal blow or engage in an itinerant charge). And, just for a moment, a spectre of fear and anxiety crosses over Mrs Townsend Rowbotham’s features... might her ant of a hubby actually mean it? May Dion Fortune be right?

TWENTY-FIVE
Yet what superintends in a world of dream or fancy? Who can rightly configure it? Again, two things need to be said; in that this couple have exchanged their phantasies. For his part, he remembers the postern gate to one of Weird’s exercises... In which a magician lies asleep in a hidden alcove or booth – whilst black-sheets transfix his body in a diaphanous way. Indeed, under the impress of their silken breviary, we note an exemplum... may it soothe one of Gunter von Hagens’
plastinates? To be sure: our guide lay abed on a dais and underneath a cup-shaped aperture, while, to one side or t’other, braziers burn fitfully. They char the air and leave brackish incense upon it… but it is the antiques dealer, Scribe-End Pentecost, who breaks a miasma borne of lotus blossoms. “Dog of a thousand unclean mangers!”, snarls Trevor Rowbotham. (Most notably, the one who peers into a magic camera or pin-hole device – after Muybridge’s photos – notices himself at their heart.) “What do you do here – and why does a merchant dare to interrupt one’s slumberous petals?” For answer the other places a burnished antiquity on a black-steel table. It has an uncanny resemblance to the statuette his wife carried into the mansion afore. Gingerly, and almost reluctantly, this Lovejoy leaves it next to a silken divan. “I bestow upon you a gift and a last enchantment”, whispers his uninvited guest. His voice has a soft lilt or timbre – could Mrs Rowbotham be speaking through her…? No matter: since the object d’art in question is a travesty of The Maltese Falcon by Dashiell Hammett. It stands about a foot in height and incarnates a serpentine writhing o’ the spheres. In this carnate gloom it encroaches upon snakes who wrap themselves about emerald globes. These (in turn) give way to a masterpiece of sculpture – rather like a Paolozzi – wherein asps rise up around the central dome of an earthen astrolabe. It strives to govern the course of the planets and illumine them from above. But, in submission to Tarim’s blood, we note that on a lowly plane this Gilbert & George offerant bestows a new tone. Won’t it be different therein?

TWENTY-SIX
It was at this precise moment that Mrs Rowbotham began to scream, even though a certain diffidence clung to her dressage. She basically doubted that her spouse could summon the gumption (or fortitude) for such a violation. Still, she gestures away from him with a gloved and precise hand… “No! Trevor, stop – desist… think of the impression you’re making by this scene. I forbid it! Again, NOOO!” All of the following then
happened in a blur... given that the servant in her blue-and-
yellow apron, Monocle, brought down a poker on Rowbotham’s
head. It proved to be a rebellion against her master (up to a
point); and the sandy-haired miscreant went down ‘neath an arc.
In this regard, the iron stick swung so as to clear its lugs, and
Monocle levels it against her employer’s brow to prevent blue
murder. Moreover – if we must speak of sapphire’s tincture – the
entire salon appears to be suffused by cerulean... it bespeaks a
sea-green incorruptibility. And in the backsweep one notices
distended chair-legs, smashed pottery and upturned baroque
furnishings... one silver-wire chair from Louis XIV’s reign
stands out; its red curves cut against an abiding ultramarine.
Also, Trevor Milkway (Rowbotham) subsides quickly under the
baton’s impress or thud, and he sprawls on the carpet intoxicated
by drink. He then lies on this thickly piled ornamentation, and
burbles or gurgles like a baby. Soon he is unconscious or fast
asleep.

TWENTY-SEVEN
For a moment, Mrs Rowbotham subscribes to what a
revolutionary conservative writer, Carl Jung, called The
Revolution in Nihilism. It deserves more credence than this,
doesn’t it? Given the following semiotic: since their dreams or
fancies have changed and turned tail (whether head-to-head or
not). Isn’t this reminiscent of Brian Aldiss’ novel devoted to the
mattoid or delinquent, Bare-foot in the head? Anyway, she
became aware of a stage-play set on a raft, and it contrived to be
a refutation of Edward Bond’s marxian effort The Sea. Look
again now: quod a fish-man has ripped the face off a victim, only
to recline into turpitude afore vengeance. In the distance, and
afore an old’un, a younger vintage of Mrs Rowbotham screams
on. She wears skin-tight trousers of a certain mesh, together with
a brassiere over her naked top. ‘He has no visage!’, she keeps on
caterwauling awhile. But a form of retribution occurs
concurrently – in that the antiques dealer, Scribe-End Pentecost,
moves into view on an autogyro. It’s a sort of hovercraft or
flying disc device, and he cries out: “Foul monster! I have you in my gun-sights… You won’t dare to mark these cross-wires in the manner of David Carradine in Alien X. Yes, an outcome which avoids auto-erotic asphyxiation is in prospect, and I’m here to deliver it. It’s a refutation of Jim Dewey’s Deliverance – by want of a ripe gesture.” “What!?” articulated the amphibian, “the rasping quality of the voice speaks to me across the aeons or its void. Most understandably, it seeks to flatter the mammalian against a living-fish – irrespective of Damien Hirst’s shark in formaldehyde.” In enunciating this, the anthropoid turns away in order to disembark into its own element – namely, the deep brine or register of the sea. Nor can one afford to forget its mask; in that this living shadow over Innesmouth (sic) is fishy, gill bestrewn, bloater-like, scaled, wide nostrilled or mouthed, as well as leathery over its bony method. Could it betoken a Caribbean fish’s head on a hominid’s body? If so, how long will it survive outside the water?

TWENTY-EIGHT
Against the background of an undulation or green curtain – one of her two servants, Monocle, moves to make amends. It passes through the corner-stone of this lightning, in other words, in order to harpoon her breath. Doesn’t it remind you of the yellowing pulp-paper which characterised those Astounding Stories of the past? By any candle-power, a maid’s orbs pass like dolls’ eyes to the side or its token; and they denote those metal ducts within which marbles rattle. (Truly, our force at issue bemoans the novella The Doll’s House by Sarban/John William Wall). “I had to do it, Mrs Townsend Rowbotham. I’m sorry or apologetic, withal! I could only intervene with a weapon or an instrument of vengeance at this time… lest he’d have murdered you.” “Stuff and nonsense!”, shrilled Mrs Townsend in a robust or matriarchal tone. (A dark blue-to-black window lay behind her at this juncture… might it double upon itself as a French peek-a-boo?) “My foolish or errant spouse contrived to close an iron maiden upon himself. He was merely bluffing from beginning to
end – and didn’t you see how tipsy he became prior to action? There is no other way for a weakling to go… for, as Peter O’Donnell’s *Modesty Blaise* points out, a body’s meek enough for aught if they resort to drugs. I will entertain your twain now…” (and she proceeded to hector the two servants, Peaches and Monocle). “Carry him up to his apartment and put Trevor Milkway to bed, why don’t you? Also, make sure that you pitch his body into the four-poster from the right-side; its curtains and sheets are blood red in aspic. Further – I want you to make his internal key-ring difficult to find, at least provisionally. Why not stoop to putting it in the inner casement within my husband’s bureau… it won’t be his first port of call? NO! He’ll make a full – if sottish – recovery in the morning and be full of remorse. You examine your Ouija board to see whether my surmise proves pluperfect!”

TWENTY-NINE
But what of our parallax or dreamy diction (?); itself the exercise in H.T. Flint’s *Geometrical Optics* which Stewart Home regards imprecisely. He considers it to be an exercise in Disney’s *Fantasia* – or the angst of a universal Prole-cult. Within this tabernacle, though, the following *Agon* pursues its course: in that a blast from an autogyro sends a fishman into the sea. He goes into the azure wavelets (themselves churning) so as to fight better under some liquid than on the land… even if it’s a raft made of wooden palisades. Never mind: since Scribe End Pentecost dive bombs ‘it’ from above – and he’s rigged up in a peculiar suit or power surge. May it embody one of those early flying-machines which were tailor-made to the individual pilot? Most definitely…

THIRTY
Back in a veritable termite hill of the twentieth century, then, Mrs Rowbotham collects her thoughts. She has also manoeuvred one of the antiques out of Pentecost’s hands and into her own… He waits dutifully, in turn, for a signal from his mistress to go upstairs with the other treasures. The rotund cook, Peaches,
immediately pipes up in the aftermath of this gesture. “I do hope”, she unctuously counselled, “that Madame will take the plunge and sleep elsewhere this night. After all, there are some goodish or family run hotels in the vicinity… such as the establishment known as ‘David Copperfield’. It advertises itself by making use of a Top or dress hat. Let it be! Quod Mister Rowbotham may return to his furious wits during those hours of darkness when the power of evil is most exalted. He may try to injure you anon, my Sybil or Mrs Jardine from Rosamund Lehmann’s *The Ballad and the Source*. Don’t let him hurt your issue with a wide-bladed axe, Mrs Townsend.” “Do not vex yourself unnecessarily, Peaches”, responded Madame Rowbotham *avec* an irritated calm. “I intend to lock myself in my own compartment and contact the police about it in the morning. I ask you not to worry about my safety, my loyal servants”, she declared imperiously and with a *mien* reminiscent of Livia, Augustus’ wife. “Maybe I’ll ring the men-in-blue and have them call at the mansion around ten o’clock tomorrow afore noon”, cut in the antiques dealer. “A capital gesture of alarum!”, added *la* Rowbotham hastily.

THIRTY-ONE
Back in her innermost mind, though, a Battle Royal continued. How interesting that her spouse’s fancies should reappear in the wife’s vital-cortex… because Mrs Townsend Side-Rowbotham is a Clytaemnestra: a woman with the sense of a man. *Avaunt thee*, the robotic figure of an antiques dealer approaches; and he blasts an Amphibian with such force that his head flies off. May it be an extension (or ectoplasm) of Trevor Milkway’s kindred? In this regard, the mouth opens or dilates like a pumpkin’s gob – when carved from its rubbery fruit out Liverpool way. It sidles to the side (likewise), if only to elongate its spastic intent, and this was to facilitate a mushroom’s torque. THWOK! The electricity of such a charge bursts around Trevor’s *alter ego*, and it seems to gain a shock from the watery blancmange. Don’t you feel
revenge coming from a galvanic gun (?) above the sources of the deep sea.

THIRTY-TWO
Meanwhile, Mrs Rowbotham is deep in conversation with her bric-a-brac dealer, Scribe End Pentecost. She surveys a scene of destruction within the salon… and hasn’t her husband fallen victim to Erich Fromm’s analysis, The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness? Methinks thee – that a spate of attacks on great paintings, like Mantegna’s Lamentation over the Dead Christ or David’s The Intervention of the Sabine Women, fulfilled such a need in the ‘seventies or ‘eighties. Look here: a tall or light green curtain stands ripped in its rent hue, and a Caravaggio in an ornate or orange frame rests nearby. “Will you veer close to this miserable finery (?)”, intoned Mrs Townsend, “my errant and cowardly spouse has destroyed some choice items. For truthfully, the masses are bestial and philistine… they care not a fart in their corduroys over art. Both Gustav le Bon and Elias Canetti were right (you see), and my husband shares the passionate hatred of the majority viz. Kultur. The idiot and mountebank! Just go and stare at the priceless treasures which he’s tried to ruin… yes indeed, my insurance may recover most of it – but we speak here about matters other than money.” Her dealer remained quiet momentarily and then our Lovejoy spoke. “My Lady, perhaps you ought not to bring your finery or purchases into the house – it might add nought but oil to the fire. A pattern o’ discretion might reduce a febrile clock-piece, and it can then bed down in order to facilitate silence.” As he says this, my mistress’ companion, a stray eye glances over him. He happens to be a bald man – of middling age and height, and his remaining hair is monkish, lost, all of a pattern, fading to grey or lights-out. Also, Scribe End Pentecost wears a blue shirt with a red bow-tie; it might be polkadot in aspect. Whereas his suit pulsates to a dun-coloured direction or impress, and it appears to be lined avec strips of woad. A brief or indirect moustache (a la Baron Gruner) caresses his upper lip. Do you notice it? “I refuse to be
intimidated or dictated to, Pentecost, and must one hear ‘owt?’”, she replied in a snappish tone.

Furthermore, she gave clipped orders to the servants, Peaches and Monocle, about carrying her husband upstairs. They complied without a murmur.

THIRTY-THREE
Nonetheless, a new fancy or midsummer night’s ‘green’ grew in her consciousness. It no longer overlapped with her spouse’s trope, but returned to Natalie Sarraute’s quixotic beam. In this incarnation, a death wizard grappled with Mr Rowbotham (who was naked save for a loin clout). By comparison to which – the mage embodies the antique dealer, albeit radically altered, and both of them wrestle using tulwars. They possess handles made from ivory and porcelain, together with exquisite gold filigree or workmanship. The master o’ magics, for his part, wears a purple toga made from rough cloth; and ‘he’ seems to be skeletal, glabrous, bug-eyed, seamed with veins, tall, or lipless in ‘its’ clenched teeth. While slightly ahead of the two warriors – and amid some steam or dry ice – lies a sexy version of Townsend Side-Rowbotham. She is held captive by two trinkets or gold chains – and she writhes between them; at once head-banded (like a hippie), as well as near-naked, with her breasts and pudenda covered by taut cloth. This was especially so as her stomach muscles stretched or pullulated, athlete-like, under some bronze skin.

THIRTY-FOUR
Back in the present tense, though, the two servants known as Monocle and Peaches carry their master upstairs. He is blind drunk and completely asleep (thereby); nor do these serfs utter a peep… And they are definitely not Peep o’ day Boys in the nineteenth century fashion; since Trevor Milkway’s weight subdues them. Slowly they mount the mansion’s stairs – and it sweeps away behind ‘em like an Edwardian hotel lobby or a
‘forties film. The stairs themselves were light-brown in colour and they spiralled akin to a servant; or alternatively, an orange stair-well cascaded alongside them. It possessed ornate or fluted struts – whilst closing off with a pedestal & its crop: on top of which a Grecian flute-boy, or Ganymede, strutted. Gradually, my masters, the two maids passed up and along in order to deposit Mr Rowbotham on his four-poster... the one with the red blinds. Behind them, on the other precipice, a parquet flooring sponged off against the light; and it deliberated upon a sequential lozenge or diamond tracery of black-and-white. A heavy or early nineteenth century Turner (depicting a historical or battle scene) lit up a far wall; whereas a green door led into a chamber observable from the stairs. It contained mixed congeries of blue doves: the first a suit of armour holding a halberd; the second a Queen Anne couch somewhere off to the rear. The antiques dealer, Scribe End Pentecost, kept up a dutiful distance from his White Kali or queen bee – after all, didn’t her purchases keep the business afloat? Mrs Marmaduke spoke earnestly now: “I refuse to be intimidated by my husband’s antics”, (she repeated). “It is true to say that I married Trevor Milkway in order to gain access to his fortune, and thence to buy these antiques. The acquisition of such objects d’art has become my life or its veritable passion. Also, I refuse to be cowered by his drunken rages, envy, passion play, pusillanimity or cowardly pique. No. The interlaced skeletal hands of those who have died – and (perforce) been buried in an ossuary – doesn’t faze me. He can do nothing to check me in his distemper; even though a gauntleted hand, a la Audrey Hepburn, breaks through a golden bodice from Jerzy Kosinski. Again: I would ask you to bring my newly obtained antiques up to my room.” The reliquary dealer and auctioneer, Scribe End Pentecost, merely answers in the affirmative. “Yes, ma’am”, he replies.

THIRTY-FIVE
Five minutes later the two of them are alone together in her auditorium. It happens to be a brightly lit and apportioned
chamber – where almost every square inch of space is covered with collectibles, antiques, motifs, sigils and elder clones. Amongst these appurtenances, my friend, we discover a mock-Egyptian ink-stand (with a quill-pen in it a la Wallis Budge); as well as an ornate curtain-wrap that’s folded back on itself in black crepe. Likewise, a darksome mirror surrounded by a heavy gold-frame is seen, and it’s accompanied by a modernist sculpture after Brancusi’s intent… or may it abound with Archipenko’s constructivism, nay, even Brian Willsher’s ire? Doesn’t an opening out of the form in this way – after Eric Gill, Duchamp or Reg Butler – indicate the following: either bourgeois formalism or a 3-D scream? In the middle of this cuboid, however, the dealer places a small statue foursquare. It consists of a figure in a hooded cloak with both hands over its face; and the entire statuette was cast in greenish metal. Might it have been (including the base) an emerald or painted bronze? Never mind: since Mrs Rowbotham stands afore it avidly, fervently, and with a faint – almost erotic – smile curling up her mouth. “You say, Pentecost, that this one possesses an ugly or questionable past? I have to say it, man: it fascinates or challenges me – after those twain sculptures of Mother Kali standing atop S[h]iva, with rubies for eyes, and a spear penetrating his side. Doesn’t this dance of death (or danse macabre) generate the energy which keeps up the cosmos?” “I don’t know about that!”, coughed Scribe End rather cautiously. “Nevertheless, this piece is widely considered to be a jinx or curse, Mrs Rowbotham. I can’t verify every case (obviously), but most of its owners have contrived to die horribly or in bothersome circumstances. Indeed, this verdant sheen on the metal – itself indicative of Arno Breker’s onslaught – comes well bloodied, even disembowelled. The surreal artist Felix Labisse may have gone to paint in abattoirs in order to achieve the right intensity… yet this is extra-terrestrial. It’s not a case of Kathy Acker’s Blood and Guts in High-School, do you see?” (As he intimated this, Scribe End Pentecost lay down an ornate cribbage
block in front of him. It was made from solid mahogany). “Quiet enchanting!”, murmured Side-Rowbotham (Mrs).

THIRTY-SIX
What goes on here, me hearties? *Quod* Mrs Rowbotham still stood there after the fashion of Peter O’Donnell’s *She.* (*He wrote the screenplay for the Hammer film based on Rider Haggard’s novel). In any event, her grey *coif* lay like iron upon the sands; whereas the heiress’ fashionable or tailored jacket – in red and yellow – stood out briskly. It embodied the spirit of a Wyndham Lewis vorticist dash; in comparison to an artistic installation in the desert. “It benumbs and quickens the blood in my veins”, murmured Side-Rowbotham. “Have a care”, replies the dealer discretely, “this statue brings pain and foreboding to those who enjoy it! As a piece, it transfigures the actual and comes with a health warning (no matter how cursory). It contemplates blind Tiresius – alone in his wasteland – and gathered hither by a solitary boy… one who fashions lenses for eyeless sockets. Many consider this object to be accursed; and, given your husband’s mental state, I’d give much thought to placing it on your bed-side table a’night.” In a likely stupor, Scribe End Pentecost, her dealer, loses no time in stooping afore her, and his head appears to be non-whizzing, darksome, scarfed, imperilled or calcified in milk (even).

THIRTY-SEVEN
“Stuff and nonsense”, Mrs Rowbotham ripostes, “do you think I’m a coward or a weakling to be afeared of aught like that?” Indeed, she has now repositioned the statuette next to her bed-head, and it glows (veritably) with a keen effulgence. All of a sudden… its criterion has adopted a blood-red passion. Oh yes! May it just be a trick of the light, only? Next to this macabre *incunabula* – itself writhing with cherubs in baroque distaste – comes an antique lamp from the ‘twenties. It reeks of Aldous Huxley’s *Antic Hay*, Tamara de Lempicka or roaring speedsters. Furthermore, a cyclopean distribution of light freezes all – and it
casts a green penumbra from a wrap-around gazetteer. It also exhibits a tasselled lower periphery in the manner of olden lit-sources; when contrasted with a blackish expanse o’wall. Most definitely, an ornate table – from Louis XV’s reign and Madame de Pompadour’s blessing – holds up this taper. A blue-strained curtain shifts to the side and on a far jetty we spy an elegant bed; it has an early eighteenth century bedstead – with a curlicue or squiggly schemata. A collocation of dark-green sheets finishes off the jobbery… and these roll away to the camping’s feet. Wherein one theme above others becomes apparent – and this must intrigue over a rough or wooden bed’s-end (itself prey to Grief’s abutment). Let’s see it now… Again, Mrs Side-Townsend Rowbotham spoke not just for her persona – no matter how fleetingly. Had she ever wished to feminise Rene Harding in Self-Condemned? “Do you think I can be made to fear those totems of self-estrangement?”", she glowered. "Might my mood be captured by an invasion of purple; (a la Bill Hopkins’ treatment of Brian Willsher’s sculpture)? I scoff at all forms of foolhardy glee. You see: those who wish to kill what they love first fire their brain-pans with mustard! Guess again athwart some beggary – for I fear nothing whatsoever and despise superstition more than anything. You speak, my Pentecost, about death and a deliverance from pain – in relation to those who sport a Dorset’s ooser over their brow. This elicits a Belial’s transport or belt-way (o’er Acheron’s bridge of sighs) and no boatman rests on his oars… eager to take up the slack. Charon is a holocaust denier or revisionist, inter alia, and he absents himself from the carafe, in Cafaye’s contemporary lore, which traverses the Styx. Listen and heed me: no man of iron can rust the grace of my disfavour. Also, talk of death merely haunts the chaff of neighbourly guillotines… themselves redolent of a Thermidorean reaction. If any are to lose their life and become a headless corse (hereabouts) it will be my witless husband, Trevor Milkway. I shall espy him down in the gutter or side-walk; plus my stiletto’s heel upon his neck, dewlap and ill-concealed goitre… under a cardigan’s wrap. Surely enough, were any fit to die betimes –
one’s iron maiden’ll close on him first of all, and, in such a Schwarzkogler’s bevy, I guarantee his penniless demise. He must perish without a brass farthing, if I have aught to do with it!”

THIRTY-EIGHT

With a smarting set of features (now) Scribe End Pentecost shuffles away. He’s desperate not to make amends, but to escape intact. A large number of antiques – themselves of Rupert Gunnis’ vintage – pass through his hands… and Mrs Rowbotham has crammed her mansion to the gunnels with ‘em. Yet he dislikes her rants; and (in particular) the unhappiness between husband and wife evinced by such words. A bourgeois and conventional persona (thoroughly so); he wishes to escape hereafter. He just wants to get away… do you hear? Maybe also, his business reminds one of Peter Quiggins in Liverpool; in that the attic hay c/o www.Quiggins.com spots a bull-dog. It rests at the heart of a Union Jack with a New Wave cut-out underneath; one which tells us of a blackmailer’s letter. (The copper-plate hand comes across as words; each of them scissored and pasted from a tabloid or New Scotland Yard’s black museum). This itemises a recognised pastiche or Pop Art, and it speaks of a burnished bronze or filter by Flaxman, Westmacott, Thorak, Landseer, Berens, Lord Leighton and Gormley. It is the very essence of collage. “I’ll be going in a timely apercu”, intimated the antiquarian. Isn’t an antiques dealer an up-market junk dealer, in any event? “Veritably, madame, I must be off.” “Very well”, she responded in a hollow tone of voice, “even those eagles devouring Prometheus’ liver had to slow down occasionally.” Moreover, as soon as the red bow-tie or dream-weaver departs, Mrs Townsend Rowbotham locks her bedroom door. It reverberates with a special click.

THIRTY-NINE

CLICK(!) went her nightly portcullis or observatory, and it sent shivers down the spine of its dyed wood. Avaunt thee, a trigonometry o’ teak closed around her; and it afforded the frieze
of one impermanence too far. Indeed, these squares were a prism’s light-rays – even the inlaid panels of each set afforded an orange glow. Conversely though, the inset debenture – inside every ochre’d bulwark – holds to a blue distaff; i.e., an inlaid sepulchre that stands firm in its harlequinade. The entrance to her inner fastness betokens an antique in itself: although it might close off a toy theatre a la George Speaight. (These were exquisite dramas in miniature – the like of which characterised Montague Summers’ misspent youth). For each instant or expenditure, in terms of Rochester’s or Wycherley’s poesy, sought to kill the black dwarf within: (the latter is an eighteenth century radical paper; and it was later revived as a Trotskyist sheet in the ‘sixties). “Too far”, murmured Side Rowbotham to herself, “I’ve gone too deeply into these Mysteries to fall back. NO! I must see it through to a bitter end. Yes truthfully, I know my spouse better than my innermost palm… perhaps even the one in those occult or alchemical prints (sic) that betrays a pyramid at its heart. This happens to squash rumours of a conic item – amidst such Palmistry – and an eye comes abreast of this totem. It codifies what Goethe, Spengler, Alphonse Constant and Henry Miller called the cosmological eye. Above all, his cowardice betrays itself to me as a yellow saffron or jaundice in the night… For, as Fu Manchu intimates in one of Sax Rohmer’s runes, hatred is creative in a negative cast; in that you can create beautiful patterns out of it like stained glass. Yet his jealousy never rises to the Satanic peak of odium and draws on bile instead. It travesties itself as a species of weakness. Don’t forget that he had to invite drunkenness aboard afore he contemplates harm! I know Trevor Milkway of old. He’d have to get blind drunk or inebriated prior to attacking me – otherwise he wouldn’t have the courage to declare his hand. You see – he can only administer a hurt when he’s ‘out of his box’, to use a hippie’s cliché. Further, there’s no unnecessary love lost between us and that’s self-evident. Yet Mister Rowbotham is rich, irregular in his habits, lacking in confidence, undemanding and liable to sadness
– at least if sober. And I need his fortune in order to acquire those beautiful *objects d’art.*

Moreover, as she contemplates these matters, her back happens to be turned away from Odin’s severed eye. It rears up – in a distended mist – and the woman’s shoulders appear to be arched, perpendicular, box-like, spaced out or unafraid. Don’t they feed off a constellation of Boris Karloff’s blades (?); wherein his abutments master a mastiff’s indulgence… in that mime remains crucial to horror. Also, Mrs Townsend R’s shoulder-pads box malefic in tandem; and they recover an arch perspective from below. All of this suffuses a pomegranate or orange lustre (like a hollowed Pumpkin for Halloween); and it finds a contrast agin an abstract expressionist blue. Oh yes!

**FORTY**

An hour or so passes in the recesses of the old house, and Mrs Side Rowbotham prepares for bed. Although a range of false curtains travesties a necklace in ultramarine; and it comes to the ground, roughly, in terms of net blinds. These stretch out in the floor’s direction or misuse. Again, a bright yellow ledger remains uncut like a tobacco brick – and it strives to reflect away the interest of a gibbous moon. Two semi-ornate curtains – when tied at the bib and bilious in their sapphire coat – seek to enliven either window. Whereas, in and amongst the chamber’s incunabula, two other objects or levies stand out: they are a Grecian urn replete with a lid… as well as two figurines from the Empire. They were British imperial (vaguely) and both wax militarist in subfusc – it’s as if Kitchener’s block-houses had never risen on the veldt. And it proves obvious (methinks) when we abstract them towards some *kitsch* or a ‘Thunderbirds’-type purport. Yes: the colours were primary or stroboscopic… after the likelihood of a French cartoon in 1899. A scenario where the wily Kruger sought to leave his office – if only to permit an *artiste* to live safely out of time. Again, these differences betray a wily truth… or (alternatively speaking) they fixate upon the salt.
which can’t be rubbed into Imperium’s doxa. Wasn’t this publication an example of Liverpool’s rightist hue (?); in that a city, replete with its guard dogs, fends off some Britbacks or stick-insects. These were well-guarded, tall, pith cap wearing and (even now) the colonial Australians stood around aimlessly. Listen to this: “Sister, do you want to dance in terms of an Afrikaner postcard, where, against a background of fabrication, a rush of fronds stays true. Don’t we outnumber a press of the following kin (?); namely, one that keeps Nielson unadorned in its Spartan papers? For these molecules and numbers betray their origins in poster paint – whether it’s a coxcomb of bright yellow, crome, scarlet, violet, chaff, green or a forgotten page artiste. It was a varied cornucopia itself; and iron grey, magenta, rising public fines and gutted antiquities (for sure) all favour a single birth-mark… Yes, here will do, and it relates to a postcard involving Kruger and John Bull – at least if the one vacates its high-pressure seat. A display (this is) which adorns William de Klerk’s The Puritans in Africa and other glories of the Burgerstand: such as apartheid.

+ “Yessum”, mused Mrs Rowbotham as she undressed, “I need my husband’s gold more than Israel requites nuclear weapons. Most certainly, I must possess his money in order to purchase these antiques forevermore… and, in essence, they prove to be my life’s only joy. Let Trevor Milkway (Rowbotham) twist and turn every which way; the truth remains that he’s trapped in doubt and folly. We are both Roman Catholics, he has to pay my bills and I shall never permit him a freedom so craved for. Yes…” At this instigation, she removed her top and dress; while beginning to engage with a night-slip. The blue moon – most continuously – seems to slip down some glass panes like a lozenge, sweet-meat or fried egg (in one of Iain Sinclair’s more distasteful lyrics). Soon she is under the portions of such a damask, if only to lever out some obedience to spent idols. All at once she finds herself in the assembly-rooms of a new beginning; and the burnished marble levels off under a pink sky streaked with blue.
The enclosure all around renders the steepness of white alabaster; and a limn or marbling transfixes the walls – rather like a Titan’s birth-mark. Each patterning of stairs rises up towards some Doric pillars at the temple’s entrance; and these reserve themselves under a buffalo’s skull. It proves to be massive, gigantic, goat-headed and saturnine; even as it caparisons the shadowed interior within. A sweep of the building moves away to the left, under the moon, and small windows are observable way up at its heights. Can she have been influenced by the statue to her left (?); if semi-consciously in the manner of Freud’s essay on Leonardo da Vinci. Before going to sleep she takes a deeper look at it… how marvellous it seems!

FORTY-ONE
Mrs Rowbotham is almost under the covers or those sheets now, and they spear up around her like porpoises in the deep. The head of the bed glimmers on in a register of the baroque; it’s munificent in an eighteenth century case. All of this shows itself off in a red outermost limit… albeit one that curves down to a yellow plaster-board with green inlay, the latter in ormolu or rolled gold. This middle-aged woman happens to be in a nightie at our juncture, and the cleavage was well displayed against an iron scalp. Her lips – on the other hand – looked glossy, avid, turbid, unrecognised and expectant (possibly erotically so). The eyes likewise followed a basilisk course… somewhat. Indeed, Mrs Townsend Rowbotham gazes in rapture at the statuette to one side of her silhouette. It has not changed in its aspect; being at once small, dwarfish, recalcitrant, unwinged, needful, darkly brown, o’er-shadowed, Baal-petor like and crafty. But who (save a lunatic at the Maudsley hospital) can credit a statue with life? In its actual demeanour, though, the figurine wore a cape around its body, a hood over its head and both mittens (or claws) covered its face. Whereas the lower extremities or limbs of this sculpture pass into a grey rapture… the former accompanied by a base in support of it. It accompanies a brown square, rather like the metal plate on which a Britons’ toy used to stand, and it
ramifies withal. Gazing upon it voraciously, Mrs Side Rowbotham mimics the following ventriloquism. It occurs in her own mind. “What a fascination lies at the heart of antiques! By Gad, every last one of their number possesses a story – it’s often of passing or irrefragable interest. For example, the one presently before my sight – like Robinson Jeffers’ poem *The Californians* – alternates via a shape-shifter’s glee. It testifies to a resource on its own anvil, by means of violence! Oh yes; since those who buy it die horribly or in a mutilatory way in their beds. Don’t they come to embody the flayed corpses of Gunter von Hagens? In any event, it has to be a jinx or negative keepsake – at least metaphorically. It’s just amazing, astounding, eerie and marvellous… or simply weird. Ho hum, what fun! There’s nothing to beat collecting antiques.”

FORTY-TWO
A brief twenty minutes later we notice that Mrs Rowbotham has fallen asleep, but her dreams remain strangely troubled. She twists and turns on this dais or bedding, and her fancies are vaguely aware of a heathen temple seen from afar. It sanctifies the reaching up of so many matters, and in its wide vista or splendid arch of alabaster, one detects the ink of proven dyes. Doesn’t the paucity of an eye dilate at such a treasure-trove? At any time, a rough margin for error comes unstuck when fixed; and its sand-papered extremity hints at an *art-strike* or a text by Stewart Home. Alternatively, might this *Salem’s Lot* (or trail) indicate the uncertain tread or fumbling footsteps of those dragged to the altar? It crosses the ground as a ridged promontory or spleen. Again, she is the first to see it: and this gigantism sits abreast of an internal diadem or trestle, and it’s lit by flaring torches. These subdue the tabernacle’s inner purple with gold, even though a carven effigy rises up in an uncertain glow… And its form proves to be simian, bestial, half-tempered, Straker-like from *Salem’s lot*, light-fingered, bulbous, razor-edged, massive, inhuman… even acidic after one of Quentin Crisp’s short stories. Moreover, this Colossus or wonder of the
world has its claw-like hands cupped afore it – almost like a gesture over the sacrificial blood they mean to contain.

Uneasily, Mrs Side Rowbotham turns over in her sleep – and she could never be accused of doing anything indelicate like snoring. No. For the backing of her Louis XV bed remains solemn and it cauterises a presumed misstatement. In the non-glow of an orange lamp (to one side) she’s shifted abed; and the bed-head waxes a dark green in its filigree or adornment. All around her the pedigree of the cube teams blackly, and, immediately behind her grey skull, a patterning of blue pillows are piled up. They seem to be aware of some deadly presentiment (necessarily). Under her own mentality, though, Mrs Townsend Rowbotham dreamt of bigger and better antiques… as well as the helpless rage of the man who financed them. Didn’t he lie on his pallet, in a drunken stupor, elsewhere in the house?

To be sure: a strange or subtle re-arrangement of the bed-scape is occurring. It seems to configure an oblong or spheroid, in shadow, when cast across the bed-clothes… and likewise the silhouette or outline of a longish hand travels across the azure pillows on her far side. Its claw-like nails taper away to a dismemberment in Hooker’s green, but still… don’t they reminisce over Max Schreck’s finger-sticks in Nosferatu (1924)? At whichever point a ghostly voice pipes up… it happens to be high-pitched, wavering or half-toned like a radio being tuned to a correct frequency. Its pitch alters and then remains still… and a stray burst of lightning takes place inside Rowbotham’s mind; together with drum beats, a peel of thunder, and a croaking sound. It eventuates deep in a moral vacuum or a tent’s recesses. These words come across as post-human (then); or possibly they’ve been influenced by Alex Kurtagic’s kaos music? Further, those words summoned up are as follows: “Listen to me, wench of all seasons!”, it sibilated in treacle. “I want you sentient and awake over what is about to be inflicted upon you…” For her part, Mrs Rowbotham was still not fully aware of her
predicament, and she lay in the Land of Nod or between sleep and wake.

FORTY-THREE
All of a sudden, Mrs Rowbotham wakes with a start at a new misadventure, and her features are enraptured by this portcullis. The pillow now looks yellow in the oft-mentioned light; while the bed’s backing or high-stool waxes to a violent red. Similarly, the coverlets which are cast from her lower extremities adopt a plangent green; they are the toadstools of a witch’s familiar… never mind its awakening. Still, Mrs Townsend Rowbotham’s face looks aghast, riven, non-playful, horrified or perturbed – and it begins to take on the aspect of Grendel’s mother. (Nor need this necessarily adopt the patois of John Gardner’s fantasy Grendel). Above all, what she observes are two hands or claws which hover above her – even though they transmit a baleful light or chiaroscuro. It proves to be a sickly or pale green in colour. Moreover, these appendages (or prosthetic handles) are wiry, slightly disembodied, dexterous, contagious and ill-conceived --- they certainly take after those ‘monster’ or joke hands which children love to wear. (Note: these were like advertisements in Warren magazines from the ‘States, for example. All of which specified the following: send twenty-five cents for our catalogue of novelty items, fun things, levitators, latex masks or de-callisthenics… plus a free pair of monstrous hands. Box 666, Midland, Texas). Yet, when Mrs Rowbotham speculated through a haze, what did she see? Why, it happens to be the amplitude of a new forgetting; and it wears about it the ferrous orb of an abandoned eye. For ‘it’ takes the form of some severed or jaguar teeth; these dimple the dawn through an eldritch haze… i.e.: one that imprisons its glistening molars. They revolve around the smoke which captures a mizzle for them – and yet these teeth or canines evince a graven laugh amid shadows. It turns the twisted character of its own imponderable, if only to lie before the face of one tapering estrangement. Yes again, the guffaw of this fate opens out towards a loop o’
fireflies, or one that shudders afore Hades’ gate in its stillness. In any event, the swirl of this death’s-head – when captured to grey – lifts away aslant such a nightmare. Furthermore, the phantasy novels of Robert Jordan aren’t able to provide a suitable iron maiden (herein). Nor do they second guess the completeness of Milton’s ‘Fall’ or Wyndham Lewis’ Sammael. Hear me: *quod* the dark beast of this book rears up after Mantegna’s torsos; and these were jettisoned sculptures in paint… the like of which saw a Herculean item amid fugg. It loomed over the captive (Mrs Rowbotham) and its compaction strikes the perfection of a Greek issue. All the time – and betwixt Satanic wiles – the musculature of a He-man waxes tall (---). Doesn’t its advent splinter blood from the bone in terms of Broadmoor’s asylum? No. Since the refuge of such a forgetting must rupture this side; and these silver or platinum chains rain from an imagined wound that accommodates Longinius’ spear. Didn’t the latter provide a peak to magnificence (?) or possibly one example of a Prometheus too far. By dint of any predestination, however, the symmetry of this snake with a skull – if seen sideways – chooses to remain aghast ‘mid a game of skittles. Don’t you know this game originates from the West Country? Eventually now, this daemonic axis speaks to a frightened Mrs Rowbotham: “My dear, I’ve been watching you from near and far. I most definitely have… and a crypt of shadows has come to administer nemesis. Wake up (!), wake up (!), and feel the earth tilting beneath you… I must have you awake at such an instant in order to understand it. Loosen the ties of slumber or Bunyan’s Slough of Despond – why don’t you? I command you to banish sleepiness from your eyes… so that I may assess the surprise in yonder retinas.” All Mrs Rowbotham can register (correspondingly) is: “W-what? (Gasp!), et cetera”.

**FORTY-FOUR**

In a moment or thrice (betimes) Mrs Townsend Side-Rowbotham was strangled to death. Yesss… For two hands appear around her ventilator or wind-pipe, and they were shaggy in demeanour.
They also besported themselves in a way which was yellow, hairy, enlivened, iron-wire constituted, fulsome, bloated and filled with gas… even helium. In this regard, each one of them took after ‘joke hands’ under the conspectus of comedians such as Kenny Everett or Freddie Starr. Needless to say, Mrs Rowbotham wasn’t in a situation to appreciate those green nails – the latter serrated after an ossuary’s nit. Further: in her paroxysm of agony, *per se*, the purple lacquer on our anti-heroine’s lips matches one’s night-gown… at least in terms of a loose-fitting garment. It sluiced away under an emerald or hemp sheet. Moreover, the cheeks were broken, curved back, mildly rococo-like or semblant: and her eyes glistened after beady marbles. The iron-grey hair stood on its ends (likewise) and a strangulated cry escaped from her screaming mouth – it went: “uuurggg!” A threatening voice ululated beyond those inflated mittens, and it acerbated: “So, Mrs Rowbotham, you declare yourself to have a passion for antiques, eh? Hee! Hee! I wonder whether your interests could be restricted to Derbyshire oak chairs (c. 1660), examples drawn from the Arts & Crafts movement *viz.* a commercial medievalism, or Chippendale efforts via Victorian reproduction. What takes your fancy, ma’am?” To which Townsend Rowbotham (Mrs) could only state: “Uurrggg!”

In her final moments, though, what did she actually see? Well! it definitely took the form of one calibration too many, and this bespoke a murder of crows (i.e., a collection of them). This apparition wrestled with its invisibility – according to her – and it flirted with a silvery enclave of so many chains. These jostled with the emptiness of a Beckett tableau… if we are to consider a plateau of mud or ordure in *Comment C’est*. (‘We’re down in Dante’s fifth Canto and, by Gad!, no love’). In any event, the skull-head presses against its darkness --- or otherwise proves to be livid over its expression of teeth. Again, this headstone (plus a split red-eye) glowers on amid darksome splendour; especially in terms of the dull-brown glow, or muddiness, that festoons the
bed-chamber. Doesn’t a translucent door exist to one side of such a parley in the dark, and it provides a rectangular block, even an anti-concrete balustrade? It computes the light of a million suns – all of which find themselves reduced to one single redaction. Again, the creatoid’s voice is heard from a throttled distance… adrift of one of Kali’s minions or thugs, and it sounds like a faint echo drifting down a bad connexion. Perhaps it’s a pre-digital exchange that’s never heard of System X? “For shame, Mrs Rowbotham”, it transposes, “I entertain a fervid interest or collector’s item too… In my case, it happens to be murder without a Columbo to solve it. Hee! Hee!”

FORTY-FIVE
From behind the sovran issue of one eye, when it’s saved by a collection of fingers across the face, a final sigh of life escapes. All of which means that Mrs Side Rowbotham’s neck was forced behind a shoulder-blade, albeit with a thunderous or life-denying crack. In a matter of moments, therefore, we find the victim’s pink head suffused, bloated _avec_ blood or rheum, and thrown back upon an ocean of blue pillows. These blur in their matter of factness – and the red cast of a bed-head, plus its wrought or baroque filigree, lies adjacent to a greenish post. It sports a spearhead or minaret atop its mantle. SHE REMAINS DEAD, THOUGH – this much suffices: and her tongue protrudes in a frothing mouth. While the eyeballs have bounced back to the socket’s rear – after the pattern of a pin-ball machine’s emblematises. Do you see? Whereas, and next to an abattoir redolent of Michael Powell’s _Peeping Tom_, the statuette rests on a nearby side-table or cabinet. You see, if we were to draw a line between her death’s-head and the carven figure – then both might meter a horizontal path, pitch or level. It rests there (nonetheless); at once untroubled, fastened down (morally speaking), robed, hooded, slightly bent over, screwed to its base, and with a sea-green complexion of its hands covering the face. Might this instance hint at an incorruptibility _a la_ Thomas Carlyle? Meanwhile, the wooden surface on which it stands
glows with a rare sheen or patterning... and doesn’t it hint at those martial figures of yesteryear made by Britains, Elastolin, Charles Stadden, Russell Gamage, Ping, Greenhall, Ball and Timpo? Not half... but the essential facts are unchanged: Mrs Townsend Rowbotham lies murdered in a locked room, to be found on the morrow, and her dead meat festers on a verdant surplice. No-one dares to speak of a Tarot’s *atouts* or trump cards (necessarily).

FORTY-SIX
A new morning or dawn has broken at *chez* Rowbotham, and the prismatic gestures of so much light floods in aplenty. Such motes – or sparkling fire-flies – inundate some French Windows, as well as their hatcheting, glass and cross-beams. The police have arrived. Their names were Fisher and Zacharias Crack, and each of them stood on either side of her husband. “What goes on here?”, evinces one of the Coppers. “The door to your wife’s portal was locked from within and only you possessed the key. Wasn’t it concealed in a chest of drawers – deep in your own chamber – and where only you might essay it? In truth, it took after the plot of an Agatha Christie novel like *Murder on the Links*... a debonair case for Poirot.” “That’s right!”, insisted his colleague-in-arms, “we had to force the portal, dungeon-coat or trap – only you could have gained egress otherwise. After all this time, Trevor Milkway, you’ve revealed your hand. For years your threats of murder have gone unabated – now the act masquerades as the deed’s after-bid. Do you play poker?” Realising the danger pressing in on him – Trevor started screaming: “NO! NOOOOO! I beg you, sirrah! I scarcely knew where the room’s key resided. In a drawer made of mahogany, you say? But surely, it took up residence in an inner casement of my bureau?” “Aha!”, seized Zacharias at the sight of this indiscretion, “so you admit the *corpus* of this affidavit, eh?” Likewise, his associate leaned over with a cruel grin: “We know that money difficulties beset you, Rowbotham, and the many antiques which your wife kept purchasing had to be paid for.
Yours was the motivation, intent, pre-planning, pretended drunkenness, malice aforethought and criminal misdeed. Why don’t you confess, Trevor Milkway?” “We shan’t require his *mea culpa*, my fellow officer”, laundered Fisher’s intrigue, “the evidence – whether actual or circumstantial – all points in one compass spree. Hold him in tight irons; you’re going to burn or fry for this!” At this point or conjecture, Trevor Milkway started caterwauling. It rose to a veritable masculine cry soon after: “NOOOO! N-NOOOOO! AAEEEE! I’m as not guilty as uncharged; I know and did nothing… or even less. I passed the entire night, whether listless or lying unconscious, in a drunken stupor on my pallet.” Yet – still protesting his innocence – Trevor Rowbotham is led out to the waiting police-van or *Black Maria*.

+ Maybe the last thing he foresees is the following scenario… it depicts a tonsured or shaven-headed millionaire stood upon a gibbet. He looks up at the heavens in a misspent or pleading manner; while a square of azure or Manchester City blue faces off roundabout. A bent priest babbles on in the background, fomenting a forgotten creed, and on the far right-hand corner we discern a noose. Its warp and weft is coarse-grained, fibre(d) or let free… and to one side of it stands an executioner. He purports to be a relatively thin individual in a surplice and dovecot. Whereupon – we note that his arms are crossed over his chest, against a light-grey top, and his features are hidden by a black hood. It looks vaguely like a Klansman or a Dominican’s moniker; and it happens to be short, triangular, pyramidal, eyeslitted and feature defacing. To be sure: it’s a hate-monger’s tirade without sound… and it seems to bore into the rear of Trevor Milkway’s pate. All he can basically do is scream: “NOOOO! N-NOOOOO! AAEEEE!”
FORTY-SEVEN
After the two policemen and their charge have left the mansion by its front entrance, a titter or sinister laughter is heard inside the room. “Hee! Hee!”, it ran with a dose of malice aforethought. For – ever so slowly – the tiny statuette came to life or indicated some growth, and its hands fell down to loll next to the thighs (no matter how suggestively). The remainder of this room adopted a darksome splendour; against which our Gruesome’s base stood out correspondingly… it shone pellucidly avec transport. Nonetheless, one’s figurine continued to wear an orange habit or divan, and these covered the ‘antique’ by way of its habiliment. A pair of green hands/suckers became discernible (also); and one remembered a Dick Tracy film, Gruesome, starring Boris Karloff in 1947. What really surprised us, however, was Mrs Marmaduke’s visage… given its transformation in 24 hours. Most certainly, a dose of rigor mortis has set in apace; and the woman’s horror or Halloween mask is spaced out, crudely whitened, blanched, sallow, bleached, albino in its kindred, and Clown-like. Might she be an expectant Joker to Bob Kane’s creed (?); albeit after the remit of Eric Mottram’s Algebra of Need. Again, her head lay transfixed or pinned upon the bed – and her tongue projected from turquoise lips. It understood the realism of a Bacon portrait (perforce); if not campanology’s imprint over a bell.

Finally, the tiny creature moved off its Britains-like base, and it took its first steps into a dark pool. The chest of drawers onto which it strode has a shiny top made of marble, and this found itself to be lacquered or cantilevered around the side. May it indicate a Georgian surplus? No matter: since this mini-Baphmotet took up a blasphemous actuality; and it sauntered towards a dead-head in a violent explosion of light. (This latter ray-dance proves to be a reddish compaction a la the dawn. Let it be…) Anyway, this devilled nick-nack proves to have a string bow-tie – rather like a Country-and-Western singer – under its reptilian cast. Likewise, Mrs Townsend Rowbotham’s cranium
props up the way, even if it’s turned to the front of an imp’s perversity… and it retains a sickly advantage over white leprosy. Suddenly now, our terror mannequin begins to speak in a grating tone. “So you despise superstition do you, Mrs Marmaduke? Hee! Hee!”

+ The small saurian then clambered over his victim without any compunction whatsoever, and he carried an object in either claw. On closer inspection, it proves to be the base or metal tray on which he formerly stood. Against this notice – the pewter tab or label bears no mark, and it happens to lack a crest or nomenclature. Further, the green-skinned gremlin walks gamely across Mrs Marmaduke’s skull. He/it is aiming for the French Windows at the room’s outer compass (to be sure). Whereas our corse’s escarpment lies prostrate, severed, without remorse, whitened and bloated to the gills… as well as half-naked in a turquoise shift. In contrast, the mouth seems blood-red amidst this calcified mount. The goblin utters more lines: “Your foolish antique dealer failed to spell out my myth’s complexity, dearie. Does one notice it properly? For I disappear after all my owners’ deaths or their decreased vigour. After all, nought goes altogether unseen, even the perfect murder (so to say) if enacted without witnesses and behind closed doors. Hee! Hee!”

+ With this asseveration, our emerald bogle or troll patters across an untidy yellow sheet and its orange pillow. He heads – perspectivally – for the French Windows, and they look smaller once the sprite’s reached them. Look at this: these glass panels, amid wood, open out to an expanse of lawn that lurks beyond. It’s accompanied by bushes and a middling sky of some cerulean distress. A brown walkway limbers up to such a redoubt, and, as a backstop, Mrs Marmaduke’s doll’s-head appears to be congealed, big, cross-eyed and crown bloodied. Wasn’t it really a defeated, if feminine, circus tumbler’s gasp? Again, the mouth hollows out the tube on a Graham Sutherland redoubt – at once scream to scream. Our malefic dwarf or green goblin speaks
forevermore: “You see, I must become an *innocent bystander* to another slaying, preferably in a locked room. But you’ll keep my secret – won’t you, Mrs Marmaduke? THEY ALL DO! Hee! Hee!”

THE END