OMNIBUS I

Jonathan Bowden

TSTC
The Scorpion by Steve Ditko (1965)

A black Thai scorpion
freezes in its Plexi-glass cage
wondrous over its naked chaos
a clean form –
\textit{Heterometrus laoticus} –
to lead a rout from fiction.
Dedicated to Dorothy Bowden (1931-1978)
Jonathan Bowden

circa. 1980
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Biography

Jonathan Bowden was born in Kent in 1962. He is the author of over thirty books – such as *Our Name is Legion*, *A Bullet through Bone*, *Spiders are not Insects*, *Apocalypse TV* and *Kratos*. A painter of distinction, Jonathan Bowden has produced over 200 full-size oil paintings – many of which can be viewed in the gallery section of his web-site. An orator of great power, JB is a regular speaker at various events around the United Kingdom, and he has also enjoyed two leading roles in the art films *Grand Guignol* and *Venus Fly-trap*. Can such a card, in Alexander Pope’s depiction of ombre, be cut in half? Now we shall find out…
An introduction

*Kratos* deals with the subject of psychopathia and is the author’s treatment of this theme. It involves dream sequences, monologue, phantasy and the elaboration of a wolfish purpose. Could it turn out to be a rendering of Lombroso’s theories about crime? The second tale, *Origami Bluebeard*, concerns love across the generations which freezes into gelignite. One youthful adventurer pursues the heiress to a rag fortune. This *Pax Geriatricus* is an anti-feminist piece that explores the inner workings of the pit. *Grimaldi’s Leo* has to be an altogether lighter work which evaluates the doctrine of ‘animal liberation’ from the perspective of a travelling circus. Its destiny will always be that of a luciferian clown. *Napalm Blonde*, the final tale in our quartet, must be considered as an attempted return to Greek tragedy. A vamp, Scaramouch Ruby, flirts dangerously with her husband’s manager. Both of them are unaware of the vengeance which could be enacted against them by her protector, a disfigured wrestler called Runter Bog.
KRATOS
a power documentary

Three semblances battle in an ascendancy or non-gulf. These were Basildon Lancaster, his wife Fervent Dominique and a madman/caretaker. He was called Odd Billy-o (a.k.a. Dung-beetle).

BIA’S BATTY (1)
“I live out its penetrative essence or defeat – even after a phantasm’s surcease. Will its filter never leave me till dawn’s break? O my brother, I walk in these streets bereft of care – despite the fact that a fog clings to my lungs. Old London town is seen to fillet up a curvature of day; desiring, as it did so, to release its temperature. Does one detect its needs? Certainly now, Basildon Lancaster --- that’s me --- foundered on a new consciousness or deliverance, and this was irrespective of being rapt by lusts. On I walked in a day-time of our night’s partiality – and ever askew of hidden truculence. It bartered before a bride’s magnificence (you see); thereby leavening up a hood’s majesty. Alack [!], each streak of pale pink chimes with a grate… it looks down from above amid green. It led towards a fortitude of the inner curve. But still and all, my slanted bill and hooks stare out on puissance; it prefigured identity. An Arno Breker form lay before me – it totalled up so many griefs, as I staggered from pillar to post. Truly, guilt lies in an abundant breakdown before grovelling.”

KRATOS AS DIVINE POWER (2)
“Each night-mote oppressed me as I walked. For London appeared to be bereft or pitilessly encircled with mist. My footfalls reverberated in dismal or dripping streets. Detect its presence please… since I lay frightened of sleep behind these whitened eyes. Each orb stared blankly – at once home to a new tyranny against reason. A brief roof-line away Big Ben tolled in darkness, the sound of its gongs clashing on stagnant waters.
Against this loss – or debenture in hand – I wandered in a gloomy twilight. Look on forgiveness’ absence now! This is because each spectrum lay in its coffin or came surrounded by red silk, and it waited for rebirth. The perfect neo-classical frame stretched out – deep in this coffer – and oblivious to a mountebank’s tactics. Perhaps it partook of Andre Breton’s early surrealist novel, *Mad Love*?

**ONE PREGNANT ASP BEFORE SILENCE (3)**

“To be truthful, exhaustion overtook me and I intended to retire quickly. Like a wraith or ghost, I passed across the Capitol’s glistening thoroughfares. I sought out a hotel room – bleak in its daily avenue – and determined upon throwing myself down. A candle guttered next to the door between-times, but I remained oblivious. Let’s notice its observance right away… For seemingly my eyes dragged like lead; whereas my feet pulled in imaginary mud… only to beg off from turpitude’s rest. Bring it forward – now that my *alter ego* reared above his coffin, albeit with his reptilian visage gleaming. It flashed its gums before dying and this was due to a strange silence, or occurred parallel to limitless offerings. A pterodactyl without hands – like in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Lost World* – our sabre-tooth enters through mounting confusion. So begins our latest exercise in distaste!”

**GUT THE PIGS AFORE BREEDING (4)**

“Like in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, one witch reproves another with the rejoinder ‘killing swine’. She’s merely been asked what she’s about. Gainfully, I seek out a bed’s restful shelter. Let it all come down out of oblivion’s wrath… Idly, I tossed aside my bed-clothes to the cork. For resultantly, each foot then resided on its carpet loam – in a scenario where one’s pyjama bottoms hugged their daisy chain. Every item of clothing remained where it fell or dropped, and this was irrespective of decorum. Besides which a skeletal entity – clothed in its saurian skin – slunk inwards towards a Thorak manicure. Might it even recall the
fastness of Michelangelo’s days? In any event, the wire basket closes on a pitiable object so as to bask in its transference. Perhaps a winged jetty looms through a mausoleum – at once centre-forward and liable to an inebriate fall. Can a sarcophagus lie over its abbreviation of teeth?”

A COMPACT BETWEEN GOETHE’S ‘FAUST’ AND MAYHEW (5)

“Sprawled upon the bed in a vacant room (sic) I summon up renewed strength – if only for defeat. My hotel cube reeks of anonymous flattery… whereby an antique lamp illumines threadbare ornaments. May they be the residuum of yesterday’s junk or charity shops? Furthermore, a strand or metal skein interconnects with a bride’s maid – or is it an iron-maiden’s jaw? It suffices to raise one from kaos, albeit in terms of a Francis Bacon head --- being all wires, grates, ducts and posterior lanterns. These were inevitable significations of William Blake’s death-mask used for an index.”

DREAM, DREAM TERROR AMP (6)

“A dreaded sleep or semblance then fell upon my brow – like brooding lightning. Its colour has to be blue! Seemingly, I staggered from the bed wherein I had lain prone or spent, and moved towards a filament of dream. It lay across other accoutrements… together with a truckle-bed rearing away in terms of a longitudinal template. It seemed to shift the dimensional gears in which I rose from a dais travelling bags in hand. These weighed me down asunder or aplenty, and it was almost as if severed heads gripped their insides. Could they intone a heavy sculpture (in mortar) devoted to Caligula’s skull? Meanwhile, the floor sloped away from my twin feet – the latter adopting a rooted quality rather like botanic life. Perspectively speaking, my body lolled over lop-sidedly and in the direction of a scarecrow’s armature. Alternatively though, various trees and branches loomed overhead. They swayed with an extra-terrestrial luminance or a gyroscopic possibility. (Quite understandably,
each misdirected branch recalls a reverse semblance. It obeyed perspective’s laws or kind, and this is primarily after one of those lenses in a bank vault’s door. Does anyone remember Brian Clemens’ *Thriller*?) Again, a light beam cut off the lower half in order to candle-wax a swaying or retrieved motion.

**A TORPEDO SEEKS ITS DISCHARGE (7)**

“Finally, I blundered on towards our cottage in the distance. One’s baggage swung behind me in a vertical plane, in that any prism captures its vista. I struggled on through a glucose doormat made up from mental mud or ooze. (May any of this relate to the extensive dream sequence in Hitchcock’s *Spellbound*? A cornucopia which had been delineated by Salvador Dali’s surrealism). In pursuit of which one slanted forward and bent to a wind’s buttress, or cast off in the direction of an isolate dwelling. It lowered against a troubled sky or a limitless plenitude of non-ocean. In truth, all unconscious manifestations led to an orange decking which was imprisoned by a purple horizon… and over this lightning streaked azure. It definitely led one to think of Spain… but, cock-eyed, I hurtled on with these valises so as to rescue my wife, Fervent. Didn’t she cry out or scream, again and again, in terms of an English rural cottage surrounded by trees? I bounded on – mastodon-like – with a scarlet MG sportscar left behind me in my wake.”

**ALL TITANS REJECT HEAD LICE (8)**

“Forget such a conundrum, man, since the slippage of a saurian carapace musters silence. It leant over a bat’s-wing; that is, it sought to depict an elongated trespass – the nature of which leavened expectancy. It occurred because our pterodactyl indicated blatancy or disclosure, and this is by fostering the milk of human unkindness. Unsavoury or otherwise, a cosmic builder pulled on a stanchion to one side of events. It always chose to engulf itself – basically so as to leave red cushions unalloyed in this crematoria. A festival of remembrance, O reader, which mirrored its delirium through aggression’s valves. Look you [!],
such a lid enclosed a perfect specimen from Charles Atlas or *Olympia*, only to allow its identity into a super-charged crush.”

**TO FOLLOW OBLIVION’S CASCADE (9)**

“No weeping can alter a semblance of ultra-sound. It inevitably steers things towards a customary leap. In my imagination I fell towards an enclosed door: each section of which multiplies in fervid dreams. These constellate around a range of cottage doors or possible hotel cubby-holes which open out. A reverie or spasm halts its muster – at a moment where such portals tilt or sway in off-mathematical hue. Let it ride – despite a geometrical angle that supplants due leverage. All of it impacts on me clearly given Fervent’s soul-shuddering scream; it’s like one of Tobe Hooper’s victims in *The Texas Chain-Saw Massacre*. Oh my yes; Stanley Spencer must gain a macabre filter… if we’re honest about it. Certainly, these gates gyroscope away and they eventually fall like a pack of cards… only for me to close in on ‘em. No grinning clowns --- bereft of carapaces --- can stop me. ‘Dominique, Dominique, I’m coming…’, I ejaculate without pleasure. My legs cannot carry me faster; as I run, caroming or cascading towards perpendicular lintel. ‘DDDDDDDDDDOminique, I’m coming…’, I enunciate beyond mirth. Do I enjoin it again and again, like one of Arthur Rank’s colophons? Truly, I recall a dysgenic actor from *The Boys From Brazil*. Yes, I concertina with a dwindling grip and this is aslant a wooden mallet. No mural taint badgers me now – primarily because I trip forward and loose nothing other than my coat and hat. Unlike two past or late sojourns, I’m closer to Cerberus’ entrance than ever – even though a longitudinal shiner or box lies across these spent lids. ‘I’m coming’, I entreat… I’m desperate to achieve satisfactory roughage.”

**TWO WOOD BABES TEST MY AXE (10)**

“What ails thee, boy? Don’t you appreciate that too much onanism makes you go blind? Surely, my twin orbs are aching
unnaturally as I ponder each one in turn? Yet again, the phantasm or nightmare assails my senses – within which a door knob recurs. Feverishly, it remains out of reach. Convulsively – and like the poet Chatterton on his bed – I slobber and grip a cranium. It revolves slowly in each mitten. Look at this! I retch progressively in adorned pyjamas – together with a fluted or Art Deco lamp rising up beside me. To be sure: her name or voiced sound has to be the first on my lips. Can all this mean aught?
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Anyway, our transformation rests complete and a saviour examines his muscles *in lieu* of marble. In these circumstances, a Greek God lies before us… irrespective of Savonarola’s desire that Botticelli should destroy paintings depicting pagan scenes. Such a custodianship drifts on regardless of raiment and with light cascading from above. It embodies a thousandfold candle-power, in order to incarnate a heroic mantra. I pause in this rival dimension and pull on unfolding robes. They billow outwards in their upper arms or happen to be bright red. YYYYeeeSSSSS… don’t these rubiate gowns befit me?”

BRONZE GILT HEADS SUIT VIKINGS (11)

“Abreast of all this, then, I tried to drive my nightmare out of waking consciousness. How best to achieve such perfection? Why, I know, at least effectively speaking… I must run my memory backwards to a cottage’s first glimpse. It loomed up and became apparent – all those Tuesdays ago – on the Yorkshire moors. Mark this kindred, will you? For we’d roared many miles northwards from London in our MG sportscar. All of a sudden this aboriginal Yorkist manse stood out… what with the surrounding dales sweeping around it. Momentarily, we became captivated by its gables, frontally projecting, when taken together with a latticed wooden structure. One wing splurged sideways and to the right; at a time when its slate roof dangled before us. All in all, its quaint picturesqueness moved us to a purchase – especially when we saw an up-ended ‘For Sale’ sign appended to a fence-post. The sky glimmered and lowered moorwards, in a
manner which portended to the magic lantern effects of Ted Hughes’ verse. Could he be characterised as an archaic Yorkshireman? But no crows were in sight.

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I – for my part – wore a jaunty cap from a Saville Row outfitter, plus a gentleman’s cravat, sports-jacket and check county-shirt. It all screamed an effortlessness of style and expense. My wife beside me, however, creamed a ravishing neck-scarf and a mackintosh of feminine cut. It flattened out against the rain-soaked nature of her body. Any obedience has to collide with hatred, you see?”

NORTHERN TROGS DELIVER FISTS (12)

“After what seemed to be an interminable delay, perchance, a shabby man came to the wooden door. I rapped on its rough surface with a knocker, at once graven to a lion’s tooth. Didn’t it recall one of those primitive artworks or corbels in Yorkshire churchyards? Anyway, we both waited for a groan of chair-springs, and this was before the scraping of boots on carpet became discernible. A derelict character stood out in subdued light; he looked open-necked and sported some braces. Almost fanatically ugly in his disfigurement – the wretch glared up at us. Seemingly, we learnt later that he went under the title of Dung-beetle or Odd Billy-o. Hadn’t I read somewhere – in Lombroso possibly – about the swinishness of the lower or inebriate classes, and their criminal partiality? Contrary to liberal jargon, disability signifies genetic inferiority and the onset of evil. For, by any scrupulous regard, those who bear Cain’s mark upon their forehead are defeat-prone. Inevitably, they have to lie to themselves about their socio-biological filth. Also – in all honesty – didn’t his visage encode an African tribal mask… by virtue of a transgressive quality? Yet – for reasons of charity – I dispensed with such vagaries and turned up business’ flame. Don’t you mark it?”
“My dear chap”, I began breezily, “my spouse and I couldn’t but help notice your invitation to bid. ‘Oh-ah’, he mumbled through a Dreadnought’s teeth. With distaste (you see) I was forced to observe his Northern patois – or use of the local idiolect. I rose before him now – albeit merely aping a soldier’s erectness and with a shooting cap a trifle askew on my scalp. Fervent bent over sideways – a ravishing picture in blonde – and affected an interest in the proceedings, doubtless to hinder any feelings of discomfort. A curled lamp finished up to our left’s vision; it proved to be made from an ormolu design. Still though, I have to remember the dungster’s enfeeblement – or, quite possibly, a freak-show’s dexterity amid blazing eyes. Meanwhile, a pipe vaulted Old Bruno avaunt my gaze. It mellowed towards a meerschaum’s lisp before it died; and it moved over to a silent respect. Surely, this example of the canaille would have been better exposed in a London Dungeon… or a similar repository of bad taste? It hinted at Performance Art or negative circus… even though it pretended to ignore Quasimodo’s ability at mirror cracking. I extended a gloved or manicured hand, only to withdraw it speedily from his mallet. Was it really an entreaty? I noticed its curvature into felt or matted hair”.

“We entered this property forthwith. Once inside it, Fervent became enraptured by the local décor. Also, I couldn’t help but notice the internal spasms, longitudinal stretch-marks and decorous proportions of its builders. An organic unity filled the entire place – relating it to a perfect possibility or a plenitude of planes. Light certainly streaked in from the moors; now russet, autumnal and disparately leafed… if out of bud. In undue haste – and recognising an affinity with Henry Williamson’s nature writing – I concocted a ditty. It was made up on the spot and took after Ted Hughes’ humour or fashion. Consider it to be a pastiche:
Harm’s way
gentle skull
out of all moss’ libidinity
<foreshortened>
what drivel!
when a mottled badger flees its bait
+
As heck as like!”

WE ARE BEHOLDEN TO FOUR ZEROES (15)
“I immediately noticed how pert Dominique’s breasts were, but rejected this thought as unworthy. She – alternately – heralded various raptures. ‘All it requires, darling, has to be a mother of all make-overs. You wait upon my innocence or indulgence. For all I wish to do is transform such chthonian fastnesses with a feminine touch… or a piquancy in pink. What did Marie Antoinette have occasion to say – at least in answer to Nesta H. Webster’s pressing question? Don’t let them eat bread… merely allow them to quaff cake or brioche – that’s bread cake! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Hee; Hee!’ Meanwhile, Old Billy-o glowered at an inward sentinel or gate’s guardian; what with his pipe puffing on between clenched teeth. Indeed, he seemed to register a dolt or troglodyte quality the more I spied on him; being half-formed and misdirected at its heart. He came aborted from a maternal cervix like Piltdown Man, only to be trampled on thereafter by imaginary elephants. Doesn’t it codify that Victoriana melodrama starring Anthony Hopkins? Such a broadcast articulated a defeat or an ‘O without a figure’… a formulation which uses the language of Lear’s itinerant Fool”.

GRASP LIGHTNING’S MANTLE, O SCARECROW! (16)
“We presently began debating a price for the property. Dung-beetle drove a hard bargain. He sat opposite me with his massive or navvy-like forearms in front of him. These were crossed over. Touché! A new esprit lifted from my brow! All of a sudden our northern reprobate started to talk and this was after a fashion
which intoned a more masculine Tony Harrison… if we might speak about sin. I viewed it all with ironic detachment. ‘EEEEE mister, this be right grand --- as happens. As mother used to say, *Get thee in from gibble and put wood in hole. I'll be back while Friday, my chuck.* ‘Do ya ken my meanin(‘), lord o’ manor?’ I regret to announce that I did. He went on to consider a weighing in groats. Said he: ‘Ya be after a purchasin(‘) ‘oousse, then ah!? EEEE, t’won’t be lettin(‘) it go for less ‘n nine hundred, straight up and no mistake. What does thee reckon to that? To speak on’t, all t’furniture goes wit’ ‘oousse. Odd Billy-o or Dung-beetle, that’s me, I ttttttrave l wit’ abode too, like’. ‘From your affidavit, Beetle, I comprehend your function as the cottage’s caretaker. I’m not at all ready for your purchase, Dung.’ (Inconsequentially, my mind wandered off to a Samuel Beckett play – possibly a variant on *Comment C’est* – where one vagabond offers another some ordure). Can I truly afford your pain?”

RAGE AGAINST A DYING LIGHT (17)

“I lit a rare Kensington & Chelsea cigarette during this bizarre interview and allowed its smoke to drift about. It spiralled towards a low ceiling and passed next to a heavy or antique lamp. Irrespective of its Edwardian feel… nowt could prevent a sun-lit burst from inundating this lodge. It filled the space between us with a cadmium lozenge or pellucid glow.

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My wife was around my neck now within a trice. Surely our caretaker accompanied the chalet, she protested? He dozed on throughout – and grimaced like a gargoyle with his thumb in his braces in a self-important way. Remarkably though, he affected indifference to his receding fate… or perhaps he adopted a low peasant cunning. His orbs slewed to preternatural dots which were like stray marbles or unnatural fish-eyes. These proved to be impenetrable, milky or cloudy white… plus they entertained a certain stagnant waiting at their depths. Around these slits we find a brown contagion to be smeared – whether in the form of
ocular distortion, depression or self-abuse one didn’t wish to speculate. A pipe lay in his other mitten… somewhat redundantly. Still, he struck me as a dubious – if harmless – character. He also replicated, more and more, one of those case-studies in Lombroso’s Criminal Man. (Wherein the latter’s theories of degeneration came accompanied by still photographs or photogravures. These delineated runts, freaks, spastics, beggar-cripples, mortal retards, human slugs, limbless gits, Mongols, splenetic showmen, post-abortants, transsexuals, hermaphrodites, giants, dwarves and other examples of Torquemada’s art. Didn’t artistic torture countenance natural indifference… especially when endorsing Victor Hugo’s tale, The Man Who Laughed?) After a bit of blather, now, Odd Billy-o piped up in his defence – possibly he recognised a conversational turn which was not to his advantage. ‘By gum, mister… t’ain’t too much I’m asking. No sir, a mere ten bob a week for tobacco, do ya ken my meaning? I also give thee to understand, our chuck, that I’ll sleep over ‘t stables’. (Editorial note: a bob is a shilling or equivalent to five new pence). Again, I indicated uncertainty over the release of funds. A fine quality cigarette wove its texture in a roughened northern air. Didn’t its aroma originate circa Bradleys in Bond Street, London, W1? Weren’t my scruples unnecessary and even vaguely ‘anti-progressive’? I contended against myself by queering my desultory pitch. Moreover – given a further effort – I came to see Billy-o as disabused northern residuum or emblematic of an inbred canaille. A literary allusion spread into my mind – thereby making the reference complete. Doesn’t one recall Hindley, Heathcliff’s shambolic brother, from the later or more adult sections of Wuthering Heights? Yesss, it rose clear as a day now. Pity should be our watchword… the poor fellow’s obviously an aboriginal Yorkshireman. Rather like Ted Hughes’ poem Pike – another word ditty or Edward Lear piece impinges.

Grotty
spotty
harbinger of a doxy
our Billy-o slides into lard;
he’s wild, untamed and swears like a trooper,
this genetic blooper!

We’ll take the house – Fervent’s right, his slinking shadow will be company for her when I’m away on business in the Capitol."

DECAPITATION’S FIRST RUMOURS (18)
“Avaunt thee, I have been pitched back into nightmare and phantasmagoria. Oh my, I continue to lie on my sordid hotel’s pallet and I’m drenched in sweat. Could it be one of those nondescript Georgian edifices around Euston station… once having caught a train down from the north country? I know nothing; I merely comprehend a desire to avoid dreaming. Listen: I understand that having reshaped my body a la Arnold Schwarznegger, California’s governor, I ride out into etheric mists. Various fumes or mephitic gases surround me now, as I mount a skeletal horse with see-through ribs. Strangely enough, I’ve inadvertently changed into a von Hagens’ Plastinate – albeit by wearing a magenta cloak plus a tripod hat. I also possess two staves above my head. Are they electronic?"

NORMAN O. BROWN’S APOSTASY (19)
“Wasn’t Taken Care Of the title of Edith Sitwell’s autobiography? Never mind… since my brain wanders within Reason’s apocalypse. Heretofore, the dawn rose emptily over a vacant sky – if only to fill up the panes of a deluded eye. Yes indeed, I tottered uneasily from my unkempt slumbers, but my exhausted or sleep-deprived state meant that I failed to attend to things. What task was mine? Why had I come down to London from Yorkshire? Truly, a dazzling luminance hurt my orbs when I succeeded in wrestling from my sack. Yet withal, I came to build on an asylum’s breathing. Multi-dimensionally, I approached the chief warder with searching questions. ‘Has my wife’s incarceration altered her approach, O loony doctor?’
‘Imprescriptibly, you are correct *monsieur*; no change afflicts her offering within these portals. A stroboscope astride this glimmer might manufacture hope, but none straddles this sick-bay or performs a receiving jest. To be sure, after looking a bit deeper we find that no stray witness solicits this envy over one’s kindred. Might it not appear transparent?’

Gloomily, Lancaster looked into the future and saw an electric foetus; it collided with so much blue rain.”

SQUEEZE THIS PIGMENT FROM A YELLOW TUBE (20)

“Such a day passes slowly through an hour-glass’ filter; wherein lethargy plays Russian roulette with Time. Without any doubt a darksome energy stole upon my sleep; thereby depriving me of what C.P. Snow once described as rationality’s slough. In this – drawing as he did on Goya’s sketches – he proved to be wrong; because instinct trumps linearity. Meanwhile, I lay slumped on my cot and awaited the next night-time. Let us be clear: if I strove to concentrate on those first days in the cottage – it was just to avoid certain nightmares. I must circumnavigate them – particularly if I am to remain sane. As my lids close up altogether – whether red or black in texture – I cannot forsake this nut-house. Didn’t Gaius Cibber’s *Melancholy* howl in Bedlam before its gates? Abreast thee of a sudden breakthrough, therefore, now that I approach her on a raised promontory. How to go about it? Methinks I’ll make a gesture which involves an open-ended appeal to bent stars. ‘Fervent, O Dominique’, I whisper in redundant tones. She refuses to answer; or maybe one of T.S. Eliot’s cats has got her tongue? I open my arms wide and this is to foreclose indecision. An alabaster wall – possibly of concrete *a la* le Corbusier – rears before her vacant gaze. Whilst a blank television screen lies digitally to her left. Two things come up the hindmost: first, she wears those all-over gloves which prevent wrist-slashing; second, her hair is frazzled, unkempt, split-ended and Mrs. Rochester-like. Could it be a result of electric shock therapy? I refuse to countenance its surcease.”
“I’m comfortable once again… especially when we’re back in the cottage’s early days. During our premier week (or so) Fervent worked wonders by making everything grow. She tended to both one’s shrubbery as well as a flower garden, not to mention decorative changes inside. No. Our northern vista proved to be well chosen. Look at it this way --- Dominique’s form matched its buxom quality, the latter contained in a skin-tight top. All of this was white in colour – while she affected a dainty hat, gardening gloves and secateurs. One morning I stood before her with a letter from London. It happened to be business correspondence or detail, and it had been directed up here by my solicitor. It proffered great bounty all round. ‘A magnificent opportunity avails itself’, I averred. ‘But it means leaving you au solitaire; something of which I disapprove!’ ‘Fail me not a completion of emptiness’, she purred. (Her voice-pattern resembled that of Lady Penelope in Thunderbirds, by the by). ‘Billy-o remains a wooden endorsement or boon, and I shall find much to occupy my stylus’. Whereupon the caretaker stared on from a vantage point. He embodied a maximum of rapt shyness, slyness and ragamuffin unkemptness. Moreover, his watchful mien waxes taut, doleful, expectant, lugubrious, energetic and yet stagnant. Clearly a misfit or mugwump, perforce, this ‘Thing’ glowered on in a manner forgotten by all witnesses.”

“Waved back towards Fervent after a moment or two/three, and in a departing sweep. She absolved to make recompense from the garden; while behind me an MG sportscar spotted its red coverlet. It lay alone in the drive. A burst or shaft of sunlight expected no other dawn – even as she turned abreast of it and white apparelled. Was it a delicately positioned gardener’s hat which I spied above Goldilocks… its colour a flagrant green? Despite this, though, no Three Bears enchainned us nearby or minus a honey-pot. Nix… for amid our understandings and reverse planes Dung-beetle peeped on. Rather like one of Alfred
Hitchcock’s sequences – an inverse articulation then shot its foot off. Whereby our female flame leant on a wooden transverse – itself next to occasional shapes or resiling squares. Further, an out-reach occurred over this roof – primarily in order to box this affidavit in amid purple. Don’t limit it yet, my people! Nonetheless, Billy-o stood there scarcely out of sight and almost monstrous in his hulk or mass. In a day’s cross-beams, however, I mistook this gargoyle – rather after the fashion of one of Henry Moore’s anthropomorphic casts in stone. Lop-sided or sidereal he was – particularly when taken over to an oblivion’s chalk. Wherein one’s Dung hinted at Tartarus’ sin bin or offal bag, in that he waxed gibbering, oblong, incontinent, rectilinear and seismic. All of which reminds me of the following title: why the designation *Kratos*? Well! it has to do with a plenipotentiary for pure power after the ancient Greek. Yes sir, it refers to a Titan or pre-god who illustrates radical Western strength. Surely someone at New Scotland Yard realised this when the shooting of John Charles de Menezes was called Operation Kratos?”

**WOLVERINES HUSBAND THEIR DOLLS’ HEADS (23)**

“I fell towards the Medusean claptrap of so many doors – all of which came abreast of such instants. You see, my dream or phantasm has vengefully returned; it addressed the lost openings of so many absences. For – linking to one of Jean Cocteau’s arabesques – a pile of wooden pellets or doors fell in on themselves. They were six in number. They concertina’d in a Gilbert & Sullivan style – while I toppled over their kaleidoscope or imprimatur. A scarlet or violet haze illumines these deeps; each foray or debenture shimmering in its heat. It proved to be like an oven; even though one’s swivelling recalls a giddy top or a children’s toy. Might it involve a clown? It masqueraded over nullity so as to achieve an end. Let us commence such proceedings anew… Oh my yes; such a switch-blade alternated with its prism; it even began to crash towards Pluto’s doom-mongering. ‘Help, my beloved… your adventure needn’t end in rape. Do the Sabine women enjoin each other before one of
Jarman’s visual nooks? Let it all eventuate or come down; there shall be other Jubilees! No amount of self-abuse may quash one of my distaff omens… at least here on this pallet. I’M COMING, Fervent!’

+ I’m also forced to reconsider an asylum’s energies when witnessing this splendour. Could it be Homerton hospital’s mental-wing out Hackney way (?); and amid its multi-racial dreariness? Before I notice that my wife’s head is on one side in a semi-conscious spasm – together with a picture of vacant eyes, curled lips and electric hair. Somehow it revisits a rock opera involving nudity or a like partiality! I cough politely before speaking or enunciating in one way or another. All is clearly not well between us. From one trajectory I seem to be intoning via a Halloween mask. It specifies a ghoul or daemon – especially when taking on a mauve tongue, deep-set slits and an ebon coif. No-one slides towards its ready witness anew.”

HENRY MOORE’S KING & QUEEN (24)

“What occurs around my semblance or aspect? Why, I must know at this moment. Dimly, vaguely – but then with greater insistence – I came to hear Fervent screaming or caterwauling. Like a hyena it ushers forth from some distant bush… after an example which has been set in one of those Laurens van der Post novels from the veldt. Again, it howls and howls amid consciousness’ lot. The love I felt beats even more fervently in my heart and I leap out axe in hand. I dreamily align myself against these doors… at once crashing into them and seeing how these balsa effigies fly in every direction. Stoop man, hit it harder --- really put your shoulder into it! Don’t be distressed either by Daliesque or oneiric magnification.

+ Meanwhile, Fervent Dominique stood in front of my distracted gaze. Her look peered into the near-distance and was at peace… but, in actuality, the deep grooves in each orb tilted sideways. It represented a marble in a sluice which moved and swam in
accordance with the eyes of nineteenth century dolls. I decided to offer her a box of chocolates or toffee, despite the gesture’s sentimentality. They were of the best wrap in gold-leaf clover and had been put together by a candy manufacturer in Kensington & Chelsea. Such a cube also contained so much filigree; it definitely refused to countenance Jack Vettriano’s involvement. I waited near her in this concealed chamber which proved to be down in the mad-house… plus a de luxe rectangle of Greek Cypriot delights in either fist. Nothing doing…”

EATING GINGER-BREAD MEN! (25)
“--- Although my form still continues to blunder through these portals or doorways using a reverse process. All of them have fallen apart whether this way or that – basically in order to litter the sand with so much spent perspective. Face it: my hands and feet appeared to be preternaturally large in terms of bifurcation… never mind exploration. They loomed discontinuously or ape-like – primarily so as to subtract from a Piltdown Man. Indeed, this figure’s articulation hinted at rhomboid movement, or those mime-like passages which disseminated Boris Karloff’s Frankenstein. A disc that was violently red in colour then subsumed my overly large shoes. It partook of a lost tragedy --- let alone any signification for a gap between sleep and wakefulness. Could these broken doors indicate a forgotten nexus?

One item alone confounded me (my friend) and this was irrespective of any other. What can my dream sport or comport? It enlivens a discontinuity between thought and action… definitely so. Yet perhaps it’s better like this. For – all of a moment and under a sun-dial’s exposure – Fervent Dominique lashes out into a lop-sided grin. Yes – altogether now – a fluorescent signal which declares ‘DANGER DEMENTED’ flashes uppermost about me. But I chose to ignore its vacillation between our different journeys. While, under her frazzled hair or dome, a rictus leer spies the sugary spice-meats that I’d brought.
‘Ha, you’ve worried sweet-meats from a cavern of disregard’, she blurted out. Her voice had a self-satisfied air… together with a hysterical undercurrent shooting beneath it. Our heroine lilted against a jet-black sensory deprivation chamber or cube. ‘Aaaaahhhhh!, it’s a case of gob-stoppers or liquorice from my honey-bunch, or quite possibly a man I’m sweet on. Hee-hee-hee-hee-hee-hee-hee-hee!’ She then collapsed into a school-girl giggling fit.”

ONE LOONY MILKS A GLAZED TEMPERATURE (26)
“Yet, deep within my desires, I moved towards a threshold of abridged torment. Oh my yes…; nothing shall alter a transgression beyond its doors. ‘Let her alone. No… you carnivorous beast’, I cry without resource. Could such an ague of misplacement be too much of a desire to comprehend? After such a disclosure, then, one image from a whirligig or ‘what the butler saw’ device enters my mind. Quod – littered by balsa doors as a casual affront, an image from silent cinema thrusts its way upwards. What may it reconnoitre? Why, it has to do with Lon Chaney’s 1924 film He Who Gets Slapped, in a scenario where he plays an ineffably sad clown. Do we get an image of a doleful complexion beneath the grease paint? Quite possibly, but only in terms of an extended neck-ruff (this) above which a fixed leer looms… a face-mask that is impenetrable in its intensity. It happens to be this which I wake up next to on a stage’s backdrop. What can have been going on within this plausible sand-machine, wearing, as it does, a World War One gas mask?”

WRAP ATTENTION TO DETAIL BLINDS US (27)
“Nor can any displaced perspective haunt my disregard. It proved liable to analyse an absence of shame. Nor do my shoes streak away from the door lightly – what with each sole up-ended in relation to a downward tread. Furthermore, this entire proportionality is in kaos; it re-routes itself through a whirligig’s stint. ‘I’m coming, darling!’, I expectorate.
‘What is going on?’, I feverishly ask to myself. Fervent was surely screaming or in terror… what’s happening to her form’s ventilation, thereby? Can any hidden reality – riven by a Medusa – break off suddenly? What does this signify? May shattering the door indicate a balance (no matter how deranged) between the subconscious and unconscious minds? Am I in a semi-conscious state all the way down? Whatever might be raddling a strawberry blonde like Fervent; and, in truth, could she intone a Blondie’s principle a la Deborah Harry? In any event, will these parallel dream sequences – with my wife in an asylum – be the hebetude of my submerged mentality? No matter how we arrive at its fulfillment… +

Speaking of this submerged continent or terra incognita, though… I had occasion to leave Dominique next to a wall of vacant plenty. This frenzy unsettled itself near a pregnant sun; the like of which embraced her torso roundabouts. Down she slid on this mural – at once consumed by a square and liable to open her legs before a deluded midnight. No-one could see that my spouse wore gloves – of the sort which various denizens in asylums wear, primarily to prevent self-harm. They were like oven-gloves when habituated to a padre or vicar, and these took over her semblance in lieu of an unfolding concrete. Shall anyone assess it pertinently?’

REACH FOR A DRAGON’S LOADSTAR (28)
“A pullulation or cry fades into the distance… Surely it raises up to the present reality that scene in Eisenstein, to be used later by Francis Bacon – namely, the nurse on the Odessa steps? She lets out a heartfelt cry of desperation, irrationally and without surcease. Above all, I claw at my face trying to remember, even when given a plenitude of remorse. Nothing else will do. My visage proves to be wet, sweaty and not given over to sentimentality. Why cannot I force my fancy to a closure – one which ventilates the hidden depths of Pandora’s box? Obviously
I am not ready for the truth yet – at least as measured by an everyday awakening.

+ I walk away from her remorselessly towards the light. It happens to be marked by the sigil ‘sanity’ (sic) and it takes the format of a white door. It proves to be a pillar of basalt; leastwise as I trudge towards it under expectant neon. No: each swirl of le Corbusier’s concrete unnerves me in its prior configuration. Maysoever it has any occasion to de-man --- not yet, my brethren! Despite the fact that various words lit up the eye of this particular needle, in a manner irrespective of any portent. They included addiction, therapy, cure, aversion, Pavlov, dementia and ‘Freud is a dog’. On I move into a rapt darkness.”

WE CANNOT OUTGROW OUR SHRUNKEN HEADS (29)

“The mist rises up over a delirious city; it coaxes the mainspring of a renewed awakening. This is because – before the frosted enclosure of such a glass – I let rip, albeit in silence’s measured tread o’ war. Yes. My beloved Fervent can be in no danger from these knives of hate --- the latter effectively surrounding her brood time. Do you expect this conundrum from her? I make eyes at the ceiling for a thousandth time, but still I find myself reclining on a reshaped bed once more. It lies laterally against my considered philosophy. In the darkness I fumble for a packet of cheap cigarettes. Could they be Lambert & Butler? No matter: I ignite one and watch its fire-fly surrender towards the dawn. I drag on its nicotine and tar-laden relief or expanse. Admittedly though, I know that such phantasms are beyond Man’s ken. Fervent registers no danger or peril --- in terms of an English Mummers’ play as yet unborn. Furthermore, this cavalcade of unreason must dance at the farthest shores of these adventures. It betokens nought but a chainsaw going through a neck at high speed. Yes indeed; since when I dwell upon such matters don’t I realise that Saddam Hussein’s execution shames Bush and Blair much more? A factor underscored by the bravery he showed in his final moments. I know that Fervent dwells among pixies and
in a rainbow land of her own debenture, where elephant trunks nestle amidst lively bushes and petals. All of it belittles Baba the Elephant before any betrayal or waxed bullet-hide. I tuck back under the covers and resist all thoughts or perturbations. My wife remains safe… who can resist this logic?”

HUMPTY-DUMPTY’S SEMIOTIC; NO HORSEMAN AROUND (30)

“In a parallel void I have ventured out beyond an asylum. This much has to be true… because my format exists in a drunken rage. Can you exist independently around me (?) … since various aversion therapies are on-going. They speak of an indifference to puppeteering’s torments; primarily after a genuflexion as regards Nietzsche’s dictum. Did he not say that sympathy multiplies misery? Most effectively, heads that are to one side of me retrieve their absent capsules from nothingness. Whereas a rival shout ululates forth from a dead-zone before medication is administered. A hooked cross or gammadion lies to one side of these proceedings. Do we detect its betrayal? Likewise, in an advanced bubble – beyond Pugin-like tracery – stand the hippogriffs of our imagination. Surely this sensibility can become deluded abreast of the aft? --- In a situation where arachnophobia, prescriptively, is tested ahead of its aversion through release. Above all, it massages a bubble over its side-on prey --- a series of events which in no way delimits a corbel. A gargoyle that rises, this, over any jet-stream or blast: it merely decides to take off in expectation of a bell-weather. For doesn’t the truth dawn on us slowly these days? Especially when the teeth of this sensibility – held over in a griffin’s mouth – seeks to nibble on ply-wood. Cannot they depict a buzz-saw of yesteryear? Most mightily, various imbeciles or tame rats are held over in mummified cauldrons or vats… perhaps they swivel aslant hooks in a demented den. While – throughout all of this – we hear a howling after the fashion of the maniac in those asylum sequences in Dracula. Didn’t Bram Stoker call him Renfield, perchance? Anyway, amidst stroboscopic neon, a
hundred slogans about health find themselves compartmentalised: the following are the most legible ones. These include: sin-bin, narrow narrative, believe your rodent yearnings, rats-in-mazes a la Konrad Lorenz, infinitude: drop the donkey’s head, plain crazy; Loon: moon-staring gibberer, Psycho. My happenstance’s intrigue means that I’ve defeated Geoffrey Household’s *Rogue Male*. Believe me: no behavioural chant captures this plainsong effectively.”

VARESE’S POLYPHONY OUTSTRIPS HATRED (31)

“It all begins to point to a reinvigorated weariness these days. In the beginning, then, I was bereft of those cigarettes which burnt down my fortune. They refuse to work towards a palm’s surfeit – and doesn’t one of these cancer-sticks frazzle across me before I crush it out? With every fibre of my Being I know that I must stay awake, avoid sleep, avoid every moment of sleep, and plunge into new vistas on the morrow. Let it all come down… I retreat abreast of myself or in a forwards direction – only to let out a paw over a clearing scream. Do you notice its echo reverberating among so many Chapmanworld dolls? Similarly, I grimace when beholden to a magnetic north – even though I notice that Mister Hyde’s military jacket links to misshapen hands. I blunder forward *avec* hairy mittens in order to seek out bravery. No longer --- since my gestures are bereft of a negative ballet. A heckle, yelp or cry reaches out to me across a darkened parchment; a template within which multiple doors fall away… or even tracing-paper versions of them. I do everything not to submit to sleep or procrastinate to slumber. For --- in phantasm’s reaches --- this room becomes syncopated or telescopic. It mushrooms aft; being presently seen from a reverse tube’s end or a telescope. It effectively limits a caterwaul’s collapse – all of it at a perspectival distance but one.

Fading to such a bounty, therefore, my parallel sequence intrudes into this spiral or eddy. It mounts against the distaff’s register. Can’t you recognise its peel? Anyway, my masked *alter ego*
communed with a rival heap, dressed under satin or otherwise mounting to the conclusion of such mirrors. Might these be affixed to our scalps so that we can look into the future --- primarily by nodding backwards in front of ourselves? Interestingly – and by way of provocation – our narrative guide seems to be dressed in one of Philip Guston’s Klan outfits. (A notification which states that within modernist art many wish to approach D.W. Griffith’s Birth of a Nation). It suffices to know of this surrender to oneself! What can these twin denizens really be expressing between the sheets? Why, they must want to comment on the secretiveness of Odd Billy-o…”

ARMAGEDDON’S VILLAGE HIDES ITS FACE BEHIND METAL (32)
“Deep in one of Strindberg’s dreams or ruptures (to speak of) I find myself back again within the cottage. Like an obscene saraband I am off my feet, breaking out from a disclosure or struggling for breath. Do we signify a break up at the commencement of these adventures? Fervent Dominique is seen to be writhing on the floor in a night-gown or negligee; whereas Dung-beetle leers over her. A streak of red masquerades across this whole performance --- it perforates many ulcers. These look up at a forgotten target. Like an instant in Beowulf he exhibits a sharp axe in his hand; it drags across the ground of a cadenced defile. A maniacal stare beams from the caretaker’s visage – truly, criminals are born and not made: they are the products of license and genetics. Each profound buffoon – in consequence – represents a recrudescence of impure blood. You see, Lombroso was right: moral inferiority results from a physical defect and the low are bound to exhibit the swinishness of how they look. A malefactor, therefore, is bred by virtue of an absence of oxygen to the brain at crucial moments. Can’t you tell Criminal Man from the placement of his eyes together in the skull; or those brown stains beneath either orb? Insanity has to be physiological; but evil and human ugliness are deeply interlinked at every level. ‘Unhand her’, I cry; as I dance around this pile of dung. All in
all, our captive’s purposes move within a threnody of the mind. We essentially imagine Merce Cunningham’s movements… in such a way as to limit their effects. These surrender a brouhaha to the boundary of many drums or atonal forays. Need this bring about a bullion or necessarily perplex those who axe down heads like pastray? Perhaps it relates to Sir Arthur Bliss’ ballet music for *Checkmate* --- with the lead parts being taken by X, Y and Z.”

DON’T FORGET TO TUG AT A WARLOCK’S SIGNATURE (33)

“In one’s parallel domain or tomb a detail stands out! It more than flicks up a coop or secret hatch to such a place – if one can reconnoitre this problem without a gibbering cage. For Odd Billy-o finds himself tied to an electric chair; with varied nodes, modules or tazers passing through his hair. He besports a mask over his teeth that breeds nought but redundant air, so as to fathom its slits. Moreover, these molars lash at the cranium of many unused dogs – all of whom remain silent against a sweep of orange and brown. A look of hatred can be perceived in his eyes – even if I were to hide the semblance of a slip. It always knows its fate in such circumstances. Can we suggest in this iron maiden or truss a Broadmoor aperture; at least in terms of its virtual reality? No matter how anyone can forget about it on the outside… Let us be clear now: Odd Billy-o receives electric shocks in a sensory deprivation chamber. He is masked and chained in dwindling light. Do you let loose a subdued smile which betokens schadenfreude?”

CAIN’S APPLE BURSTS UNDER A CROSS-BOW’S IMPACT (34)

“Feel its bolt ---. Now then, without force or fraud, I float ethereally beyond a plenitude of two bodies. Nor do I feel undone in my new habitat. Yes indeed; for I rise above Billy-o like an angel hungering for its prey. Or might it be a devil (perchance) – namely, one of those denizens who had fallen from Heaven and were murdered by Milton? Against this observation,
though, my mincing penumbra recalls some of Merce Cunningham’s dance steps. All of it in an instant where my body floats above Dung-beetle’s in a sack – it limns, fizzes, scrapes and realises a flibbertigibbet. Isn’t our transparency altogether dream-like or unreal? Certainly and again, it subsists in a mathematical construction or Venn diagram --- theoretically speaking. None of which prevents us circling around each other like marionettes, even vaguely mimetic studies. As I blink and stare anew the battle-axe in my hand becomes more and more discernible.

+ Irrespective of the above – and in a rival cosmos – my simulacrum strides forwards in cyberspace. Or may it intone another form of quality circus? A bridge stretches across a cavern of non-identity; it salvages a hint of tangerine aslant such a gulf. Way behind my back a concrete structure rises up; it betokens an NCP or national carpark’s wall. Does it loom up sheer like one of le Corbusier’s brutalist offerings? Nonetheless, a hidden savant finds himself roped to a stanchion – he heaves simultaneously against his imprisonment. It embodies Gaius Cibber’s sculptures outside the Imperial War museum; the ones which betray raving madness or raw Bedlam. Likewise – & pursuant to a rival shrug – I dispense with a man in a jump-suit --- presumably it’s not the same colour as the prisoners in Guantanamo bay! He writhes within the suffocation of a burial ground; a dispensation that leaves him out of Doctor Seward’s padded jackets. (Do we wish to remember Bram Stoker’s psychiatrist in *Dracula*?)

**FIRE DWARVES FROM YOUR CANNON – 10% off (35)**

“Finally – and in a limbo of frustration – my rubbery body comes to be thrown over by Billy-o. I circle beneath a distinct blow – the kindred of which causes me to ricochet from a trampoline. Such gymnastics exists like spore in a test-tube or bacteria under a microscope – a situation where each bubble coalesces to silence. Inevitably so, given the fact that it appears to be unreal… what with my body curled over in a loop. Billy-o snarls above
me and his massive bulk looms in a squint – or could it possibly be an over-sized shirt? A kaleidoscope of colours moves and shimmers around his axe-head; as a mad-man’s convulsive strength sent me spinning across the room.”

PEACHES LIMIT THEIR OWN GASOLINE (36)
“My presence in a ghoul’s mask crosses a bridge which lies adjacent to one’s gulf. A dip or declension in the ground (this) that drops away from a hellish cosmogony… it preconfigures Bosch and casts my psychic state into relief. Do we acknowledge this prior mesmerism? Because immediately at the end of this corridor a camouflage stands out; it shows a neo-classical head which is blind-folded. A torch spears upwards next to our reclining skull; wherein re-aligned to this figurine’s right a pyramid levels its ballast. (Note well: a few windows break the surface of this needle; they are transfigured by yellow squares). It ascends – by dint of alertness – to a curlucie of golden haziness.

Above all though, another Thorakian plaster takes our attention. It dominates most of the available space. Its inner organs are exposed in a manner reminiscent of Professor Gunter von Hagens’ Plastinates. While the bulk of its torso came connected to various wires, cables, tendons, muscles, electrical valves and boiler-plated lagging. Its musculature blistered out in a rippling display of power; a criterion which shows off an athletic build or prowess. Can we understand those wrapped-around guts that betoken an internal combustion engine? Surely this involves the boiler-man scene in Terry Gilliam’s Brazil?”

IT USES A SUB-MARINER OR A SHARK’S TOOTH (37)
“Again – within the leeriness of a birch – Odd Billy-o descends towards me in his dreams. Behind him spiral various strands of coloured air; they streak upwards like grooves or wounds in one carcass after another. Most undoubtedly, his form became angered within a psychopath’s purview; it merely doubts the circumstances of existence. Yet this remains momentary --- even
fragmented. Must one detect its cause? Beside these events (though) a squint in Dung-beetle’s eye looks likely – the former hovers over his use of the axe. All the time – as in slow motion – a hint of Worzel Gummidge crossed with Hitchcock’s Psycho lifts its veil. (Did Robert Bloch prove ready with a screen-play or script?) Especially when the bristles stood out on his scalp; primarily because we are ready to bear witness to Leatherface’s rage… abundantly so. The meat-axe ponders the atmosphere over my head; its glistening metal surface seems to get higher and higher. Might such a dramaturgy arrive at the cross-cutting of a mollusc or a snail?”

WE MUST HAIL THE SNOW OF A NEW DAWN (38)
“Altogether the potentiality of a nightmare lay before us; an experience which lurches into one dislocated prism after another. Truly, our Thorak torso gleams on in its magnificence; it bit the bullet of many rubber truncheons as yet unfulfilled. Again, each arm contains within it an amputated fist; the latter characterised by two prongs. (These denote electronic versions of Alexis Lykiard’s novel, The Stump). Did they salve the conscience of a new beginning? Yet we realise that the lower leg reaches forwards in a boot --- maybe a reverse gauntlet. Furthermore, our figurine’s cranium lies open or cast away over its teeth; in a way which throws doubt over its extension. Similarly, a distended tongue reaches out beyond sovran lips; these suction-cups handle eternity’s doors. Each orb or eyelet in this gigantic shell remains small – despite the fact that it elicits a dropping plenitude. Such spotlights flash before us a signification: it reads White Power.”

A CAUCASIAN HABITAT FREEZES OUT PAIN (39)
“I am down in a tunnel of renewal or exertion – what with Billy-o facing off against a declining blade. It swings or arcs through a descant and parabola; each motion then chasing a stopped reproduction. A magician fixes it… Rather like Rene Magritte’s painting of a stilled repetition, Dung-beetle caroms through five habitats: every one more wearisome than the last in terms of its
circumstance. The cutting-edge flashes and he is picked out in a 5-digit response; whilst one muscle or two carries a cleaver’s trajectory further on. With each crenellation or beasthood, therefore, Billy-o grits his teeth within a woolly-hat… it basically flatters to deceive all on-coming witnesses. Whereupon our new mister Hyde drools over the exertion of a blow; the source of which would have remained mysterious save for some silver in his fist. Likewise, his wide and succulent slits glower as he brought down his halberd towards Tyburn. Might such a threnody, in turn, indicate a grunting or Hyperborean clamour – the nature of whose atonality indicates its morality…?"

NEMEDIA’S SENSITIVITY MILKS INSECTS (40)
“In a parallax purview, however, a rat-a-tat-tat continues to intrude under an asylum’s door. It covers the reduction of one reflex; only to cut off a solitary ring at the wrist should it prove unable to call a halt. For next to a pipe, suction cup and entrance – or possibly adjacent to its prompt – we sense a disturbance. It runs along the skirting-board which covers a ventricular circuit… or a V. While water slashes around these fronds – in such a way as sees fit to deny that everything’s made-in-metal.”

LET US ENJOY THIS RESPITE FROM A JOKER’S CARD (41)
“Again and again, my lords, no motivation clears any solace or trespass like this… especially in a situation where Dominique screams continuously. What goes on here or roundabouts – even within Robert Bloch’s neurology or impress? Surrender it to us now – in a silent cinema’s encore wherein her blonde head registers a diminuendo… or possibly a curve in spite of. Down she goes abreast of selfhood… as well as prone to falling over within a parabola. Its identikit pictures swivel over to the side; with each minstrel in her nightie streaming after a dawn’s danger. It proves to be naked or diaphanous. It covers over one projection too far – if this was going to alter Fate… never mind its implementation. Her arms wrap around a pillar during the
descent… do you register its cat-call? Whereupon – in the background – our northern pile or cottage rears up. It appears to be changed or altered; thereby resembling a tower in reverse. Such a cube or Lego block signals the horizon; it splinters the sky with each large collection leading to cumulus. Moreover, these sands refract pinkly off the sky’s gold; could it intonate a refulgence? May it detonate a convergence between hydrogen peroxide and white phosphorous… or napalm? Oh my yes --- still the house came contained in its pyramid or aura… what with parallel lines drawing the mind to its grains.”

VACATE A HUMAN CANNON-BALL’S STRAW MAT (42) “Listening to a diatribe – communicated down a tunnel – we come across Fervent Dominique’s alter ego. This subsists as a transliteration or tour de force. For – in the middle of an asylum or sectioned under the Mental Health Act – she stands alone and barefoot on hygienic floors. These help to wear out better moments or overlain grief. Because our damsel keens to erectness in a lycra jacket (padded green) with her arms trussed together in bondage. Such attributes manifest one quarrel with non-identity – in that they feast on belts, buckles and braces. All of them inundate rind. Each Houdini element overlaps with fingers that are held tight --- whereas the vagina comes to the fore in a promontory or bulge. It exists underneath her nameplate, zip fastening, naked, shorn or shaven legs and flowing hair. Funnily enough, our heroine’s frizz has given up and it flares up above the scalp… even electronically. Whereas – between her dinky sandals and the tresses stood on end – a sun-dial transfixes the face. A momentum which encapsulates eyes staring manically, bizarrely or with self-estrangement. This mediumship reckons on nothing but trouble. Meanwhile, a recurrent tapping is heard from the background…”

A CROSS-BOW BOLT SPEARS ITS TARGET (43) “I remain alone in a hotel’s bed-room or iron box. This cubicle looks broken, lonely and sepulchral by turns. A splitting or
explosive light enters my cranium; it passes through various nerve-endings or hooliganisms. Have I woken to be in the maw of giants? Likewise, my ears ring like arrested canals --- to wax surreal. Isn’t tetanitis the medical resume for a certain tonality? Despite such an intrigue (though) I shuddered awake in a drenched bed – and I shivered with a recollection of Lovecraft’s awe. Does one recall that he kept a journal or writer’s notebook on Providence’s sound? It contained jottings from dreams and the occasional ink-drawing which delineates Pickman’s model… amongst others. Various lights or jolts of diamond lit up the round – it illumined each spark while I sprawled on my back in Auschwitz pyjamas. Nonetheless, these tame versions of the aurora borealis soon drift from under an eye-lid. To leave what, exactly? Why, nothing but memories of cessation or violence. All of which circles that fiend’s attempt to murder my wife, Fervent Dominique. But didn’t the northern buffoon or misfit try to turn his bloody axe on me? It was more an example of a Yorkshire than a Texas chain-saw massacre… to be sure. Yet one’s memory fades – any recollection turns to puce… or mulcts and levels off as BOC gas. What can mesmerism really tell me now, yes?

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Multi-dimensionally, an impediment haunts our consciousness. For a man in a leather mask (made of jade) interferes with our silence; it tempts fate only to look back on it by hating. A rictus was occasioned about those eyes o’ plenty: they don’t know the meaning of surrender to such tensions. All the while, though, a stream of rheum or spittle bounces forth – it dribbles from a brace of clenched teeth. Nor can one navigate in the dark by them – since each retina flashes above or aslant. Whilst the playlet indicates a stratum or sub-text; the depiction of such things always lets out a gasp… by the by. Could it really reconnoitre a Balthus painting without the curtains? Furthermore, the face mask encloses an identity – rather after the fashion of Alexander Dumas’ Man in the Iron Mask. Surely it advocates a conceit or the indeterminacy of S&M (?) --- particularly when the latter’s
measured by hermeticism, concealment and distraction. Throughout this hallucination a continual tapping was heard. RAT-A-TAT-TAT! RAT-A-TAT-TAT! It knows no intermission or surcease. Basically an imprisoned Billy-o can only be trying to contact Fervent Dominique. But remember: she finds herself occluded in an asylum’s padded jacket.”

NO-ONE CAN SEE THOSE BREASTS BENEATH THE HAIR-PIN (44)
“Release these structures and pull yourself together! It ill-behoves one witness to deny death’s fortitude… certainly when I lie back and stare at the ceiling in this hotel room. I have come to a decision amid all this indeterminacy; in that I MUST UNCOVER THIS DREAM’S MEANING! Nought else can still such negligence should I choose to exercise it. Yet again, the awful kaleidoscope levels up and illuminates aggression. I yelp and move wildly like a slide of film – as I run towards the cottage’s door only to fling it open. I gyroscopically veer and race in a trance with each image retracing its category. It seems to indicate mercury or perhaps quicksilver. Does one detect the difference subsequently? To this end: all of the stop-motion frames of Edward Muybridge leap from the nineteenth century to greet me…

At a level which comes behind my eyes a demented man in a leather or rubber mask beats out a tattoo. For the first time one notices that he has a chipped metal cup in his mitten. Bang-bang-bang-bang it goes; always reverberating next to some stanchion or trellis. Might it be a door out of this particular time capsule? Anyway, an imprisoned Dung-beetle continues to tap away in his beak-top or Masque; it repeats itself day and night. Is he trying to communicate in morse code… or possibly it denotes some semiotic of his devising? To finish up: this vista was lunatic and contrives to look like a Bacon head from the ‘fifties; at once toothsome, clenched, in profile, bitten into, replete and indicative
of amputation. Perhaps the morality of a mediaeval Bestiary betrays its hint?”

WE ARE NOT RELATED TO WILLIAM BLOODAXE (45)

“To start with the most important point… my dream rushes on unabated inside a concealed chamber. Who can understandably assess its depth? In relation to all this – I can make out a distraught Fervent in the background. I am through the portal now. The cottage’s door lies seemingly well behind my advanced guard. She holds her head in her hands and a vague moaning sibilates from one fallen consciousness. Whereas my mack forsakes the witness of its disclosure; it blossoms out aslant my tread. Surely it doesn’t just wait to take up an advantage? Now then: every transposition suits its basic profile; it fractures and eddies… or, rather perversely, it manoeuvres in a slip-stream. This essentially lends a disjointed or fervid atmosphere to my imaginings. All of a sudden I notice that the bull-necked ruffian’s charging me. Oh ghastly prudence… in one fell swoop I fall victim to Quasimodo’s leg-irons. For the fitful, variegated vision of Dung-beetle triple-jumps before me. He sports a glistening axe in his glove… withal. His eyes similarly burn into mine like naked coals; the after-effects of which indicate a Martian landing or the resurrection from the sands of some strange cacti. Saliva also streams from his lips in terms of a spent offering. May this blubbery water contain its rabid intoxicant – thereby disseminating an Icelandic geyser rushing soilwards?

In dalliance’s realm, however, our puppets continue to twitch and twirl… can we ask them to strut on broken strings? Against such an advent Fervent stands erect in an adjacent cell --- all of which happens to be bathed in a dull glow. Could it be grey? Let it pass us by… Because – next to an interconnected series of pipes – she stares wildly into the distance. Oh my yes; since her format remains trussed in its padded jacket: the likelihood of such an object keeps Broadmoor’s patter from these oven chips! It also reeks of sour and prismatic lisps… even lesions (…) Her blonde
hair --- marine peroxided --- tilts up electrostatically. It’s gorgeous to look at. It does not appear to move about, but merely exists like a Gilbert & George sculpture or manikin. The tapping continues to go on rhythmically behind her – probably conducted onwards by these plumber’s veins. ‘Soon we will be together, darling’, Dung-beetle seems to be saying in his veritable morse code. What is happening here and why has Billy-o lost his Yorkshire accent? All in all, his diction recalls my braying tones. ‘Do not despair, sweet one, I possess a plan for you and me to escape. I love you, Fervent’, he knocks out repeatedly with his metallic cup. Hearing this confession – to be sure – I wish to beat out his brains with a meat-axe! Meanwhile, Fervent serenely sculpts her quiet volcano. Like a Tarkovsky movie, it breeds and evinces calm amid Bedlam and raging mania. She stares ahead aspen-like and strawberry tinctured. Has Marilyn Monroe been reduced to a muffin? It speaks of false volumes over and over again. Yes; since her two eyes glisten on into space like twin marbles. In bondage to insanity and with her hair on end… Fervent scarcely spies this ceaseless tapping. (An artist’s manikin often finds itself cut in half, straight-laced or even reduced towards auburn filters, you see). What can have happened to her mind?”

A PSYCHOTIC ANT EATS OUR HEADS (46)

“May we speed up our progression towards a phantasm’s fulfillment? Moreover, our heady drama careers on in the direction of a disclosure. Remember: not even Greek tragedy can forsake its Deux ex Machina entirely. Or, if we were to put it more persuasively, might this story be our version of Hitchcock’s and Bloch’s Psycho?

It all continues to grow apace; at least before it falls down haphazardly and without forethought. What was that song or chant from the rock group called Nazareth: ‘all the king’s horses and all the king’s men…’ et cetera? It obviously relates to Humpty Dumpty who – in Lewis Carroll’s diction – kept his
head on the wall. Yet here the screaming is lost within an oasis of red and black; even as it strives to offer sundry resolution or attack. Fervent declares herself to be a screaming puppet; the like of which folds over in a blinding glare. It creams or sibilates over a stroboscope’s fancy – just wincing or circling under a scintilla of day. Watch it now: her hands are up, the breasts exposed amid a diaphanous material, and her *negligee* is cast aslant of a bloodied vortex. We observe all this (albeit from a distance) and the last element we grasp has to be an expressionist tableau. It weakens any sovereignty which we expect from silver… it also causes Dominique’s eyes to bulge and pop, while the mouth lets out a Fury’s cry. Don’t the forearms also limber across these circling or vulvic slip-streams? Let it pass… because the lower part of her anatomy draws down the eye; it articulates a cone of penetrative arches when dashed with red…

Given such a sinister cradling, one hears Fervent’s cry fading from view. It ultimately becomes a dissident’s bat call --- even its echo. Don’t these mammals screech sub-sonically in order to see? Anyway, a filament of the lachrymose palls over this concrete. Heaven and a day (!), a beam of autumn’s light cracks the darkness of a moral winter. What comes up out of these nethermost deeps (?); why, it happens to be a coffin that stands revealed on an antique table. Might it be an example of Chippendale furniture – with fluted legs beneath a level or baize surface? Fervent kneels next to the coffer in this subdued glow – she has a manicured head in her hands. She appears to be sobbing her heart out…SOB…sob…sob; it breaks on gravel’s silence in a heart-rending manner. It’s rather like the outer epidermis or shell of a beetle which grinds against cardboard. All of a sudden I REALISE that I am stood alongside her --- I look across the bier. May I be adjacent to her point of call? It’s a definite possibility. Half disclosed in an enabling shadow I crane my neck, primarily in order to peer into the casket. I wish to inspect what she’s sobbing about; I want to know who’s in there.
Yes indeed… while all around a swirling ebon slurry descends. It decants in a despondent arc – circumambiently so.

I immediately decide to smash through this inertia by an undertaking. ‘In the beginning was the word and the word was God’, says the Authorised version of 1611. Not so --- as Mephistopheles intimated to Faust --- at our commencement there had to be an action. I decided to move now. After a period of lethargy, inaction, disbelief and inertia I AM ALL A-GO! Yes truly; I dress frantically with a tremulous onrush; and it all takes place in a situation where my clothes are thrown together like so many rags or a scarecrow’s raiment. I check out of the hotel in a trice and soon the miles northwards are being eaten up by my flying machine. Within the matter of a few hours my red MG sportscar pulls up outside the cottage. I’ve got to check that Fervent’s alright; I AM IN A WHIRLING ANXIETY TO KNOW. ‘I must assess her present well-being’, I repeat to myself like a mantra. Given a few definite seconds of value – my low-seater’s gliding to a halt outside our residence. A few bleak northern peaks alternate with greenery behind me. The first thing that I notice, however, is a large wrench or smashed aperture in the doorway. It looks for all the world as though an axe has rammed through it, been turned around and then violently withdrawn. A few woodcuts or indentations surround this hole – somewhat salaciously.

I enter this rural structure without further ado. One perceives that destiny must take its course. Wisps of mist rise from a blackish bog next to the manse; it purples the air with a brackish incense. Inside Fervent is naked except for high-heeled or strapless shoes and a dressing-gown; her breasts are almost out and she has hurled herself over a coffin. Just like in my dream, it dominates the dwelling’s lower-most half. Can’t I see that the coffer rests on a rather immaculate or antique table – one which has been shoved aft and made to do service? Yes again… but my attention is momentarily taken up by the planes or lines lying directly
behind our combatants. These whip up so as to foreclose one’s distance. A series of escarpments meet our gaze; each one pursuant to an abandoned stair-well or various friezes and blocks on the walls. Two calibrated, fashionable and Art Deco lamps hang down from the ceiling – they bisect these mathematical interludes. For my part, I stand stupefied by the door’s jamb. Is it my imagination… or do some heavy flecks of lead paint actually disengage from it and float towards the ground? My own presence seems substantial – it subsists like a deluded scarecrow. Does my perceived bulk appear to be a rag-man (?) ; that is, one which a farmer puts in his fields in order to scare crows. Yes. My grey mack billows out behind me and represents a sail… most regrettably. Atop which my head slopes after a spinning-top or a piece of topiary. Might it intone a Dominican’s head-gear? Virtually so: particularly since my hair looks very greasy. ‘Fervent; Fervent…’, I am heard to whisper or lisp with increasing fervour. I notice, with growing distraction, that my accent has become increasingly norther. Have I begun to ape Yorkshire’s *patois* without realising it?

As I look over the accredited boundary, the coffer reveals its discharged item. One of us is deceased or dead. It has to be Basildon Lancaster. What! BUT I AM HE; IT CANNOT BE! Lumberingly, I step forward into the cottage like a minotaur who is treading on egg-shells. For his part, though, Fervent Dominique’s husband lies peaceably enough on the pallet. A silk under-shirt or vestment lies underneath his body; it doubtless soaks up the blood. That the body has been bleeding is evident -- for a large gash lurks down one side. It fades over and turns away from me as I look – otherwise he appears somnolent, stiff and a trifle condescending. Just like in life! My hand reaches out in an ungainly fashion and Fervent turns towards me distractedly. Her perfumed pinkie trails against the coffer’s side – as my Beauty stares up towards me in a dazed or dumb-founded way. Her globes and nipples are almost out in an attendant fashion – and the diaphanous gauze of her dressing-gown slips from her. I
am suffused with a tender lust contrary to an orange backdrop. It teeters on the edge of oblivion and I feel an uncontrollable erection coming on. Fervent looks towards me with her blonde wisp or cask askew; her lips open and a plunging cleavage playfully dangling between canyons. Suddenly, I notice her eyes for the first time – both of them are like squares or Rubik cubes. Ahh! She has been driven virtually blind by grieving over me. But I must tell her the truth. ‘Darling, chuckee, me duck…’t’ain’t to bother thyself, dearie. I’ve been born asunder ‘midst Thetis’ thighs. I’m alive!’ For the first time she speaks; it’s a low croak or groan. ‘Choke’, she gasps, ‘it’s you then’. She utters this remark in a totally dead tone.

The room’s longitude becomes blurred to me; it seems to slope away within the entrance to a deluded eye. Did the god Odin loose one or t’other on life’s tree? Further, a stairwell retracted towards curtains which are aft. While an easy chair lay next to an ornate lamp. Most assuredly, my animate motion came and went – at least in terms of the perambulations of a clockwork toy. Yes and forevermore, a rip-roaring skeleton had come to eat at this particular feast. I staggered towards my love with jerky and faulty step-overs. Could I be considered as aught like a machine; at once metallic, stiff, uneven, mechano-like and disabled? My limbs felt heavy, steadfast and troglodytic – they ill-suited Lancaster and this was irrespective of the clothes worn over them. But – wait an instant – didn’t the alleged master of the house lie down there on his death-dais? I say unto thee: ‘I have come to replace him!’

All this time, Fervent has been backing away from me into the dwelling’s recesses. Her face is drawn taut throughout this ordeal. It reconnoitres the razor wire of its indifference. Nonetheless, my feet reverberate with a definite or staccato echo on wooden flooring. I continue to observe Fervent Dominique -- my endless darling or arrested carouse. ‘What ails thee, duck?’ Why doesn’t she say ‘cock’ in contravention of the above? ‘Keep
away… move farther off from my torso now, do you hear?’, she all but screams. Tut-tut… it’s most distressing to hear. Moreover, as she repeatedly backs away I become more and more apprised of the BODY I’ve always desired… The breasts are virtually out from the flowing bed-side robes and her blonde coif hangs over an articulated cry. It embodies a discarnate circle or the letter O! May it be an extended Story of O by Pauline Reage, perchance? Anyway, her dressing-gown falls off or rises up over her perfectly formed legs. Each one has been waxed in order to cater to oblivion’s occasion… and her strapless or high-heeled shoes become more observable than ever.

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IT FINALLY HITS ME WITH THE FORCE OF A REVELATION… Fervent Dominique continues to caterwaul and her husband, Basildon Lancaster, lies dead on his bier. It’s distended alright… It’s only now that I realise what has happened. I have contrived to dream a maniac’s fancy. I AM OBVIOUSLY ODD BILLY-O OR DUNG-BEETLE! I consider myself to be a gibbering retard, biological relic or wreck. Dost thou know that criminals are born and not made by society? I luxuriate in my psychopathia; I blubber incontinently like the spastic I was born to be. ‘Ay, thee wait on owt pretty, me chuck; I’s coming for thee ta seek dalliance with thy head’. I know that I can’t stop myself from now on. I salivate and leer with my orbs reeling and turning in their sockets. My hair seems dishevelled and my chin unshaved – both the result of days refusing to wash in a southern hotel. I grab hold of Fervent’s auburn tresses in a grizzly or gnarled maw. She cries out ‘YAAAEEEEEEEEEE(!)”; as the axe-head becomes discernible. Can you ken it, brethren? I’ve come back to my caretaker’s cottage to murder Fervent Dominique just like I slew her mate… presumably because she wouldn’t ‘go’ with a malformed cretin like me. Blame it on a Quasimodo’s loins --- we should be castrated at birth in order to prevent us breeding spawn! ‘Eeeeee(!), I’ll cut off her head afore I hang myself from a bough on the moors. Ay, it goes on until a night’s ending…’
Fervent’s cry echoes like a Banshee until a sickening thud intervenes. Her mouth had dilated to a sycamore oval before its silence.”

THE END
ORIGAMI BLUEBEARD
a phantasm

Characters devised: Trevelyan Bostock, a bland, good-looking adventurer; Candice Leper, an aged crone or geriatric artiste, and Man-Cloth: a tatterdemalion.

PART ONE
“I sat on a plush and purple sofa which was taffeta rinsed to its loss of intrigue. It lay abreast of me or outside any witness statement whatsoever. Its corners also seemed to be bowed down under wood or solitary abutments: the latter being residual or unfinished. A brief or blue curlicue – of some species o’ resin – lay off to the side and even by way of a cushion. How I loathed and detested the whole caboodle! Immediately in front of me – and coming adjacent to my toe – loomed another Magdalene’s mercy seat. This time it came to my gaze hollowed out in green light and it looked to be manufactured from plaid… the character of which took on an emerald sword. Examine the carpet beneath our feet, will you? It consisted of a dull or brown mud that listed to a ready significance: and it’s bordered at the edges with grey’s abandonment… whether headless or otherwise. How I wish she’d been decapitated, but there lies another point we’ve got to get onto! Anyway, a dim sweep of wall crossed against our backs; it almost reared up sheer in its spareness (concrete like). Jesus Christ, I want to pluck out my eye-balls and play marbles with them, but wait awhile… LET US FACE UP TO NOT ONLY THIS! Calm; calmness now… keep still and serene, you wretch! She might suspect something; leastways before I get my hands on the money… What did I momentarily witter on about? Yes, I remember now, it had to do with a kaleidoscopic backing behind us. It appears to be reminiscent of one of le Corbusier’s offerings, perchance. Where – under the guise of Cathar spirituality or some such – this pure one treated us to unadulterated concrete by way of interior design. Was he alone in his simpering enlightenment, I ask you? It’s reminiscent of Art
Brut or raw art – thereby cataloguing the creativity of Outsiders or degenerates who lust for prey. They do so in visual realms where rhinos gather after Ionescu’s transport. Do you realise that they’re all insane or catatonic? Each one’s off his tiny or little rocker! Whether they choose to go under the names of Albert Louden, Billy Morey, Brian Willsher, John McQuirk et al., i.e.: the whole crazy troupe who exist down at the Maudsley Hospital. It’s pathological or demented (you see); and little more than a coxcomb brandished before contemporary culture. What am I saying, though? For the artistry of maniacs and absurdists is little more than Kaos’ elixir. To bring it to a point, however, I, Trevelyan Bostock, am sat next to her amid either a charnel house or a suburban atmosphere. Whatever’s that aggressive rock band from the United States called… ‘Bomb the Suburbs’? Well! let those mugwumps come down here by way of a three-way treaty. I’d like to see if they have the courage and dexterity so to do!”

PART TWO

“Aslant the two of us – and possibly adjacent to this desolation’s fastness – were two mirrors. Both of them happened to be forlorn twins of one another – the first had a silver frame of exquisite and baroque workmanship; while the second waxed gold in its grandeur. (That is, in its filigree, template or mock-allure… do you get it?) I bet the former’s framed around ormolu’s in-sheets and exists in a stationary or selfish orbit – especially when put together by old age’s hands. Maybe it illustrates Hindi rolled-gold or some marker-pen beyond identity? Looked at in a certain light or under definite conditions, therefore, these glasses festooned an ebon tint. Stuff and nonsense, I said, when I first heard of this frippery, but, au contraire, could there be aught to it? Because I detected that on moonlit nights or within a gibbous stream these windows were misted over. At a distance they betokened dark, limpid pools; where occasional faery lights came up and added to a lambent lustre. Could they represent flickering fire-flies now? Balderdash… Yet I’ve started to discern dream-
times, images or forethoughts – nearly always somewhat down in a glass vista. Or is it really an example of Newton’s prisms… even a misprisionment *per se*?”

PART THREE

“Here’s a kindred to one type of phantasy… for out in the clinging darkness a hand grasps a wall. Was it mine and did it essentially matter if it weren’t so? A variant of this can be seen in the graffiti which clutters one mural – it says a ‘platform of love’. Moreover, any dulcet sweetness finds itself surrounded by such atmospheres. Given that this ambiance is a dismal tunnel – half Mies van der Rohe shanty-town; half NCP (National Car Park) graveyard. Again, the paw which doesn’t grasp this paper remains distressed, cross-grained and without humour. It passes altogether over a green-skin’s absence. Palsied or diseased it might well be; or possibly slow to react to the circumstances of Edward Bond’s *Lear*… In a situation where violence pursues its tabernacle of disunity – all of it in an absurd comedy which edges over into Artaud’s theatre of cruelty. Do you comprehend its vagaries? Still, this mastodon – in keeping with frenzy – restrains itself over concrete’s sheen. Can it rekindle a *dance of death* when seen in a calm market-place? Furthermore – and when viewed from above with an arc-lamp – this humanoid looks glaucous through and through. But he also comes without a man-fish’s symmetry – at least in terms of a God’s delay. What might this be if not the Prince Namor variant; a factor otherwise known to the Greeks as Glaukon? Will any swimmer of yore beat him in yardage over a pool or sea? Redundantly he issued forth or came on against you… all of it occurring within mystagoguery’s delay. In truth, it’s rather like the white leprosy in Conan Doyle’s story *The Blanched Soldier*. Wouldn’t you be able to retrieve it from a blanket endorsement? Anyway, this mayhem’s scuttling sent me reeling within a dream’s portmanteau; and it often took place against my better judgement. His hand reached out to me. O leper’s bell… where’s your fury’s remit? Unclean…unclean…unclean… say what you must in a scenario
when you’re next to chloroform. Most spectacularly, I backed away from this mirror’s intention… unarguably. Do you hear? Wherein the man-thing listed on and bled from its misshapen pores. It pursued me… yet its blood didn’t perceive an absent note. Indeed, we refused to wrestle on the floor. Or – to put it another way – you reminisced about a decadent sculpture that was by Angus Calder. All of which continued to psyche me out and this’s especially after a recent exhibition. A sub-Turner Prize offering, this, that took place in Bethnal Green. It warranted Dalston’s yardage when pursuant to Max Nordau’s classification. Look you: the performance art of Mike Kelly and Paul McCarthy deliberates on sausages… nearly all of them made from pork. These were used in unmentionable places or in lieu of declaring anything at all. It’s either a surreal onslaught or a jaded failure to shock the bourgeoisie. Face it, a kinky Heidi no longer cuts it in a world given over to Terry Southern’s Candy. Hurry up, I say, and bring down a fire which punishes Hades. Persephone was raped at a certain temperature. Bring it on, hurrah! Do you take a point? Let’s paraphrase Bakunin and strangle the last conceptual artist with Nicolas Serota’s viscera!”

PART FOUR
If we might return to our present imperfect, though… Trevelyan Bostock sat on a tatty sofa riven with mildew. While – next to his armature – swooned Candice Leper. She wore a far too revealing dress; at once diaphanous, low-cut and light blue in tint. Azure it was; although her stringy and poached breasts showed up nothing other than her inappropriateness – when taken together with her stick-legs. Bostock took up a rival bay, wearing an electric-blue suit plus an accompanying bow tie. Around both of them were signs of collapsed gentility, such as sagging green and purple chairs as well as potted plants. All of them showed advanced stages of disrepair and, without exaggerating it, the odour was indescribable. Now Trevelyan, in a manner of speaking, had come to propose… but the words stuck in his gullet. All he could think of were the twin mirrors behind him –
not to mention an expanse of dun-coloured wall. Each and every extra-mural dictum claimed insignificance, to be sure. Yet the dream imagery rose from her mantel-piece and it had come to consume him… make no mistake about that. ‘Deliberating on this cross-stitch, I came on a pattern. It swerved to avoid its labyrinth, isn’t that so? Given that a semi-humanoid or creature like this lumbered forth. He pursues me down in a repossessed antechamber. Does any of it relate to past selves? Farther on, its image became interdicted or stopped in a manner which took after Magritte’s example. Nonetheless, a peeling hand emerged out of a dull or leaden miasma before me. I strove to avoid it and duck its challenge… particularly when it was bent double with architectural weakness. Listen to me, O Gods! I mean to defeat this poltergeist. Its essence nauseates me. It seeks to primarily hem me in within a grave’s silence. But I’ll not submit to it… never and a day!’ You have been listening to the words of Trevelyan Bostock.

PART FIVE
We are your keepers! Candice Leper lay across his available visage in order to embrace it. Her hands clawed at his rubicund cheek muscles in a bony fashion. To get a handle on it… try to imagine a minor matinee idol being man-handled by an ant-eater. Given such a freeze frame, perforce, it even recalls geriatric pornography which has been sublimated. Still and all, her long, tapering nails grazed his skin or pelt, and it was like being dragged backwards through a bush made of bone. Momentarily, he averted his face so as to avoid her toilet-plunger lips. Yet her mandibles proved to be greedy, hungry, avid, rapacious, sand-paper like and without pity. Truly, nothing can stem a desert of needy affection! Isn’t a desire for love like a pullulating jelly-fish? Surely it intones a lion’s mane as it drags a victim towards its heart… while mouthing kisses. It runs a gauntlet of nature’s mill like an addictive personality. Certainly, this grilling risks a token from Eric Mottram’s The Algebra of Need… particularly when referring to Burroughs’ soma. In her last moments,
Candice draws down a lover to her mulch by way of a bromide. Now the hot air of senility’s brothel intervenes or froths, and it’s in a fashion that splices Arthur Schnitzler with Gunter von Hagens. He desperately tries to avoid such Eros throughout, but Sven Hassel’s idiolect proved unstoppable. Leper’s brown hair comes tied in a bob and carries on. She grabs hold of this passing masculine vessel like lichen. Maybe he can only escape in phantasm?

‘Even in a bent tunnel my pursuer evinces a foetal carapace. It proves to be an aggressive stick-insect before a fall – at once awash with transparencies like these. Because – as Nietzsche averred at the time – sympathy multiplies misery. Is it not so? All of which meant that its head sank into a gathering gloom, rather like in expressionist cinema. Despite the fact/codex (sic), obviously taken from Pierre Boulle or Monkey Planet, and that delineated it with a gorilla mask. He possessed a knotty scalp together with kinky clutches of absent hair. Above all this he wore a red-and-white bobble hat: the words Manchester United stood out on its wove.’

PART SIX
By this time, then, some sort of Episcopalian union had occurred between these two. They were man and wife. Yet Trevelyan Bostock found it difficult to fulfill his marital responsibilities. For instance, around bed-time he’d taken to lingering downstairs. He dallied with a cigarette between his lips; whilst he contrived to wear a white night-shirt over his remit. Behind Candice’s back, though, some tall frames boxed off their munificence. She mounted the stairs and abjured him not to be late… although he was determined to remain below. For how long (?), perchance – maybe an hour avaunt mounting those steps to a spider’s webbing. Perhaps new visions might lie in an arachnid’s awakening? Wherein a squeaking sound can be heard; it’s masked by a black substratum. This intrigue exists under glass. Can you detect its coming closer? Squeak, squeak… it almost
sounds like cosmic mice when made of metal and whistling along the floor... by way of a graven interlude. Yes indeed...
Anyway, this horror chrysalis rumbles on and finds itself accompanied by underground sound. Sinuous pipes are also observed; these stretch up far away and as distant as eye-sight permits. Now a skeleton comes forward wearing a face mask. It is attendant on its own momentum and gifted by purple’s verve, nethermost wise. Likening to the above –Bostock effectively brought down a pack of cards which were lodged around his head. They happened to be tarots and each one illuminated a past indifference-cum-wake.

+ Whereupon a difference supervenes... since these dummies or affordable mannequins look askance. Every one mixes green with shadow – especially when held over at the distaff side. A wheel-chaired figure moved onwards now; it slanted adjacent to those pipes glistening above. Beyond this providence a spider’s web cast its darksome spectrum... only to indicate a rope’s sordidness. On he rolled with the chair’s wheels squeaking on stone & being bereft of a banquet. Or alternatively, it ground on metal whilst Trevelyan Bostock – not the most imaginative of men – wondered what it was all about. But did it really matter? He decided to pursue imagination’s creativity – even if he felt it to be fruitless or pointless. Nor can one presume on a language’s limitations here. Because a formation of signs rose up in front of you (per se) and this is irrespective of Gaston Bachelard’s resonance. To be sure: this chair might illustrate a prison which had been summoned in blue – after Andy Warhol’s affectation of an electric chair. All of it subsists in a dream’s numinescence. Slowly, a figurine who’s reminiscent of a corn dolly’s manufacture looks around. It attests to any possible conflagration whatsoever.

PART SEVEN
Trevelyan had slumped over the kitchen table on his own. The light faded to a cerulean-like effulgence and plotted his doom.
Whereas the folds on the other side of this settle seem scrimped, crumpled, let-go and thoroughly devilled. Several bottles were observable nestling on the far side or counter, and they reflected back in a night-time’s window. What really worried Trevelyan Bostock was failure or a fatal mischance: namely, one that had led him into a fundamental error. He dwelt on the money or its legacy… precious little of it has come to his attention so far. Already now, his anxiety is beginning to consume him. Surely the man who’d let him into her secret hadn’t lied to him? Definitively speaking, T.B.’s condition indicated what Martin Heidegger called dread or inauthenticity.

PART EIGHT
Two or three weeks of marital intimacy passed without comment, at least before Trevelyan Bostock decided to let rip. After a late-night drinking binge he moved towards the stair-well determined to have it out. A bright yellow hiatus covered his tracks… as he stumbled up the wooden steps which led to the bed room. Moreover, a slip-stream of pure magenta curved behind him or aslant, and this was just like a magic camera’s slide. Although – when everything has been considered – he possibly found himself wading knee-deep through a dream. No source of memory can be relied on – leastwise by a cripple in his moving chair. Visually speaking, no opaque gestures are possible when given so much dun-coloured mint – especially now a trellis or leveraged beam lay to one side. It took the form of a doorway which existed off to a quarter or its side, and this was gesturally aft. Its expanse cast a dim luminescence and yet this distance seemed unsound… in that a long, measured hand could stretch out to open it.

PART NINE
Upstairs in bed, Mrs. Bostock (nee Leper) kept watch on her husband. He exhaled a definite whiff of liquor. Perhaps she noticed how much he staggered about? What was he searching for (?) – why, his valise… of course. Worried now, Candice
leaned forward or aslant, and she came dressed in a green nightgown. Her hair is done up in a bun rather like an amateur beehive; it’s also o’er circled by hair-clips, pins and curlers. Whilst the room’s recesses were filled with heavy Edwardian furniture. It betokened a brown fixative when placed next to greasy and peeling wall-paper. (Note: not everything seems to be completely decrepit, but a general mildewed quality suffuses all. It partakes of degeneration theory in the nineteenth century... as is witnessed by Max Nordau’s exemplum). A weighty two-way mirror – plus its lateral reflectors – then dominates the bed-space.

In his own mind such adventures stretched out to Hell’s gates. May it happen also that the underworld spoken of recalled Hel in the Nordic pantheon? A plateau which enlivened shadow dancing rather than punishment, therefore. What could he utter? Because this black box held itself aloft. It disclosed more of an antechamber to Caligula’s workshop – to be sure – rather than a Malign Fiesta... or pain’s forcing house as articulated by Wyndham Lewis. (This latter is quintessentially a modern version of Hades). Nevertheless, our cranial image gingerly opened the door or golden key, and it pertained to the man with no name. He proceeded down a passage afterwards. Could he be Trevelyan Bostock’s alter ego, or alternately might he be called Mastodon X? (Even though the light subsisted to a deep and dark ochre in this tabernacle). Assuredly, Pepper’s Ghost refused to give up its trickery or tom-foolery, and this was despite one collapse’s latent intent. Didn’t Albert Camus envisage such a moment in his novella called The Fall?

PART TEN
Candice Leper refused to misjudge her step now. Because – when she realised that Bostock was threatening to leave her – the bed-linen came to be thrown aside. She locked her arms around his unappreciative neck; they were like adjacent mandibles or sticks. ‘Don’t desert me’, she shrieked. ‘I can’t bear rejection’s pain... certainly not at my age. You’re too old to start again, you
see?’ All her errant husband could offer by way of reply was: ‘It were better if you forgot me, Candice. Learn to disremember, why don’t you?’

But – all this time – startling images cascaded in his mind. They inundated the back of one’s brain; the contextual area wherein a mortal’s emotions are situated. Yet a ready gloom appeared to be eldritch or it dealt in reverse splendour – what with orange tints turning into gold. Oh my yes; these molecules just littered the ground. They crossed over or inundated rival gestures… even while melting into a background’s haze. Gingerly Trevelyan’s dream creature came forward on its steel pegs… or what passed for delusional legs here. It trailed its own folly or absence behind it… with each locution or special pleading just adding a diction in the light. Could it indicate a sepulchral plumage? Even though this chair’s revolving wheels lost their bearings at one instant… in a situation where a metal armature turned aloft. It twisted to silence. All of this subsisted in blue light; the nature of which traversed inexistence. Was there a partiality or a cross-beam here – at once listing to an end, if not quite possibly a fragmentation thereby? A hand finally emerged, though, in order to push the invalid down a flight of steps. Despite the fact that a wisp o’ spirit or a halo then spiralled up from the cripple’s body. It bore on itself a redundant breath or locution. During a moment where what has been gave up the residual ghost. Or accordingly – and within this ashen mask – an artificial rage can commence… could it be a nimbus of some kind? Isn’t it thus reminiscent of scenes drawn from Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ*? This was not only in a colour-field’s depth, but also as regards one’s satanic nerve.

**PART ELEVEN**

Still, Candice clung onto her man rather like a leech on its poltergeist. Her scrawny hands encircled his neck and clawed avidly without purport. Behind him different tones of brown swirled around his lair; they made up a stair-top together with
various abutments of wall... even a wardrobe. Might it have been constructed from clean aspen? Whilst, all this time, Trevelyan Bostock’s cerebral cortex limbered up...

Regarding pigmentation though: darkish ochres or yellows merged into brown; they helped to give a retrospective tribute to it all. A codification in paint (this) which then looked back to the early Renaissance. This involved painters like Cimabue or Giotto – all of whom dealt with the crucifixion. Also, Gibson’s touch where the devil is presented as a woman was a masterstroke... even if she were an androgynous one or a diva who exists beyond gender’s cusp (somewhat separately). For her supermodel status hints at a devouring nature; at once all-inclusive in its destructivity. Wasn’t this femme fatale Italianate, leggy, shaven-headed and gender mysterious... if feminine? Anyway, it gave the game away; at least as regards sexual ambiguity and revenge.

PART TWELVE
The next scene in our drama wouldn’t shame a Verdi opera by any reckoning. No sir... because, in a calmer manner, a straightened up Candice Leper persuaded him to stay. She hung on to both of his lapels within the door’s rays. A scenario wherein two swishing curtains – themselves purple in hue – had parted to the left and right. A bright glare then came through or suffused the window’s square portions... or persuasively its lead lining. Its tint waxed azo, cadmium or lemon to sultry; nor can this new beginning halt a brilliant dependence. ‘Dearest meat’, she intoned, ‘I know that I’m old and ugly --- as delivered in a rictus’ time. Yet again, stay with me now. For even a leprous mendicant can prop up aftercare. I beseech you – do not rubbish my love. Remembering that – in our theatre’s conundrum – the murderer Christie can emerge from a pile of detritus. Didn’t our psychopath act as a reserve projectionist at the Electric cinema in Notting Hill Gate? This proved to be during the second european civil war. How right Ezra Pound had been to christen the entire area Rotting Hill. Nonetheless, in Howard Brenton’s play this
murderer looms up from such residuum… when beholden only to a mask. Likewise, my skeletal demeanour estranges you from aught. I appreciate, beloved, that chastity can become necrophile given a prevailing wind. But one redeeming feature mocks this Death’s-head which feasts on its prey like a Sheridan le Fanu tale. I have money or rich credit and appurtenances --- and you’ll inherit it.’ ‘No argument, babs, you’ve persuaded me to stay’, he rejoined by way of an answer. For – as Trevelyan Bostock convinced himself of this – his eyes came to rest on a toilet jug and basin. It stood in a far corner and next to it were her teeth in a glass.
+
Effectively – and to begin again – Trevelyan Bostock sat near to Candice Leper in her home. Surely this impinged on some sort of dream time? Now – during this entertainment – a tarot card had fallen from its prior position. It imaginatively whisked down between our two protagonists. Did it turn over against this sun or otherwise reveal itself to be the Tower? It testified to being a card which was bright in its devastation or kaos, and scarlet had sprung up around its periphery. Could it really be outside this vision? Or persuasively, did a furnace’s entanglement come to grief over Crowley’s visual intentions? It occurred within a plenitude of arms or quite possibly death’s entreaty. Look at this! Due to the fact that an arrow knew its fate we can say with certitude that in order to erect you have to pull down. Furthermore, is such an utterance inverted even when we consider it in its own terms?

PART THIRTEEN
For a brief interlude things passed off relatively peacefully. Trevelyan Bostock and Candice Leper certainly tried to make a go of it as a couple. Then a strange knock took place at the door one day. RAT-A-TAT TAT. Who might it be? After all, they hardly had any visitors whatsoever. While the man who stood on the front step was a strange or solitary creature. He came dressed in a purple wrap and his body seemed to be oddly disjointed…
even elongated. He filled the house’s entrance more like a ‘Thing’ than a person… as a consequence of the same. Trevelyman was definitely amazed to see him. ‘You’, he thought, ‘the one who informed me about Candice in the first place, or quite possibly he’d embarked on a train of hidden associations. Didn’t it lead to thoughts about her concealed money-bags thereafter?’

To whit: this living scarecrow wore a floppy hat which looked rather like an effigy in a farmer’s fields. He began to ask for Candice Leper in a high-pitched or piping tone. It reminded Trevelyman (somewhat distastefully) of a hurdy-gurdy at a provincial fair. It took him back to his childhood or infancy, and to a repetition of those scenes in a Thomas Hardy short story.

+ When one came to think of it, though, what pictograph rummaged in Man-Cloth’s mind? Again and all, lines of refracted ardour slanted ever more redolently now. They bellowed bright red in colour and possessed a fiery filigree; it successfully pulled at their judgements no matter how well spent. Even so: the wheels of this vitality smudged its bliss or outline silhouette. (Despite the fact that such a fatality listed sideways or alongside, and kindled towards the pluperfect. By way of such a mishap, then, a rage to live can become a handicap for all life. It tasted death’s residue when abandoned like so; and – in truth – it belonged to a cripple’s chair rather like a dark spinning-wheel).

PART FOURTEEN
Our magic camera moves on slightly further now – but with Man-Cloth cascading across the entrance. Could it be like Jonathan Harker’s gestural longing – as expressed in terms of Castle Dracula’s keep? Anyway, his head bobbed and weaved within a diminuendo of lighted drift. To be certain of our ground, he stood aimlessly within identity’s forecourt and a spiralling green-shirt lay off down his anatomy. Whereas the face limbered up to be bony, long, stricken, unreplete and without surcease… for what it was worth. Each fold mounted beyond the other or under a peasant’s hat. (May it recall one of those artist’s head-
pieces from the *fin de siecle* or thereafter?) Man-Cloth has begun speaking, however: ‘I’m a rag-and-bone man, you see? Candice Leper always sells me her used linen, trouser suits, presses, any old dresses, ruffled buttons, wigs, et cetera… She’s liable to get a good price and even top dollar… oh my yes.’ But Trevelyan Bostock retreated into reverie or was otherwise lost in contemplation. ‘Don’t you retell my witness, rag-‘n’-bone? You’re the one who put me onto her, I’m sure.’ Nought save silence came back towards him.

While, in another dimension, Trevelyan Bostock and Candice Leper sat next to their twain. A brief haze of cigarette smoke then filtered between the two of them. In a sovereign spate Trev(.) beheld an adjustment; it featured a crisp bow-tie, a white dress-shirt and a blue suit. Let us look at any margin for error at this juncture – since yesterday’s woman now stood next to him. But, in the flicker of an eyelet, she had become seated once again. It was as if she transmitted negative energy… all of it reminiscent of a dream’s parallelism and the pictures of Otto Dix. A decrepit fissure had also entered here – one which festoons a bun tied over its knotty brown-hair. Whilst a slatternly V-shaped dress literally failed to cover over her skeleton. A clap-trap (this) which hinted at precipices beyond our ken, or even the possibility of boundary-markers *avaunt* one’s flesh. Especially where her legs happened to be bone-thin in terms of their issuance. They split at a thigh’s juncture or proved to be otherwise measureless. Yet again, each motif found itself to be carvern from skin --- at least as regards a bounty which lacked plenitude. Likewise, our crone lay abreast of these developments and in a light-blue skiff. An azure tint (this) which boded ill when it came to be set against the sofa’s diatribe. It distributed a turquoise colour which was rather like the Purple Emperor --- England’s largest butterfly.
PART FIFTEEN

A curlicue to the side took place amongst everything else – with Man-Cloth looking agape at a silence’s beam. Behind him and attuned to silver’s plenitude lay an over-green sward; it altogether filled up one’s rapture in emerald. Look upon it in this way: chez Bostock had no time for topiary and this was especially when each root fed on weeds… primarily in terms of ‘humanity’. (But, to quote or paraphrase William Gayley Simpson’s Which Way Western Man?, such an abstraction feeds on its insecticide). To whit, Man-Cloth ignored Trevelyan’s recognition or appeal, and he didn’t obviate it through misuse. Nonetheless, he ploughed on regardless of all this. In such a respect, then, his floppy hat shadowed his face or mask, and its penumbra revealed it to be long + thin. He masticated on a straw – but it doesn’t happen to be one of those elaborate corn dollies. They are immaculate and over-extended… or otherwise bound to find themselves set alight under an Anglo-Saxon sky. Each burnt like a regular wicker man, albeit through a plenitude of clean fire in Robinson Jeffers’ Tamar. ‘Yes’, pondered Man-Cloth, ‘your wife presents nacreous tribute to us. She beds down before a storm… truly enough. Her bounteous gifts fill up Alice’s cornucopia or jetty, and such cups run over with Karelian wine. Forever and a day now, her patched concessions wax to one’s livery. Because – rather like one of those Red Quill Girls of yesteryear – a charitable nature always leavens its bounty.’ ‘By dint of what splendour?’ ‘Why, she repeatedly sells me her untold linen, curtains, blouses, dresses, trousers, coats, duvets and bedding. I’ll have you know that it scales an excellent price.’ Yet, in a sotto voce manner, Trevelyan Bostock still kept to his ready aside. ‘Man-Cloth’s visage worries me vaguely. I cannot be sure about it – thereby recalling the saleman’s uneasiness in Basil Copper’s horror story, The Spider. I’m certain that I met him during a night when I was deep in Bacchus’ toils. You know, it all had to do with an ol’ Coger telling me about loneliness' fate or a rickety widow’s bullion.’ During this interview, Man-
Cloth’s face had appeared stark blue, electric, comatose, overshadowed and even cerulean.

PART SIXTEEN
Candice had emerged – by this juncture – with a pile of laundry. It looked to her new husband no more than a prior civilisation’s leavings. It consisted of fabric, old lace, cast down curtains, squares of rug, cloaks, diaphanous material and unused bed-sheets. In turn, these scrapings came wound around and around her fists – rather like that phantom in an M.R. James story. A situation wherein a poltergeist seeks a semblance or a given form through a cloth’s texture, extension or false mouth. Might it be a frieze around the lips? Regardless of any of this, though, Man-Cloth grinned like an idiot when this rag-bag was produced. His nut-cracker jaw leered inanely or madly, and it arched like a chameleon. Whilst his profiled features limned towards sapphire, or they turned and twisted like a character in a Mummers’ drama. (Didn’t they wear tassels of cloth about their persons?) ‘Fine… marvellous, Mrs. Bostock. A silver sovereign will liberate this lotus dust for you. For historians of yore remember that John Cass, a Knight and City Alderman, left infants a request via St. Botolph’s, Aldgate. It turned on bloodied quills which were stained with partridge and tied to February the twenty-fifth.’ ‘Hence those Red Quill Girls, I suppose?’ ‘Quite so…’ ‘How much?’, ejaculated Trevelyan suddenly. ‘You’d pay a Queen’s ransom over mildewed parchment like that…?’

Again and all, figments from rival dimensions clouded his mind. Weren’t her legs treacly, viscid and underdone… or alternately over-cooked with a shark’s ripeness? Simultaneously, she wore a Hecate necklace or a mistress’ advent around her throat. Perhaps – and in spite of her solitude – we can invoke mesmerism here… after Frank Herbert’s imaginative foray in *Dune*. But still, these lips have cracked to indifference’s paw marks… even though black lip-stick continued to forestall these glands – a Gothic touch this. Nor may one see it too clearly. Because no advanced
guard penetrates the ether or swerves against ice’s fire... at least prior to kissing off against Trevelyan’s reserve. Truly, will such a grand dame be better off in a parallel time – itself out of accord with Beresford Egan’s draughtsmanship? A scenario where – most evidently – she has to canvas Baudelaire’s *Flowers of Evil*. Necessarily so, since this conflates Ralph Steadman’s linearity (say) with Audrey Beardsley’s more controlled poise... erotically speaking. In any event, Eisenstein’s axe-head looked hideous or touched, and it exhibited a screaming death mask above ground. Surely one’s driven to reminisce about the Odessa steps in a novel like Michael Moorcock’s *Byzantium Endures?*

**PART SEVENTEEN**

Candice Leper moved forwards in order to cover up her husband’s churlishness. Her gestures were quick, jerky, spasmodic and yet fluid... all in all, they bespoke a sparrow’s influence. She held out these quilted and scare-crow’s left-overs as a Parthian shot. ‘No offence meant, Man-Cloth. My spouse is new to this endeavour. He doesn’t understand Hawksmoor’s architraves – let alone a conch-shell’s inner rumblings to Cthulu. That’s all...’ She gave him Joseph’s technicolour dreamcoat now – albeit with this closing remark. Catching on to her words’ meaning, though, Trevelyan soon followed this suit of cards. Indeed, he immediately cast forth a five of diamonds. ‘Don’t worry a neuron, cloth old boy. Anxiety, nervousness or vexation are unknown quarryings to one of your kind. Mind you, if ye want to taste human flesh in Atreus’ house yonder, then feel free to do so. Will I stand in your way? Certainly not... should you wish to tatter up for a mercury quartz – you go right ahead. You’ll be open to the idea of paying three guineas for a stork load of emptiness? Just plunge in the blade and let none call a halt to this undertaking. Bravo, give me my stick.’

Yet how could he forget her abiding ugliness? It matured in another dimension rather like a rasping Golem. (All of which cannot forbear from mentioning Fritz Lang’s expressionist film
from the ‘thirties). Needless to say, her visage struck us as
eldritch, blackened, macabre, shrivelled up or possibly made
over by want of care. While again – multi-dimensionally
speaking – it would be better for her to wear gauntlets, heavy
heels, patterned hats or sonorous toppers on occasion. These
weren’t replete without facial nets that dwarfed the Anglican
head-gear of yesteryear. Also, can’t we imagine the scar-tissue
from a cross which exemplifies a ‘Passion’ via Mel Gibson’s
film? It has yet to be burnt across her livid features… at once
metaphorically intoning the hint.

PART EIGHTEEN
An hour or so later, we find that our husband and wife are
confronting each other. They were stood within the confines of
their sitting-room or at least an imaginary wrestling ring. Might
its perimeter have been a circle of salt? A purifying agent, this,
which differs from what Bertolt Brecht meant by his play *A
Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Trevelyan kicks off with these words:
“What goes on, dearie? I didn’t really recollect that I’d married a
rag-picker. From whatever direction do you assimilate these
harlequin outfits or a jester’s motley? Shall yesterday’s sheet
suffice forever and a day – or do you require a spectral
tatterdemalion? Namely, this process recognises nought but an
exorcist’s wind: as it came to be clothed in a spectre’s winding-
sheet or shawl. May it delineate a mummification – nearly
always after Anne Rice’s novel?” ‘Don’t get het up, sugar puff’,
she rejoined. ‘It always has to do with scavenging past a
vulture’s play-time. After all, a chameleon faces off against
nemesis by changing its skin. Again, no harm has been done to
us – save to a decrepit sense of bourgeois respectability. Do not
ooze out of all conscience, I beg you. Because these mummified
selves cry to us in their heartlands: they cram such orifices with
cloth. As to where my grab-stick cleaves to them all… why,
every treasure trove detects its mettle. Could it call out like a
parrot: pieces of eight; pieces of eight; pieces of eight; a peace
for your hatred?’
PART NINETEEN
A few hours passed by or were spent, and this was before our aged trout touches her husband’s shoulder lightly. She proved to be wearing a yellow dress which couldn’t conceal her skeletal beam. An unfinished tea lay on the kitchen table behind them… whereas some cylindrical object or metallic device has piled up leftwards. Pursuant to all of this, Candice apportioned no blame whatsoever. ‘Don’t be too lonely while I’m gone, butter cup. A due providence of silence milks its delay. I go abroad over any arrested triumph, but one that doesn’t expect a laurel wreath around its temples.’ ‘Uh-huh’, shuddered Bostock slightly, ‘no echo of chafed wheels shall expectorate on an ant. Can’t you recall L.S.Lowry’s paintings on Salford Quays? Eh? They all frequented humility’s barrier… so as to concentrate on beggar-cripples and frauds. Yes indeed, all of these canvases find themselves whitened out on a blank ground… Yet don’t mind me whatsoever… When we consider that isolation suppurates a toad, particularly while Artemis walks amid swastikas or gammadions. I won’t play solitaire alone.’

+ 
Despite the fact that fantasy can’t sustain our gait throughout… since, in an alternative dimension, Mrs. Bostock spoke plaintively enough. Truly, she incarnated a pantomime dame or one that had been cast forth from Gilbert & Sullivan’s wit. (Or alternatively, might she unburden Cruella d’Evil, especially as it pertains to wearing a fur coat without impeachment?) Listen to this, then, she probably fixed Lewis Carroll’s Queen of Hearts in aspic or mercury, and all of it occurred outside Alice in Wonderland’s pages. Never mind… for any repulsiveness betokened Macbeth’s witches or other sisters of the weird. Furthermore, can an undercurrent of eroticism or Black Lace actually cling to these skirts?

PART TWENTY
Trevelyan Bostock found himself left alone in the house afterwards. He suspected that his wife had gone rag-picking, but
all he could hear was the blood susurrating in each ear. Needless to say, he decided to invade this partiality with some action. Relatively soon, then, he found himself in an attic or loft. ‘I’ll commence at the house’s apex’, he mused, ‘it will serve as a crucifixion of an unlikely metre. Candice may have gone a’roaming or is determined to play at Steptoe & Son – yet I still find myself here looking over this detritus for buried treasure. Somewhere roundabout – and under this unbelievable mess – must lie her fortune. It was definitely a candidate for Forbes’ rich list per se, and her stash had probably been left her by an eponymous Leper: namely her first husband.’ Trevelyan also continued to survey this L-shaped room: it consisted of reduced boilers, oil lamps, record players or gramophones for 78s… as well as endless trunks, caskets and boxes of spent jewels. He virtually expected a hairy-legged spider to emerge from one of them. A pink glow then came to suffuse this gloomy scene moment to moment.

PART TWENTY-ONE
He rearranged this bay considerably and cast around with planks of wood… while fastidiously upsetting old mattresses. Nothing doing… and, if truth be told, such a residuum or after-care proved to be more ruinous than abject. Whereupon – and situated at its heart – this Mayor of Casterbridge looked forlorn. At its core it consisted of ancient mirrors, bed-steads, gold wires, manikins, various left-over watering-colouring boxes, decrepit Leyden jars, outdated books on zoology and rejected glove-puppets. ‘Cooiiee!’ went the sound. What catered to its disturbance? ‘Cooiiee!’ – that detestable dossier yet again. How does it perform within a Circus Flavius’ indent? Surely a recomposition like this indicated that Candice Leper was calling to him from below?

+ Most certainly, an eroticism which manifests neediness is exhausting… even if it happens to be replete. May it speak of Mottram’s proem in The Algebra of Need; a text that hints at
inexhaustibility? Despite the fact which indicated that in William Seward’s case Eros always tended towards sterility. It atrophied its future through an inner childishness. Therein lay its decadence.

PART TWENTY-TWO
Candice Leper had returned from her forays afield which were in pursuit of mere trash. Her appearance dove-tailed with the extraordinary: in that she wore a knotted green handkerchief over her scalp. It ramified with those scarcely laced sneakers (later to be known as trainers) on C.L.’s feet. Wherein Candice’s dress came patched up and quilted in ultramarine – not to mention various slivers of tartan which intertwined on it. Didn’t Trevelyan discern cotton socks on either foot (?); they contrived to be of distinct colours and sizes. Likewise, a large bag of swag came attached to or slung over Quasimodo’s shoulder – it looked fit to bursting and was russet in hue. Verily, silk, lace, taffeta, dinner cloths, wardrobe items, odd gloves, spare parchments, quilts, frayed patches, misappropriated pockets, oven pads, heat retainers, pillows, pyjamas, cushion covers, bathroom mats, curtains and night-caps… all of these became affordable. Although when it came to discerning her husband – Candice L. cast forth Odin’s eye. It helped to abbreviate an old-fashioned look (forsooth). ‘Where have you been, Trevelyan?’, she enquired slyly. ‘What measures are discernible when you become trapped in a machine with Quasimodo’s face? Could it delimit a port-hole or sphere whose convexity moans at a lion’s mane? It doubtless registers Caravaggio’s Medusa at a time when it writhed minus a head.’

PART TWENTY-THREE
By this eventide or song, Trevelyan Bostock had gingerly descended from the stairs. He stood there with those spindly bannisters winding themselves into a cork-screw behind him. Viewed objectively and from afar, his demeanour affected a slightly guilty air. ‘I chose to desist from this cavern’s
untidiness’, he blustered, ‘even severed heads have to be put in a row for the sake of tidiness. Don’t you concur with this judgement, wifey?’ ‘Effectually so, you’ve been tidying up the attic, eh?’, she answered. ‘Well, *qui bono*?’ Whereas – if we might look at it – Candice swore blind that no-one was following her… what with her swag bag, patches, billowing Navy corset, emerald bandanna and tennis pumps. Slowly she shed her skin laterally like a serpent unravelling to the side… just prior to moving off.

Whilst he dwelt upon such a spore (sic) Trevelyan came to consider his dreams. Truly, such a matriarch can use black lipstick if she occasionally renews her rind. Or does it choose to engulf a false trail… such as in the ‘thirties magazine *Black Mask* (?) – a yellow press publication which entombed *noir*. (Wasn’t this mildewed publication addicted to the hard-boiled – out even beyond Raymond Chandler’s example? It all came to illustrate an adventurer’s *coup de gras* or violence, and is less saturnine than underground). Yet a valkyrie has about her some unused goods or a python’s assertive quips. Can it reassert the terrorism of Caroline Blackwood’s creation Great Granny Webster?

**PART TWENTY-FOUR**

Soon after this, the rag-and-bone fellow known as Man-Cloth pounded on a door’s ornamental knocker. How he appears to have become a regular feature. Squinting as an aside to them both, Trevelyan Bostock assessed these twin silhouettes… each of which chose to cast a puppet’s slide-rule on the ground. Indeed, a sward or velvet background proved ruinous to one’s appetite – especially when limbering up the necessary costs. Yet since an orange doorway stood between them no needling toasted this necessity. In his ever-present hat, though, Man-Cloth continued to laud her tattered gobbets. ‘Marvellous crumbs of comfort, Mrs. Bostock, I must say. Even Carl Kerenyi couldn’t appreciate a Gorgon’s pate better than you. Doesn’t it exist in a circle – thence being hemispherical to a twin’s prospects or
genetics? Rather, it bespeaks of an ivy Quasimodo who came to be trapped under a glass disc. Put crudely then, it recalls a launderette from a particular distance. But – as to these damp squibs – they weigh down a ragamuffin with gold leaf.’

Yet, more and more, Bostock came to picture his wife in increasingly alien terms. Quite possibly, he mistook her for Walter de la Mere’s constrictor known as Arthur Seaton’s Aunt. A Gothic *anima* (here) this Grendel’s mother helped to fill up Lady Bracknell’s photo album all by herself. Let us consider her to be a splicing of Queen Elisabeth II and a split-lipped Anais Nin; the sexual writer. She’d been rendered altogether brazen at one’s bit and chew. Although truthfully, this has to be enough malingering at lonely grave-sides for the moment…

PART TWENTY-FIVE
While she was out next time, Trevelyan moved down the house’s Y-axis in search of loot. Logically enough, he would shift one day from mildewed chimneys to clammy basements. Where did this insufferable woman keep her stash or hoard? Certainly no safe, keep-sake or deposit box lit up the dwelling’s sepulchral glow. Exasperated now, Trevelyan Bostock tore into one of the upper storey’s cubes or tenements. He increasingly nurtured a resentment against the inanimate or the physical, and lashed out repeatedly again overflowing wardrobes. All about him cascaded an inundation which swooned from a Volkswagen Beetle’s cargo – as was originally seen in childhood. Yessss, he found himself surrounded by candelabra, used or streaked mirrors, ripped hangings, broken-backed chairs, mortars-and-pestles, bird-watching records, miscued frames, strange tubular postings, gutted closets, zig-zagging bedsteads, slashed sofas, miscellaneous wiring, aged canvases and worm-eaten shelving. Layer upon layer of this muck subsisted all around him; it proved to be indescribable. No-one should think about it any differently. Again, doesn’t the above miscellany just indicate B.S. Johnson’s capitulation to lists?
Whilst he continued to work at his digging and prying previous marital conversations entered into his mind. ‘Can’t you pretend to love me, o grieved one? Leastwise, try to do so in your heart of hearts’, cautioned Candice. ‘Given wine’s rapture we must plot a path through indifference. Personal infractions are envious or thereby indicate mystagoguery. Come to me across a night-time’s breeding, drear one. Because love’s asylum wears a mask and it closes off variously resultant dens. Do any of these encode a prior fortune or riches?’

PART TWENTY-SIX
So intent was Trevelyan about his task that he didn’t hear a stair’s creak. Immediately after this, though, Candice Leper mushroomed behind him and held a scrawny arm posted to the door. Bostock whirled around as if he’d been discovered in flagrante delicto. He let out various onomatopoeic sounds which were all a’stumble. ‘Why, a... errrr, Candy. What fine mettle goes about it, eh? Huh – and no mistake.’ Her response evinced a liquid coolness between times. She enunciated thus: ‘Trevelyan, my husband, whichever progress goes abroad now? Doesn’t due process claim its lionisation; and this is no matter how disregarded? Similarly, one’s answer to a search (sic) was to play Cluedo with whatever element of anatomy remains. But I’m pleased that you’ve decided to tidy up at last…’

PART TWENTY-SEVEN
May the ancient Roman Vegetius have once declared that if you want peace prepare for war? Yet within her connubial dreams Candice Bostock (nee Leper) intoned: ‘Cannot you see the black square within which my features are consumed? It consists of darksome felt. Do they breathe a sense of justice abreast of Fate’s rectangular markings? At a time when a dark heliotrope assaulted our usage in terms of its visage. It wounds a bleeding self a la Gibson or Grunewald. Are you to be my soul-food, darling? Surely I’m not careless or witless before these Norns? Because
one can see windows both angular and square in comparison to my orange hair. Imaginatively speaking, they’re oblong, set against deep blue or buttressed with a rat’s-tails livery. A moon merely pokes through cloud… even a half-cadenced rock so as to adorn my gesture.’

PART TWENTY-EIGHT
Trevelyan Bostock had become exasperated by this turn of events or intrigues, and proceeded to thrash a mattress. It reared away in striped lines or forgotten approximates. Might this be an exercise in Auschwitz pyjamas – after everything else that could be said? To one side of them, however, certain dirty sheets and wood piles made an entrance to our drama. But it wasn’t an august or important one… no matter what. By virtue of the fact that an inner illumination came uppermost, at least as regards penetrating Candice’s slits. Her eyes danced a saraband like electrostatic sparks rising from a pool. She’s realised his game, you see. At last Miss Leper has approached the truth… namely, that Trevelyan’s ransacking her manse in order to discover its fortune. Basically, it enjoins a skeleton which is shorn of skin and that sat on a black marble dais. ‘What are you gawping at?’, bellowed Bostock. ‘My ready symmetry leads me to criss-cross a Gorgon’s head… particularly when it’s been severed at the wrist. Can’t you detect a Medusa’s fulminations; in a situation where it transgresses over from turquoise green to pthalo, permanent and emerald? Moreover, its poise on a screen came to confound Barthes’ *Signs*, especially in a chapter where it refutes a computer’s desire to exist. Why dare to look at me when unaccustomed to such glares or prints? I’m busy bathing in Jay’s fluid or Dettol (perchance); while trying to cleanse these Augean stables like Hercules. Maybe you object to flushing this pig-sty down the privy, huh?’ ‘No, a begrimed crock pleases its stable hand… most poignantly, when it travels under a car wash. I have repeated my gladness and not my aspersions, honey.’
Needless to say, a sadness intruded into marital dust herein. It interpolated an emptiness which only saw to its death later on. Whereupon Candice Leper doubtlessly felt a pang: mayhap no-one can look upon love’s dwindling without a remorseful eddy.

PART TWENTY-NINE
Several inferences or time-fragments passed by – and they pushed each lacuna towards dissolution. Again, before too long had elapsed Man-Cloth’s subdued or muffled knock occurred at their door. Out then Candice was seen to troop; all of it after a trespass from Tobe Hooper’s *Texas Chain-Saw Massacre*. Speaking of which, a beech had been up-ended in a recent storm: it lay across from the house in a traverse-wise manner. No-one had attempted to shift it. Resultantly then, Man-Cloth stood ramrod straight in a floppy hat; it proved to be rather reminiscent of those worn by Wandervogel and romantic artists of yesteryear. He made the following remarks: ‘Wonderful texture, Mrs. Bostock, these rags mummify a new alleviation. They seek to clothe a kindred spirit, if only to render the inanimate animate. It’s a partial bliss given an imperial watermark on such calligraphy, after all. A scenario which occurs via a detour where each parchment crinkles to a golden touch; a buttery glow that illumines this sprinkle throughout. Mrs. Candice Bostock – I readily detect a smile thereupon.’

+ She didn’t make any reply, however.

PART THIRTY
In a parallel light-beam-cum-effulgence, mister and missus Trevelyan Bostock engage in dialectic. Amid this swirling fog a checker or draughtsboard is seen to lie between them. It delineates the following sport or pictogram: an exercise in game theory where the white spheres have moved contrary to the black, albeit even in contradistinction to them. *Avaunt thee!* It conspires to load up the Strickland position in classic draughts; a scenario whereat white leads off to play and black can only draw. To
listen in on both of them from afar: ‘I thought that your face often waxed Medusean’, muttered Trevelyan. ‘Don’t be unkind, my love’, she responded. ‘Can’t you see beyond the travesty of appearance… or possibly towards a fastness which lies beneath all? Are you aware of a multi-coloured lexicon; the latter brokering a soul? Look at me either as desire’s oft semblance or in terms of emotional transcendence. These factors go beyond one’s flesh and transmute such tabernacles anew. Wherefore, and about the place, the kindred texture of such meat finds itself rejected. Seek nought in Iceland’s habitations, I beg you: and merely come to recognise therein a victory’s centrifuge.’ ‘Harken to me! Love’s axe breaks open the marrow of one’s bones… it acknowledges defeat.’

Although Strickland’s stasis levelled all before it; and this game-theory just led to an elusive draw or a Fifth Position. Truly, these checkers then danced across the board in a cavalcade --- even an example of the Black & White minstrel show. Yes, Trevelyan bounds forwards now with an array of manoeuvres, kinks, fold-ins, shots and sacrifices.

PART THIRTY-ONE
A pattern or progression then ensued forevermore. Every morning Candice Leper left their dwelling or manse, and this was in order to seize a rag-dolly. Possibly it incarnated a scaramouch; or even a sad Guy who numbered November the fifth among its festivals? Whereas Scaramouche elongated his neck – in death – like the Anglo-Italian hybrid he claimed to be. His twin came to be called Mister Nobody and such a Lewes exemption always burnt merrily… it often had to be lit up by its straw. This subsisted at the man-thing’s extremities – much after a corn dolly’s liquid magnificence when it has been set afire. Had Titus Oates ever grumbled about the Wickerman before?

Meanwhile, Trevelyan Bostock searched desperately over three storeys. Immediately he set about a fire-place or grate, and all the
while displaced its pokers by throwing tin cans over his shoulder. Would it bring on a Fool’s luck? Still no fortune revealed its lustre to him.

+ 

To one side of a past travail, however, Trevelyan and Candice sat playing draughts with one another. ‘Do you realise that we gnaw, knot and reflexively twitch at the Tree of Life’s roots? Whilst – farther on from this – a silhouette looms up or on, and it cast an icy vision before one’s affection.’ Candice Leper has been speaking – only to have her husband respond at a later date. Can you detect such a deliverance? ‘Sanctify the reason for your unreason, my child of the hour. Are you ready to receive gifts or like provender? Anyway, this jig-saw’s theorem came pole-capped (regardless). A trajectory gathered now so as to blunt any escape… and this was primarily by virtue of the moon. Let us look above us (again) and recognise that consciousness’ sliver comes tempered by steel. It seems to be in some way transparent or pellucid, and otherwise listing over foggy bounds. Moreover, it offered nothing other than a surfeit and a gesture next to a window’s expanse. Although no-one really knows what occurs here… since a moon’s spheroid curves away by dint of a dwindling ray. Might it stare down at a sapphire-hardened earth or its available confines? A swirl of light vapour or fog blossom then surrounds it. Whereupon it evaporates into the numinous or it definitely seeks to stave off sunlight’s resolution. Such remains our remedy for a spent fortune: in that we can’t see those answers which lie beyond the pain of a white line.’

PART THIRTY-TWO

Each dawning day-sprite, though, Candice returned with her swag-bag intact. Necessarily so… because relations between these spouses had hit an all-time low or a basement fixture. Trevelyan Bostock even forgot to regard her every time he limned a red mist. Oh yes; his face became a white mask of hate throughout. It betokened a Doric imprimatur; at once fierce, Hellenic, impenetrable and as hard as stone… at least in Homer’s
overall diction. What he intuited was her belly laugh or a thick horse’s whinny delivered from inside the throat. All of which illustrated the fact that Trevelyan knew about her comprehension or recognition of his intent. Had Man-Cloth actually informed him of a £100,000 fortune which was parcelled out in gold ducats, silver quatrains, lilies, herbs of the field, dandelion extract or zirconium? Any road up, her visage looked withered, aspen, dry-eyed and altogether unspectacular. Most directly, a shadow contracted her eye-ball’s statement or nethermost sign --- it lay lacquered in gloom or twilight. Despite all of this, though, she still allowed some cynical asides to escape. ‘Men like you are all akin. Try to tidy up a place and you leave it more dishevelled than when you started. Mess is your middling nature.’ Trevelyan Bostock refused to respond to this tirade – while a sweep of trellis’d window provided a puppet’s backdrop when contrasting itself with teak.

PART THIRTY-THREE
Trevelyan Bostock’s most fatal musings happened to number these amongst them. ‘Look here… (he said). No-one can tell it differently, even if it’s to blunt a black mask’s futility. None remains effectively clear of it --- you see. Whilst we detect the eyes’ inner ebon within either nacreous conduct or frippery, and just evaporating into a ski mask’s greater redundancy. Such a gesture has to rear up like a medusa’s forethought, though. Because your ugliness forbids a gorgon’s impediment. It continues along indifferent tram-lines and rails; or at least ones which speak less opulently to you. Why don’t you remedy Bluebeard’s cascade now? Does anyone reinterpret The Passion of the Christ? A mystery play wherein the Devil – played by a shaven-headed super-model – moves brazenly along time’s diagonal course.’
+
Meanwhile, in their parallel game of draughts, White was to allegedly play and win when superintended by an unknown hand. Didn’t a White King move from 12-8; thence followed by a
black checker skidding away 11-15? A trick answered with a king’s sacrifice 20-24 – just to be doubled back upon by a rival monarch’s triumph 28-19. Would this move prove Pyrrhic? Because another White King spears diagonally 8-11; only to be responded to 15-18. Our rejoinder comes with the climax 11-15; to which black o’erleaps 19-10. What then (?) white moves seemingly defensively 17-14: while black attacks aggressively 10-17. White then clears the board with the ultimate or zig-zagging manoeuvre 21-30. He takes all of Black’s threefold archons. White always has occasion to win; and doesn’t a dagger in the text signify a noteworthy move?

+ Trevelyan then kneads his triumph within the dough of expectancy.

PART THIRTY-FOUR
Another day at chez Bostock began as before, but this time it undertook a different course of development. Certainly, Candice left as per usual or on time; and yet from this moment forth Trevelyan started to dig. He took up a pick-axe in the basement and it came to flash like a guillotine in subdued light… only to create a larger whole. This might prove to be a People’s Art – rather like the sculptures of Anthony Gormley. Gradually mounds of earth, stationary locution, cement, brick-dust and other rag-tag ‘n’ bobtail surrounded his knees. Various colours also added to this kaleidoscope: these were tints such as red iron oxide, pearlescent yellow (grey), chromium green, indo orange and renaissance gold. All of this compendium of shards made an appearance. Who says that Goethe’s appreciation of minutiae is really dead? Nonetheless, large deposits of detritus or residuum were piled up around him. His pick rose and fell without ceasing… particularly as he penetrated farther and farther into her house’s foundations. A fixed, avid and even maniacal gleam transformed his features: all of which glowed with prior intent. Now he’d come to embody one of Heathcote Williams’ “Speakers” at Hyde Park Corner: namely, the one who was
shaven-headed, glabrous and wearing woad all over. It probably took something of a tattoo artist’s form in his case. Eventually though, Candice Leper went down into the cellar in order to see what he was up to.

PART THIRTY-FIVE

After a busy day’s rag-picking, however, she found herself opening up an oubliette and peering in. Its iron frame then creaked like a dulcet maiden’s voice – rather than the reality which reinterpreted Lon Chaney’s *Phantom of the Opera*. She stood at the stairwell’s summit and craned down at Bostock’s growing pit. A panorama of leavings, scrapings and shadings met her gaze. But there were no whippets down here, by Gad(!); nor could one find any black berries to pick. All in all, she felt untroubled by these events. Because such happenings fitted into a ‘normal’ pattern, even though this sensory deprivation chamber rented its misuse. Within such a compass, therefore, various mounds of rubble discovered themselves to be heaped. They rose up towards a steady adventure (thereby); all of it illustrating a comatose refuge which came to be lit up by shadow. Do you notice it at all? A refractory boiler lurked in a corner and it proved to be all valves, tubular constructs, misplaced pipes and gas. To one side lay the evidence of chaos – what with barrel tumuli, newspaper aggregates, green bottle-banks and spent cartridges. Candice descended a stairwell and thereafter clung onto a weak, sagging balustrade. ‘How scintillating, munchkins, to dwell on so many infractions as these. For – by digging a hole – your wraith may bury our trash rather than body itself forth.’ Yet Trevelyan affected a dismissal of it all. He stood with his hands on his hips and masqueraded a scowl – after the manner of Alan Sillitoe’s *The General*. ‘Really, fruity pops, do you perhaps mistake an action for a reaction? Can’t you wilfully notice that I hesitate before my kindred? Truthfully, I mean something distinct by this very definite *dемarche*. Wherein a naturalist notices that a shark which is in deep water falls away and drowns if it stops going forwards.’
PART THIRTY-SIX
Their two heads finally came to a close on an essential aperture. Each one then watered a river’s spout – after the form of white water rafting in John Boorman’s *Deliverance*. (Wasn’t it an example of Jim Dewey’s quill or word processor?) Any road, a wall or mural of cement stood or shone behind them; it lay flat between a tincture of naples yellow and bleached titanium. Yet Candice Leper raised her pulse in order to meet his all of a sudden. She lofted a cold slant likewise and stared at him sarcastically. Did she approximate to one of those artist’s figurines with broken limbs – albeit all pinned together and skeletally askew? Leper whispered in reply: ‘I know your game, husband. You’re delving down into an Anglo-Saxon barrow like the one at Sutton Hoo. Do you hope to bring forth helmets, bedizened breast-plates, nacreous pearls, rare pewter dishes, onyx, ormolu-burnished mirrors and ornate ringlets? These – in a Peter Ackroyd allotment – apportion beryl, amethyst, zirconium, topaz, *lapis lazuli*, carnelian and magnesium lustre. Who told you all about it? Was it Man-Cloth, perchance? Well! Let’s see… have you in mind a treasury of 100,000 ducats, groats, florins, shekels, dinar, sovereigns, pound sterling, euros, punts and even cistophori? It’s a capital sum in any tongue… regardless of aught else.’ ‘Wrong again, my luv. Admittedly, you may have evinced a quivering arrow once or twice. But our game of draughts now proceeds across vacant squares. You see, I happen to be digging a grave… it’s yours!’

PART THIRTY-SEVEN
For a moment or two Candice Leper let out a little squeal, before she tried to get away with all her strength. Quite clearly things were taking a turn which she’d never expected. Whilst Candice’s skeletal frame went down beneath Trevelyan’s flailing pick – it resembled a fumbling scarecrow thereby. It lurched away suddenly and thence circumvented all reticence… even as it sat astride a plunging Pluto. Denoting an unfit ballet dancer (sic) she twirled like a rag-doll who was apportioned to its fate, albeit after
the fashion of one of those pieces in Sir Arthur Bliss’ *Checkmate*. Whereby the axe lodged in her shrivelled spine… and thus masticated jelly or spurted a Theban aside. Do we remember Seneca’s *Thyestes* – particularly as it was recalled in Caryl Churchill’s rendition? (All of it related to Atreus’ blood apple, even cannibalism. Move over Bernard Mathews --- you’re not wanted here!) A locution or spinal tap came to be heard in this cellar anew. It sibilated its last gasp – while quite possibly being bereft of a golden whisper. GLUG-GLUG-GLUG; it sounded from afar. Maybe it enjoined some of Bim and Bom’s hectoring – or it savoured specks of the mud from Samuel Beckett’s *Comment C’est*? When each sub-man or vagrant just wallowed in plasticene – primarily so as to facilitate ordure. Its stickiness then oozed on regardless and this was despite any travail to the contrary. Finally, Candice Leper --- pole-axed forevermore --- hit the dirt. Her ultimate gurgle proved to be: ‘UUUUUGGGGGGHHHHH(!)’; and it pinioned away slowly like a worm.

PART THIRTY-EIGHT
Given his deportment, Trevelyan Bostock continued to lash out limitlessly and without surcease. His pick thence rose and fell like a rivulet’s automaton. At first it had hooked itself in the old laggard’s back and under its influence she’d hit the floor – albeit pursuant to a brittle log. Did an infestation of gore smack a narrow or diaphanous screen – thereby intoning the horror of silent cinema? (Whereby the blood might even be green in terms of a drained colour chart). Here and now, such nothingness lauded its spectre to iron oxide *via* sienna burn, indo orange, cadmium, napthol, permanent rose, azo and spinacridone. Moreover, the pummelling or beating continued long after Candice’s death… and it all took place in a cavort or negative lethargy: a situation where skin shed bone magnetically. It proved to be uneven – almost as if Trevelyn punished the corse over his former habit o’ love-making. For, in his imagination, a halberd or axe came up from its rescue; it definitely seemed to
level off amidst lead-piping. Each strand grew roots on occasion or afterwards, and even then it picked itself up through a metallic embrace. Yet still and all, Trevelyan Bostock reared his instrument uppermost and it delineated a conundrum… a scenario which was dedicated to black heat. The weapon slammed into the piping – whilst being carried along due to a magnetic shudder. All of a moment Bostock’s alter ego ran along unlit corridors: he happened to be naked from the waist at the time. These passages were tiled, dimly lit, sepulchral and outside measurement. Didn’t he have a laurel wreath around his scalp or tonsure like Nero, even Caligula? He filled an onrushing frame as his pace grew faster and faster… a feature which was enacted without perspective. Surely there’s no need for a wheel-chair any more, he mused? Meanwhile, this berserker’s ax* registered a tattoo. (*Note: the use of the word ax indicates an American spelling). It rose to a shiner’s bleeding and it merely came to recall a crab apple… possibly its bruising. Again and again, those vengeful hands gripped Aaron’s rod – they did so with a fulsome fury. A cathartic action, this, which definitely ruminated on cultural ruin. “Which Way Western Man?”, indeed… and this occurred despite a shadow, a nimbus that re-engineered one’s plumbing, psychically speaking. Furthermore, it scraped across those plant-like ducts – if only to betray photosynthesis with a viking’s leap. Thus, in the manner of a von Stroheim miniature, a whirling dervish brought down mayhem – especially when sporting a pick-axe. Under this impact, for instance, various flakes of plaster came loose from the ceiling. They inundated Trevelyan’s jowl – while he bulked like a fervid Punch who was murdering Judy in darksome splendour. Isn’t there going to be a feature-film about puppets called Grand Guignol?

PART THIRTY-NINE
Various tubes or ligatures then split under Trevelyan’s axe-head. They also came flush before an undeserving tone – irrespective of all else. Despite the fact that our athlete pounded unknown tunnels – he continuously savoured his indifference to the chase.
Similarly, Bostock dragged his weapon away from a window’s frieze; it splintered some shards from its environment by way of ventilating empty sound. Trevely an immediately looked at his feet… albeit without a condescending leer or stump. When, pursuant to all of this, he obviously began to dig and this was primarily to avoid the multiplicity of Wyndham Lewis’ painting, *The Siege of Barcelona*. Yet again though, T.B. deposited Candice’s torso into a ground zero; an ossuary within which it would rest for evermore… or so he hoped. His body bent double with the exertion, he shovelled on the dirt and eventually stood smiling… even with an effete familiarity. A wall rose plain and sheer behind him in its circumspection. Whereas – to one side – this pick-axe handle gained adherence and it was rather like an Angus Calder mobile… at least in terms of planar observance. ‘Sleep tight’, wheezed Bostock, ‘you’re not liable to disturb my rest tonight, sweetie.’ (Maybe Daniel Smalley’s gothic and industrial music had followed its descent… possibly after *Laibach’s* example?) Seemingly then, this tale of Bluebeard, scripted as a macabre children’s story by Charles Perrault, left him without any sunlight whatsoever. Despite the fact that Bela Bartok’s opera, *Bluebeard’s Castle*, ushered in a necessary revolution within the form. A taboo for which E.H. Carr’s exegesis on Bakunin proved futile…

+ Exha usted and desiring rest, now, Trevely an B. staggered up to his bed-chamber. He pulled the covers over his head and went to sleep.

**PART FORTY**

In due and proper order (then) our murderer slept on for a good twenty-four hours. Truly, sand’s time moved through an imaginary hour glass bit by bit; whereupon an ornate time-piece could be seen amidst the gloom. It spun like a turquoise disc which was made of silver or plate, and it came beholden to a lightening-blast’s thrall. A tableau wherein zig-zagging patterns of energy made an entry *a la* Zeus. These collected around an
ornate clock’s frontispiece; the latter a mystic semblance over Great Granny Webster’s frame. TICK-TOCK; TICK-TOCK (it went), with spindly hands travelling around a dial: the oval of which seemed to be enamelled or gilt laden. Surely, if you look hard enough into its glass then Conan Doyle begins to stare back at you?

Eventually, a sound of banging shuddered through the house; it came from the lion-headed knocker on its front door. A brass fixture it was, and its cry or shout reverberated within the dwelling. Gradually, and with extreme reluctance, Trevelyn Bostock rose from his crumpled bed. He made a winding course towards the gate or door, and lost no unction about it thereby. By this time, Mister Bostock didn’t care for appearance anymore… wasn’t he dressed in Birkenau pyjamas replete with flip-flops? Slowly, he opened up an oaken barrier inwards. ‘Hello’, he said stupidly. Man-Cloth’s long, unsavoury and elongated face met his gaze. It limned a blue or lugubrious taint which became particularly evident at even-tide. Could he have stood there a whole day, perhaps (?) --- a flash of intuition lit up Bostock’s back-brain uneasily. Never mind, this scarecrow’s face filled a doll’s-house… can’t you detect its tatty dignity? Under a slouch hat the uncanny being’s coat trailed away to forgotten footwear, however. Might he be Worzel Gummidge’s version of An Inspector Calls by J.B. Priestley? ‘Have you any rags for purchase?’, his reedy voice piped up.

PART FORTY-ONE
‘No, no… no tattered vestments are wanted here at all…’, expostulated Trevelyan. ‘Likewise, my wife is travelling abroad at the moment. She’s enjoying little more than a chaperone’s company. They won’t be returning for aeons now, maybe even months. I wouldn’t waste anymore time by calling around for rag ‘n’ bone, do you get me?’ But – to appease his eerie guest – he dragged a few towels down from an upstairs closet. They were threadbare, ancient, patchy and full of holes. A bourgeois aunt
might consider the danger of catching a mange from them! Yet Man-Cloth betrayed dissatisfaction with what he’d been given. ‘These aren’t very nice tatter and whetstone, Mister Bostock. In fact, I’d measure effrontery’s days by saying that Mrs. Bostock’s laundry basket coped much better. Her technicolour dream-coat evinced finer patches which were made from bluish wove or orgone. Again, Candice’s generosity lay in a parchment’s creaminess – or possibly in its cross-grained, textured and rich mantle. Pray tell me, few coins will pass our hands for these efforts.’ Becoming more and more exasperated, Trevelyan blurted out: ‘Keep them, matey. Let it bend forever and a day; it’s a gift from one to another for old time’s sake or indent. May it assuage Gilbert & Sullivan’s burden in Mike Leigh’s film Topsy-Turvy? There you have it…’

PART FORTY-TWO
Many moons passed o’er Trevelyan Bostock’s scalp, and yet he continued to mope around his marriage’s mausoleum. Increasingly, he fell victim to frustration or fits of wrath --- where had Candice Leper secreted her fortune? With mounting desperation he adopted a Dostoyevskyean vein: thence whirling around in silhouette rather like a wood-cut. One day he devastated the kitchen – and this was primarily by discombobulating its hob + griddle, as well as prising open the stove. Set amid this wreckage, however, we find that tears of self-pity came into his eyes and he wondered what to do.

PART FORTY-THREE
To cap it all, though, Man-Cloth kept returning almost every other calendar’s jot. They met on this tumble-down’s doorstep – with the manse’s dilapidation sheering away and shying up to yellow light. The house’s windows multiplied like sullen eyes and they were unhindered by any eighteenth century tax… one partially levelled on their number. Moreover, this was despite the fact that they slanted away towards one’s rising damp. Simultaneously with which… great boughs or vegetation lurked
abroad; wherein this fastness delivered creepers, moss, aching ash, silver birch, weeping willow, mighty oak and herbaceous citadels. These crushed or crystallised the mansion in sunlight – rather like an Ascendancy pile in Sheridan le Fanu’s fictions. ‘Mrs. Bostock would have cover-alls available for me’, sang Man-Cloth peevishly. ‘I don’t doubt it’, rejoined Trevelyan. ‘Yet I have no need of ghostly apparel or various winding-sheets… so caparisoned. Let these dust-blankets cover their corses and help to deliver dullness. Likewise, all of this subsisted in black-creped rooms – in a manner reminiscent of Mrs. Dalloway in Bleak House. Above all, I’ve hoovered up tat from attic to cellar – irrespective of these garments’ characteristics. Isn’t it a case of “never mind the quality feel the width”? Cast this gooseberry forwards… clear off, let me be; silence this whistle: I don’t want you stooping around here again!’

PART FORTY-FOUR

Later that very night, Trevelyan Bostock found himself woken from a fitful slumber by a bizarre note. He instinctively knew that an alien or foreign presence had invaded the tumble-down. Some “it” or available thing has proved its efficacy, especially when it’s like the shadow of a disembodied hand… one which moves along a skirting-board. Without really thinking about it – Trev(.) tore off the bed-clothes and made his way downstairs on bare feet. He proved to be in a shambolic state. Yessss…, although he did retain about him some witticisms or a Sweeney Todd reticence. Basically, because he retrieved a blunderbuss or a loaded magazine from under his pallet. Unlike the poet Chatterton, Trevelyan will not visit a personal nemesis by swooning horizontally. No. Thus armed and prepared, he viewed himself in a heavy Edwardian mirror before vanishing down a tunnel. He reckoned to annul its domicile. Like a vampire or man-bat – he was seen to cast no reflection.
PART FORTY-FIVE
He snorted with derision and began to disembark from a crowded stair-well. Do you detect its rite of passage, anthropologically speaking? Soon after this a stolid post-Victorian dresser and its glass – minus a misanthrope – came to nought. He easily determined where such creaks originate from by scouting around chez Bostock… and they were in the basement. Obviously an armed Trevelyan Bostock careered downhill on a toboggan; in a scene where he caromed like a pin-ball in Jerzy Kosinski’s pastiche. Having arrived at the bottom… who should he spy at a rickety ladder’s surcease? Why, it happened to be Man-Cloth. He stood motionlessly staring at Candice Leper’s (nee Bostock’s) grave.

+ What perturbed Trevelyan most, though, was his sentinel quality – even its aloof starkness and sense of judgement. He towered like a pillar of salt… whilst giving the adjudication of Solon way back in ancient Athens. Although Bostock decreed: ‘I’ve imparted a thousand gobbets to you, haven’t I? Literally man, no more vestments apportion blame or guilt, and they are spendthrift in Santa’s grotto. Touché. Let’s abandon Iraq to its own misgovernance…’ By this time Trevelyan Bostock had climbed down his rope-ladder… domestically voicing it. He chose to ignore their flapping creases – particularly when dressed in striped pyjamas. Man-Cloth pointed towards the floor with an Olympian assurance – albeit before a flagged wall. It measured up-turned earth to its very limit or extent… and it echoed four by four. Cloth then uttered a terrible soliloquy, primarily by virtue of extending a Colossus of Rhodes finger. Its repentance gave rise to a monologue… all of which indicated Patrick Magee’s or Max Wall’s imprint. Most especially – when they referred to Samuel Beckett’s oeuvre. ‘I loved her most definitely, Mister Bostock. It waxed unrequited this passion, to be sure. Yet she required more than my acquittal – at least in terms of votaic offerings. That’s why I informed you about a £100,000 fortune. Redolent of Forbes magazine or the Sunday Times rich list, it
exists... but differentiated in its scope. Surely you realised a salient truth, namely a compound figure arrived at from equity and rag ‘n’ bone stock... at once turning into capital? She told me about you pulling the dwelling to pieces and it amused us both. So it did... I never wanted a negative outcome (assuredly). I told you because I mightn’t satisfy her remedy. A salient gesture, this, which recalls those clothes on her... down there... clinging to her buried body.’ (He coughs and points at a recently dug over pit).

PART FORTY-SIX
A certain transparency is reached by this parting. Can you tell? It worried Trevelyan Bostock’s inflexion – basically because it engendered a trace or folk-memory. This shines a spot-light on *Dick Tracy Meets Gruesome*; a film based on the comic-strip and that originated from the ‘thirties. A conspectus which involves various starlets, whether blonde or brunette, as well as Ralph Byrd and Boris Karloff in the title roles. You can seemingly trace angles in this locution... in one single tourney (therefore) we find dimensional planes involving villainy in a box. Could it transfigure one of Francis Bacon’s skulls; an entity that screamed in a black cube or a sensory deprivation chamber? Nonetheless, in one rival circus a blonde grabs the hero’s shoulders which lie adjacent to a leering dwarf. Whilst Karloff truculently saunters on with hot, scalding eyes. May it all encumber a painting by Max Beckmann?

PART FORTY-SEVEN
Post all of this, Trevelyan Bostock became convulsed in one instant. He fired repeatedly and held his antique blunderbuss in both hands. *Ceteris paribus*, he realised that Man-Cloth must die. One... two... three... four... five... six: after so much battle and applause the slugs ripped through his anatomy. Each dum-dum or perforated bullet seems to lodge in Man-Cloth’s physique... somewhat inescapably. Yet – wonder of wonders – none of them passed through the other side, in accordance with normal
physical laws. Both physics and biology became confounded – at least as regards a scarecrow’s criteria. ‘DIE, die, die… you hideous swine!’ screamed Trevelyan… a man who was seemingly going berserk. ‘It’s odd that I’ve fired six pellets into his corse through a two-fold triptych… and yet it’s like trying to tease a stick-man out of all order. Would a plastinate obstruct such treatment – and won’t M.R. James set a hare running when adjacent to a scouse cup? Similarly now, a dull thud stops a gesture during each moment that he returns a bullet. It’s rather like impenetrable laundry. Blast it! May it all ensnare Thomas Carlyle’s Sartor Resartus, or a Philosophy of Clothes?’

PART FORTY-EIGHT
‘Turn around and swivel about, Betty Boop’s grampy. Let it snow, give it a go, let us know: grumpy. We’ll kick you on your can…’ With which announcement, Man-Cloth turns his back on a tormentor and moves off. Amazed over his resilience or implacability, Trevely Bostock seizes the axe and assaults him again. This time the pick travels through shoulder-matter and penetrates a spinal zone. ‘What gives mortal sustenance refuses your caste. I belaboured Candice in an identical spot, but you refuse to wilt. A man-thing you be, you’re inhuman! Where is a register of like effects? Even one of Kali’s thugs couldn’t be seen, especially if dangling in irons on a Raj’s gibbet. Never mind George Orwell’s Death of an Elephant in Burma… you refuse to perish.’ ‘Alexander Dumas configured it correctly, Mister Bostock. Most abundantly – when a moral gesture amplifies itself or flounders on oblivious to torture.’ In uttering so Man-Cloth’s image betokened a comedic or Attic mask, and it hailed from the ancient world minus a cod-piece. It incarnated Punchinello’s task – after a fashion that cried out for vengeance with a capital V. A vendetta which clung to Great Punch’s wreckage hereabouts… even though Punch and Judy can often founder on Brighton’s sands. Don’t some consider those red-and-yellow awnings to be “politically incorrect”? Man-Cloth starts to turn around once he’s assessed this tourney. Wouldn’t a man-of-
cloth be scraped naked by an iron maiden, so to say? After all, such a purchase just leavens the instant before he left.

PART FORTY-NINE
Soon his felt paws were around Trevelyan’s throat. Both of them resolutely crashed to the ground and rolled around in the dirt. Again, T. Bostock blurted out: ‘Avaunt thee, Lucifer… get behind me!’ Whereas Trevelyan Bostock noticed that Man-Cloth’s hands seemed to be special. They were tepid, loose, cling-film like, knotted, barbed, softish, elongated, stringy and garrotting. Would each glove become its puppet or even a bolas to our resource? Bostock didn’t doubt it – despite the fact that his fingers gouged deeply into Man-Cloth’s side or sole, primarily in order to prevent his strangulation. (Might we be referring to a soul instead?) Regardless of any of this, though, nought came away save pellets or shavings of canvas, dye, used curtain, tarpaulin, rug, bear-skin, fillet, combustible resin, fox-glove, stole, dyed blue-skins and Persian carpets. ‘All in all’, filtered Trevelyan through blood, ‘ragamuffin, humanoid or tatterdemalion… you’re essentially rags, no more or less. Choke… you consist of used clothes, naked and wound around a stalk which is so wetted. You are animate clothing.’ His assailant readily agreed. ‘That’s why I engineered a match between the two of you. I loved her, Bostock, despite knowing that she required more than a RAG MAN!’

PART FIFTY
With this Parthian shot, then, Man-Cloth forced Trevelyan’s head back until the neck broke. It shattered or snapped with a snick. ‘UUUUGGGGHHHHH!’, he wailed; it proved to be unutterably beyond retrieval like James Hinton’s nineteenth century prosody. Bostock’s tongue protruded and his hair stood on end electrically – while his eyes glazed over in death. As he became asphyxiated, a red/black sludge rose inside those orbs. Whereupon – and following his victim’s death-throes – Man-Cloth began to disintegrate also. His hair fell out; the skin peeled off, his face
and head streamed garments or sluiced into a puddle. Further on from this, his warped sinuousness teased its rope sections apart – rather like a hemp-ladder fraying or coming unstuck. GLUG-GLUG-GLUG(!): soon he dissolved and finally both of his eyes popped out. They slithered forth like Dali’s time-pieces or liquefying marbles that revolved psychedelically. Both automatons then became crushed in each other’s grip like vassals of paper. (Hence we may refer to this as an exercise in *Origami Bluebeard.*) The last thing that Trevelyan heard, however, was Candice Leper laughing. A piano roll tinkled away in the background throughout… surely they can’t be playing this couple’s anthem *ad nauseam*? After all, it’s only rag time music.

FINIS
GRIMALDI’S LEO
a circus prism

ONE TOT (1)
Perhaps we had better categorise our Dramatis Personae first of all. These consist of denizens who are destined for prior oblivion. Various then, they embody a motif from The Woman in Green; a melodrama starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce. They include Winged Rhea, a high-wire artiste, Sol Rasputin, a big-top proprietor, Agent Naxos, an animal trainer: as well as Scaramouch or Clown Joey. Leonine Half or King Leo – a performing lion – also stars throughout. Whereas certain circus extras – in this John Aspinall ‘ passion’ – move on and off the board continuously.

A SECOND GIN’S TINCTURE (2)
A lion is foregrounded in our drama after having escaped from its cage. Indeed, the latter bemoans a belated structure, at once longitudinal to its squares and fatal in its depth. What a misalliance! Given that it growled apiece in heaven’s gate – together with a starred stand which was conical in fashion and next to its leaflet. These ribbed up concerning steel when wandering abroad of a circus’ show-tents. Speaking of them, a small white marquee – shaped like a T – lay along laterally and in accordance with moon-shine. Further afield, though, a sideways-on tent lifted off to the left and it aimed to complete a rectangle. Whilst – somewhat redundantly – a number of circus humans stood before our King’s cage --- primarily because Leo has escaped. Momentarily then, three men sprang before him with raised chair-legs; items which were themselves attached to small circular white-stools. Two of them were meandering extras just left in Afrikaner hats; in a scenario where a daddy long-legs intruded across their screens. One particular wrestler, Agent Naxos, carried a whip in his hand. Do you notice a resulting tension?
A THIRD CUP OF WASTE’S CARP (3)
What might an animal dream of (¿), in line with extending Richard Dworkin’s idea of human rights? Doesn’t such a discourse lie fallow when covering over the negative ethicist’s --- Peter Singer’s --- notions of animal liberty? (Hence his penning of the book *Animal Liberation*, in which he develops a specious doctrine known as ‘Speciesism’). Nonetheless, Leo’s mind seemed to be confused with a capering filter; a magic lantern in which one image followed another in silent motion. First of all, our clown’s eye looks on at a creature’s freedom; it also surrounds his circumference with ease. In this mammal’s phantasy, then, one’s Glock drifts on essentially bereft of identity and before a bay window. Could it be one of those latticed structures that fills out – primarily so as to reconnoitre the space? Palm uppermost now, Joey Clown raps his hand against a wooden jamb. ‘Meat eating remains a mortal’s elixir’, he averrs. ‘Our animalism necessitates the other’s inferiority – just prior to being pinned on our blades. It betokens a treasury of Bridge cards… all of them delineating a bid.’

A FOURTH PART LEAVES ITS BRUEGEL (4)
Continuously so, King Leo or our Leonine half growled extraordinarily now. Its roar increased exponentially or in relation to the Russian state circus’ absent touring company. You know that in Putin’s new Russia – when replete to a national veto – circus is considered to be a genuine art-form? Well, it surrounded its surcease and this came as a refutation of Conan Doyle’s story *The Veiled Lodger*. (It also revolved around an escaped tournament lion). Likewise, in our wrestling bout + a mane the show’s proprietor, Sol Rasputin, looked on with magisterial impassivity. Even one of his underlings letting off a shot didn’t faze him. It came from a stray starting-pistol, after all. It was probably designed to cower this King of the Beasts… especially once a wooden box had been thrown over. Under Leo’s guidance, therefore, a heavy thespian-lid might be cast about like matchwood. To add to such a burden, however, both
our mottled harlequin and the beauteous Winged Rhea brooked silence’s grave-yard or retreat. They happened to be standing on a fair-ground barker’s left-side, conceptually speaking.

FIVE SUGAR LUMPS DISSOLVE (5)
Most brazenly – and inside our animal’s mind – a dream-sequence travels forwards seamlessly. It overthrows any right to debate before a latticed screen whatsoever. Again, I say, one of the circus orderlies wants to make a dialectical contribution here. He appears to be wearing a joke or horror mask at this time. Does it confront your goodness or sense of self-esteem? Because one side of this orb filters a redundant carapace – it’s dotted about with green and apportioned to a zig-zag. It definitely doesn’t relate to what Robinson Jeffers meant by a communist people of dirt. ‘I hear what thou sayest, Clown’, he attested. ‘Mightily so, but animal liberation postulates a distinct urge… possibly after John Cowper Powys’ rants against vivisection. May one discover these axioms in his testament known as Morwyn; or the Vengeance of God? By virtue of the fact that a utilitarian codex seeks to avoid all pain, primarily on the basis of equal consideration and rights.’ ‘But why such egalitarian sludge’, bludgeoned our funny man, ‘surely elitism and hierarchy governs all meaning?’ ‘Why so?’ ‘It just abrogates a different temperature thereby.’

ONE SIXTH PORTION OF LOTUS (6)
Now then, our heroine and a tourney’s mad-cap, Joey Clown, stood next to each other triumphantly… at least on a stage’s verso or left. She --- Winged Rhea --- is sleek, well-apportioned, Latinate – and with heavy ear-rings plus a black-haired bun. A dazzling cloak curves off her back; it comes aslant her shoulder and relates to a high-wire act. Our girl expostulates after hearing the shot: ‘No. Don’t discharge a musket on Leo’s breath. Like in Kipling’s Jungle Book, he remains a bestial king without any liability to seek out prey. Certainly – by a law of reverse correspondence – let him be. Harmlessness seeks out the font of
its own pit, you see. Dearie me, may there be no obfuscation over Moriarty’s drift… as it concerns a B-movie like *A Woman in Green*? No severed fingers can walk adrift of a player-piano here. Surely a neutral observer speaks of Greig’s *Nocturn Opus 54 No.4*?

+ All of a sudden some fair-ground, carny or fun-fair music starts up. Mightn’t it embody a piano-roll or hurdy-gurdy tunes – themselves possibly spliced by Sir Harrison Birtwhistle? Truly, *The Second Mrs. Kong* has been digitally remastered.

**A SEVENTH LAUGH OVER TREMORS (7)**
In terms of a final conflict, we can see this gesturing dervish severing contact with anxiety. Whereupon he looked out through a bay-window towards Armageddon or a forgotten sun. Its rays refracted through a bay-window’s portcullis, leastwise when pursuant to one lost memory. Or is it mastery? You see, a creature in an iron-mask lumbered up and it happened to be the show’s proprietor. He wore a white roll-neck sweater or perhaps a polo shirt. How will our friend’s capture reduce animal cruelty, in that an arachnid possesses eight limbs not six? That’s a *canard*. Moreover, Peter Singer extends a lore of rights to primates in order to delay things, since this increases the likelihood of a vegan supper. More pertinently, the avoidance of harm needles a rejection like this – primarily because it must base such privileges on sentience’s boon. Can’t you reverse a pronounced sentimentality here… at least over and above Landseer’s Victorian portraits? ‘It goes very far without slaying the messenger’, dove-tailed Glock II. ‘Against which authority, I have to talk about Man’s superiority within the animal kingdom.’

**A BERSERK EIGHTH TRESPASS (8)**
Winged Rhea talks all night and this is presumably in order to provide Leo with a disused mirror. Above all else, she assists his return to the cage by saying: ‘All right, leprechaun, go back into this fastness of steel glasses… why don’t you? Try to rest easy in
an assured silence, sweetheart. No-one wishes to harm your hide… or perchance to turn it into a rug by witness’ dint. Rest easy, boy-o, and remain in this box care of all available trespass.’

During such a radio communication, Sol Rasputin, the festival’s ring-master, looks on with a furrowed brow. His face waxes masculine, heavy, lugubrious, engrained and thoughtful --- primarily by some turns of absence or other. A thick mop of black-hair covers it when fastened to a taffeta overlay… itself of so many wigs. Below ground, though, a Panama or Havana cigar broils away merrily; it spits red ash in the daylight. When (somewhat irrefutably) this scene encodes the early stages of Brian Master’s biography, *The Passion of John Aspinall*.

**A NINTH RECTILINEAR CORNEA (9)**
Oh my yes… Because a rare human menagerie had gathered under a convex window. Certainly, imagination foredoomed a Comus Rout… one of whose number spoke out with a sun efflorescing in the rear. It churned up a comparison to all these sounds, primarily by witnessing its own star-burst: the latter in terms of a yellow-to-orange cadence. On the other hand, one of the lion keeper’s attendants wore a dunce cap, and it rose over a dark smock or tunic. He gave a cosmic shrug or held out both hands in a complacent gesture. Our con-man declared the following: ‘Speciesism is an evaluation’s correct estimate. For – rather inevitably – *homo sapiens* trumps any other carcass’ ace. The issue cannot really be sentience, therefore, but the superiority of a perception due to one. Can it be properly observed? Again, it necessitates the following ditty: namely animal ‘racism’ demarcates a fulsome humanism.’

**NEMESIS: TEN DWARVES MEET THEIR KNIVES (10)**
Back in our circus, however, a fully made-up clown apportions no blame but to the cosmos. In his appearance he represented a classic counterpart to Glock; as can be seen in terms of a final serenade in Trevor Griffiths’ *The Comedians*. Nor can we file an affidavit before Grimaldi’s extras – since the latter proved to be
Britain’s premier master of pantomime. What did he look like? Why, he proved to be chaste, blanched, rose-painted, alabaster-like and wearing an ornate ruff. This visage, *au courant*, was turned sideways-on with thick rouge lips, a bald pate and even a pronounced red-nose day. It also existed together with hemicycles across the face. These delineated our kabuki player’s eyes – i.e., those orbs that revolved in grease paint (withal).

**ELEVEN SHARK-HEADS IN A HAUL (11)**

Despite all of the above, our lion’s mind remained illumined throughout. First and foremost, it saw the manner of its retrieval – when we bear in mind that a lattice or trellis-work lay off here. For, even when it is viewed from without, we can still catch a pellucid vista… within which a thin rake – who happened to be dressed in dark slacks – gesticulated to himself in a three-way mirror. Didn’t it recall a bargain basement version of a three-way triptych? Besides all of this, our mirror fiend looked decisively like one of those attendants who tried to enforce Leo’s caged status. Still, our leonine half heard the following mantra – it echoed across the room from the other keeper. ‘Surely one *desideratum* of oblivion deserves another, in that animal welfare precludes a Rights’ agenda? Likewise, the Animal Rights Militia and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals proved to be incompatible… precisely because one seeks amelioration; the other looks for violent revolutionary change. In such a maelstrom, a lion’s head can only be worn in pantomime.’

**TWELVE STRIKES AND YOU’RE OUT! (12)**

One’s Grimaldi or clown now passes onto a new lunacy… whilst recognising a bell which tolls during these proceedings. His ears stuck out preternaturally from a jester’s skull; and yet transparent circles continue to deliver a mid-wife toad. Can you tell by this yardstick? For London’s Anglo-Italian mountebank has a special day. It’s January the fifteenth to be precise – an anniversary which celebrates his contribution. Culturally speaking, one of those white shadow-tents then rises up with various fluffy clouds
contained on an azure backdrop. Our patron saint of clowns repeats his words: ‘By a lark, Emma Tennant’s *The Bad Sister* exposes nought to our gaze… especially when the show’s owner, Sol Rasputin, ought to fire Leo from so much lauderdale as this. He’s a natural born killer (after all); none would miss him and these snarling under-currents must greet their trap… possibly when concealed under bamboo shoots a way off. Do you ever reminisce about simplistic or *naïf* art; particularly when it hails from a Hindi or Indo-Aryan origin? It basically shows Nabobs and subalterns on a tiger-hunt… all of them depicted in a manner alien to artistic perspective. That’s too Western, you see? Let’s consider a sahib being borne aloft on an elephant, in accord with Angus Wilson’s *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling*. As per usual though, Lord Mountbatten’s version of the Raj has to be in charge. Didn’t Arthur Kemp call it *The March of the Titans*?’

THIRTEEN + FOURTEEN’S UNLUCKY COUSIN TRUMPS WISDOM (13&14)

Because now a golden disc lies adjacent to such abstractions – no matter how latticed or under glass there need is! To begin with one item, everyone notices a warder and Nobody’s clown stood next to an alcove… in a situation where none rules each roost save them. These marionettes speak thus in our Leo’s phantasm: ‘Can I dwell on your left amplitude – as it came to be positioned within a booth? The moon-light streams in a sheer way and it glistens through the glass’ refraction. To one side of this errant page – and divided by a shadowy pillar – stands our Joey the Clown. Various other denizens – such as an Iron Mask or a Dunce-cap – are momentarily out of sight.’ Even though fatality’s Scaramouch hasn’t been listening to a gesticulator, or a narcissist, who carries his mirror with him. ‘Look yonder’, he attests, ‘and you will find a paternalism which exhausts our bacon slicer. Perhaps one species’ arguments help to rectify Natural Law, in that the closer to nature one is the more remorseless. None can then top the peasantry in ancestral feuding, canniness, low cunning, rude health and fierceness. In a
village or a hamlet like Rotherfield Peppard in south Oxfordshire fox-hunting was a liberal past-time… when one chooses to compare it to cock-fighting, superintended by gypsies in outlying barns --- as well as badger baiting. (The latter proved to be a sadism with nothing to recommend it whatsoever, save if we reconcile it to D.H. Lawrence’s *St. Mawr*). A tributary which consequently exists both before and after the God of Love…”

BETRAY FIFTEEN CHAMELEONS ON A BRANCH (15)
To return to conscious living – if only for a moment – our Clown is now in full spate. He continues to deliver a verbal tirade when spied on in front… albeit in a softly spoken manner. Clouds of white fluff continue to bedizen the horizon; a template which has itself become habituated to French Blue. A white tent or minor marquee tilts somewhat aslant of these protagonists: namely Winged Rhea and Joey Clown. ‘We must dispense with that Leonine brush’, admitted this prankster. ‘His escapes from the cage are becoming all too frequent – he seemingly rehearses them all the time. Let’s be clear about this: if nothing is done about it then one of Ricardo’s cast list shall end up in his stomach. Forsooth and all, Christians may no longer be thrown to the lions, but an amphitheatre still exists in our minds. Even the Circus Flavius has just moved into cyberspace… basically in order to essay new pleasures. Or do I mean victims?’ Our greasepaint proceeded on after a brief pause for breath. ‘No-one would miss this pantomime lion – albeit one possessing metal teeth. It brooks indifference’s fortitude like a piranha – only to steer a middling course towards zero. Do you realise why Russell Grant’s astrological chart may be untrue? Particularly given the following facts, namely that the male lion might be lazy or rely solely on his mate’s killing aptitude. For – rather like Mutually Assured Destruction or M.A.D. – he’s quite capable of devouring our joints.’ ‘It’s a lie’, expostulated his tamer, ‘Leo’s more reminiscent of the lounge-suit in *The Wizard of Oz*. This beast-king won’t feast on mankind’s haunches – no matter how ignoble…” Moreover – in saying this piece – Winged Rhea’s
profile turned violent, angular, perpendicular, silhouette-like and wood-cut dissolving. No emulsion would be required… since she was very angry with this clown.

SIXTEEN BREAKS IN A NORMANDY LANDING (16)
Ho there! These fantasists lived out a moon-landing every day… at least when it came to bed-time. Still though, one of our number – possibly Agent Naxos – lay askance of some criss-crossed windows and held his head to the left. It registered a filmic stunt whilst passing out of a perspectival filter. How did he look in this other dimension when next to our own kin? Why, he fashioned something of the punk here – by virtue of being naked or fastened to the waist. Also, we have to consider his spiky hair-do; a mock-cockatoo nicety (this) which brought the worlds of vaudeville and Billy Idol together. Understandably so… yet our dunce-cap asked him a question in lieu of these opening heavens. ‘How can George Orwell’s Animal Farm configure it, zoo man? Does your mind bring forward a digital video disc or a mechanism that contains an imagised Boxer within it? This shire horse has to stand in for a burdened beast or numberless proletarians… all of them akin to soviet propaganda. Look at this: in one picture Napoleon/Stalin finds himself delineated as a large porker, replete with a monocle. Furthermore, all of the voices were composed by Ian Holm (a Shakespearean) or the northern actor of repute, Peter Postlethwaite.’ No answer beats forth any sweat here – leastwise in terms of a lion tamer’s diction. Rather, we discern a dreamy translucence or reverie. It drifts on, somewhat haphazardly, towards a rip-roaring sun. Do it again!

A SEVENTEENTH’S PANTOMIME CURTAIN (17)
At our veriest level, then, yesterday’s circus drama continues on in a vacant field… wherein one Clown and Winged Rhea are going at it hammer and tongs. The thespian or funny man’s head is seen in perspective… with various cups or moons around his face and eyes. These retreat like tyre tracks which are
circumambient to moon-lit craters, so to say. Whereas a bulbous red nose --- itself redolent of such a day --- stood amidships betwixt cup and lip. Against a violently orange background, moreover, a blue ruff trots observably under his chin. While his companion in this Platonic dialogue, namely Rhea, refuses to go to pieces before a latticed iron-work. It has to be Leo’s preventative cage or cube. ‘He (Leo the Lion) meant nothing by his frisky banter’, she intoned. ‘Such astrological forays just indicate a desire to join the show… in no way should they be thought of as aggressive acts like the provocation afforded a beast in Conan Doyle’s *The Veiled Lodger*. A proem where mutilation occurs through malice aforethought, in an attempt to murder a brutal ring-master. No way… weren’t these wrought clubs, which proved unequal to their task, cast into a lime-pit by way of Oxfordshire’s chalk? Likewise, a Strong-man who bulged with steroids failed a test of manhood when it came, necessarily so. Doesn’t this fatalism recall one of Aleister Crowley’s tarot cards? A reverse six of diamonds this might be; in which the weakness in a He-man’s face belies its muscles… and this was irrespective of a directory that he effortlessly tears.’

**EIGHTEEN BULLETS IN A CHAMBER – WHERE’S THE GUN? (18)**

In an adventurer’s mist, however, the sun burned on within an odour of gravy. Couldn’t there be something of a definite sanctimony about it? For this disc swivelled in a revolving culpability, and it’s nearly always entranced by a bluish expectancy. A pink haze also gathered about the sky if we may further it; wherein each mote carried forth Zeus’ living lightening. The lion tamer, Agent Naxos, has to be the one to speak first: ‘Again, we are confronted with a conundrum or dilemma over Peter Singer’s ideology… because a chastising whip has to be redirected from a creature’s back onto an animal tamer’s hide. If sentience be the key – why not extend human rights to gold fish and molluscs? Yet alternatively, what about the brain-dead child that cannot function on all fours? May it
scramble rather like the babe – or possibly the carrion cripple – which is depicted in a late Francis Bacon triptych? Oh my yes… the decision to grant comprehension to Pierre Boulle’s *Monkey Planet* must doom the defective to defeat by way of a related process. If self-consciousness is our litmus test, perchance, then a slaughter of the innocent follows axiomatically. Nor are we referring to Poussin’s famous painting here… despite its desolate shamanism.’ ‘You are taking it to mean’, muttered our mirror-man, ‘that Professor Singer has replaced one ‘political incorrectness’ by another. In other words, ‘disabilism’ ousts ‘speciesism’ in his fated rejoinder.’ ‘Quite so… or was it necessarily thus? Yet ‘political correctness’ really fails to exist at all; it remains an exercise in theoretical halitosis. No-one properly adheres to its set texts and it stays myopic (or liberally degenerate) thereby.’

**NINETEEN PLUS TWENTY COPPER-HEADS IN A ROW**

(19&20)
Now then, returning from our lion’s phantasm we can see that this narrative spots a Clown’s response or readiness. Are any and all of us aware of Grimaldi’s special day (?) – it occurs on January the fifteenth within every year. A calendar date (this) which celebrates the life of Britain’s most famous carry-on and still-born performer, let alone pantomime *artiste*. He lived between the years 1779 and 1837; and he’s still the country’s foremost Anglo-Italian clown. Let’s listen to his current representative: ‘My lady of the manor – this lion scares us out of our wits. He knocks spots off any caterpillar who might come close… can you witness its diatribe? He may not have dragged anyone into the bushes yet, but who can tell? For all mortals look alike to him, prospectively, or they incarnate Gunter von Hagens’ plastinates. A stratagem whereby haunches of meat or would-be venison cuts (to speak of) hang off the Columbine of so many nuptials. If we register it keenly – then a skeleton rushes forwards nearly always cut out of its matrix and with its skin peeling off every armature. Truly, such a corse is blown through
its own wind-tunnel; thereby losing its pericarp in the process. A resultant pelt is then found to float freely around these slain homunculi: the like of which inundate bottles which are held in formaldehyde in anatomy museums. One in particular comes to mind... and it has to be the Royal College of Surgeons in south Kensington, London. Although if Leo chomps at our privates, however, then such an amphitheatre will look more akin to the London Dungeon then Doctor Seuss.’

TWENTY-ONE PROSTHETIC LIMBS --- HOW MANY KEEP HARKENING? (21)

Our fur-factory continues on a false concupiscence – especially if it is to engage upon these leonine dreams. Didn’t T.S. Eliot quote a line from Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta* about a religious millipede’s approach? No matter, since a bedizened clock has now appeared amidships and it shapes its circumstances through a blue slant. It lists over to one side with old-fashioned clock-hands which penetrate the hour. These curlicues rest upon their laurels, but they also indicate a margin for error that says ten-to-twelve (betimes). It illustrates the eleventh hour – albeit having less to do with a witch’s conundrum and more to do with John Tyndall’s diction throughout. Understandably then, one tad-pole chooses to rub a distant shape afoot... all of it occurring in a lion’s dream. Who can it be or interpret? Well, on a closer inspection it accommodates Agent Naxos, an itinerant lion tamer. To be sure, he slides his hand up and down a silvern object which glints dully in a sepulchral light. (Surely the latter plunges through the sort of serrated glass that’s held at an auditorium’s back?) ‘We’re bored, Grimaldi’, insisted this zoologist *manqué*. Yet will our cosmic clown realise that evil’s a stray latitude given over to tedium? Moreover, we slowly become apprised of this fact when Naxos’ Agent draws his mitten away. For he happens to have been stroking an iron-maiden all this time. Does it all recompose itself with Ian McKellern in a modern-dress version of Shakespeare’s *Richard III*?
TWENTY-TWO WOODEN FIGURINES ALL IN A ROW…
(22)
Now Sol Rasputin, the master of this particular caravan, has
decided to step between these two artistes: namely Clowning’s
Joey and Winged Rhea. ‘The two of you will have occasion to
listen to me’, he barked. ‘Fate has temporarily placed one in
charge of this special art-form, don’t ya know? As such my pets,
I’m determined to do the best for any rag-lions circling my ring.
Have you ever turned on the children’s television programme
called Bagpuss? Well – heretofore and all – no-one decides as to
whether this animal goes or stays without consulting me.’ He
continued to stare at both participants with this indecisive spleen
afoot. A thick cigar rested precariously on his lower-lip
throughout this performance… While – at either extremity –
Rhea and our Clown-face glared at one another: it all subsisted in
a vortex where her hair lay sleek and black, and his glabrous
moon-beam drivelled on. Might it be pursuant to a children’s tea-
party, but with strychnine in the barley cup? Needless to say, a
brilliantly white marquee rose up behind all of our moral
wrestlers.

A TWENTY-THIRD QUADRANT OF PIE (23)
One of our dialecticians may have been parlaying throughout
this; and he could well be Naxos’ mirror-man of yore. He offers
a pipe of peace; and yet it proves to be unlike a dime store’s Red
Indian. ‘Professor Singer’s theories lie flawed before their
abundant and modernist architecture. Why so? Because he must
condemn a large number of brain dead children to death in order
to claim sentience as a boon. To re-phrase The Communist
Manifesto of 1847-8: “Spastics of the world unite; a test-tube of
green ichor awaits you!” Could it turn out to be an example of
emerald blood which has been brought from a joke-shop for
£12.00? Anyway, if self-consciousness is an undefeated mirror-
image then what of an animal’s inferior gifts? For – contrary to
Savitri Devi’s book The Impeachment of Man – Singer cannot
insist on a tiger’s superiority to a delinquent Homo Ludens. Nor
can this Man of Games necessarily place the negro and the Jew outside of humanity – whether we are speaking of ludo, bridge, chess or Snakes & Ladders. His misanthropy relates to a different cast of mind, therefore. Let’s choose to articulate such a vision in another way, in that no reverse speciesism can be called upon in order to deflect his utilitarian bias. It merely resiles before a parallax view in an unquestioning way. But, to be certain of our facts, Bentham’s utility theory always had the taste of death in its mouth. It enjoined what we might choose to call futilitarianism… if we’re to effectively invent a term or a neologism after Thomas Carlyle’s diction.’ ‘I’m afraid that I don’t follow any of this’, manoeuvred our clown of choice.

TWENTY-FOUR MAGPIES ROLL GLASS PEAS (24)
Or could our false sense of certainty really be enacting a Jacobean days’ Parliament of Bees; a privately printed edition of which turned up in the nineteenth century? Nonetheless, Winged Rhea moved laterally in order to placate her lion – a creature who lay beyond necessary platitudes in a wicker-cage. Most certainly, our Rhea shifted up close to these parallel bars; the like of which narrowed in on a lion’s paw and thus illustrated a chess board’s architecture. Whereas King Leo himself had travelled so far as to let out a yawn – but it couldn’t help bellowing forth as a growl. ‘RRRRROOOAAAR!’, he enunciated without self-reflection or shyness. ‘Don’t fret, my prince’, murmured mistress Rhea rather plaintively. ‘No-one shall touch a scintilla on your scalp --- at least by way of harming a hair thereon. All relevant matters will be handled to your satisfaction – just like a platter of meat that has been left out before your cage. Even Sol himself wouldn’t be party to a deceit which could see you setting out on a voyage down a yellow-brick road. Come on, little ‘un, possess yourself without fear and ignore the words of those men who presently surround you… listen only to my judgements. I swear to protect and empower you against the world.’ From behind a veritable iron curtain came a mighty or further RRRRROOOAAAR!
TWENTY-FIVE PAPIER-MACHE HEADS ARE STOVED IN (25)
Let us behold a bent and rearranged Scaramouch before our ken… doesn’t T.S. Eliot speak of a Guy’s penny or its guiding coin? He does so at the commencement of a discontinuous Wasteland. Still and all, the coruscated brow of our itinerant clown looks on… it continues to stalk a sallow prospect under naked bulbs. His eyes, on this particular plateau, deliver silver pennies --- they are rather like a disused copperhead from yesterday’s pulp-fiction magazines. They remain avid, piecemeal, revolving, singular and seemingly lit from within… almost after the fashion of Walt Disney. Our Joey speaks up in a dry monotone: ‘Harken to my fit! If sentience happens to be the key to Professor Singer’s route-master then animals and men will forever wander unequally. Mental self-consciousness betrays a resilience under fire… particularly ‘neath a white sun or its token. It even capers before a superior reduction – but not any scintilla of a redaction (to be sure). Never mind: Professor Singer then resultantly slips into speciesism or non-human prejudice, basically because he has no other choice. Mankind might otherwise find a way to sacrifice bullocks to its pleasure – albeit in obviation of such a circuit. They would come to sanctify clothing, eating, flaying, slaying and skinning mammals all the way up Uppsala’s ventricle. Oh my yes – what price oblivion or the abattoir when it’s confronted with one of Descartes’ machines?’

TWENTY-SIX HUMS SURROUND HIS PASTED HEAD (26)
Our circus melodrama or tableau unfurls its banner with four stick-figures gathered around Leo’s cage. We spy Winged Rhea, Sol Rasputin, Agent Naxos and Joey Clown when viewed anti-clockwise in. Do you liken it to a bold transference of energy? Against this fun-fair, though, their penumbras dipped in a guttering candle-flame… only then to rise up as a forlorn stalk. Abreast of them (and to the left) stood one of those coloured wagons that are unique to a circus – it hides in a gloomy triangle
of light. It consisted of various slats or boards upon which an ornate advertisement for Rasputin’s ‘Big Top’ figured... such an instrument involved bright, polished or burnished wood. Also, our signal’s sides looked woven throughout and they were transported towards the corded ware of a Gaelic mirror. Wooden wheels – together with a walkway enabling any Boxcar Bertha to descend – made up this trumpet. Let’s examine this somewhat further, if you will... various barrels lay aft of our enquiry and they positioned themselves next to a feeder-tent that fed yonder Big Top. It proved to be cavernous... as well as being pitched to the grass with multiple stays and guide-posts: these exhibited the colours blue and red. Above it – and fluttering at its very apex – a Union Jack tilted in the breeze.

‘Do you hear her mulct and abandon?’, complained our Mister Nobody. For this clown continued in a mood which was exasperated with vexation. ‘Listen to her carry-on! It’s near insanity, I tell you. She addresses that killer cat as if it were a free-born Englishman.’

SEVEN-AND-TWENTY CROWS BAKED IN A PIE (27)
Our buffoon simultaneously dwells on philosophical niceties within a free-flowing phantasm or conceit. Can this lion really understand the dialectic which gathers pace under his very eyes? May it alternately confirm or refute various notions of animal liberation (sic)? In accord with such a basis, however, Joey’s clown blows root-toot-toot through a traditional trumpet or German brass. It posited itself as an ancient Western device inside a copper pipe; a much burnished object that strove to announce a clarion. ‘Further to our analysis’, our rake trills and squawks, ‘if sentience happens to be all and sundry then what about the foetus? For – in truth – many unborn children are probably more sentient than most non-humans. All of which means that the utilitarian’s bidden to act if the senescent can be implicated in suffering. Contrariwise, my man, can a solitary autonomy light up the path to one’s moral being? Because – if
not virtually extant – a vegetarian can still eat rare birds’ eggs with impunity! Most definitely, the logic of Professor Singer’s thinking must foreshadow some dysgenic slaughter. It’s a post-foeticide (all in all) that will inevitably fall on sub-humans with a downward blade. At last, we may discern a vista where the professors Peter Singer and Eugene Shockley link hands across our compass… moral or otherwise. Bravo! Especially when we recognise that this philosophe enacts his vision of a Kolyma with almost mathematical precision. Might his co-religionist, the chemist and writer Primo Levi, have justly christened it as a periodic table?’

TWENTY-EIGHT: WILL YOU EAT THIS GINGER-BREAD MAN’S HEAD OFF? (28)
Please missus… an untroubled suffering now has occasion to crease a lion tamer’s brow. For – if we gaze at it aright – Agent Naxos incarnates a salutary principle: namely, a Noel Coward vintage which swans abroad without inversion’s taint. (In other words, no ditty lurks here which pertains to Otto Weininger’s fugue in Sex and Character). He wore a resultant cravat around his neck and a black Ukrainian cigarette continuously puffed in its holder. Similarly, his hair came to be regarded as sleek and dark – all of it after the fashion of Humphrey Bogart in Casablanca or The Treasure of the Sierre Madre. A brief moustache customarily melded with a cut-away brown suit – it happened to be unstained by tobacco. Didn’t such earth tones delineate something of a relaxed nature? As hitherto, then, a white tent or festival marquee rose adjacent to his proffered scalp; it profited nothing at all by sloping off to the right. He re-addressed his proprietor’s tones with an element of clipped contrition. ‘I don’t know what eventuated outside John Bratby’s kitchen sink, old boy. By deuce, one moment I’d turned my back in order to spy a toy; the next Leo had struck clean off by vacating its cage.’ A cigar-chomping Sol Rasputin glowered lugubriously in response to this competition.
TWENTY-NINE BELLS UNDER A JOLLY ROGER (29)
As per usual in dreams we often find that time shifts suddenly and discontinuously between scenes. It almost recalls early or silent cinema wherein a passage of moments indicates itself by a ripple effect. A sudden clang hits an air-passage or ventilation duct; in that a three-pronged trident rasps against a concrete floor. Its colour has to be a shade off the deepest red. This cacophony or jarring sound momentarily startles Agent Naxos out of all conscience… until he realises who’s been husbanding this ground. It’s one of his attendants who wears a ski mask underneath a top hat – like in an Edgar Wallace or ‘Sapper’ adventure of yesteryear. Whomsoever among Naxos’ many myrmidons could it be? Any assessment proved troublesome – especially given the woollen balaclava which was worn beneath a hockey goalkeeper’s vizor. Like in Alexander Dumas’ *The Man in the Iron Mask* only his orbs showed up; and these were at once fruity, over-ripe, black buried and semi-insane. Surely it wouldn’t come to involve Keith Waterhouse’s interpretation of *Billy Liar* --- that is; a hominid who’d repeatedly multiplied himself in mirrors? Hadn’t he actually been a keeper who’d threatened Leonine Half with an empty chair-leg? It was hollow (you see) and happened to be painted white using Crown Plus emulsion.

THIRTY BENT NAILS FOR ONE’S COFFIN (30)
Sol Rasputin made a final offer to his employee, and this came after a solemn refusal to utter any severance whatsoever. ‘Look here, Agent, I’m giving you fair warning of what a pub landlord means by “time, gentlemen please…” Will yonder Naxos correctly evaluate my drift? For – if Leo escapes at any future distance – then I’ll have no excuse but to dismiss you.’ In uttering this, though, an indelicate firmness became apparent in our proprietor’s jaw. Momentarily, he took on board a sullen aspect; and it was one that proved to be vaguely dour, termagant, minimalist, carefully guarded + inexpectant. Certainly, the seriousness of ownership or property weighed upon him in this
instant. Agent Naxos – by contrast – became ever so slightly crumpled and he bowed his head amid a variety of colour… all of it bordering on brilliant purple, copper, raw sienna and permanent rose. Behind him various tent-ropes sought out an abundant shore – what with fluffy clouds above and cerulean glimpsed roundabout. ‘It won’t subsist anew, I’ll tell ye; I contrive to wander on a full dish’s level’, mumbled our trainer. ‘Let’s see to its axis’, urges Sol.

THIRTY ONE MOUTHS (FEMININE) DEMAND FEEDING (31)
Now let us enter into a dream’s self-regard… if we bear in mind that Leonine Half’s contribution to a collective unconscious continues apace. It skims a surface of whipped cream (thereby); if only to return to a metronomic insistence. What rumbles are found to be afoot? Well! a figure entered a plateau via some hesitant gloom – only for Sol Rasputin to come across or discover one of his attendants (thence). He sported a ski mask which nestled adjacent to a top hat… much after the insistence of a movie from the nineteen twenties. His stick-figure’s makeover then glowered in pitch or shadow, and it answered to a call over unheralded mist. Agent Naxos made an approach in sweltering ebon and yet alive to such silences. His step looked rather shy under an off-cut or taffeta shade, since a hieroglyphic covered the floor. A concrete carpet (this was) which left a semiotic register in stone. Could it have encoded one of Saussure’s misstatements, perchance? Most particularly, when it realised that a runic alphabet had been chiselled out of such grief. Again, this nightmare heralded a secret universe of signs… primarily in a way which is free to provide an alternate encyclopaedia or its alphabet. For here – in the process of leaving the twentieth century – Peter Singer’s collected works came to litter one’s tram-lines. Surely, they provided a utilitarian codex when compared to Jeremy Bentham’s architectural drawings? These documents contained plans which spoke of his ideal or ‘humane’
prison: namely Panopticon. Each one had been executed in tinted prose.

THIRTY-TWO SECTIONS… WILL THEY SPEAK OF A MAD GOD? (32)

Less than a week or so passed before King Leo cut loose again from his contemporary confinement. Whereupon – and bounding forth from his cage or enclosure – he let out a triumphant ‘RRROOOAAARRR!’ Immediately, we find that various circus denizens scattered all around; in a conundrum whereby their footwear moved up and down on the loam. It more than characterised the liveliest of fashions. First up and upon the tarmac, our mirror man ran and jumped in order to avoid those teeth. Likewise, another joke-mask wearer or clown melted away from this leonine fury – he appeared to be graven to a Lon Chaney leer which characterised his film, *He Who Gets Slapped*, in 1924. Furthermore, the tasselled shoes and belfry of our jester or entertainer, named Joey, were seen to cart away speedily from any discomfort of this sort. Above this lofty zone or interlude, various clouds billowed and comported a cobalt-filter prior to dust.

PLACE A MIRROR ACROSS THIRTY-THREE CHAPTERS (33)

What does a lion, who is free of all natural constraints, actually dream about? You see, the world wildlife fund (or WWF) has succeeded beyond its wildest dreams, in that Leonine Half has come to despise all restraint. Even a Daniel has no need to enter his den or habitat, since with one minor leap the anti-zoo movement reaches its goal. (Do you realise that certain radical restorationists or greens – like Gayre of Gayre or Prince Phillip – were actually members of this fund?) But – to recap it all – a trespasser on a lion’s cage opened a door between two walls of stone… his name’s Agent Naxos. A white streak of light illuminated the way behind him, and it was superintended by a naked bulb. Did it wax existential; or prove itself to be in
concord with Buffet’s canvases from the nineteen fifties? Oh yes… because a multiple reflection occurred now; and it subsisted via the mannerisms of Pepper’s Ghost. A theatrical device (this) which illustrated or indicated presences… all of them illusory and subsumed by mirrors. Still, a squared tableau or exercise in tiling led away from this; it rather resembled a checker board minus its draughts. (A factor that shows up the handiwork or trellis-board of Leo’s cage). Could a travelling circus install a game without determination here; wherein White had to move against black… the latter coming near to being crowned at the board’s edge? At this particular second or moment, our tamer reached out towards his mirror-image… albeit over an opiate of steam. It looked like a bath’s reverse essence (withal); while one stopped reproduction continued to fall away from Magritte’s hand. It has been mutedly raised throughout. ‘Welcome, O traveller in pelts – all hail our beast King!’, heralded a voice.

THIRTY FOUR PAPER PELLETS (34)
Look you no further than this, now that a real Naxos’ Agent approached an uncaged lion! He wore khaki in a slightly mystified manner, and a blood-red cravat shimmered above our kraken’s wake. A brown bullet-case became evident at his belt; it doubtlessly accompanied a revolver in his fist. Our emperor bayed or ramped in its livery… all of it occurring rightwards or aslant a slide-show, and quite possibly its rectilinear tent. Some yokels would call it square. Didn’t it hold fast to a conspectus which bordered on burnt umbra or indo orange-cum-red? Most mightily, Agent Naxos had now come to stand on a dangerous mien --- one which lodged betwixt life and death/on a skeleton’s border. (An interested observer shall always recall the thirteenth tarot card – it denotes death and transformation). A perfumed sleeve touched his own when he was about to fire. Who should it be save Winged Rhea? She wore as a cover-all her high-wire or artiste’s costume; together with a large ornamental broach about the throat. It supported (in turn) a cape that came studded avec
sequins or stars. ‘Forbear from shooting your thunder-stick, Nax(.),’ she entreated --- by way of an imprecation or command!

A THIRTY FIFTH PARALLEL TO A BLAZING SCARAMOUCH (35)
To a furtherance of whose debt – albeit in a state of deshabille and dreaming – Agent Naxos entered into a space where Winged Rhea existed. A twinkling or stroboscopic spectacle now suffused her, wherein candle-light sparkled within a moon-beam’s intelligence. She wore a large voluminous dress which was made of purple plaid; it seemed to blurt out from beneath her corded waist… thereby underscoring something of a bell-jar. (Didn’t the mad poetess known as Sylvia Plath once pen a dispiriting volume so entitled?) Regardless of any of this, though, Winged Rhea wore on her head an enormous or floppy top-hat – a piece of head-gear that proved to be reminiscent of Dr. Seuss! A large hookah or bubble-pipe broiled away before her; it essentially indicated a hissing broth of cadmium green. Might it alternate, *en passant*, with various items whether they’re turquoise, pthalo, permanent, emerald, light, Hooker’s, sap or citrus green? Even though – if we want to be truthful about it – a sweet, sickly odour filled the air: it was probably a mixture of cherry tobacco, mint leaves or marijuana. Possibly our acrobat billowed ‘skunk’ around her in a gloomy enclosure of disco lights!

THIRTY SIX SEVERED SNAKE-HEADS (36)
Time and again before our chronicler an amazing adventure in the animal kingdom unfolded its bias to us. For – with a crowd of circus tourney-men gathered around her – Winged Rhea instructed Leo to return to his cage. Its fastness will have to contain his amplitude now and forevermore; particularly after a fashion which proved to be indicative of John Aspinall’s friendship with tigers. A situation within which he moulded, stroked, massaged or sculpted the fur of various Bengali cats with his fingers… and throughout this experience their mouths
were agape, their whiskers’ askance! To be truthful about it all, such a relationship must revolve around an inner warmth or the capturing of such a flame. Because magnificent primates (who are of an essential disposition) find themselves attracted to the inner core without any doubt. No subterfuge or camouflage can work with them --- by virtue of the fact that they discern absolutely a hub, kernel, root or nub to this matter. All ephemera falls away from them, therefore, in order to reveal a possession which is nought but love… or possibly the numinous. Here, we remain free to discover that human torch which strides at the heart of a high-wire star’s racination. What did the thinker Simone Weill say about an identity’s recurrent need?

A THIRTY-SEVENTH BROKEN EGG-CUP; ARE THEY OVER-TURNED? (37)

Yes indeed… for we find that Winged Rhea has puckered up her nose as a reaction to the pipe’s exhaustion of its hashish. She smiles obliquely at us now and her eyes look somewhat dulled, opaque, oblique, jam-packed, lissome or treacly. At last she seems to recognise Agent Naxos’ presence in front of her… even if it’s only to momentarily recall herself from any hint of drug misuse or decadence. ‘Hi, handsome one’, she lilts in an unnaturally deep voice. ‘Let’s be clear about all of this farrago: Professor Peter Singer’s discourse always favoured a coprophiliac intake above everything else. It remained the obverse to any robots’ rebellion posited by David Icke or any others… customarily. Verily and after, his various stunts all come apart in your hands and from every angle --- whether they canvas the reckoning of Green politics, civil libertarianism or campaigns for the Australian senate.’ Winged Rhea then stopped for a moment in order to relight her pipe-bottle or its pipette. It flickered in the darkness and she used a flaring taper to do it. ‘FFFPPP(!), now and again, my bean-pole --- cough, cough, cough --- if we examine these issues with any thoroughness then moralism proves to be the key. An otherwise broken or mysterious Yale in its lock – it betokens an illusory wandering
which is rather like the magic key in *Bluebeard*. It also indicates a Pharisaical or Khazar form of hubris *par excellence*. For – from the ghettos of Europe to Canberra – we can say with certainty that his is the hand which signed the paper. Oh yesss’, she puffed incautiously on her marijuana stem, ‘such whited sepulchres abound in the present liberal purview. Truly, such whetstones require thirty pieces of silver to be paid yet again before loaning it out on the crash.’ With this she closed her eyes… while sucking meaningfully on a hubble-bubble’s sweetness. It laced the air with musk.

**THIRTY-SEVEN PLUS ONE INDICATES THIRTY-EIGHT** (38)

Back at our travelling circus, however, King Leo reverted to his cage’s nearest doorway and all of this took place at a mistress’ insistence. Might she prove to be the ring-master of these deluded tokens… albeit at one remove from her fancy? Once again and all, our marionettes continue to allow a floppy or pantomime lion to resile from this performance. For, whether we choose to question *The Wizard of Oz’s* textbook or not, Leo finds himself enfiladed from every side. Could it really all be part of Baum’s inheritance? Never mind, since our muppet resumes his boiler-house position after a fashion that necessarily revolves around one of Don Segal’s films like *Escape From Alcatraz*. Irrespective of every other moment, however, his woolly head counted up all the metal bars to either side of him… might this be considered to illustrate a philosophical enquiry? Moreover, the king of the beasts has a yellow flesh-tone and it refuses to engage with any impertinence – irrespective of whether Leo’s pelt wanders towards lemon by way of azo, cadmium or brilliant. In response to which, Winged Rhea bows her head solemnly or with a respectful nod. ‘Listen to an ablution’s cortex, O my Leo! My King, stay within this balustrade or a chorus of unwelcome gold. Do you hear? Agent Naxos meant no enemy intent by dint of his intervention; nor should one speak rashly of his luger, my child. Because our symphonic music always has the power to
calm the savage breast… Needless to say, let it also cause us to entreat a remedy from a nodding donkey’s direction… primarily so that you remain inside Rowolt’s cube.’ (Do you recall him to be the crazed scientist in Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis*)? Throughout all of this interview, *inter alia*, Winged Rhea’s glamorous head knelt down in a manner which was both restrained, obliging, cautious and clear-cut. She even enunciated her words in a way similar to the young Elisabeth Taylor.

**A THIRTY-NINTH CUBICLE FOR THE BRAIN (39)**

Examine this evidence, my brethren! For – in the depths of Leo the Lion’s dreams – his would-be trainer confronts Winged Rhea in a ganja-laced atmosphere. (Does one take time out to reminisce that a bewinged Goddess appears with a lion on pieces of Attic vase or pottery? Both are surrounded by sunwheels, gammadions, hooked crosses or swastikas). When hitherto and all, Agent Naxos’ shadow was found to cast itself abroad on brillianine brick – the latter an example of a criss-crossed board holding up various illuminations. Momentarily, we find that Winged Rhea’s face had become grimaced or coruscated in its downwards glow. Might it, perchance, be gloom? Whereupon a pronounced whiff of marijuana blew up around her pipe… the smoke of which briefly glazed her eyes shut. ‘Where was I?’, she mused. ‘Ah yes, it comes back to my cerebral cortex gently… For one of Professor Singer’s later wheezes has been philanthropy, in a scenario where he advocates that everyone must give a tenth of their income to the poor. Why (?), basically so that he can wag his finger against those who don’t. Exactly as it sounds, *mon ami*, it relates to previous postulates…” ‘Such as?’, quizzed the lion tamer. ‘Oh, weeeellll, it all revolves around issues like the non-consumption of meat, vegetarianism shading into veganism, a refusal to wear fur --- all that compost. Most assuredly, the British Union Against Vivisection (or BUAV) comes uppermost to our minds over its advocacy of a ban on animal testing. It’s completely opposed to it.’ ‘Medical testing?’, infers one’s tamer. ‘Obviously, my man, have you been listening
to any of the words that I’ve uttered?’, demanded a quixotic countess. Pot fumes then passed out of her ears with this veritable salvo… POP!

FORTY FROZEN MIRRORS HELD IN SNOW… (40)
Back at the circus we find that Sol Rasputin, Winged Rhea and Agent Naxos are all deep in conversation with one another. Their heads exist in slow-motion or rather like the delayed exposure of Muybridge’s prints – at least in relation to one’s penumbra. Could they be described as a coconut shy at a fun-fair, collectively speaking? A game of chance (this was) where the fruit – prior to being fired at – came adorned with masks or the painted faces of sundry clowns. Each of these visages is then shot at and knocked off in a way which was either full frontal or diametrically positioned side-to-side. A waxen or wicker enclosure and a series of tents adorn this carnival’s backdrop; it all comes, when one thinks about it, to look like those stands at Henley Regatta in south Oxfordshire. ‘Goddamn – and even tickle-boo – it’s the weirdest sight I ever spied on’, roared Sol Rasputin. ‘I tell you: all my years on these boards, Agent, and I’ve never cozened aught like it. Quite clearly, my girl, our multiple escapee loves you as much as such affection’s reciprocated. Still, in all tarnation, it remains a unique visitation or a calling down of lightning to the earth.’ Sol Rasputin’s hotly expressed feelings were quite clearly sincere, even though he seemed to be slightly out of breath. He also refused to embrace Schwarzkogler’s actionism from post-modern art in the ‘seventies… he preferred to recall the Reverend James Hinton to his standard instead. Rather than any of these prevarications, then, he left a thick rolled cigar chomping at its bit. For hadn’t Winged Rhea succeeded in coaxing King Leo back to his cage by the power of her voice alone?

FORTY-ONE CHEWED DOLL’S-HEADS (41)
Although we have occasion to notice that Leo’s unconscious still flowed by us – via an alternate river-bend on the valley floor.
Can we really assert it as cleverly as this? You bet on our notification regarding it... For one’s in-depth analysis finds that Winged Rhea’s drug-taking has reached new depths of abandonment. Does a refined audience choose to recall the Hollywood film *Reefer Madness*; or Kenneth Anger’s *Hollywood Babylon*, (volumes one and two) ... reliably so? Despite this ever-present build-up, she swooned in an apportioned silence – if only to prevent an over-flowing Eros from budding. ‘Ah yes’, she remarked, with her head surveying it all from a buzzing or rubicund enclosure. It sought to represent a form of ‘enlightenment’ which altered her evidently or physically... at least in terms of drug usage. Because a prior intoxicant strove to fill the face’s focus, and this was by packing it to the gills. How do her features appear to us, then? Well! They take on a partiality which is at once fazed, slightly incomplete, torpid, dull, treacly, honey-pot like or otherwise stupefied. Also, her looks similarly betray a drunken or eddying self-satisfaction --- that much is evident to all. (You see, someone who’s making use of junk or heroin like Kate Moss, for example, wouldn’t be capable of the moves which are attributed to her in Marc Quinn’s sculpture... particularly when we recognise that this Liverpudlian artist specialises in ‘politically correct’ classicism). To begin again in our affidavit of days: ‘Are you following this spiel, Agent Naxos? For – if sentience happens to be Professor Singer’s key or hum-dinger – then dysfunctional humanoids must be knifed or a finger shall be hacked off their corse, in turn. It effectively reimburses Professor Moriarty’s gambit in *A Woman in Green* – a quality B-movie of yesteryear which entertained the masses during the early nineteen thirties. Albeit for a brief instant, Rhea breaks off her chat and this is in order to suck up various hashish vapours. Momentarily – in accord with one’s phantasm or magic camera – a visage forms above her head. It transposes its currency from some heightened or in any way coloured squares. Bilaterally – and in parallel to a turn of the century theosophy – one of those late nineteenth century busts swims into view. Could it be manufactured from delicate white porcelain and attest
to various brain functions which cover the scalp? It’s all got to do with the early Victorian proto-science of Phrenology; as it came to be outlined in hemp’s mist.

FORTY-SECOND STREET: A HARPOONING THROUGH THE OTHER’S VITALS… (42)
‘How dare you call yourself an animal trainer!’, expostulated Winged Rhea through a scarlet mist. ‘You’ve obviously got no idea of how to handle a grown-up alley cat… especially when this creature of the night is wide awake. Now listen to the affidavit or barrister’s statement which I place before you… For such a mission in its sightlessness accords a witness to these scenes… in a tableau wherein a lion rampant buries the hatchet otherwise hidden in a serpent’s tail. It rears up in mock-solemnity and looked like a dinosaur that had been crossed with a horse. Or – by possible inference – could it really embroider a hippocriff in terms of heraldic design; never mind a creature of mouth and sky? Also, a vertebra languishes inside a taped square: it finds some accompaniment within stretched leather and to one side. You transfix the pelt-like with inadequacy’. Whilst we find that Agent Naxos – at whom this particular Aunt Sally was directed – refused to utter a decibel. (Do we have occasion to navigate around those ferocious and Catholic paintings, in impasto, by Roualt? They referred to Aunt Sallies!) In accord with a knockabout, like the one decried, Naxos’ profile etched an entry in a fun-fair’s shy. A process within which his Ziganov cigarette poked downwards in a holder; it indicates defeat when positioned on a Bishop’s diagonal.

FORTY-THREE FEEDS SEVEN NUMEROLOGICALLY: A SIGIL FOR CREATIVE EXCELLENCE (43)
Our female artiste doubtlessly continues to swoon within the rigours of her own mind. Furthermore, such an attitude necessarily debases itself before a group of armed men or over a SWAT team; but only in relation to a body’s blue kaleidoscope… a scenario where each one sweats on its
neighbours’ vantage-point. Indifferently so, when we consider that Naxos’ mute hand waves away everything abreast of it; it slants or dives ahead of any concupiscence it might entertain. While, all about our caricatures or *dramatis personae*, an etheric swirl limbers up… it’s a leyden jar or a shaken ice-crystal which involves pink and grey mist as it does so. When – in terms of any factual matter – Winged Rhea has begun a disappearing act that was rather like a beautiful magician’s assistant. A denizen of Garrick’s stage or a vaudeville turn (she found herself to be) who would be cut in half or locked into iron-maidens later on… irrespective of any justice achieved, thereby. May her sibilant and oft used voice get fainter and fainter, by the by? ‘Adjust yourself to my Parthian shot’, she trilled. ‘For Professor Singer evinces a thorough-going hostility when it comes to freaks. No ghoulish *Victoriana* raises itself on his behalf: a situation whereby giants, dwarves, beggar-cripples, siamese twins, bearded ladies, and even a limbless human slug, caper in a Comus rout. No, by any and all contrary means, a garden of these supplicants can’t be found to rescue his philosophy from oblivion. He’s essentially become addicted to their destruction, even though both Singer and Kevorkian wax freakish themselves… after the multiplication of Artaud’s theatre of cruelty. This is because either one or the other of these dysgenic figurines supports abortion, infanticide and euthanasia against the disabled. Can one visualise it --- at least in part --- as a Jew’s and an Armenian’s form of cosmic revenge? Might it turn out to be the ultimate exercise in revisionism?’

**FORTY-FOUR MEASURES EIGHT IN NUMBER THEORY… POSSIBLY IT’S INFINITY’S WEALTH & POWER? (44)**

Aghast at all of this, Winged Rhea stood toe-to-toe with the circus proprietor who was known as Sol Rasputin. He refused to dispel a thoughtful impression whether one way or the other – while his orbs continued to slant about a concentrated cheroot. It puffed on regardless… and rather like a factory chimney in an L.S. Lowry print. Whereas right next to him two crates rose up
which were salient to an observable eye-line; or possibly they could serve as a companion to their limited vision? Can it be disinterred as such? Behind these two jesters without a pox several white marquees filled a tableau which was reminiscent of folk art – or, *ceteris paribus*, they chose to illustrate some of Billy Morey’s spectral playgrounds. They also had a tendency to concentrate on femininity *a la* Taschen’s *A Thousand Nudes*. Moreover, an orange sky didn’t discourage Rhea from standing afore him – albeit with her ebon hair bobbed and sleek in a nine ball’s turnabout. Perhaps the woman’s inclination to reminisce involved a peek-a-boo, or one of those devices which are redolent of sea-side amusements. (Note: a peek-a-boo is to be found down on the pebble beaches in Sheppey, north Kent, as well as elsewhere in the vicinity, and it consists of a body which is painted onto two-sided boards). All of this leads up to a hole that finds its circumference cut out of some balsa therein, and boys and girls then pop up in order to outface their neighbour. Remember: in folkish art, and in every form of carny or fun-fair – can’t we hear the people’s voice writ large?

**FORTY-FIVE SLICES OF CAKE: WHERE’S A GINGER-BREAD MAN’S LIMBS? (45)**

Meanwhile – and in the confines of an animal’s mind – Winged Rhea began to enunciate an exalted turnabout in the air. Why so? It proved to be merely a case of wanting to swivel within these glassy panes. Were they allegedly simulated; or might she be floating off autogyro and all? Could it also amount to the cumulative effect of so much marijuana (?) – primarily in accord with Paul Bowles’ mental landscapes under a sheltering sky. (To Agent Naxos’ dissident recollection, a miniature Elizabethan piece by Peter Warlock had already succeeded in freezing the air). ‘Let’s look at it this way from afar’, called out our Diana in a tremolo – for wasn’t the latter usage just a different version of her name? It merely originated from another or a Roman notion concerning the same civics. ‘Peter Singer’s entire philosophy revolves around an attempt to avoid suffering. It runs contrary to
Richard Wagner’s thinking and correlates more with *Parsifal* than *The Jew in Music*.

When we remember that Singer’s *oeuvre* (or meta-ethic) refuses to acknowledge artistic or religious feeling in its utilitarian bias. It apportions a desiccated or half-formed Lot/criterion. Can’t it really be dismissed as a viewpoint which is half-alive?’ With this formulation of her position, Rhea began to disappear from view. (Moreover, all neutral commentators must take on board the fact that Rhea was Zeus’ mother next to Artemis… mythologically speaking). She came to be interpreted subsequently as a child of both the moon and chaos. Was she found to be moving surreptitiously in flaxen-haired Phoebe’s direction? To be honest about his response – Agent Naxos hurled out a sovran and gloved hand which soon confronted his own visage on unsullied glass. This was because – at once simultaneously and within rising mist – a clear refraction emerged that registered nought save ear-pounding blood.

**FORTY-SIX HALF-FACES MAKE UP A LUNAR PICNIC**

Let us guess again over Rhea’s left-wing and Sol Rasputin’s unguarded conversation with each other. ‘Why don’t you choose to examine any fatalism that remains?’, she enjoined. ‘I know, Sol, about your granting one last happenstance to Leo King… or, quite alternatively to the above, Half Leonine would then be free to follow us to an early grave. But – I tell you in all honesty – if he departs then so do I bag and baggage.’ In reply to such an occasioned summons, S. Rasputin merely furrowed his brow. Did it coruscate to a fleeting instant; or might its forecast leaven all grease-paint? ‘Cease your itinerant banter, sister’, mused our circus owner. ‘I understand the levity of your forgotten fusillade. For – without supplication or entreaty – a black box seems to open up the recesses of a lion’s soul. Doesn’t the Roman Catholic & Apostolic church declare that animals don’t possess one? *Ergo*, it can resemble the calligraphy of an immature or
feminine heart when set against a checkered relief. In such circumstances, then, its graphology curls with over-statement or it passes away before one’s liquorice… even its under-lining. Yet, in relation to Richard’s overall Lionheart, I appreciate your grief. If you care enough about this Beast-king to save its life a la Aspinall, then I will tolerate it in my Big Top a little longer.’

FORTY-SEVEN SKULL EMPLACEMENTS (47)
In truth, Mister Kurtz remained free to dream on about his death in Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness. Might this happen to be because our pantomime lion has long ceased to cascade its particular memories? Do you continue to take on board or reckon about a significant pause – in terms of computer diction? This is especially the case when a golden-syrup’s lion can’t imprison meaning within a thick impasto… given that its paws are attempting to grab a crayon. Needless to say, such a diction tempts a casual critic to utter a diseased nomenclature; it understands that Auerbach’s or Gilman’s paintings don’t steal a final conflict by their thickness. Still – in conclusion – we happen to recall that one of Artemis’ morphs was a lion.

FORTY-EIGHT PARALLELS BEGIN WITH A CONDENSER BATTERY OR AN ELECTRICAL CIRCUIT. IT CARRIES ABROAD A RAINING HEAD, ONE WHICH HAS BEEN SCREWED INTO ITS IMPERMANENCE. (48)
For several weeks following on from this, then, nothing untoward occurred whatsoever. Our troupe settled down once more and Leonine’s King refused to break out of his cage. Suddenly – on one such sleepy occasion – everything changed base-about-apex within this dreaming citadel or people’s palace. (Surely, you are in a position to recognise circus’ unique position in mass art?)

For, on one special evening in September, Winged Rhea tripped on the high-wire above her available audience. She staggered, swayed involuntarily aslant the multitude, and began to fall.
Powerful arc-lamps illumined her penumbra’d drop and all of it took place high up inside the main tent. An auditorium --- this couldn’t help but be --- which came inundated with a mixture of canvas sacking and stout teak poles. Simultaneously, the crowd around her began to scream or react… and they betrayed the semblance of a sea of faces plus hats. By no sort of coincidence, though, King Leo bounded loose from his cage at this very moment. (You see, a clown or one of the company’s orderlies had been trying to close his prison door… all of it to no avail). He certainly made up this yardage in a matter of seconds, and probably gained entry into the Big Top by means of a side flap. Once inside – and within a flash of twenty more seconds – he emerged abreast of this festival’s inner ring or artiste’s enclosure. (Against or contrary to its citadel, a robust mast with an attendant rope and pulley rippled to the ceiling). Unerringly now, our magnificent animal seemed to detect Artemis’ point of impact with the saw-dust strewn beneath her. As quick as lightning or an electrostatic start (thereupon), he made for that very spot. Winged Rhea, meanwhile, sailed through the air almost like a diver whose gymnastic artistry mirrored Leni Riefenstahl’s depiction of it in *Olympia*. Within a trice, however, Leo grabbed up the safety-net in his mouth and he moved it across so as to slantingly break his mistress’ descent. What he seemed to have spotted – like no-one else present – was the discrepancy between the netting’s placement and her downward trajectory. Thankfully, the mesh broke her sky-diving so as to leave her with bruising and nought else. Bravo, King Leo – you’ve saved the day!

A FORTY-NINTH PARALLEL, EVEN WITHOUT AN EPILOGUE (49)

Two hours later we find that the Ring-master and circus proprietor, Sol Rasputin, Winged Rhea and the beast tamer, Agent Naxos, are all stood before Leo’s enclosure. It’s ready for anything. He (the Lion King) looked on with a rueful aspect. Both of the men were smiling broadly and this was irrespective
of any previous postures – perhaps even in spite of them. ‘No-one can dispense with our leonine monarch’s services now’, beamed Rasputin’s sole survivor. ‘Doesn’t he recollect that, *inter alia*, a Strong Man’s boards always find themselves etched around by painted gilt on a trellis? It habituates us to a London fair, carnival or folkish amusement which is similar to the one that Hogarth depicted in Southwark in 1733. Or – quite possibly – it’s more reminiscent of Chas & Dave? Anyway, Leonine Half’s well and truly earnt his pewter mug (or cup) on this particular sideboard. No-one will insult your memory ever again. You’ve definitely spun some testimony as a ‘Circus Hero’ and no mistake!’ ‘Do you hear its rain-dance?’, lilted Artemis to her astrological *alter ego*, namesake and companion. ‘In one stroke you have effectively undone Savitri Devi’s impeachment, (sic), and none shall fear our future together now.’ ‘It’s unique to us’, growled the lion.

*END*
NAPALM BLONDE
a tragedy

FIRST DEBENTURE (1)
Our impresario straightened up his jacket and tie – if only to place two fists upon cuffs which mocked green’s latitude. Again, either hand wrestled with the red tie that moved like a bishop, diagonally, across a black-shirt’s front. Abel Cummings certainly liked the look of himself in this mirror, in that his visage betokened a mixture which wrestled with distaste. Mentally speaking, he thought that he detected Rudolf Valentino in Blood and Sand; but, in actuality, the twitching moustache and all-ebon hair looked alive before indifference. A crimson wall patterned an atmosphere which led away from these participants, with a doorway revealing an orange semblance. A row of metal cases resembling a gymnasium locker-room slid along one wall, in such a way as that they were ignored. In the foreground, however, a beautiful woman powdered her face by dint of a compact. Its colour mushrooms to a complacent grey in lieu of purple; the internal mirror of which doubtless helped to afford a response. In appearance, her blonde visage lit up this template – at once according to a new Artemis’ spiral, and primarily so as to collect all vestiges of passion and reallocate them in one spot. Don’t certain astronomers believe that a powerful glass can refract the sun’s rays to a sacred point – there to char the earth? + Anyway, her face sloped away towards a latitudinarian dome… can it be true? Quod each eye-brow arched up like a doll’s stillness – at least in terms of one chiselled magnificence. She was definitely prepared to play games with her husband’s manager… a character whose straight-jacketed form stood behind her. The woman’s auburn hair came parted over to the left; and it acknowledged the impediment of flame that caroused down her back. Any illumination which she encountered, however, could always be reflected away by those blue head-lamps. Because her eyes came to resemble azure discs that
looked like marbles – each one contained in its slot. Her lips, on
the other hand, sucked up peaches so as to leave their gloss…
and each parted indent understood its yearning. Do you see? (A
million vamps have already died in order to cross over from this
carriage-way). Any road up, she wore a low-cut dress which
amply showed off her bosom and shoulders… before it swept
away like evening attire. Let’s see now: her name has to be
Scaramouch Ruby --- but some prefer to call this diva by an
original suffix, namely Lupin.

A SECONDARY OR PERFUMED LOTUS (2)
“How can you stick to the affidavit of his witness?”, chortled
Abel Cummings gleefully. “Your mugwump’s fingers rot before
the attention of their wrath, particularly when they are given
leave to transpose themselves. How’s that achieved, my
chickadee? Why, it’s simply unchecked – leastways in terms of
an iron-maiden which closes upon a replica. Can one really find
oneself consumed by that red velvet, so as to cancel one
existence before transporting onto a next stop? NOOOO!, a
Gustav Thorak lineament may rise abreast of a glass-case, nearly
always contained in the Royal College of Surgeons, south
Kensington. But who cares, my duck? Our witness goes on to
taste other fruit from this unripe tree! Moreover, the front of this
gine bears a mausoleum’s tincture. It presumes to invest only
in the bad – primarily to reveal a mask. This grins on skeletally;
basically so as to chomp on in terms of an ossuary’s
encrustations. Likewise, our sarcophagus’ face glimmers from
beneath a shimmer of loadstar.”
+
“What rubbish you talk!”, interrupted the woman sharply. “My
man’s strength lies in the reptilian curdle of so much speed,
essentially so as to perfect entry into a space as confined as this.
For – despite those masques of envy which uncover our rapture –
no-one wants to recognise such matters. All that concerns a
femme fatale like me, Abel, are the muscles, tendons and
appended glands of a He-man. Let his remaining protuberances
be Fate’s affair! Especially in a situation where a wired-up saurian or a pterodactyl-head gains entry. May it gibber and trespass across the simulacrum of these days!”

ONE DOLL’S-HEAD TRANSPORTS GREEN (3)
During this encounter, then, Abel Cummings has been getting nearer and he finally cozened Ruby into a clinch. His hand strayed meaningfully over her arm and breast, while she reacted like a film-star that had not been stung. What really passed through the management of his senses? Why, it pointed to the turquoise backdrop which provided a livery throughout. Also – in his mind’s eye – Scaramouch spoke of one demonic interlude or quite possibly a Devilina. This saw her (most definitely) aprey to all manner of lusts and at once triumphant against a light green background that milked its own haze. To the rear of her stood a grinning Lucifer – like in the Tarot card – whose beard limned a blackness amid silver but was otherwise a shimmering scarlet. His arms were folded and a brief stepping-stone of skulls ran away from him. These seemed to surround the neighbourhood, albeit by tapering away into mist. In the foreground, his would-be paramour rose erect with a cloak of purple silk trailing away behind her like a grail. To be more accurate about it, though: this approach seemed somewhat mixed in terms of its fortune, in that silver bedazzled her cloak’s outside or hem. Meanwhile, the bone-structure of some lineaments covered her boots; the latter approaching along a serpentine array of steps. Along by this mortar-board, however, various pythons, salamanders, minor dragons, hippocritfs, constrictors, boas and other worms all curled and uncurled. They did so next to a blood-red day-light. Simultaneously with the above, however, Scaramouch Ruby nee Lupin was completely naked – if we except thigh-high boots, a G-string and a low-cut bra between-times. It swallows an absence of pride; being diaphanous or see-through in its construct. Above all though, her skin glimmers to an absence of fat; in a scenario where its outermost lustre waxes to bronze. Most certainly, her envelope looks undusted, replete, tanned,
golden-skinned and splendid in its apertures. If we consider this with certainty – then the dimples or curves in her body sport a skeleton’s delay. These effectively look out on each other’s absences in order to reveal one voluptuous fact. Namely… this had to do with a Luciferian sign or sigil over her vulva. It betokened a heavy response which proved to be full, limpid, spent and unattainable.

A coiled emerald python has already begun to wrap itself around her left boot (betimes).

A SEVERED HEAD’S LIP-STICK (4)
Let us listen to Scaramouch Ruby’s spiel: “Drear one, Antonin Artaud’s theatre of cruelty cannot satisfy our estrangement from one another. No sir; since your touch blossoms on my arm like the sting of a wasp. Have a care, my enforcer, for you never know when my husband might appear. Do you stand out before the witness of these fates or what others call Weird? Because his hand may cascade through a teak door… superficially, such a mantle looks cerulean and taloned. It apportions a mesmerism in terms of its spikes… and the inner part of the under-arm suggests dimples. Could it indicate something elephantine (or Hulk-like) looming up in the distance and shattering all barriers? You may well cavil like a mountebank, Abel, in that your red-and-yellow dressing-gown appears more inappropriate than ever now. I – in accordance with one chance – wear a fiercely cut lemon dress. It speaks of a refulgent summer-time and shows off my excellent legs. Meanwhile, I continue to scream and scream. Do you hear it echoing inside an Aztec’s skull of polished lapis lazuli? While behind us four bookshelves slope away; they indicate those volumes which one should never read. Is it possible to detect Oswald Spengler’s The Decline of the West amongst them?”

ONE JEREMIAD FILTERS ITS SAND (5)
Throughout all of this, Abel Cummings has been manoeuvring Scaramouch Ruby towards the wall. They have yet to land on
their feet, but both of them press up against a rectilinear incline most impurely. It tapers away from their longitudinal plane in silence. Most assertively, a crystalline palisade refuses to come between them – it limits rather than accentuates their approach. “My fondest chickadee”, he purrs, “all you have to do is summon me to be a witness at your enslavement. Yes indeed… our elopement can be the configuration of a new imprisonment. Recognise this item: it speaks to our most profound sentiments about an elaborate canaille --- one with a dragon’s motif. Assuredly sweetie-pops, for a Dominican in his head-gear strides towards Hieronymous Bosch’s definition of Hell. It looks out from a vista, template or museum-piece. Do you credit its wondrous abundance? Because the half-torso of a giant lies in the foreground; it prejudges the operation of Jack’s Beanstalk. Wherein the latter impermanence of his trunk betrays a thousand battles – it also speaks to those midget dots within his fastness. Quite clearly now, our hippy-god has roots of clay: most of them skating in boots on linear parchment. Whereupon – on his own part – this White juggernaut looks down on an extravaganza. Various out-buildings seem to be on fire in the background… but one comes to mind in particular. Why so? It might have something to do with a fluted creature in one’s nearest vicinity; in a scenario where its belly appears to be distended or Haggis-like. Truly and again, Poppy; our fluted pixie looks like its playing a musical instrument from its own snout.”

“Don’t fret by happenstance, my duck”, coos Abel ever so sweetly. “A terrain of lost skeletons has to impinge on our dottiness. Come away with me to a distraint isle – there to dwell upon the wonder of beetles. Let’s forsake this dreariness for a new temperature all alone!”

“But do you mean anything in the pluperfect tense, my mountebank?”, she responded. “It all gathers one query too many into this croupier’s net. What can be asked for which might pass through such a magic mirror… only to possibly skewer a warlock
afterwards? I want something, most definitely and assertively, yet can I recall its nature?”

“Abbreviate your silence to a spider’s whisper, my sister”, he answered. “I remain all ears. In this throw of the dice a double six must eventuate… no matter how hard you throw your craps. Why don’t you take out those blue eyes and polish them again --?”

“Well, come to think of it”, she pushed back in gladiatorial battle, “a sword-thrust into the belly does require some sort of remedy. Entreat any wish you want from a pin-ball machine’s lucky manoeuvre. Hast thou ever heard of Jerzy Kosinski’s version or novel?”

[Scaramouch Ruby (nee Lupin) suddenly blurts out in a manner which is much alarmed: “What’s that attendant sound? I fear its doleful and abiding toll… doesn’t it reverberate like thunder in the mountains? By Loki’s testicles, MY HUSBAND HAS ARRIVED!”]

In a moment of inter-cutting or continuity, she starts to scream before our screen goes blank. It momentarily customises such a black eddy.

SECOND DEBENTURE (6)
Looking upon a travelling stratagem o’ strangers...
Most assuredly, we have to cut off the fat from this gristle before we can properly live. For Scaramouch’s mate or husband, Runter Bog, had made an unexpected appearance. In deportment he came stripped to the waist; in a manner which is hulk-like, troglodytic and threatening. It glowers in the light of an unapprised dawn. Do you detect its mesmeric charm? Yes truly and a day; when we understand that he recalls Frankenstein’s monster – namely, one who has been put together in charnel houses. This all came to illustrate spent passages of flesh which
were themselves unglued and altogether indicative, replete and Mastodon-like. Maybe something about Sidney Nolan’s paintings of the Australian bandit, Ned Kelly, come to mind? (One picture stands out in particular: it depicts ‘Ned’ next to a bathing beauty and abreast of all of these circumstances… as well as being captured in bright light). Meanwhile, Runter careered on towards the other two --- in a situation where his arms betrayed a matrimonial imbalance. A factor that was best delineated by great hams hanging down… albeit without any mercy whatsoever. Needless to say, he definitely incarnated a Gothic form: although its interpretation proved to be more roughly hewn than anything else. Didn’t it portray itself as prehensile, roughened, rather concrete and somewhat other than smoothly textured? Certainly, it betokened an extravaganza which demarcated Gustav Thorak’s arching torsos or Ayn Rand’s novel, *Atlas Shrugged*. Let us be certain of our ground before proceeding… for Bog’s hair wrapped around orange matting and it shaded into brown. In relation to his advent – and next to a primitively carved table – both of the captured couple staggered back. They (Scaramouch Ruby and Abel Cummings) could not credit what had eventuated; and Cummings lost all composure by putting his paw up to his forehead in exasperation. His eyes became distended or misapplied now; whereas a tangerine tie was seen to filter around his neck like a scarf. Behind him, Scaramouch put up a dainty mitten to her mouth – it dissembled likewise over its camp and chiselled air. But – in all actuality – her bodice heaved and she evinced very real fear. The girl’s cleavage became more and more exposed in her anxiety, and she began to look wretched… even ugly in terms of a feminine mood swing. Yes again now; a warning has to be issued like a clarion at this point, in that a golden halo exists above our characters. It found its habitat transfigured by a magenta glow which levelled off into some reddish cabinets. They were locker-room cubes or mantles made of steel.

+
“NOOOOO!”, hinted Abel Cummings --- a manikin who is more than merely affrighted. Truly, if he had been wearing grey flannels then they would have turned brown by now! “Leave us not bereft, killer”, he insisted. “No-one wished to trespass on any adulterous witness. Dear me, my man, you have aggressively grasped the wrong end of a damaging stick with main force. It looks bad admittedly, but none can really arrange for an auction to be enacted using their own souls. Rely on me, Strong-man, not to sully your family’s escutcheon with salt-petre.”

Runter Bog merely grunted like a cheetah by way of some sort of response. While Scaramouch Ruby succeeded in putting a perfumed glove to her cheek… and howled: “EEEEK!”

SKELETONS HANG IN SIGNORELLI’S GARDEN (7)
In this Man-beast’s enclosure, a fitfulness began to crank up its peradventure all alone. Although incapable of rational thought on his own, consciously speaking, Runter Bog did possess an imp of the perverse on his left shoulder. Or might it actually be characterised as an imp of the reverse? In any event, it happened to be through this spectral rook --- whose mind cascaded like sand --- that Bog could utter: “Sadistic tarantulas, my rush to bloodshed is your obliviousness to assault. Furthermore, you sought to trap me in the viaducts of a recurrent distaste. Do not regret my slicing of this balaclava in half: since now I know of the truth which lurks behind your vizors. Liberals or ne’er-do-wells like you regard marriage as purely contractual – whereas, in a realistic compass, it speaks of unholy or primordial Gods! It has to relate to a matter that pursues an archaic and forgotten novel called The Divine and the Decay. Yet again, a festival of blood or haemoglobin must materialise after a mask’s seizure, and before these gates of spume. Such a rigmarole inhabits one fossilised entity after another, in particular in a manner which illustrates a fetish or an ogre in the British Museum. Let’s consider it from another angle (altogether): in that an Oceanic piece of head-gear from New Britain witnesses our intent.
Surely, we may speak of a ‘Rainings’ masque which opens up the cases in the Pitt-Rivers museum to a wider inspection? It delimits sunlight and the adventure of the morn – only by then closing off one breach with indistinctness. Rather than an unutterable witness such as this… each eye spirals like a totem before its pole, though. It wages war on silent lots which are held over in the ground… in a scenario where a caterpillar’s stitch entreats against its web design. Might such a chameleon pull off one covering in order to reveal a spheroid, or even a surgical plaster-cast? It reminds us of one of those medicinal heads or porcelain skulls that find themselves used by alternative therapy. Each example can do no more than hint at phrenology’s calling-card.”

REVENGE, REVENGE: WITNESS A BOUNCING BALL (8)
Following on from this momentum or dementia praecox… Runter Bog snorted in order to reveal a rhino beneath his skin. It definitely sought to trigger the blue touch-paper or mount to a crescendo of sparks. Let’s listen in upon his earworm/commentary: “Avaunt thee, my despair shall eviscerate you like a rag doll! Do not doubt the strength which lurks in these robotic thews, limbs and loins! My pleasure encompasses the pain that I will inflict on your unhallowed slips. Such envelopes leave me cold all over and no mistake – truly, my diverse loves! Will I quit your company free and able to salt away your millions now? Without doubt or hindrance, I remain liable to pick up an axe from amidst a plentitude of roughage – each one lies like roots alongside its fellows. They are a dull grey in colour and at once spangled to iron --- whereupon every other halberd finds itself sprouting from adjacent skulls. A red nimbus shifts around these available points of the compass… only then to experience what we might call an indulgent warp. I pick up one of these graven and two-headed blades; its salutary usage shall do more than enough to obviate yonder mouse-traps. Look upon these smoking tubes forevermore! Let us choose to leaven a miscellany of fallen mallets and connect them to a trope which
leads directly to *The Boys from Brazil*. Sufficient unto the day that a cosmic foetus is born under Ligeti’s signature… for I crouch in the shadows before raising a wilting axe-head. It comes out somewhat magisterially ahead of one’s spore – albeit if only to mount a ventriloquist’s scaffolding in the background. Especially if it mantles off towards a spectral pumice or blue – after the example of Goethe’s colour theory. I mount the bludgeon in its starkness and it repeats its coinage *ad infinitum*. It comes as an exclusive or bell-weather rejoinder to Rene Magritte’s painting about a stopped reproduction.”

**RUN, RATS & MICE: YOU CANNOT HIDE IN THESE MAZES (9)**

Meanwhile, a transfigured Abel Cummings spirits himself down secluded corridors such as the ones described. In this reliable foretaste or disclosure, his feet rebound and echo on steel-shod floors. Do they reverberate towards a returned definition of concrete? Might skeletal and bony hands grasp at his ankles as they pass? Let’s throw a dice to find out! In any event, Cummings launches himself into space amid floating motes of light and dust… all of which constellate around his starboard entry. From a distance away he appears to be stripped to the waist, but this need not necessarily be the case. Around his temples, though, a laurel wreath was found to garland its supply: it sort of institutionalises him as a Roman emperor. May he be one of the later ones who happened to dwell in Gibbon’s chronicle? He certainly slid aft in a serpentine manner. Never mind about all that, though: since in mid-sentence (or via a full pelt) he spells out a necessary grievance.

+ “The homunculus known as Runter Bog has gotten free in order to plague us. It runs in and out of those traps ahead of us and amid shifting iron. We must post a witness to our treatment by it; one which radiates outwards against these particular bath-tiles. They must have occasion to splinter over a sapphire’s reluctant entrance… even though his revenge stalks abroad as clear as the
day he was born. It grasps the stanchion of each posting without a nervous tread; and two mittens then flex at this scythe’s swing afore sunrise.”

STRAIGHT AS AN ARROW (10)
Now, Scaramouch Ruby finds herself given leave to speak, albeit over the din of a cascading dream. One arrow-spit then spears towards its target; if only to land a certitude or a bull’s-eye without effort. “See!”, she hisses, “a run of hate leads him to carom onwards. Why doesn’t one look at it this way (?); his figurine has become resultantly hunched up within these particular towers: it sprints against the fading glow. Although we find that a few seconds later on his form had delved into a purple suffusion; a limitation (this) which ultimately shades into pink after a prism’s refraction. Our runner contrives to cast a dark shadow ‘agin this imperial nimbus: the habiliment of which compartmentalises its scarlet portion, as hitherto described.

But – within our vestibule of speech – Runter Bog wishes to exercise a right of reply… no matter how imaginary this might turn out to be. For he has already been transformed inside a dream’s purview. Wonder of wonders now… his visage betokens a clown or a jester’s mask that effectively discounts John Osbourne’s *The Entertainer* starring Sir Laurence Olivier. But still, such dissociated insights into the self often betray some news from nowhere. (They justifiably stoop to conquer – by means of tipping over a basket from Sir Frank Brangwyn’s *The Lemon Pickers* in 1908). Against such odds as these, though, a blanched face travels up to its perpendicular dome – it then blossoms out towards some woollen or orange hair. It likewise comes to fit oddly behind a funny man’s wind-up routine or piped smoke through valves. Does your gypsy fortune teller of yore reconnect such a facsimile with a high-pitched voice? An aquiline nose sprouts to vouchsafed prominence herein – it rears next to a ruby sphere which intrudes on all such occasions. *Avaunt* our reversal of the Hanged Man – if we might make use
of a Tarot pack – a latticed blue-strip of window indicates an old-fashioned abode. The moon gleams on as a white dot through its Rubik aspect… or Rothko’s patterning to ribena.

“Listen up, hated mice”, jeers and steers Runter Bog. “Adultery will be punished by death… in a culture that disprivileges divorce and rests on masculine honour! Dost thou comprehend it clearly? Hee! Hee! Hee!”

A REVENGER’S TRAGIC PRIAPUS (11)
You see, the glowering nature of Runter Bog’s eyes betray an absence of fear… no matter how knowingly. In demeanour, he’s a giant-sized professional wrestler and his manager can only hold down the title of Abel Cummings – while his vampirella wife must be Scaramouch Ruby. Perhaps our version of Big Daddy or Giant Haystacks has successfully caught them together, but there is no clear evidence of an actual adultery. Now read on, Children of Absalom: “His face convulses like the grip of a savage Pict”, laments a running impresario who flees from his own act. “He grits his teeth after a titanic fashion of coals. A curdled annihilation (this) which will not allow another to breathe in his vicinity. Could he be compared to one of those Aztec totems or icons atop a funeral pyre? Truly, an actual rendezvous with such a Ka-Tiki expedition may prove to be necessary after all. Observe this transaction, sister of mayhem… for one of those fierce dolls out of Oceania leads the way through a thicket – it privileges nought save a chosen primitivism in the sky. Surely he’s mistaken, you are thinking? Because the strength to grieve without tears articulates a behemoth’s rapture… and, although dwindling to a small compass, it packs a ripe punch. This endeavour contrives to loose the piece of rag otherwise known as a Cambridge tie – an embroidered black-and-red sheet which exists by way of sluices, slits and cubicles for bodily apertures. Also, such a truculent spasm carefully avoids a mute fist: in that it comes to be placed ahead of Tiki’s corse (in other words). Blame the Marquesas islands, if you want more action!”
Nevertheless, the two fists of Runter Bog continue to raise themselves up beyond these necessary latitudes… so says a twisted fate. He (Runter Bog *excelsior*) then aligns himself to a spendthrift expulsion of blood; one which inevitably leads to a manoeuvre where various specks end up on Warhol’s screens. Don’t you recollect the silk-screen print of an electric-chair? Likewise, this debenture occurs in cerulean shading; a curtain-raiser that challenges its own *denouement* thereby… Could it draw attention to one cliff-hanger too far? Now then: these muscular arms help to bring down a basic travesty in steel… in a situation where armageddon chunters through Runter’s veins. He follows up each consequent swipe with a gesture of brigandage – only to then bring down a pillar and its post around Samson’s shoulders. Truly, he has to be characterised by a savage lust or a mordant introspection: the pullulating life of which knows no reason or restraint. Do you remember the Latin tag from grammar school – *Homo lupus hominem*? It declares Man to be a wolf to his kindred.

**WOLVERINES BRING DOWN HEAD-LICE; NO GLOVES ARE WORN (12)**

She ran screaming from a husband’s purple orifice; while her spouse’s shadow indicated a troglodyte’s witness. Nor can his penumbra effectively crowd out a golden light – it exists beyond any greenish tinge to the contrary. Meanwhile, one lamp transfixes a swinging plenitude of desire: it casts one witness before the others and thence lists over to a tarnished emerald. Whereupon – and irrespective of these running figures – a black impediment rustles around these forms. “Make a run for it, chickee!”’, pleads our Abel from on the front foot. He was always liable to kick up his heels before her solvent witness. Moreover – and amidst the castaway of her golden hair – Scaramouch’s flesh proved to be pale pink, red-nailed and lipped… even scarlet-tinted: in terms of an eye’s distillate quality. Let it be broadcast aloud to everybody (now) and this is irrespective of a furrowed
brow. “He’ll slay us both, my man of a thousand indiscretions… a factor which happens to be independent of our innocence before the Fates. Because a cot within which a child of the imagination lay, perchance, testifies to an empty witness statement. Don’t triangular faces that are of a cloven happiness writhe up the wall-paper *avec* hidden smiles? (Surely such a token to despair speaks of Glasgow’s or Liverpool’s status as a city of culture?) Irrespective of this, though, the infant’s teddy-bears indicate a bloated array of furry stomachs – one of these bore a colophon across its front. Or might this be described as a self-enclosure or glove? Never mind: *quod* Scaramouch reached for a bread-knife from out of this darkness… She caught it up within the glow of one forgotten observer; nor can the girl be sure of what will eventuate within this turquoise haze. In this dream-sequence, however, her nipples were enclosed within synthetic clips and the vixen’s hair seems to be mounted in a buffed manner. It all spoke of a Madame de Pompadour’s dignity, to be sure!”

**THIS GOD WILL NOT SERVE A SKULL + GRAFFITI (13)**

Shall one interpret what is going on? For both of them loomed up against an orange door; it consisted of nothing more than a wooden fastness --- the outer covering of which betrayed a golden knob. Such a device glistened in the available gloom. (It will be noted in all of these scenes – no matter how dream-like – that the colours involved are poster-paint in their abstraction. They evince the lurid quality of so many Fauves or possibly the limpid, brackish, garish and child-art tones which follow on from several *blue horses* in those fields… all of them incarnating the art of Kirchner, *et al*…) Speaking of our drama again… the wall around our anti-heroes waxes to a bold Green; all of it becoming inter-connected with the woman’s violent red-dress, auburn hair, toned flesh and made-up face (inextricably so). A scenario that deposits Picasso’s ballet-sets in another area – particularly as they embody his Hooker’s green suit, coal black shirt and orange tie. Runter Bog’s renascent shadow – though – aims to upset
things, in that it chooses to pursue a misaligned duct much after the fashion of John Gardner’s novel Grendel… a work which interprets Beowulf from the monster’s point of view. Could it be some sort of shape-shifting entity like in one of David Icke’s speculations? Indeed, our characters are speaking to one another once more: “I’m all out of puff, dearie”, indicated Abel Cummings between-times. “But now that we’ve discovered this inner or secreted room we can rush in, close the doorway, lock it and restrain your monstrous husband’s anger. In any event, I’m sick of running throughout the echoing labyrinth of these tunnels – particularly if we are to shadow the reality of such rats in mazes. Because these damp or water-bestrewn corridors exist underground in an overgrown conundrum of M.R. James’ estimation. For no minotaur lurks at their heart these days – since Runter Bog is a nemesis behind even a mask! Remember now, this mortal equivalent of a rodent’s cage exists under his wrestling ring: the one where he has torn many of his opponents to pieces, metaphorically speaking.” “Quick”, the quivering female flesh next to him asserts, “hurry up, loony tune, his witness to a silhouette indicates violence on this wall.”

“He’s coming now…” <<<<but then the voice fades out amid reverie…>>> “All I can recall is the following”, she sibilates. “It continues to look at the gesticulation of a new absence – even though my features are convulsed with rage. Avaunt thee, bloody daemons of my inner space, especially when we recall that my finger points accusingly! It all happens to be done up in a ruby pie… even despite the bread-knife in my hand sharpening itself to a point. Are we not deluded in terms of its tunnel; especially if a matrix exists around our cot’s plunge? Don’t we recognise that heavy black mascara which imprisons one’s eyes deals them a basilisk blow – one which illustrates nought but a mask of hate!?”
THE INFRINGEMENT OF SAND IS VINCENT’S WITNESS (14)

A purple door has finally shut beyond their entombment; it caters to nothing save a Gypsy’s fortune-telling… irrespective of any tarot which masks its fatalism, thereby. A steel-shutter has effectively closed its glory – nor may we encode the fact that magenta signifies death in aesthetics. Despite any available colour science going, therefore, both Abel Cummings and Scaramouch Ruby indicate their relief. They are no longer behind’t door – to make use of a Mancunian’s drift. Each one recognises that they have experienced a narrow escape, or a sideways-on scraping on life’s wooden gun-barrel. After the strains of their exertion in this underground chase Abel’s green-suit hangs limply around its frame; while his tie and shirt bear perspiration’s foot-print upon them. His face, alternately, appears to be long, haggard and given over to witnessing such truths. Might it occasionally look Italianate or possibly criminal in its hang-dog Masque? Oh my yes; in this interlude he doubles as a minor or B-movie actor: that is, one who has inescapably seen better days. Moreover, his elongated or doe-like grimace can be compared to the woman’s enervated carapace. For his companion, Scaramouch Ruby, comes across as tremulous, ultra-feminine, stockaded, dream-like and altogether insubstantial. Her shoulders – both of which wax unstrapped or naked to this particular touch – heave with the effort of her emotional exhaustion. She stifles a sob amid the shuddering of her off-the-blade-insouciance and a stray tear passes down her cheek. Likewise, her knuckles are screwed up into a ball and she massages one mitten around a distended ‘Eye’. Yet – despite a sympathetic femininity – we always leave open one moment of doubt. It plays around the lips… because aren’t her orbs and vulvic mouth unnaturally scarlet in hue?

“We’ve outlasted him”, hisses Abel Cummings, “and are safe behind this wooden cavern or doorway. Yes indeed; this happens to be true – despite the fact that one of Hieronymous Bosch’s
‘Gardens of Earthly Delights’ rears up before me. It has to depict a smuggled arm-pit under its own sundering; whereby a corpse or carrion, wearing flecked under-pants, comes to be devoured in a reptilian maw. It passes through an imaginary or Imperial gateway – only to then face being secreted out from those saurian flame-ducts at a later point. Nor can it escape from a Romanesque magnitude or a third-brain indication of impermanence; whence a rippling green torso eats its way through rheum. Could this serve as some sort of anti-pope; the latter reckoning to alleviate a cannibal by leave of a four-leaf clover? No matter how unlikely this may be… even within phantasy’s purview. Certainly then, no residue of alienation might pass from out of this husk… when, instead of all this, a plexi-glass bowl serves as a repository or cubicle. It exists under a mastodon’s hoof and by virtue of its see-through nature one can spy inside: there to accommodate a collapsing corse, spiritually speaking. It has been defecated into an activated prism --- nearly always by being beholden to a triptych of its liking. Most sincerely, these multiple or doll-like forms wrestle apace; each one resembling one of the Chapman brothers miniature dolls in its tiny dimensions. These are manikins or store-dummies of yesteryear – the adventures of which festoon some necessary flames… the nature of this may delineate a million pixies wrestling under bone. I say again---"

+ 

“Oh do shut up!”, cries out his blonde maiden or companion-piece in crime. “Because my adventure dwarfs the chess-game of your silent interval. It all relates to any sovran sense of materialism around this particular cot… For haven’t I crept closer with a disabling bread-knife (?) : it glistens over a pink emblazonment. In comparison to a prior or minted Bosch, my intervention is all too clear in its leavings. The dog-collar around my neck twists abrasively in the breeze – yet none but me knows of its inner Sigil or nature. Let’s grant mathematical symmetry to a cauldron of dwarves… since my lips champ against gritted teeth or are recumbent upon the lowering mascara around my
slits. ‘No – no… --- NO!’, scream these guardians of the pit, but I fail to be deceived. Does a modern woman have the ability to kill her child *a la* David Steel’s intention? Yea or nay…? Abortion is murder, after all, whether a feminist like Germaine Greer wishes to engage in euphemism about it all. She chooses to call it foeticide at her trilogy’s end.”

A CELTIC CROSS WEARS UPON IT A DEAD GOD’S GOAT! (15)

CRRRASSSSSHHH!!! goes the pallet or balsa-wood door --- now that this ply-wood surround has completely caved in on its hinges. For, under the impress of a brazen or titanic fist, our orange structure shatters like a chicken coop – it resultantly splinters every which way in terms of its warp and weft. Never mind: since these shavings, bread-heads, shards and mute joists are all a’cream. They dissemble over leaving the very pattern of themselves --- let’s just notice its arrival, my friends. Because Runter Bog has just put a massive W.W.F. hand right through such a portal. It (namely wood) flies off in every possible direction. While – against a bright emerald background – Abel Cummings gazes on askance. He can hardly hide his sweating exterior; whereupon his moustache twitches and the boob’s black-‘n’-blue hair virtually stands on end. --- The fellow or *lourdaud* also gulps repeatedly. Scaramouch Ruby, in her off the shoulder red-dress, turns vaguely to the side --- almost as if she wishes to vacate this ‘scene’ as quickly as possible. All she can effectively do is bellow, yodel, ululate, cry and caterwaul. “AIEEEE!” – That’s how it goes.

EAGLES DO NOT DARE TO DEVOUR PINK HANDBERCHIEFS --->>> (16)

No longer can our two denizens imagine any purchase on safety, in that the possibility of creeping out back has been foreclosed. Under this new dispensation, then, Abel Cummings looks distraint – he’s dishevelled, perspiring, bothersome or accountable to a lifting lid. Throughout all of the above, though, his light emerald
suit contrasts with a mauve back-cloth roundabout. *Au contraire*, Scaramouch Ruby’s face comes across as full-tinted, plainly-clothed, concerned, beauteous and yet only so slightly strained. Surely we find that a feeling of consumption --- or an over-devouring urge --- mantles this make-piece ghetto or stockade? It helps to illuminate one intrigue after another, even as it seems to fall away from our perspective. Her features look troubled (to be sure), but one other affidavit cozens an abstraction or possibly a nonchalance. All the time a vaguely red glow pertains to her eyes --- though they reckon on being pin-pointed after one savage impress like ours. Likewise, a scarlet tinge becomes more and more discernible around her lips: these filter out the quietness of so many English graves. What could be going on here and whichever *desideratum* of menace passes through our sweetheart?

+ “Come on, Abel”, she enjoins, “we must not gasp for breath before one’s available livery. Should the two of us stumble wildly in relation to our symphony’s first movement? Not at all, munchkins: we must flee through a rear exit which leads to another corridor. No more; no less.”

{Editorial note: Let’s remember that all of our adventuresome frolics take place deep underground. All of these recurrent intrigues or exercises in game-playing fury, then, come pursuant to a concrete bunker and a sensory deprivation chamber so described. Can it be an interlude or a waiting game for an opera’s phantom?}

“Run, run, Abel; there’s still a chance to get away if we hurry. A back’s slippage may not be shut off to a corn snake’s slithering, thereby! Nor will I abstract my gaze – retrospectively – from such a winnowing scene. Its gesture --- above the cot --- causes me to break out with a cry or shout. All of it wavers before a base parliament of wood or trees. Didn’t the English revolutionary period superintend a Bare-bones assembly? Because a bread-
knife quivers over a pantaloon most rare; nor can my nubile form be grasped by these conspirators. Such a shapely shadow comes to betoken pornography’s absence; it subsequently leaves off from the nursery of its estranged intelligence. Do a series of interconnected triangles fail to festoon these walls – each of them baying before a pink mantra? Haven’t geneticists already proved that girls prefer pink and boys are attracted to blue --- it’s all in the genes, you see? Socio-biology stands confirmed. It all depends on whether such structures shall be brought down --- or not. ‘Stop it, desist in your murderous quatrain, wench’, fulfill these guardians of desire. Each one of them wears the esplanade of a Dominican – at once hooded in their mastery and waiting for bravery’s assistance. Is the child or babe a hybrid of its parents -- - namely, Scaramouch Ruby and Runter Bog? Or, mayhap and all, a reverse nemesis contrives to lift the lid on a broth which indicates Abel’s esprit. Surely neither of them has taken one trug too many into the garden?

A COWBOY HAT CANNOT BE WORN IN A DUNGEON

Avaunt thee… let’s consider this conundrum: a reverse plane or an aberrant perspective registers our course. It deviates from no other rectitude, in terms of one’s primary colours. Yes indeed; our two collaborators --- Abel Cummings and Scaramouch Ruby --- have occasion to run within an orange box. A brief or minimalist slant hangs around them throughout – it serves to cater for one shadow-play too far… and this is independent of Keneth Robeson’s or Orson Welles’ involvement. Within this sprightly entertainment, however, a magenta stair-well looms up in the half-light… it transposes an immateriality, even a curdling space. No more than this: especially when we are forced to consider a block of shading next to our procedure. It liberates itself with a jet-black tint… at least as regards a necessary craft. Hang loose, brethren – for our two expellees choose to launch themselves full tilt at the stairs. They are best seen as speeded-up runners or labradors who come loping after each other with
unappeased pace. Each one definitely accords with a slanted pilaster or one of Donatello’s transports which look forward to both Muybridge and Leni Riefenstahl later on. Both of them are now found to be o’er-leaping at full throttle – athletically speaking. They streak along this duct, tunnel, transverse-way or moral canal as a consequence. Could it be one vehicle for the emergence of a creature as yet unborn? Despite his breathlessness… Abel Cummings insists on giving sport: “Are you sure he’s not gaining on us, my witness to be? I’m already dangerously out of puff and one’s breath exhales all too quickly from this body. I hear a rattle in such a prize-fighter’s arsenal – rather after the fashion of Professor Gunter von Hagens. But we have to keep on going, Ruby – no-one knows better than me how he can tear a man limb-from-limb. It had come to resemble one rag-doll after another at the close.”

Perhaps, given such a shock to his system, Abel Cummings entered into a dream or its trance. He was not usually an imaginative man, but this time who can blame him over a phantasm’s transport? “Listen Ruby, I’ve been cogitating”, he began with a deep rumble. “For I can see you – at least in my mind’s eye – trussed up in a bondage jacket or possibly the sort of restraining shirt worn in lunatic asylums. It stretches around you from top-to-toe; and various interconnecting buckles or belts know nothing of its remit. They salivate beyond any original prognosis, do you hear? Your arms seem to be folded over an ample bosom – whereupon each strand of blondeness lives in its erectness and your vulva is delicately covered by lycra. A distant resolution was heard overhead now --- could it be a distinct tapping?”

WE MANOEUVRE AROUND A WOMAN WITH A WHITE STREAK IN HER HAIR (18)
Simultaneously with the above remarks, per se, Scaramouch and Abel rush down an unfolding corridor. Each one affects to catapult the other out of a partial misery. While a darkish blue
backdrop is seen to rear or supervise behind the advent of such misfortune. It resists a shadow or penumbra which has been cast across it --- one that explicitly relates to Runter Bog! Effortlessly, he charges aloft with an enormous chest which heaves in the twilight. Its depilation cascades to an undue portent and comes to remark upon the film *300*, dealing, as it does, with Spartan valour. No Thermopylae criss-crosses this checkerboard, though… because Bog’s crushing fist is raised and it hints at an arrested void (therein). For he springs or resiles in a manner that’s reminiscent of a mass, a beast or an acclimatised hulk. Please credit any available witness whatsoever --- in that his Adamic front continues to wear only a loin clout: in a situation where one gesture too many indicates death’s sovereignty. Must one foretell its future? Yes, in all conscience… On their behalf, however, Cummings is increasingly showing signs of a nerve-shredding desperation. He lurches this way and that in bright or verdant overalls; whilst Scaramouche Ruby appears to be much more collected. Her lips adumbrate a red tincture in this subdued illumination and one finger in particular over-arches a possible grave-time. Whereupon her off-the-shoulder pink flesh hints at a neglected cat-walk; albeit one triggered by Rudyard Kipling’s poetic remark… namely, the one which declares the female to be deadlier than the male! Rightly so – when Goethe’s, Spengler’s and Henry Miller’s ‘cosmological eye’ perceives the woman’s amber coiffure passing down her back or all around. What can this evidently suggest? Why, it has to do with those heroines or divas in Latin American soap operas who are nearly always O.T.T. (that’s over the top). May Michael Powell’s peeping tom definitely witness a case of either supererogation or defilement?

A DICE HITS A KERB ONLY TO TRANSPLANT A SIX (19)

Now then, the following communication mushrooms out and beyond our ready witnesses. Might it prove to be silence’s reverse dialectic? “Listen to me, ye twain”, burbles on a breathless Abel Cummings. “We shall pass under the glory of a rekindled knife. Let it be… since our killer’s hot breath
luxuriates on my neck and even suffices to whet Hades’ blades. I’m all out of go and spirit, dearie. Could this be the end of Abel Cummings? Can Fate allow it to cease like this?” (An anguished bark or cry was heard then). “I’m all afeared, chickee, in relation to the behemoth’s wrath that’s just been conjured up. I sought to steal you afar, I admit it. But no-one would have foreseen this Thak; in the form or resolution of a Great Ape whose furry outline limns against these curtains… All of it then coming to interpret either a labyrinth or the veritable Ha!Ha! – the latter is attendant on its drop in an English country garden. “Cease your prattling, man”, commands Scaramouch Ruby with a scarcely concealed contempt for the hominid next to her. “Listen to this statement or affidavit, will you? A cage with an iron-door or possibly a sensory deprivation chamber lies nearby. It looms up oft-handed or in terms of a left-leaning slant. Grasp it with your main measure, homunculus! Mayhap it’s our remaining or only hope?”

A CUBE, A DOOR, A FERROUS CAGE (20)
Abel Cummings continues to bumble along in a manner which is seemingly oblivious to all else. Wouldn’t he be guilty of talking to himself now or engaging in mesmerism – even auto-hypnosis? “You’ve got to believe me, Runter”, he casts back with a hopeful glance. “I didn’t really mean to attempt a future adultery or a slight pardon o’ witness. By no extent, it purely signified a gag or an after-take. Think nothing of it… dear boy.”

But still and all, Runter Bog came on regardless of these abjurations and he was a Thing/an architrave of witness… in a scenario where each scintillation picked up the pieces of its own drift-wood. Necessarily so, since he shambled forwards as a veritable man-thing – irrespective of any swamp’s absence.
A RUBIK CUBE DIVIDES ITS PREY (21)
Scaramouch Ruby and Abel Cummings shoot or hurtle down this corridor; they are now breast-to-breast. Behind them a mauve wall curves away; and it absolves a structure which is solid, sandy, earthen or rough-textured. Moreover – its livery finds itself to be countermanded: when both of their intermingled shoulders are cast across it. A dark blue door --- of either steel or iron shapes --- comes to enlighten their eye-balls. Rivets, dimples, screws, shards and the indentations of metal strike them bodily – even facially. Will it be the boxing-ring or mayhap an Alamo for their final conflict... quite possibly, an absurdist showdown? “If we can get through yonder trespass, lovey, a chance might beckon towards our future graven offering.” “Let’s seize it”, replied ‘she who must be obeyed’ with decision. “Our eight ball must be struck clearly and enter its slot without any undue hindrance. We have to make for Thermopylae’s path and this is with or without Leonidas’ hordes.”

Together – and acting as one person – they speed into the chamber.

TO DREAM OF YELLOW PUPPETS, SADICALLY, AMID TUNGSTEN (22)

One marionette show shall always defeat its off-spring, don’t you understand?

At key moments, however, the mortal imagination is liable to blank things out... or alternatively, it throws its net forwards in order to bring in a shoal of sharks. Are they basking on the surface or not? In such an instant or fragmentary pedigree, Abel discerns Scaramouch Ruby at a distance. As before now, she remains trussed up in ‘bondage gear’ or those holy robes which incarnate an asylum’s padded cell. May this betoken the restraining shirt with which madmen like Sefton or Renfield* were once subdued? (*Surely he happened to be the lunatic in
Dracula?) Nonetheless, beauteous Scaramouch stood there bare-footed, replete, uncongealed and expectantly innocent… having all but foregone the pleasures of terror. Let it be discussed thoughtfully by aficionados of Stephen King forevermore… Around and about her, though, Abel continued to tap away in a manner which proved to be beholden to a vegetoid moment. These clarion-calls struck up the blue touch-paper at such a time, whether it had been prescripted by Powell and Pressburger (or not). Can Will Eisner’s story-boards also get a look in here? Never mind: since, having donned a perverse rubber-mask o’ fortune with a snout cleaving to its trough, Abel slobbered on. Spittle cascaded from his under-mouth – even though it felt contained by some lycra. Alone now, it has to know a vista of apartness all too well --- being lurid, enervated, beady-eyed, trussed, gnarled and rubicund. Nor shall the sunlight pass through this latex; in order to provide a scorbutic tincture to the skin. All the time he continues to beat out a message… TAP-TAP-TAP – it mushrooms roundabout. Don’t such noises echo and reverberate? They are brought about using nothing more than an old-fashioned tea mug. He causes it to jig a tattoo or provide a back-beat for this slam dance. Although some believe that he is trying to contact Ruby using a message laden in morse code. She occupies a neighbouring cell in this imaginary Iraqi prison, you see? What would those analysts of yesteryear at Bletchley Park have made of his communications? “I LOVE YOU; I LOVE YOU”, Abel repeated via his snorkel, grip, tackle, adjustments and deep-sea diving surplus. He’d made sure that he inhabited one of those old-fashioned suits a la Jules Verne; the ones with a bell-shaped/conic tower or helmet. Isn’t it so?

WE AWAIT A CANNIBAL’S APPETITE (23)
The room lurks ahead of their advent into it, but already they are through its egress. Both of them have plunged into this inner fastness higgledy-piggledy and one after the other. Abreast of these developments (now) Scaramouch Ruby virtually falls over --- after all, those stilettos were not exactly made to run in…
particularly along concrete corridors which exist underground. She topples over in a culpable red dye and is blonde/distressed; albeit with a scarlet pencil-dress that streaks away so as to reveal a cleavage. Rebounding on herself yet again the woman cascades to an abundance which partakes of nothing but orange... like a spinning top. An ebon shadow chooses to interpret this license – if only to underscore its necessary project. Abel Cummings then attempts to close this trap-door that’s filed from iron and he does so by standing slightly to Ruby’s right. Its ore knows or understands little of Michael Faraday’s filings, to be sure! Yet he still continues to be dressed in motley or a collection of liquid green. Desperately he wrestles with the aperture in a vain attempt to close it behind them. “Quickly now, Abel”, screeches Scaramouch Ruby, “close out the fastness so that my erstwhile mate, Runter Bog, cannot defy its closure. Once he’s trapped outside we are safe --- none can then achieve such an entrance without our leave. Whereas – if he were free to entertain us in here – his strength would be able to tear us to pieces at the beat of a public amusement. Before even the sand has drained from its egg-timer, he may have strangled me with your intestines.” Abel blanched for a second at this thought... before replying rather hotly. “He’s mightier than me, babe, it’s all I can engineer to keep his thews at bay: never mind the prospect of closing off a harpooning from without! Whoa now...”, he cried, almost as if he were dealing with a Roan Stallion from Robinson Jeffers’ poem.

Irrespective of any of this, though, a dim travail of blackness limned or cast its line backwards into Abel Cummings’ mind. Again – and for want of aught better to do – he saw Scaramouch Ruby standing before him in a condemned cell... the latter seemed to be somewhat subdued in terms of a sepulchral glow. Likewise, Scaramouch Ruby had parted company from this twilight glare; while her blonde coif lifted up at the prospect of some wind. She mounted these steps towards an imaginary guillotine alone... (Does it recall the final scene in Poulenc’s
opera – where the nuns are executed by the French Revolution?)

Trussed up in a straight-jacket as before now, her eyes gazed on in abstraction… whereas the girl’s forearms were pulled up close by her breasts. A sheer wall delineated the space which proved to be adjacent to Scaramouch’s glow… a dilemma that existed in spite of a distant tapping which could be distinctly heard. Tap-tap; tap-tap; tumble-thump --- it goes forward in a trance of forgiven sound. Because Abel Cummings – in his own phantasm – continued to send adoring smoke signals from afar off. (The means by which he did this appeared to illustrate a rip-roaring belter – primarily by utilising a tea-cup in order to signal morse. It’s a code that’s created by a metal mug knocking into a radiator pipe far away). For his part, Abel’s visage still contrived to look fervid, fenced off and resultant to its prime movement by way of a ligature. It all composes itself into a scarlet apotheosis within which Man Ray’s portrait of de Sade lives again!

TO PUT A STICK-INSECT TO DEATH IS THE HEIGHT OF FOLLY! (24)

O ye; hear me, brethren: Abel Cummings and Scaramouch Ruby continue to bestir themselves in their own trap or oubliette… especially when they find their avenues for advancement brokered by ludo’s cube, as it were. Abel continues to work ferociously at the door handle. Remember in this situation that Runter Bog --- the barbaric mastodon who can tear them to pieces --- lies beyond such cardboard or distant ultramarine. Ultimately, his maw is seen to trespass out from an uncertain space… that is, one which attempts to deliver the portent of a limbered ham. It casts itself between a jamb and a metal door – like a joint of stray meat on a butcher’s slab. Too true: the brawny hand and muscular fingers find themselves cut adrift… or they’re re-routed in order to articulate a silent nimbus. Whereupon – in an alternate compass – might they possess match-sticks which have been set up so as to fire a wicker-man? (Did anyone miss growing up without seeing the film starring Christopher Lee?) Anyway, such a hairy torso gazed out from
beyond a closed door – it continued to stray outside our darkness’ puddle. Let’s reckon on at least a smidgeon of wisdom, though: since any such metallic casing as this comes over as a light or badly bent brown. Whereas the rest of this imprisoning cube betrays a faintly purple history – leastwise given the interior walls of cell number six in the Vincennes fortress. Its ceiling or cloud-space, however, waxes to a dirty blue that sheers off or away on either side. To look at it objectively --- our two main characters evince contrasting emotions… Abel Cummings, for his part, sweats or perspires copiously; while the man’s features belabour a pasty-faced measure or contrition. His moustache twitches or jiggles uncontrollably – and there’s no hint of a matinee idol a la silent cinema left now… No indeed: whilst his companion, Scaramouch, devotes herself to an old-fashioned look; at once knowing, indelicate, full-in-the-face, sly, intrigued and roughly calculating. Is mathematical atrocity one of her amateur pursuits, do you think? No matter how amatory her pretensions or intentions (that is…) Nevertheless, her plunging mammary and pronounced cleavage gives meaning to a coquetry which is underscored by a scarlet bodice. What does she entice forward or wait for all aglow --- at least in relation to what Wilhelm Reich called The Mass Psychology of Fascism? Who knows? Yet – without the necessary rectitude of some indifference – our vamp seems to be vaguely amused by their plight.

+ Her violently red-lips also underpin this pregnant or John Cage pause.

REJECT ONE’S CUBOID – SEEK OUT NEW LUSTS! (25)

In a near to final tableau, then, we notice that Abel Cummings sheers away to the side or passes up a steep incline in one corner. He obviously understands the reality of disconnectedness (in other words). All by himself (now) he literally jigs on the spot so as to give out some vampiric speed. But truly, no hint of amphetamine or kentucky ham continues to hold sway over such
deeds… even though his arms are out and aloft in relation to a wrap-around sound without end. Do you muster this legerdemain – when it dimples to orange?
+
By contrast, Scaramouch Ruby behaves in a totally different way or over a delimiting measure. Grabbing up a piece of wood from the cell’s floor, she batters her estranged husband’s exposed arm. “I know how to make him let go!”, she expostulates with glee. Oh my yes… it is only after retracing such a step that Ruby Red remembers one salient thing: namely, a nail has become attached to this shaft’s underside. Mightn’t it have been able to draw blood, perchance? In truth, she waxes exultant about it all. Runter Bog – with a belaboured howl or groan – withdraws his mitten in double quick-time. “AAAAGGGHHH!”, he enjoins startlingly. Immediately this fist is drawn back and the portcullis shuts with a snap. CLICK-Click…ping…: silence then reigns again in these cellars or entombed trails beneath the stadium. (Wasn’t there an avant-garde writer called Roger Pinget?) A masterfulness has intruded into the Blonde’s gestures hereabouts… how can she have changed so suddenly or in an eye’s blink, you ask? Certainly a backwards glance at her staples, corset, bodice and rear sequins delivers a blow. It looks forward to nothing in particular, but still betrays a renewed endeavour. Has our victim or Justine become a Cruella d’Evil?

A VINDICATION OF INTOLERANCE (26)
A mauve or turquoise impress now sweeps clear of its abiding X-axis; it refuses to ask why it might otherwise be there. Strangely enough, the perspectives engaged in by a casual observer appear to be altered… perchance. Now the blue door happens to be on the left-side with its doubled hinges going up the wall. They defy all understanding of place and interpret one of L.S. Lowry’s details in his naïf paintings of yesteryear. Abel Cummings looks to be carrying himself a little straighter in his green jacket – now that the relative ‘defeat’ of a foe like Runter Bog has raised his mana, you see. No disturbance can intrude on Abel’s brow
without hindrance --- after all. Because the Cain who would have destroyed him, along the lines of Durer’s draughtsmanship, lingers on… His sweating gradually removes itself and he circumnavigates this space with renewed vigour. “A close shave, honey bunch”, he burbles. “I would’ve faced evisceration --- like a Gunter von Hagens’ plastinate --- if Bog’s talons had fixed me down. It proved to be quick thinking on your part, dearie, otherwise you might have lost me forever --- now we’re as safe as houses! Moreover, here in this projected room or cube we can spend a bit of time becoming acquainted all over again…” He allowed this sentence to hang in the air almost like it was in suspended animation; it illustrated a moth that repeatedly beat its wings against a glass case. Surely the example of the pigeon asphyxiating as the oxygen is removed in Wright of Derby’s painting comes to mind? (Didn’t Herbert Selby Jnr. write an angry and scatological novel called *The Room*)

To be true to our prior illumination, however: Scaramouch Ruby has actually turned away from her partner’s actions now. Momentarily – and by way of contrast – Abel fails to recognise her face. Like a ‘twenties diva or *femme fatale*, her off the shoulder party dress smoulders in such a bunker’s cool. Always hot or unmeasured in her conduct – *inter alia* – Ruby knows little of balance, duty or proportion. She also recognises Abel’s penchant for flirting… leastwise as soon as all danger removes its indent. Why don’t you take off the pressure and release the mountebank within (in other words?) No doubt it cleaves to a cad’s escutcheon… Still, Scaramouch Ruby helps to delineate the sleaze of a pulp magazine cover from an age gone by. Her eyes come across as tilted, slit-like, reddish in tint and all-perceiving. Even such a death-mask as this smiles silently to itself – it happens to be a lonesome rictus or a nethermost character. “Are we finally alone?”, she simpers almost continuously and enticingly. Yet – although sultry – these words refuse any prospect of gentleness; they rather exhibit a Dungeness or metallic harshness. It’s tantamount to the Kelvin
register of negative temperature. “Are you sure, Abel, that we’re altogether safe? You remain certain that my spouse, Bog, can’t gate-crash or manufacture a point of egress… thereby?”

A SOLDIER OF LOVE GATHERS IN CHIPS (27)
A strange transformation then occurs among the participants to our drama in which some of their number change places… veritably so. An orange ceiling now supervenes above our pair of recusants, even though a turquoise filament belabours its walls on a continuous basis. Yea verily, but a frieze of wood or basic joinery bends its aft into a gap which comes to be situated between the floor and its murals. One brass door – soldered to its inner dexterity of iron – makes up such a break. It exists over or to one side of Abel Cummings’ left shoulder. Yet the entire scenario has been subtly repositioned inside a tabernacle of dream and at a great distance from what could be called real life. In this exercise in silent cinema Scaramouch Ruby strode before and to one side of Abel Cummings – albeit with her shadow clawing menacingly at the purple betwixt them. It subsists (somewhat) as a slant, a designated eddy or quite possibly a biro swirl: that is to say, as one of those art brut designs which transfigure the stream-of-consciousness of Jockey Wilson. She (Scaramouch Ruby) looms haughtily, vampishly and with a slight streak of triumph. All in all, the camp or dependant look --- a la Joan Collins --- has died - only to be replaced by what? It’s really some sort of bizarre intonation or maybe a threat to the sovereignty of one’s throat… She also cascades rapidly into a renewed heaviness; at once being over-ripe, replete, orange tressed and passing over effortlessly from a Pre-Raphaelite virgin into Sheridan le Fanu’s Carmilla. Have you noticed its leaden penumbra of late? “Of course, my chuck, no-one can transgress against an iron maiden’s bounty --- even Runter Bog won’t be able to penetrate it.” Abel Cummings was speaking during this interval – but it presents itself to us as unnatural or high-lighted after a dream’s fashion. No-one knows a pure answer to these conundrums (you see) and it certainly doesn’t pertain to any
pithy anagrams in Charles F. Haand’s *The Master Key*. Scaramouch Ruby interrupts him in a contemptuous way; one which responds to a plumb-line’s whoosh or a grating sound. In this manner her diction comes to lisp after a Golden lotus’ perfume; it pours from such healing buds when they are positioned above you in the ceiling. Most readily, a blood-red curtain shimmers at a distance from our discrete actors. All of it ramifies with such an enervating experience or an otherwise electrical lozenge. A leaden pendulum or a musty cloud fills the ether; despite the fact that these phenomena lie outside a naked retina. “Pleased I am”, she began in triumph, “that my husband, Bog, remains *behind’t door*. (Does the wording adopt a Mancunian bite? Who can tell?) “For now, my future or errant love, I shall hold you to an unsuccessful promise --- one which you don’t have the fibre to otherwise release.” “Eh? What goes on from under this customary defile?”, murmured Abel uneasily. He was desperately trying to think back to their original conversation that had been brutally set upon by Runter Bog. “You once declared a desire to furnish me with a customary sweetness – even the commencement of all you possessed!”, her dulcet tones infringed. “Did I?”, expostulated Cummings. He certainly affected to be devastated or taken aback when discovering that this woman took his swooning or Lethean airs seriously. “The silly moo”, he thought to himself, but a copper distillate in the air rendered it unfunny.

METAMORPHOSIS (28)
All of a sudden, a cataclysmic transformation exhibited the course of one of those Biblical paintings from the nineteenth century. (One thinks of the work of John Martin here). It proved to be reminiscent of one of Professor Gunter von Hagens’ corpses pushing its way into a vicarage tea-party! Against a backdrop of orange which grew progressively more violent by the minute or found its form subdued to circular lines of force… Abel Cummings staggered back. Truly, a devastating rush or onslaught then hit his senses: it contrived to come in his direction
like a bullet between the eyes. No matter what might be delivered
to a watching Erda or earth mother… for sweat cascaded down
his weakling or seducer’s face. It coagulated in lieu of rheum’s
seepage and trespassed over such rivulets. All of this culminated
in a gritty realism (or assembly) which betokened one moment in
silent cinema: where the matinee idol knows extreme stress.
Moreover, his perfectly proportioned white teeth ground together
like hack-saw blades misfiring in a Midlands’ machine. Would
Mister Chin, the Brummagem historian, be interested in any of
this at all? Who can tell? Yet words do eventually form
themselves from between his lips --- despite having a tendency to
fail him at crucial junctures. They stain the silence after those
pictograms a la Beckett’s oeuvre. For won’t such a semiotic
distill nothing but loss under grease-paint’s shadow and slicked
down Brylcreem? “Great Scott!”’, he limbers over some desultory
closure or other. “What can you mean by such a transvaluation of
all values? Or – in terms of a gorge’s upright fissures – whatever
may be welling up within a breast here? Look my duck,
perchance, at the latitude of your facial teeth!”

+ Magisterially speaking, all that really bestirrs its kindred – in an
example of Sir Henry Irving’s dramaturgy – is a CRY OF
HORROR! It screams, screams and SCREAMS like an ululating
womb. Shall it intone the likelihood of a Minotaur cover of
yesteryear; wherein a vulva’s mouth sports molars around its
extremity? (Note: the aforementioned magazine has passed into
history as Surrealism’s house journal or Andre Breton’s vanity
fair).

THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER WON’T BUY A SOUL! (29)
In this instant of grandeur a poster-paint reflex hinders our grasp
– at least as it pertains to facts which are reflected at a diamond’s
point. These testify to a magenta filibuster that delineates one
caged space in which pink and purple are rendered together. It
knows no other interest and expects no mercy whatsoever… if
we might paraphrase the rock band Nazareth of yesteryear.
Nonetheless, Scaramouch Ruby looks to have become utterly transformed in a matter of moments: in that her flesh-tone has changed to dark blue when set against the violent red of her teeth and hair. *Au contraire*, the plunging scarlet evening-dress contrasts at this instant with her piled-up or *buffo* orange tresses. Various jewels also bedizen this ‘big-hair’ in folds of make-believe or a plastic anthem… whilst a spectrum of bat’s-wing continues to cascade from her naked side. Abel Cummings can only gag *avec* displeasure when faced with this devilish surd. He tumbles backwards after a fashion that’s broken, alone and incapable of complete self-mastery. He starts to residually gibber like a senilitic dotard in an old people’s home… necessarily so. At the heart of a fountain of blood --- like in revolutionary Iran --- a green speck then disappears midst this welter. It knows that a nameless spawn breeds in one shadowy crypt!

+ “Why are you so surprised, darling?”, chortles or gurgles Scaramouch Ruby. Her voice certainly betrays a glutinous transparency from here on in. It indicates death’s triumph over life. “Haven’t I given you every indication of an aberrant after-life – or, quite possibly, this could be described as an anti-life?”, she enjoins betwixt slavering lips. “Are you aware that the sun has passed across its horizon way above the stadium? Down in this basement the darkness cannot formally intrude, but it’s there if you don’t cleave to any misunderstanding regarding it. I have changed into my true shape at dusk. Hear me, erotic vagrant! Your attempted seduction only feeds my desire for carrion! Wretched fellow, don’t you wish to celebrate the fact that I AM A VAMPIRE? I shouldn’t worry about it unduly, Abel.” She proved to be falsely canoodling or ironic here. “All I wish to do is suck your BLOOD – we children of the night and daughters of Lilith must swallow such ichor to live! Demise can only be celebrated as a capturing of existence, you see?”
ARMAGEDDON FOR ONE (30)

Abel Cummings moves back towards the iron shutter, which allows one to cross over into silence, and he feels captured and harassed now. A metal cascade or curtain separates two rampaging behemoths – both within and without. One is Scaramouch Ruby and the other happens to be Runter Bog --- whether one considers them to be male or female, depending. Abel Cummings finds himself to be trapped between Life’s extremes. No-one can doubt it. He perspires like a water-fall on full tap and his green jacket hangs off him limply. It recalls an earth-toned suit which has been mistakenly put through a mangle. A bold yellow oblong besports itself as the neighbouring wall – it exhausts one’s gaze by traversing a black cube above one’s head. Beyond our ferrous partitioning, and held at bay in its sectioning, we observe the he-man called Runter Bog. He heaves like an animal or beast at such a steel barrier’s under-side. Gloom continues to unfold his hulking physiology – like a heterosexual Robert Maplethorpe. Could he be held to interpret a misshapen Greek deity in dwindling light? Whereupon Scaramouch Ruby all but edges closer on our buck-board’s other side. Her talons, claws and canines have become fitfully unfurled by this stage. She or ‘it’ simultaneously chomps and ramps after a ravening pit-bull’s example. In a time of totality – and a desire to overcome the doppelganger – her dress delimits haemoglobin; her hair kindles fire; her nails are blue swords; her wings edge into sabre-tooths; her front incisors file their settings and her twin eyes glare lasciviously. Each basilisk moment enjoys its free-falling or criminal irises (therefore). It’s bereft of any certitude save destruction.

+ In the seconds awaiting him, ceteris paribus, Abel Cummings has come to a cross-roads in life. His existence will be forced to fork either in one direction or another. He must decide what to do in the split-seconds which are left to his tarantella. Prevarication cannot be allowed to prevail any longer. He now (and rather fitfully) understood the secret meaning of Mr. and Mrs. Bog’s
marriage of convenience. It underscored a mating or union between a vampire bat and a bullock in the pampas. She essentially fed on his strength; a feasting which he hardly noticed... while ravishing or enjoying her body. What can Abel offer by way of part exchange to this? Nothing – given the prospect of any substantial fact, that is... Now comes THE CHOICE: and it’s not the delusional one vouched for in William Styron’s ‘exterminationist’ novel, either. He will have to decide or deliberate upon the character of his death. Shall he be torn asunder by the wrestler he hoped to betray, or rather more efficaciously, will the vampirella he sought to steal drain his blood? A cosmic or atomic clock clicks down the micro-seconds under the influence of the fire at Windscale in 1957. Look at it this way: a prospective adultery has received a ferocious or frosty rebuff, a disembowelling or an example of haemophilia redux, even anaemia. Which flick at backgammon might you prepare yourself for? Choose, my man or mate, choose: throw the dice and make it last. Whatever alternative malady ails thee, brother? Whichever shelter might your husk seek out in the cold? Whate’er could your exit strategy amount to a la Houdini or Doc Madness? What would you do?

THE END
THE FANATICAL PURSUIT OF PURITY

a novel

An introduction

‘The Fanatical Pursuit of Purity’ is a Gesamtkunstwerk or attempt at a total artwork in the Wagnerian tradition. It prefigures a puppet-stage or toy-theatre within which the lead character or marionette, Phosphorous Cool, has his circumference. (This makes use of a micrological analysis chronicled by George Speaight, the cultural historian of Punch & Judy.) Into this world other dolls – Mastodon Helix, Heathcote Dervish and Warlock Splendour Thomas – nimbly trip and spin. All of this finds itself punctuated by a third dimension or alternative space. It proves to be the unconscious or dream-space inhabited by these exercises in a bizarre pantomime. This rival or extending narrative brings back our wooden figurines as part of an alternative Victoriana. It deals with Stephen Knight’s analysis of Jack the Ripper and a variant on Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein – even James Whale’s film starring Boris Karloff. Like the German film director Hans Jurgen Syberberg, Mr Bowden believes in the creation of a separate world as art’s real purpose. It goes without saying that the result is ‘politically incorrect’.
THE FANATICAL PURSUIT OF PURITY
a novel

Dramatis Personae:

Heathcote Dervish
Phosphorous Cool
Bounteous Elsa Hapgood
Butler James
Mastodon Helix or Spyros/Skyros
Warlock Splendour Thomas
Tumble-weed or Hermaphrodite X
Moustachio Brave Herring
+
Ms. Igor
Baron von Frankenstein (MD)

An epigraph:

“And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and old Satan, and bound him a thousand years.”

Revelation 20:2 *The King James Bible*, (1611)
ONE PART DICKENSIAN: (1)
It began in the mind of someone who has not been born yet, and it reared up like a miasma or the merest dream. A phantasm of non-identity it was; in that one puppet dangled from a string of fives. These ropes cascaded from the back of a stage’s hands and they were always beholden to the touch of a puppet-master, such as Eric Bramall and his theatre of yesteryear. It had existed in Colwyn Bay up on the north Welsh coast – or otherwise adjacent to a plunging sea. All of a sudden, a silvery puppet loomed up against a dark green background. It roofed off the immensity of its enclosure; and this was probably by satisfying the deepest, most verdant allure. Moreover, against the tincture of such a moon, the cords on our silvery titan were hardly discernible: they blew hither and thither as so much spume. Be quiet now… For – simultaneously with a streaked disc – various tendrils of night-time smoke crossed our vista. These built up so as to afford a climax in the sky; they also affrighted any nebulous intelligence whatsoever. Behind them – and at the centre of this congruence – a witches’ stove was seen to boil. A cauldron it proved to be; the like of which flickered in the moonlight garishly.

Arrest any sense of fortitude now: since flames licked at the edges of this particular bowl. An extremely bright or lemon yellow (they were), in a manner which pitched sulphur against magnesium’s maximum. Around this bay of plenty, betimes, a coven of witches have gathered; they happened to be both male and female. Each one of them screamed, whelped or let go a gnarled hand; it clawed the air with the sanctimony of an unused cry. Do you detect its vision? Their faces waxed a deep shade of rum; at once Khitian in aspect as well as being aggressively perspectival. Every one of them appeared to be strongly etched before a mildewed crowd. A gathering swoon or secret English coven could be articulated here: it let rip around Stonehenge and came aslant of many an arrested evening.
At the heart of their deliberations, however, a monstrous apparition had begun to unfold. It flavoured the aftermath of a puppet; or it looked out over the conspectus of a noon-time devil. Regardless of which, this puppeteering blob manufactured an orange hue. Its musculature was highly developed and rippled beneath a manikin’s hide. Against this gesture, though, the jaw stood open or slack before the Fates – it relieved a process of unBeing as it travelled towards wilfulness. No – if we happen to be more accurate about it – then it measured the finality of Time before Hades’ gates. Also, lower than the mouth slanted the teeth of a rippling surd; these characterised a debenture’s losses. Abundantly therefore, such steroid protuberances cast forth a daemonic lustre which re-entered themselves. It gave a notice of ecstasy – only to furrow a brow or cast off before an opening maw. In short, its titanic molars stood agape; together with a crenellated forehead, masculine thews and agate preponderance. These (effectively) had nothing to do with the barrel-like bulk which cascades away towards its legs. Their number proved to be Hyperborean. Could they be mysteriously active?

LET US PERSEVERE WITH OUR TAROT: (2)
Yet even a puppet’s consciousness can have a reverse side – at least in terms of who’s prepared to gainsay a wooden figurine. In this case, the silvery one saw its alter ego enter into a magisterial building… It waxed Georgian or gave out the immensity of those dwellings around London Fields, Hackney. Are we to spy smoke or dry-ice crystals that festoon its base (?) – these tendrils rise up around lower-case windows. While – analogous to the above – our shape-shifter enters a portal dressed in black. Does he endanger a shadow: the highest plenitude of which stands before our Gods? Avaunt thee, an enabling act passes above us. It unloads a new mesmerism: since our puppet has shed those skins that tie it to dreams… especially now that a witches’ coven exists downtown, spectrally. For – on this plane – one’s Klavern becomes disembodied or no longer needs strings… and each one basically floats free from the heavens. What can the collective
anima – or anima rising – of a penumbra be like? Never mind its hinterland… Well, it embodies new fractures – but glides abreast. And this is primarily because (contextually) our coven exists as a blanched face that twirls. It was ethereal. Our visage exalts a lunar conspectus – one with red orbs, distended eyelets, gigantic teeth, lavender skin, and the rippling glow of a von Hagens’ plastinate. (Note: these showed themselves to be inanimate corpses, a la Vesalius, which slither under ultraviolet light. Did they occasion a blue temperature?)

THIS FIRST ACT DAMNS A HARLEQUIN[!]: (3)
Yet enough of these introductory forays... no matter how hypnotically registered they might prove to be. Let’s commence: at the centre of an English coven a male witch stands aloof; all the rest subsists on Wiltshire’s moors. His name is Heathcote Dervish and he’s just cast a spell in ancient Enochian. Around him a rabble have gathered in their sepulchral hue. “Listen to me!”’, he cries agape. “Our Jaggta-Noga lilts after no such involvement. Let the wraith appear from subdued depths of chasm. Do you detect that he cuts up his enclosure’s miles? Desist from your dreams or pornographic abandon! HE’S HERE! Awakest thou a rage in sulphur --- particularly as it pertains to one who crosses dimensions in order to be? Listen…”

During this intervention, though, our warlock holds up his hand – the outermost fingers of which are extended. These virtually scrape the surface of the Heavens… conceptually speaking. He also wears a lengthy robe; the farthest or outer lineaments of it sweep down to his feet. Beyond this two sandals or slippers peep out. A cowl is then seen to douse his head; in a situation where his features are limned against a pumiced cloth. Oh yes --- here he prances before a cauldron; a vessel of the stoutest iron that possesses a round handle on its side. It looks heavy and proficient. While the entire tube glows at red heat – so much so that a nimbus radiates around these flames… Each and every one of them then pours successfully from every side. Such a vortex
entrances its wonderment... does it likewise seal its fate before the facts? All of a sudden, a ghostly face emerges from this bubble or steam: it moans and quivers. Its features are blurred by congestion; and yet a doleful mouth, orb, twilight and sceptre looms up. They count to ten, basically in terms of the nearest indifference. Could this incarnate a Gothic sliver by Fuseli? Anyway, as the death’s-head materialises these witches gather around in thraldom. Each one successfully envisages an astral belch or flame. They are eight in number – at least when viewed from a distance. Every one enjoys a covering before a bridge (betimes); and they represent a Dominican order in reverse... often down to minor details. These votaries prance, leer, caterwaul, gibber and let loose a hullaballoo! Oh my; since --- for today’s Comus Rout --- such events were a dream’s culmination. Hermetically speaking and all...

Whilst – beyond our expectant throng of magicians or musicians – an immense zero gathers. It proves to be an infestation. It is all signalled by a shuttered wall, mortar, brick-dust and scraggy trees: these limn the sky or delineate a presence. All of it measures a dotage unto ash: it’s against such vapour at any rate.

TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE STILTON: (4)
To complete our picture now... the warlock, Dervish, stands screaming before a scarlet haze. At the edges it tapers into turquoise, indigo, magenta and a brilliant or refulgent orange! His cowl moves back slightly on his scalp, but it still just about gives one balm, phrenologically speaking. Whereat his shoulders lift up in ecstasy – in this they recall a diver without complete control over their anatomy... as seen in Leni Riefenstahl’s *Olympia*. Nonetheless, his mouth rests open, his robes billow expansively, his radiant orbs streak back fire and the mage’s chanting reaches a crescendo. It remains both hermetic and hieratic. While either of his arms, windmill-like, find themselves thrust out as stick-insects before the dawn. At last the wraith – curdling amidst Greek Fire – becomes temporal enough to
materialise. Does it atomise unbelief’s frequency? A rainbow then cheats the heavens of its vista – and this appears as either a snout or a pedigree nostrum. Above such a saurian two slit-eyes poke forth --- they are Mongoloid in aspect. Furthermore – at the base of this indent – a savage mouth cuts against the ether. All in all, our Flame-face floats free of every support. It interprets a disembodied mask or filter – let’s call it Hermaphrodite X or Tumble-weed. Our Warlock continues his bleat: “Behold brethren, I have achieved my fondest desire – a wraith evinces its temperature; it tumbles forth aflame. Listen, heed its bark or cry! (Note: like the demon-king in many a good pantomime, our shade or presence from the other side speaks in rhyme. His couplets trip off the tongue as so much goodness to dross. He bathes in the sardonic quips of a debased ironist. Can’t you see the puppeteer’s strings going up behind ‘it’ --- at least in terms of our toy-theatre of yesteryear?)

Tumble-weed or Hermaphrodite X:~

‘A spell is cast
by any repast
it delineated a task
--- only to ask.

Do not forsake
the prospects of a bake
which ends in a lake
perchance of all slake.

Cauterise the blow
let alone the flow
it can never really glow
leastways not slow
but by all means GO!’
A SIAMESE TWIN HAS AN IN-GROWING TOE-NAIL: (5)

As precipitously as his arrival, our demon king or wraith vanished. Abruptly a golden vapour, mist or silent trail fills the space which he once occupied. The drunken shell of a building is all that remains; it lists vacantly from side to side. But – in all truth – its static projection fulfills an unknown promise. A spiral of smoke ascends from this tambourine man’s gesture – it has to be a tendril which limits its dissolution. An inner wreckage or decay cauterises it, especially given the lop-sidedness of those turrets. They speak of a broken husk. It looks out on the blasted nature of a heath further on; a kindred of this sprouts whey grass or split bracken. Would it be too onomatopoeic to speak of its taste, lustre or Imperial purple? The mage continues to stand as a dark shape – or a nineteenth century silhouette – within a dwelling open to the elements. His arms straddle a lofty competition, given over, as they are, to the reality of an incomplete fastness. All the other occultists lurk furtively around a well – and a tower/its circular brick-work hoves into view, in terms of so much darkling air. A brief and magnificent spasm passes across the moon: itself a cellular orb or shift that reflects orange against turquoise. Look at this now, Heathcote Dervish’s returned to the verbal fray:~

“Avaunt a lost witness to expectancy, brethren… No-one can effectively take away from a memory which is ours. Oh my yes – the wraith has gone back to its solitary sphere of absence. Who but us may tear away the veil of these secrets? Tumble-weed or Hermaphrodite X lists where it wilt, as regards a cosmic finality or its precision. Yet our monstrous or thwarted mask’s boomeranged home – in whichever dimension that may be said to reside. It reverses its ascent by way of a cast dye; it traverses once again a Masonic coffin which litters a vatic space. No matter what relief… and given the nature of its unquiteness, as it comes to be played today. Could we be speaking of a Mediaeval passion or mystery play? Don’t its nails percolate now amidst wood, balsa or tenderness? They spread a deluded word – only to
kilter before its speed. It limits its projection or penetration into the oak, thereby. Will you correctly configure it? For a tunnel, a prick or a pin casts an indent before Golgotha: it merely mounts to the glory of puissance. Now let’s loosen a charred fabric, it helps to give a costive or bluish glow to caskets, the nature of whose bark curls under each knife! Yes indeed, those screws that turn on the tap of plenty are bound to unlock a woodchip’s offering. The grain or texture leans sideways; primarily in a way which lifts up one strut in order to massage a spendthrift plenty. It is all held too deeply within those trees.”

DO NOT BORE US WITH SLEIPNIR’S EIGHT LEGS: (6)
Heathcote Dervish pulled down the cowl from his darkly illumined robe. Didn’t it resemble a reddish hue in a cauldron’s last or fluctuating breath? Behind him a bright yellow panel indicates its transport: it struck up before a ceiling’s livery. Various planks or heavy buttresses, irrespective of purchase, existed beyond his left shoulder. A woman is also observed from afar. She has de-cowled, at least when taken together with a slightly owlish face – it proves capable of looking spectral, even beady-eyed. A pair of expensive and reinforced ear-rings are also seen: and these ramify with a devil-may-care set of eye-brows, themselves merely captured before one’s view. (Just for a moment, one of Richard Linder’s exercises in Pop Art veers into the frame. Many of his canvases were used to illustrate Vladimir Nabokov’s prose, after all). Against this, the female had a shock of white hair which passed through her scalp’s central axis: it ricocheted from one’s brow like a silk handkerchief’s tail (…) Her name, you ask? It patterned to Elsa Bounteous Hapgood. “My husband”, she beamed, “you have forever vanquished the toils of Reason. One must care for an abruptness which travels aslant a balustrade. Never mind… since a Y has been carved deep into this sand-stone’s interior. It widened out towards the cement of an outermost wall. Such a walkway carried away its dispensation --- most sheer. Again, a disillusioned or carved rubber – squared off with mathematical precision – hindered the
foreground. It related to a black pastel square beyond its linkage; one which arrested the signature of a forgotten diary. Likewise, a brick, lozenge or sponge disfigured the whole: it had to pick up the skeleton lurking inside this stone. No matter how articulately its roughage can be yielded! Moreover, the icon of a wizard --- or possibly a salamander without fire --- cast itself adrift from this unribbed mortar. It all seemed to hint at a saurian indifference avaunt one’s grave. Nor can we forget, necessarily, the skeletal outer limbs… when taken together with its bulbous orbs (at once insect-like) and the bird’s rib-cage. It up-ended a vice, triangular in its certainty or rigour, and Palaeolithic in frequency. Surely H.P. Lovecraft’s *Rats in the Walls* digs deep enough for us?"

**DO NOT GO GENTLY INTO THAT ACID BATH:** (7)

For his part, Heathcote Dervish manifested a powerful visage; it looked on the world in a misanthropic way, definitely so. The brows were beetling, the eye-sockets sunken; especially when taken together with lugubrious skin around other apertures. His hair also delineated a slant; being coiled, silken, black and closely etched upon the scalp. Whereas outer extremities – like ears – proved to be made of heavy porcelain, metaphorically so. (This recalled Dennis Wheatley’s novel *The Haunting of Toby Jugg*, rather helplessly). Meanwhile, his lips sundered flesh or they happened to be full, ripe, discursive and non-pursed. They definitely resounded to a strong chin’s character; whilst his snout indicated narrative drive. It drove home its point in a way which appears beaky, truculent, vulture-like and aristocratic. (In terms of a fictional correlation, Alan Sillitoe’s novels *The General* and *The Loneliness of the long-distance Runner* come to mind). His teeth, less remarkably, gave an impression of Vorticist angles: that is, they gyrated towards a steel grimace. Here we find that Caro’s lightness of touch misfires with genetics…

**AN ANGEL BURES ITS NOSE-CONE IN THE EARTH:** (8)

Another individual stares on in a grimacing way – his features are desperate, cloven-hoofed and unperturbed. They seem to
kindle memories of a concrete slab which was possibly off to one side. Furthermore, these detours into identity, phrenologically, appear thick-set, graven, slip-streamed or trog-like. His name intoned the following accent: Warlock Splendour Thomas – it happens to be. “Bravo”, he thundered in a deep, bass voice. “None could have served such effective witness as Heathcote Dervish. He (alone of all doubters) reaches beyond oblivion’s curtain in order to summon this wraith. It came at his call and in accord with his prime o’ life – only then to susurrate the wind. Can the late symphonies of a post-modern like Richard Simpson cast a beat? Whatever the cause: a hollow reaches out before one’s background; it strives to be deep or mole-like under the ground. Likewise, the darkest mud and earth limbered over it; thence occasioning a relation to wires of red. These came to illustrate a clock’s outermost features; itself closely bound up to or broken in terms of a face… at least on one side. This sundial’s white frontispiece was chipped, peeled or salutary in scope. Whereupon its innards spiralled out of control. They addressed the certainty of a witness too far… even though each coil, helix, comfort of many and compression-spring toiled to reconnect with its aftermath. These internal devices (you see) affect to be modulated; at once bearing a carnival’s imprint… even the sea-side resort or comedy circuit of yesteryear.”

WE SHALL BURY NUDE CARDS IN A VACUUM: (9)
Our narrative travels on, however, with Heathcote Dervish striding away from his cauldron… it continues to splutter and smoke on a brick altar. Its votaic patterning adopts a form that’s silhouetted, darksome, rigid and squared in its quilt. A vapour trail rose up successively from its hearth. Assuredly, the sky broke to the remit of its orange – if only by virtue of incense swirling below. Heathcote moved forward with a bowed head now – almost as if the man’s visage became frozen, congealed, progressive and determined. A dark nimbus plays about his brow, casting it in a silhouette’s form. In any event, some wooden debris --- when mixed with stone --- lit up our view’s
left-hand corner. Certainly, one woman (a nameless votary) looked on dispassionately --- all of this religious circle’s experienced a shock, after all. Whereupon another monk drifted in and out of consciousness; he came to abreast of the right-side. In reflective mood, Elsa Bounteous Hapgood opined: “Some day the world shall understand, husband of mine. It will broadcast such results as these on children’s television. Isn’t it obvious? Since two pillars stand alone before a moon’s opalescence (now). They disagree with what may or may not exist within one. The twin columns rise like sentinels in England’s darkness; while a shadowy or liquid orb slips upon furtive ground. Don’t chase it again… because fictive shapes cross the screen of a dawn’s mantle. They live out their subsistence on an electric terrain; the like of which refracts onto a falling wall. This telescopes a graph of many bricks – all of them releasing deep grooves into Byzantine concrete. It seems to be a million miles away from Sir Frank Brangwyn’s oil sketch, The Lemon Pickers, in 1908. Although a rough-cut suffused this stone; it drove a bargain and etched its stillness. Definitely now, such a mural levered its absence towards the wood: thereby reflecting on such deep incisions.”

NO WARRANTY SURPRISES PARADISE: (10)
Over and again, our mage chooses to intervene: “Listen to me, woman, we need to break out of our enclosure – it offers us nothing but purple. The rottenness of one hand may not limit entreaty, particularly if our feeble will halts before Fate. In any event, mankind mocks at us by way of surcease. They imagine us to be fools or worse, in terms of our adherence to these mystic arts. You speak --- Bounteous Elsa --- of a time when knowledge or illumination comes; but favourably cast aside such Masks. None surrounds us with a hundred pigs here: since any swine-herds on stakes recall William Golding’s The Lord of the Flies. Insufficient recognition awaits us; it passes off into ready grievances – only to fail at a feast of Yorkshire’s art. Whereby – like a painting by Atkinson Grimshaw – Aphrodite gestures
ethereally across a tidal scope of red. It lumbers up above the horizon – thus escaping from any final curtain-call by Arthur Sutro. Truly wife, what we require is a sigil’s power --- not a Pope’s indulgence. We need a sign that comes to us from out of the aeons; or quite possibly it’s the nimbus of a new decay… one which scrapes the maggots from expiring meat. We have to prove to our fellow doubters or sceptics, locked into modernity as they are, that this knowledge registers in our breasts. It pertains to us alone.”

In his mind’s eye, though, Heathcote approaches a double-breasted door… Next to it – and availing itself of all mythology – a pattern of mist swirls around its angles. Leaning against one of these posts stands a Clown; he seems to indicate infinite cruelty or a Pueblo’s response to lust. Do such peons learn morality through a carnival of play? Anyway, our character is seen to incarnate Glock’s absence or estrangement – even the tell-tale covering at the end of Trevor Griffith’s drama, The Comedians. Certainly, a circus’ sinister aspect travels beyond our avatar. But no matter… for our version of Magnasco’s Punchinello remains arbitrary in his dismissive air.

A MAQUETTE OF DELUDED LOOPS OR EYES: (11)
A car’s indifference attracts one’s attention to it – such a futurist racer lies to one side of a funeral block made from stone. It casts the net wide before a phantasy (herein). To notice our hullabaloo: all of these denizens, led by Heathcote Dervish and Elsa Bounteous Hapgood, make their way towards a bevy of vehicles. Expensive limousines find themselves arranged next to several collapsed walls. Didn’t Dennis Wheatley declare that those engaged in the mystic arts are often wealthy? Abundant materialism always breeds such immaterialism, you see. Nonetheless, Wiltshire’s mists gather around a burnished Rolls-Royce; while, to one side, a silver cloud or lotus effectively locks in its own seating. Various subdued panels fall away; their sides are crenellated to a lost magnificence… and each one looms up
before its witness. Occasionally, a brick becomes discernible amidst porous granite; it comes laced with the odd neighbouring hole. A cavernous window (this) which peeps out of such hollows; it straddles a parchment via many stones. Do they scream in silence, in accordance with so much feminist dictum?

Anyway, our two main protagonists, whether male or female, walk between these barrows. They pick themselves up over such hewn rocks and head for the cars’ running-boards. As usual, Heathcote Dervish is talking: “We must accomplish a great feat, wife… one that cuts against the very root of Life’s tree. Oh yes – if one of our number brings down to earth, even momentarily, some sort of sun-spot… then all corners of the globe shall bear witness to it. Not until such Power has been manifested will we encompass our due. What we require involves an object for both passion and thaumaturgy.” As he said this, Heathcote strode forward purposefully. Furthermore – in a glowering template – his face stood out starkly; it seemed to be limned or even haloed. A ruddy effulgence covered all of its aspect; whilst a scorbutic rim hastened to chastise those roundabout. Seen in this way, he effectively betokened a shaman’s features: at once masked, effigy-like, fixed and full of blood. To wax Mediaeval about it, his humours were unbalanced and thus led onto a situation of excess choleric.

All this time though, our worshipful master has a dream or fantasy on the go. It relates to a past Clown or one who chooses to brush aslant us… albeit when beholden to a shadow’s bliss. This big-top monger --- or companion from out of left-field --- gestures wildly. Yet still, all things considered, we continuously return to his face. It depicts an unalterable act – whether spliced, immobile as to grease-paint, and transformed by degrees. Let’s sort it out, if you will. For our Grimaldi’s tone seeks oblivion’s rescue. It can be seen in profile, hectoring from a booth or otherwise akimbo. Needless to say, all of these Glocks look macabre over a potential for masking up – that is, for foot-wear
worn over the face. Yes: our patience has worn thin... because the bulbous nose, red-letter day, rouge, thick lips (abreast of silence) and paint-wheels all speak of chaos. Or – to put it another way – they indicate nought but an anarchic potential in tom-foolery. It happened to be a feast of fools which ventilates the aperture of a new beginning. What goes on here? Nothing really; our scenario just understands that a mountebank engages in assault and sexual ragging: it all proceeds darkly under glass… nay, even smoothly betimes. Like all relics that die in a child’s arms – it contrives to induce an innocent fording, possibly a rind stone amid a darkling glass.

UNDER A SMILE, A MECHANISM BETRAYS ITS GREASE-PAINT: (12)
Our warlock, Heathcote Dervish, walks to a brocaded car through some indifferent mist. It all speaks of unhallowed offerings before various bull gods and others. Somewhat reluctantly, his wife steps out with him, although already his mind happens to be elsewhere. One experience before all others risks its temperature across from his brows. It seems to encompass the following: in this programme a lonely waif, Heathcote in another life, wanders Whitechapel’s streets bereft of care. Isn’t this where those ‘sexist’ mutilations and slayings took place – all between the 31st of August 1888 and November the 8th of that year? Watch Heathcote Dervish, though – for he’s attired in a triangular dome independently of any trespass. An old great coat – of the sort worn by a Boer war veteran – surrounds his lower appurtenances. But any mask (hitherto mentioned) comes surrounded by a further infraction. This enables one to breathe under a muslin extremity; it seeks to whisper against its own claret. Needless to say, a great swathe of bandages hides the cusp within… or could it be a Pinocchio who’s been shorn of all his lies? In any event, the mummified rictus swirls apace – if only to bury a scarab’s entombment. It rightly decides to go on before the draft; at once disabled, frigid, falsely congealed, sarcophagus-like and ameliorated. In this advent, you see, one’s verso or ‘the sinister’
has been raised to a nethermost power; it chalks off any semblance to lint. Let’s see now --- a gas-light glimmers in the distance, nearly always adjacent to a pea-souper. The briefest of blue scarves then uncurls from Heathcote’s neck in a serpentine fashion.

LAUGH, LAUGH YOU HOLLOW SCARECROWS[!]: (13)

“Numquam potest non esse virtuti locus.”

‘It can never be that for courage there is no place.’

- Medea, Euripides

Bounteous Elsa Hapgood, his wife, has been meaning to accost him for some time. Perplexed, she stands her ground like a four-fold tree. “Husband of mine”, she averrs, “all semblance of torture must cease to be articulated by these lips. Your importance in our community stands recognised… and vast wealth surrounds you --- what more do you crave? Surely, you can wax satisfied with these inner furnishings of Pandora’s box?”

For his part, Heathcote remains still or mute. His mind cannot readily free itself (you see) from those fancies which come laced in an alien Victoriana. By virtue of them, a close-up is observed around his bandaged eyes. These stare manically ahead of themselves – whilst coming wrapped in a magenta’s haze. Each eye-ball looks avid, unremembered, and all requesting in terms of a sacrifice. But where can a wickerman be found in this unlikely fog? Altogether now, his mummified appendages speed on lightly to their task. Like a satanic easter egg, these outer wraps encode one betraying silence or other.

A MINUTE TO SAVE THE UNIVERSE FROM CAVEMEN: (14)

Still Bounteous Elsa Hapgood, who has refused to quit her post, makes fine her entreaty. To which her spouse responds brusquely
and with brutality. “It dissatisfies me over provender, woman. Do you hear? I cannot bear to be scoffed at by my peers o’er performance of the ancient rites. More than any Dion Fortune novel, we are the true custodians of animal magic!”

Despite this though, the wizard’s mind seems to be penetrated by Whitechapel’s fog. His alter ego has turned his back towards a dark pregnancy, only to then give a rejoinder to a back-line of gloom. Basically, he continues to wander forth, the triangular tapes and bandages trailing behind him. All around his ‘dead man walking’ there subsists an uneven glow; it lops off one final disaster before another… even though a decayed wall or fantastical mural slips along beside them. It drips with entreaty or hidden expectation. Hark (!), might those prove to be figurines up front or in the darkness? He can hardly make them out, but somewhere he knows that he’s seen them already.

AN ADVENT WITNESSES GOITRE PRIOR TO MARTYRDOM: (15)
Like always, Heathcote Dervish is bluff and unapologetic with his social inferiors. While almost unbeknown to him his chauffeur, Butler James, holds open a carriage’s exit so that his master might enter. “I trust all went smoothly at the ceremony, your worship”, cooed the Butler. “Verily, underling, show all speed so as to position us before the mansion”, snapped his bad-tempered owner. Butler James – irrespective of what he actually thought – held open the door for his lord and lady. A league beyond this certain other couples were likewise disembarking. Furthermore, the vehicle in question proved to be an old silver ghost; what with spoked wheels, tiny palisades and shimmering glass surrounds. All the time a heavy and impenetrable mist came down around them; it appeared to register the trick known as Pepper’s Ghost in the theatre.
Heathcote Dervish knew – with all sincerity – that to feed on your own kind was an obvious moral necessity. Yes indeed; but who or what were those dimly discerned shapes ahead? In one sense, identification luxuriates in straightforwardness… since two bourgeois figurines stood out amidst a pea-souper. Its resultant colouring – when bereft of all toads – had to speak of cerulean’s mock-majesty. Now then, in the distant confusion, Heathcote makes out various sparring partners. They prove to be differentiated versions of Butler James and Elsa Bounteous Hapgood. They stand, in pre-Edwardian fancy dress, in front of a rather stark building with a golden door. What might it signify, possibly? Again, desultory gas lamps shimmer from above, and each globular yellow speck looks to be cast away in ones and twos… This is it: yet one enabling factor foxes our consciousness. It has to involve the figure of a small ragamuffin or street urchin who runs from our respectable duo. Do they come to represent or illustrate the middle-class couple on Munch’s bridge, irrespective of his screamer? Never mind: since our street-child involves a bit of stray ectoplasm or sensory protoplasm. This may well have been cast adrift by Bounteous Elsa in the course of her researches. “Come back, return to us, ol’ Jenny. Let there be no hard feelings or recriminations. Can ya credit it?”, opines a dead butler. “Cor mister, not likely”, hums our Jenny. “Haven’t you heard that there’s a monster abroad – around aways and about these backstreets, themselves encased in fog? He be a ghoul, a watchman, a Ripper or Walter Sickert without the acrylic grief, my lovelies. Lor’ above, me ducks…” – it’s then that she spies Heathcote D. Abreast of mummifying bandages (he is), although not necessarily liable to stop aside of a triangular convex.

In our dimension (or its twenty-first century compass) this couple’s limousine races ahead. Deep inside its upholstery a
husband and wife converse. “I’m afraid that you worry me on occasion, my lord”, insisted Elsa. “Let’s give it a go abreast of Hans Jurgen Syberberg’s cinema… for, in truth, your pursuit of magical salves started almost accidentally. It went under the christening of a hobby --- nothing more. Now it seems to have completely taken over your existence, dear.” In saying this… one just has to remark upon the emboldened mask which is her face. It happens to be blanched, replete, effulgent, clipped as to tone, aristocratic and spartan in its training. Was it anything other than an Aristo’s visage, to be sure (?): if we might make use of a phrase drawn from John Fowles’ non-fiction. Nonetheless, nacreous ear-rings float in her lobes (depending); they carry forwards Leni Riefenstahl’s Olympic torch, thereby.

BETRAY THE DEATHS OF A MILLION GNATS, WHY DON’T YOU[?]: (18)
Irrespective of any of the above, my friends, Jenny ran smack into Heathcote Dervish’s mask. He stood out starkly when limned against an ebon ground; in a scenario where his orbs glowed like coals. They transfigured such darkness within a shining esplanade – especially now that a gas-jet lit up the rear portal. It gave off a stroboscopic pulsation none too easily. Likewise, his features showed through the triangular hood underneath the bandages… Could H.G. Wells’ description of The Invisible Man have been a psychic transcription of this? In any event, his Lon Chaney grimace passed muster with the sepulchral; and it denoted an off-shoot of Bram Stoker’s discourse over those seven stars, or such-like sigils. “Lor’”, betokened our Jenny in innocent blasphemy. Had a vampiric nemesis struck from out of the pages of James Hinton’s philosophy – leastwise, when it came to deal with female redemption?
DO NOT DISILLUSION THESE POST-MODERN STAVES: (19)
The lord of the manor, Heathcote Dervish, remained oblivious to his surroundings – while concentrating on an innermost project. “Most assuredly”, he responded to his wife, Elsa Bounteous. “Covenship (or the practice of the mystic arts) has become my life, veritably so. Nor will any dare to mock me for it – irrespective of aught else. Do the heavens mark my cry?” In this instant, Dervish’s voice rises to a crescendo; it both rasps and shouts. Whilst his upper-class patina (to look at) recalled Lord Lucan’s after a Saturday night out at one of John Aspinall’s gaming emporiums. Abruptly then, it reached out as expansive, costing plenty, robust, truculent, awkward, plummy and magisterially alone. It sort of intoned a David Cameron look without the wetness, effeminacy and liberal bias. No temporising stood out here from afar: in that Heathcote Dervish came across as a preacher man Riley, a fanatic or a customary mystagogue. (You don’t need to have read Flannery O’Connor’s Wise Blood to have arrived at this conclusion). All and everything stares clearly up at you from these waters, yes?

SPARE A SECOND THOUGHT FOR A RUINED TENNIS-BALL: (20)
In a parallel universe to our present one (circa. the London of the eighteen eighties) a street-child backed away from us. Might she interpret the role of one of Pasolini’s rag-and-bones, particularly when illuminating the forsaken identity of ‘Kathy Come Home’? No doubt about it: her liquorice treatment seemed to suffice for some instant or other on the board. It waxed beastly before its own inanity, therefore. As to hair, the girl sought out a rubicund offering – with her mane frazzled under a temperate dose. “Lor’”, she insisted, when addressing the bandaged carapace before her. “Are you a make-belief or a shape-shifter; that is, one who plys the by-ways of the soul looking for victims?” For a moment, Heathcote’s doppelganger remained silent, but he then repeated in a dulcet whisper. “Lor’, Jenny, old love… it’s time
for socio-biology to take effect – just think of me as your reaver, claustrophobic entry and Maudsley hospice. Truly, I shall release you from your mortal coil.” In uttering this, he incarnated a wraith’s imprint – what with his glaucous spirit, husk, rotting cadaver exterior and Anne Rice look. Certainly, he bore his mummification lightly – if only to retrieve its essence at day-break.

LISTEN TO A CANNON’S JOYFUL WISDOM: (21)
We move now to embrace another character’s development… For a silvery puppet, by the name of Phosphorous Cool, hangs from the back-frame of one of Eric Bramall’s marionette shows. Like a toy-theatre it was; in that our silver manikin danced above a globe – the latter jigging away before a transparent screen. Could it be little more than a prop vest; or a painted door at the back of a performance house? Let’s loosen such a witness – when we remember that a swirl of the Heavenly firmament exists outside: within which one glacier after another shifts its transparent non-ice. It fuels the fire of teleology or a prior purpose, you see. Yes again; each planet twinkles before the stardust of its available canopy. While – to one side of these developments – Phosphorous gazes at an enclosing white hole. A centre-point of non-darkness (this happens to be) which eludes its own sun, choosing instead to fire off around a planet. Such an imprint sought to give a fiery halo to a visiting orb; it composed an aureole that transfigures its stillness.

EAT A GOLF-BALL WITH A PORCUPINE’S MOUTH: (22)
Entreat me now and forever, why don’t you? For our bandage man continues to subsist in a rival dimension. It paints up the posture of its latitude, indeed… especially since Heathcote’s auxiliary consciousness strikes muster in its mirror. May this object be one of those fair-ground glasses which disfigures the body – by means of optical trickery? Never mind: this has to be due to the fact that Mister Bandage is adjusting a cantankerousness in his hand; one which casts a Doctor
Kevorkian shadow. Do you detect its lustre? Let’s examine this forethought again... particularly when his adjustment filibusters an eye: the kindred of such a loss betokens a poison within each valve. Whilst concentrating on this debenture Heathcote Dervish registers a manic gleam – it’s merely non-spectral, undistanced and puissant (to say the least). “Lordy”, whispers Jenny. Her slightly hoarse Cockney accent is reduced to a croak now. “My Lor’, no, no, Jesu; you must be the harbinger, phantom or monger of solids. Hazard your worst, Mr. X!” “I shall, dearie”, responded Heathcote D., “have no doubt about that.”

VISIT OUR ENGLISH COMMEDIA DELLE’ARTE FOR THE FIRST TIME![1]: (23)
What does Phosphorous Cool look like? Well, he continues to ply a trough into innocence – if only to remember a maintenance of prisms. Instead of which, however, we notice that his eye-sockets are absent to an expectant retina: they achieve the grave of one unknown too soon. Most definitely, since the dome of the puppet’s head glistens like a billiard ball in those stage lights – each one of them twinkling from this comedy theatre’s wings. Never again though, quod our marionette’s visage recalls the architectural purity of Botticelli; wherein idealism comes transfused in one face (a la Riefenstahl’s yearning). To be true: the cosmos radiates unreality behind our figurine’s head-piece; possibly due to its articulation out of papier-mâché.

ONE PICK SEEKS A SAND-CASTLE TO KNOCK OVER: (24)
Against our witness statement here, Bandage Man prepares his pipette for the final count-down. Irrefragably, his finger-tips, covered in lintel, reposition the plunger within this particular dial. Moreover – culturally speaking – his demeanour has much to do with Professor Moriarty’s obsessionality in a film like The Woman in Green from the nineteen thirties. To be faithful to its memory, you understand? Meanwhile – and viewed as a close-up – Jenny stands before this dark doctor with a funereal ‘plaint.
Surely, she represents a Pre-Raphaelite virgin who’s badly out of focus? Yet again, we find that her mittens were clasped together, the tresses badly dishevelled, the eye-pits sunken and her skin sallow. Furthermore, the mouth depicted an oval or rectangle – almost pleading, empty, redundant or forlorn (it was). A passionate dimness then gripped all around this fog; it limbered up to a neighbouring building’s absent prospect, effectively speaking. “Let me inform you of who I am”, registered our Band-aid top.

MARIONETTES SQUEAK BEFORE THE LIGHTS, MIND EACH FIRE: (25)
Underneath our jigging figurine, Phosphorous Cool, a silk backcloth superintends; it provides a fitting terrain for this character. Almost immediately Phosphorous hunkers down; he seems to be regretting something whilst remaining speechless. Above his pointy head a meteorite shoal glimmers; it carries forth a transpondency… even a reluctance. Let’s forgive its overall vista once in a while… Likewise, our puppet – although a manikin and not a glove – realises that he can’t break free. Most assuredly, he must be stuck in an assembly of stick-men or corn-dollies (forevermore)… and don’t forget the restiveness of Mister Punch, irrespective of his violence, once the old Italian called Porsini brought him over from the continent.

FLOW RIVER, FLOW THROUGH MERCURY’S VEINS: (26)
Back in a prismatic recapturing, then, Heathcote’s bandaged saliva manages to fill this wreckage with fear. It rears up as a tubular encastellation of rags; each one delimiting the tower in such a Babel. It decides, most considerably, to leaven dysgenics with the promise of an after-life. Again now, a variant on Breugel’s tower of many tongues leads to some sort of closure: it essentially finishes off the space around our plunger. Also – and akin to this – the atmosphere swirls pulsatingly like a piece of Op art. Mightn’t it encode one optical illusion amongst many? Although the hollowed out cheeks of our Jenny back away; and
this is oblivious to the fact that her Joker’s turned up… albeit in a game of solitaire. “No, please, master of diffidence, ‘ave mercy on a poor waif and stray. Do ya find it so?” “Forget the bleating, oik of a crimson plenty”, enjoins our Strangelove’s tissue. “Your reaping of the whirlwind is a gain attributable to my particular life. Mark it so: the provision of slaughter – for these new Gadarene swine – has to be either a misadventure: or a desire to place a porcine head upon a wooden staff. For – only by virtue of sucking the marrow out of you – can I liberate myself from the doldrums. No mere psychic vampirism, a la Dion Fortune, may satisfy me and mine. Not half…”

ONE STRATAGEM EXISTS FOR A BOUNCING SILVER BAUBLE: (27)
One has to listen to what’s going on in order to really understand, you know? While – during this rival tournament – Phosphorous clenches his fist in an expectation of nothingness. A burst or susurration of speed surrounds him – all in accord with reverse trigonometry; it actually favours one capture ahead of another one. During this enclosure, the puppet’s jaw hardens with new resolve, albeit pugnaciously. It similarly argues for a split humidity around the eyes, within which one star-cluster can coalesce. It burns – akin to magnesium oxide – at some time in the future. Maybe Ray Bradbury would not approve – but, in all honesty, Phosphorous Cool had decided to break free from Eric Bramall’s chains. He wishes to blurt out from one theatrical backing or story-board… at large. Again, such a toy-theatre – as chronicled by George Speaight – was made by Elsa in West Germany (sic). It betokened some wood, came flat-packed, stood erect up to six feet when mounted, and consisted of heavy velvet. A colour scheme of red-and-blue intruded --- complete polar opposites, you see!
AGAIN, TO BREACH A PANTALOON BETRAYS A CACTUS: (28)

Assuredly now, way back in the nineteenth century Jenny staggars away – together with a golden pulsation surrounding her lights. Before her form, Heathcote Dervish, bandage swathed, prepares to administer the *coup de gras*. “Your worthless life (Jenny) must furnish fuel for my becoming… it illustrates the ability to replenish existence with naught but a sausage. A naked tableau of meat spits in the pan – always broiling over the embers of unnatural fires. In its way, therefore, it proves to be adjacent to that scene in a Howard Brenton play; wherein the mass murderer Christie rises from a den of rubbish. He forsakes the articulation of so many crazes – it also reaches out in order to refute Brenton’s doctrine of ‘practical communism’. Nonetheless, a mask on Christie’s psychopathic features betrays its innocence. It listened to the adventure of so many gates; even if nemesis rises up from crumpled issues of *The Daily Star* – rather than *The Morning Star*. A bobble-hat and scarf around his upper body – possibly with the colours of Reading FC in blue-and-white – passed underneath Christie’s second skin. Conceptually speaking, Christie’s facial covering looked rasped, Mediaeval, boy-hooded and somewhat naïve. It doubtlessly travelled via this travail *in lieu* of pain; it also speaks to nothing save a salve in an empty mirror.”

With this repast, *ergo*, Heathcote Dervish slid through Jenny at a run; and his syringe proved to be the weapon of despatch. Listen to me: a sacred scream is heard… one which happens to deliver its provender from the ground. Everything else really tips away from its offering now; despite the fact that Jenny’s demise takes place before a bar of newsprint. A rectilinear blast at the Hackney Empire followed its suit… whereupon a thousand-and-one vaudeville shows, *artistes*, and such-like entertainments, littered its boards. Didn’t these betray the inner dimensions of the Actor’s Club off the Strand, as well as being pursuant to those early Max Wall farces of yesteryear? Jenny – at a milk-top’s
finality – cried out: “Help, murder, police… cor, not half.” Finally, the two shadows merged into one. A rooted hood and a minor earthling combine in their shapes – and the cry of a lynx comes to be heard at a falling night-time. It yelps, roams and then turns mute. Likewise, a policeman’s whistle may be listened to in the distance, but who will truly obey its sound?

CRUMPLE BEFORE A HURDY-GURDY MAN’S LISTENING: (29)
Phosphorous Cool has jilted himself free now… He accosts or limbers his body up, thereby, and this is in order to let off steam from a deluded turbine. It travelled up one’s left-side in terms of one geyser too many. Whereas just behind Phosphorous – and to the right side – there stood something of a pitted planet. In a Herculean firmament… it seemed to speak up for ultramarine, sapphire, cerulean and French Blue. Despite the fact (we must say) that this globule undulates like an asteroid – what with craters, dips, declensions and other inclines. (In truth, such an orb took us back to those moon globes care/of Sir Patrick Moore’s *Sky at Night*). Needless to say, a pitch black or ebon back-screen limits our theatre. Phosphorous Cool sets himself against it. May he be a rebel with or without a cause?

COCKNEY EELS WILL MAKE YOU PAY, MAKE YOU PAY: (30)
Our narrative continues in another dimension, but now it takes a different tack. It’s not Heathcote Dervish’s consciousness this time; no, the development which enters here has to do with another character altogether. For Phosphorous’ transliterated dreams come to the fore – especially when a turbo-charged hansom cab repositions itself above the stars. All of this leads to a situation where the Thames levels out below: and it sheers off to the side, if only to escape from the glittering lights. Contrary to Bulwer Lytton, these reflect back from a spangled or bedizened river. *Tout court*, the People’s Palace is lit up adjacent to Pugin’s Big Ben; the latter cascading into the sky by dint of its
hours. Sundry air-ships or balloons are also seen; they move effortlessly across between the north and south banks. Irrespective of this, Phosphorous belabours his point by motioning to the cabbie. He stands, whip in hand, at the back of the vehicle. All in all, he sets himself over a Phileas Fogg extravaganza – even a rival child’s intervals of play. Yes indeed, he stood upright like one of those figurines in a toy-theatre which Montague Summers made so much play with at the twentieth century’s advent. Could a connexion also be established, perchance, between this drama and Terry Gilliam’s Pythonesque bravura…? In any event, a picturesque *Victoriana* continues to intrude. It’s best illustrated by those gas-lamps whose illuminations flicker on the Thames; the water then glistens, ethereally, in a haze. Mark it!

**TO ESCAPE AN IRON-MAIDEN TASTES OF HONEY:** (31) Do you wish to remember such a velocity? Phosphorous has speeded up now and he is just a blur of motion. A literal quick-silver weapon he might well be – one which chooses to render indistinct its momentum towards a goal. Certainly, various planets and cellular orbs twinkle on, plus a negative reverberation in relation to the silences of these interstellar gulfs. Didn’t such planetary correspondences become frightened at daytime? Furthermore, our marionette wants to break out from Eric Bramall’s world --- freedom is sought, thereby. It wishes to strike out along a ventriloquist’s lonely path. Don’t you know that a puppet-master’s voice ultimately originates from the stomach? Regardless of which, Pascal still seemed to be affrighted by the ache in these gulfs and their ignorance over mankind!

Some time later, Heathcote Dervish enters a pub down in the vicinity of Bishopsgate – it’s called “Jack the Ripper”. (Although – unknown to many of its participants – an inn with a similar name would be forced to change its title. It did so during the nineteen seventies and under feminist pressure.) Heathcote nimbly entered the tap-room – with his bandages prominently
displayed around his pyramidal cone; within which his eyes burnt on like coals taken from a living fire. Various gas-lamps illumined the scene; and they had VR picked out on their glazed surfaces. It stood for Victoria Regina. Inevitably though, this pub appeared to be heavily lit – what with solid wooden panels all around its walls. A few mid-century pictures – such as one or two Constables – lay about the room’s far-flung vicinity. Yes truly, they came encased in gilt or ormolu frames of some grandeur. A large collection of creatures filled the bar; they wore frock coats, top hats, cravats, bow-ties and even cloaks. A few of them dissolved before one’s gaze – becoming shape-shifters or semblances a la David Icke. What might this hint at? The possibilities are obviously multiple – it’s true. Yet a captured disfigurement hints at a lack-lustre glass. Around Heathcote Dervish (and to the side) stood his two accomplices: these were Bounteous Elsa Hapgood and Butler James. Although formally dead – he’d changed little down the years, but she looked altogether like a little madam. A virago authoress of yesteryear – she was definitely U, to make use of Nancy Mitford’s term. Various buns adorned her scalp (thereby); itself replete with an off-the-shoulder fur coat. Less Pre-Raphaelite than mildly Audrey Beardsley in manner – that’s how she proved to be!

ENOUGH OF THESE STRATAGEMS WHICH ENCASE OUR THOUGHTS: (32)

On Eric Bramall’s imaginary stage-set, then, Phosphorous Cool comes unstuck; in that his body caroms back from an after-screen. A terrific conundrum ensues… Alack (!), a reverberation impacts upon this puppet cradle with almost physical force. Again, a brain-dwelling SPLAM (!) notates this mark… it also raises the moniker of a spendthrift Golgotha (here). Surely, the barrier at our set’s rear preserves a forceful imprint – one which lends a corporeal lustre to what might otherwise be a doll’s tabernacle? For a moment our figurine looks stunned or sleepy – yet one cannot help but notice that the strings which tie a marionette are broken. Unlike Gerry Anderson’s Thunderbirds,
or a barge-theatre in Henley-on-Thames, this glove seems to have slipped ‘his’ armature. No-one really knows any more at this juncture…

Meanwhile – back in the ecstasy of Heathcote’s forgotten dreams – he espies a tap-room’s mortal saw-dust. Yes indeed, various trans-mortals sup up their cups in the bar’s recesses; in a situation where each one measures a cloud’s aberrant silver. In one corner, a spheroid-headed mugwump downs an ale; while his companion grows a pineal eye from its compress. Do we really mean ‘its’ forehead? Again now, the public house’s back-sweep waxes poignant in its intrigue: and it shadow-boxes over an array of figures who could have come out of a Beresford Egan drawing. Regardless of all this, a number of pre-Edwardian yokels bite the dust – they also sit around circular tables in a low light. Listen to our mementos: since a man in a cylindrical top-hat slumps in a recessed booth, and the head-gear in question is bright green. Whereas – on the House’s other side – certain couples relax before pint glasses… or a jar of viands fills the space next to them. Although it appears to be obvious that one of them has a misshapen head; it flutes away to a turnip or trumpet a la Cesare Lombroso. Further, his companion in this endeavour downs a milky stout – a monk’s habit and hair-cut are numbered among his possessions.

DON’T FORSAKE US IN OUR LETTUCE HOUR: (33)

Forever and a day, Phosphorous Cool’s silvery form floats in space. He’s at once up-ended and unresourced, but with a trail of vapour crossing his prow amidships. It definitely maps out the silhouette of so black a night; the curtains of which have been pulled down as a tribute to Pepper’s Ghost. Look at this: a stillness supervenes in a puppet’s world or show, and it grew angry at such a sallow hindrance… Despite the fact that Phosphorous drifts gloomily in space, or through a disacknowledged template under its sound.
WE WILL CONQUER ONCE MORE, ABREAST OF SULPHUR: (34)
Let it ride now: when we discover that a bandaged Heathcote sits next to Elsa and his butler, albeit a transformed one. A hint of frustration enters his voice here – yet he does well to conceal it. To speak of his head, though, Heathcote Dervish’s cranium is adjusted to the triangular; it also came swathed in bandages. He illustrated an Egyptian mummy… possibly one which had been characterised by Budge, the Egyptologist. Still – underneath Anne Rice’s accoutrements and gear – Heathcote’s orbs festered away: and they summoned up fiery marbles to one’s memory. In the farther environs of our public house, some desultory spectres sat at their drink. Although – and close to hand – Elsa Bounteous Hapgood and Butler James whispered in his ear. As a penitent, perforce, he had no choice but to consider their objections. One by one they laid them out before him… can we consider it as some fallen architecture aslant its deliverance? Her form looked most apt, wrapped up, mesmerised, intense and concentrated on one final effort. Similarly, she wore a studded broach or choke around her neck; it reflected a pale white lustre this even-tide. Are the eyes a window into one soul’s leaving? In her case, then, such cerulean offerings paid the price of their own intrigue. It definitely outshone any Aphrodite of Melos out back – or contained on a salutary grass-land. Do some refuse to call it the Venus de Milo? Against this, however, E. Bounteous’ moral jigsaw showed off; it sloped to one side and carried away Stan Barstow’s carrion. Likewise, such a carnival knew no surcease and it exhibited its contempt --- even playfully. But such slits gathered some witnesses: and each one atomised an agency of change. They similarly refused to come down from the moon… especially when each one threw over a domino’s heart. Surely, we can declare that her eyes foiled a slain witness (?); they were hard, twin-pointed, dark, enveloping and vulpine. Do they witness the star-lit status of a silent-screen goddess from the nineteen twenties? Oh my yes…
LET’S INDULGE TRUMAN CAPOTE’S PASSION FOR BRANDY: (35)
Within our puppet-master’s purview, a meteor shower inundates the ground; it cascades to a known promontory. Nor do any ask: how can such fiery rocks fling themselves towards a toy-theatre’s round-house? Never mind: since this shower of plunging granite moves on – and it tends to follow a definite pathway. Each congealed cliff carries a momentum’s track (in other words); and it seems to observe a straight or propulsive energy, thereby. Furthermore, an ebon screen still sufficed to translate these puppets out into the mainstream. From the maelstrom or carnival of children’s entertainment, then, it loomed up… so as to castigate a grave. Wisdom may issue from the mouth of babes, but, in this case, a circus always hints at Fear’s wages! Any infantile joust doubtless contains the sinister within it…

THROW YOUR DICE, YOU MASSACRE OF INNOCENCE: (36)
Like Julian Barnes’ novel about Sherlock Holmes, Heathcote Dervish and his companions sat in a Victorian pub. Each mystery solved its own defence through absence, you see. To return to the narrative, though: Butler James snapped his fingers in a clinch, but not necessarily a convulsion. Dear me no: because Butler James’ look is altogether sly, inclement, listless and over-drawn. Nor can one tax a nasal feature which connects such a protuberance with his forehead… at least straight out. He chooses to wear an over-stuffed great-coat --- one that swoops down to his booted knees. In the remainder of the pub, revelry finds itself joined to an early version of a Cockney knees-up… although it doesn’t necessarily feature Chas & Dave! Nonetheless, a sing-song has begun in the tap-room’s farthest recesses – it helps to depict a miscellany of fin de siecle types. All of them happen to be hale and hearty. Do they not embody, after all, one of those Strong Men who are painted onto the wooden boards of a Limehouse show-town? Also, our collection of revellers consists of one Tommy Atkins on his own…
somewhat conspicuously. A dragoon guard possibly, his cap, uniform, braces and belt went with the sabretache underneath. He’s surrounded by two charlatans in conical hats, or quite evidently they could be Pearly Kings and Queens. (A tradition which hasn’t altogether disappeared from contemporary East London… an area wherein the old white population’s virtually ceased to exist. It’s been forced further out into Essex’s marshes – primarily by dint of mass or alien immigration from the Third World). Accompanying this assembly, then, an old dame tinkles away on the sheet music’s piano. She hardly looks at the score, however. A gusty tune rips from their collective throats (resultantly); and it remembers Lord Blake’s biography of Disraeli in more ways than one.

A splendid town
a wonderful round
we’ll smash our enemies into the ground…

Hurrah; hurrah –
diddly-doo…
nothing but the few can entertain you.

Rule Britannia
Britannia rules the waves
Britons never shall be slaves!

What music accompanies this ditty? Mayhap it happens to be Standing Block or Stele by Gyorg Kurttag, together with two works by Karlheinz Stockhausen: Group and the Helicopter Quartet. Dream on!

A BISCUIT CAN BE EATEN IN ONE GULP: (37)
Look at this! Our silvery puppet is caught up by these meteors and flung forth. He finds himself propelled along without either volition or will. It belabours the point of its own inauthenticity, in other words. Yet – when considered in the round – a version of
Clive Barker’s *Books of Blood* crystallises here in a toy-theatre. Truly, it’s an example of Angela Carter’s *The Magic Toy-shop* or one of Michael Moorcock’s broken tambourines. A certain haze comes over one’s eyes (now) – even though Phosphorous Cool finds his velocity to be mute. Alone he is; while being cast amidships of this oblivion. It awakens before a necessary harbour. Again now, his limp body finds itself exhausted in front of such a waif. It’s carried aloft or gusted forwards slightly; and the stray momentum of its entreaty measures a shaft. Does an embarkation like this require an Indo-Aryan swastika on its cover? Regardless of all else: the meteor storm turns on a cascade of rock and ice, or is it fire? During the course of it, a silver bullet seeks a were-wolf’s body --- so that it might enter it. No matter: the point at issue rests with curving sun-light; it picks up our puppet and leverages him towards the earth. Moreover, our home planet looms up in the background – what with a quadrant of the night-sky blossoming from this dolls’ theatre. In these moments, then, a transfiguration reckons on its aftermath: and it carries a marionette out of a mere play & into life. No longer, therefore, will the Marquis de Sade have to conduct plays involving lunatics at the Charenton asylum in the early nineteenth century. Such exercises in Artaud’s Theory of Cruelty took place before Peter Weiss’ version… nor did it really pre-date an expressionist vintage. In this cavalcade – together with these comets or meteors – Phosphorous Cool escaped from puppeteering AND ENTERED LIFE. (He was no longer beholden to a bald puppet-master, brandishing a mimetic trestle, and could now strike out in the dark. Surely, blindness might escape from his revolving orbs – if we consider those sculptures to be manufactured by touch alone? May his maker utilise a plasticity, stretched out on mesh or chicken-wire, and beloved of Elisabeth Frink?)

A SPARROW ALIGHTS ON A DISUSED STOVE PIPE: (38) Further unto this endeavour, Heathcote Dervish and his fellows remain in ‘Victoriana’s’ public house. Let it all come down
now… irrespective of a bath-towel. On his left side, Elsa Bounteous Hapgood and Butler James adopted a conspiratorial vein. They looked unapologetic, shifty, needful and full of what Titus Oates once called ‘Popish Plots’. Elsa’s eye-brows were arched and James’ moustache-ends looked waxed, pointed and possibly insect-like. In contrast to his fellow travellers, Heathcote Dervish seemed more sinister than ever – what with those bandages shifting over the surface of a Toblerone head. Do these mummified cadavers move and slide every time he speaks? His eyes continue to glow preternaturally – by dint of a closed light. “Are you akin to our water-pistol’s spout?”, articulated Butler James. “Or does a poison-pellet, when delivered by a straw, leave you cold (?); especially if one shoots it like ‘Just William’. What are you up to now?” “Of course I agree, my clucks”, cooed Heathcote… by way of remonstrance and whisper. (He was desperately trying to reassure his erstwhile allies, you see). “Furthermore, your desire to up-end the Victorian colossus commends itself to me. I know you for what you are --- most veritably. You happen to be plenipotentiaries or representatives of the Grey Movement – an English schism, this, from the wider skinhead current. Many consider you to be an Anglo-Saxon variant on New Slovenian Art. No stuckists are you, but rather the vanguard of one collective semblance. It vaguely relates to the rock band, *Laibach*, who were part of *Neue Slovenia Kunst* – their anthem could be considered to be a version of that *ABBA* ditty: *Life is life*… never mind ‘Great Man of the Nation’. In your case, however, you wish to rebel and overthrow Victoriana in order to establish modernity… albeit of a neo-classical and authoritarian vintage. Like Saddam Hussein or Gilbert & George, for example, you will use *kitsch* against itself --- in terms of reverse dialectic. One also wishes to speed the velocity of your pedal-bike more radically on its way.”
NO SECRETS OF THE UNKNOWN MAY RAISE THIS BALACLAVA: (39)

Most truthfully, our comet streaks across the azure heavens above Heathcote Dervish’s limousine. It is at this moment that our puppet-theatre, hitherto prior to all, crosses over into three-dimensions or real life, so to say. Look at it this way: our meteor shower blasts across the template of a thousand houses; and it stops only to bear witness before Holst’s *The Planets*. A swirling impediment of mist then clears a desultory template of light. May rural England experience aught else – in terms of early morning rapture? Let’s hold fast to this – for Heathcote Dervish’s silver cloud passes over a mottled bridge; a structure which happens to be constructed from Portland stone. It casts a grey aspect atop a restless sheen beneath: this characterises the green scum floating on a waterway that intrudes under its arches. The limousine --- stream-lined by Tamara de Lempicka’s art --- then facilitates the speed of its embrace, as well as its rectilinear outcome. Various hamlets or dry-ice shoots limber upwards here, and they surround the patterning of so many Wiltshire endeavours. Each dwelling – when one looks at it – has rain-sluiced roofs, together with laminated grills or ducts. These are occasionally illumined by one high-light too many – a torch-light to a brave insistence, this essentially is. Nonetheless, a comet offers its payload overhead and it strokes a heavenly gate with a prior anger. Looking up, Heathcote Dervish refrains from any suspension of disbelief. “Look, my husband”, cries his distracted spouse. “Way out there over the moors… a hurtling thunder-bolt breaks up its essence. It champions the earth or bites at its own bit. Regrettfully though, no such indulgence can affect us – since each threnody spies on our entreaties. Do you hear me, great Old Ones gathered above? Yes sir, no Babbitt may prove to be alive… given its trajectory across the moors --- but us, why are we never forlorn before those practioners of Weird?” “An incarcerated rock formation, dearest; it coagulates over unarrested flame. Nor must we know more of its advent. Let it all come down – it entreats a
consecutive burst of silence. Let’s also survey how it plummets downwards towards the moors.”

IN CHESS, A THIN WAFER THREATENS TO CASTLE: (40) Multi-dimensionally, and listening to its quality, Heathcote Dervish turned his face slightly westwards from his guests. Still – and as before in our credited witness – the features of Bram Stoker’s Mummy remain in order to entrance unborn children. It leaves nothing to be desired, you see. For the eyes stare as beadily or manically as before; and his cone’s lint decides to unwrap what Jim Dewey chose to call Deliverance. Most assuredly, we are going to throw over politeness for the sake of war --- what Julius Evola would have called The Metaphysics of War, (theoretically speaking). Again, this surrender to fate involved no iron-maidens; and instead it chooses to throw a road-surface between two poles. “Are you listening to our witness before Zeus?”, enquired his two correspondents – both of whom seemed to be adopting a querulous tone. (Note: peevish can never be a word that intrudes here… no sir). Why so? Because both of their faces looked calm, slightly put upon, and livid with a cold spark. Isn’t its colour a natural blue? “Of course”, he answers, “my attention has never remained riveted on a Chinese doll – namely, one which exists carved in wood, or spray-painted with the gold of a renewed western passage. It definitely stops before a sheen that releases demons when it cracks – these mushroom up from the artificiality of bark.” To which statement Butler James averrs: “Are you barking mad?”

AN ELECTRIC-CHAIR, FROM ITS BLUE LIVERY, CASTS A POSTER’S RUSH: (41) A large meteor lay steaming in the road; it effectively swooned in order to deliver something akin to a divine spittoon. These sulphurous breaths then raised themselves up amidships – probably to allow out such a radial gasp. Fundamentally though, its colour apportioned a spirit of rufous brown: one which chose to be hived off amid some sandy accretions. Certain other
smaller boulders – or chips off the old block – lay about its epicentre in a confused consort. Up above the sky deposited a lavender effulgence, even though the orange streaks of a breaking dawn were seen at its periphery. These cantilevered up to an ochre streak at daybreak – one which filled half the sky with rectilinear fissures. All of them waxed lyrical – via a very deep blue or cerulean at its depths. Above all else, Heathcote Dervish’s limousine cut through the dimness with a yellow sword-thrust. One naked tree – rendered savage by its innocence – stood barren and without leaves on it. A mighty oak from England’s past, it laid about matters from the left… bearing witness to those wooden tendrils that scraped the loam beneath. Can you see it, strange witness? Observe this as well – from one side of the roadway a lighter pall lifted --- one which casts a negative shadow that betokens warmth. What was a pulp magazine’s moniker from the nineteen thirties (?) – why, it had to be the Shadow knows… Anyway, we mustn’t interrupt Heathcote’s talk. “It be a mystic sign from beyond our ken, wife. Let us look at it from the depths of one of John Dee’s mirrors… therein to read the future on a piece of darkened metal or glass. An appurtenance of disorder this be, although many would mix it up by calling one a diving/divining pane. Such a blast as this has rent the curtain from beyond – it roils and writhes aslant us here. We must go to it… and those who are untroubled can lead the way. It has to involve a deliverance in relation to Dublin’s pale – one which we must follow so as to reckon what it portends.” His words are followed by silence in the vehicle.

SAMMAEL’S VICTORY WEARS A CONE-SHAPED HEAD: (42)

Isabelle of Bavaria had guests this afternoon… Now then, Elsa Bounteous Hapgood seemed convulsed with a near rage; in that her features were rapt, arcane, liberated and feminine in their fury. Each affidavit rose to a crucial witness – almost after one of Rodin’s forgotten orgasmic studies. (These have to be works that exist prior to a sculptor’s object. Certainly, no indication of relief
could be proffered by a maquette’s advance. Can one tell? Let’s overcome this pleasant even-tide together…) “I wish to make it clear, Heathcote, that our rebellion is one of pure style. Bugatti racing cars and Tamara de Lempicka prints are not enough for us… Our stylistics must plumb the depths of modern articulation. It’s not for us merely a matter of penny farthing bicycles – when these were themselves jet-propelled or subject to locomotion. You see, these sky-scrapers list their own tenancy --- they presumably drive their rain against pillage. Most understandably… because we can visualise aerial velocipedes, balloons, dirigibles, strange hanging baskets and autogyros. No more stilt men, hurdy-gurdy entertainers in top-hats or human bicycles shall be seen on our streets… *Au contraire*, we want a firm break with the past and regime change. For us, any transfiguration has to involve a future wilfulness – it must incarnate Liza Minelli in *Cabaret* (amongst other things). Above all else, to us she embodies a blasphemous tincture – albeit in terms of the Tofflers’ futurity. For there she stands – virtually naked and with fresh thistles; together with fish-net tights, much abundant Latin flesh, a leotard or clout, choke and bowler-hat. It’s what we call Weimar’s diorama.” “I see”, purred Heathcote… while contemplating vitriol. Do you really see?

DON’T LIMIT THESE DRAWINGS TO B-PENCIL SKETCHES: (43)

It always exists further down and nearer the stomach’s pit… Yes indeedy; since Heathcote Dervish’s wiry profile limits its perspective to the right. It tries to vaingloriously shift to a look which is less foregrounded, evil-like, articulate, craggy or austere. Beyond his example – and way out ahead of him in subdued mist – stood the chauffeur Butler James. No doubts can come from this parkway – by virtue of his minion’s peaked cap, truss and serge overalls… themselves manufactured from rare linen. All around them, smoky English twirls lay upon their beds; it definitely chose to break up the day by a seizure in Blue. “Heathcote, sir”, mumbled his minion, “nought effectively
witnesses a tell-tale sign. Do you credit its gravity? No-one lurks out there in those mists… or alternately, are you prepared to gaze beyond a perspex glass – if only to embrace nothing?” “Let me be the judge of that”, snapped his charge-sheet. “Look you! The folly of inaction lies heavily on our brows. We must up and away at the assertion of these days. Remember now, it has to be far in excess of just smouldering meteorites, to be fair. Again, the listed complexity of one’s allure merits caution… It also transposes dignity. Look, you fool”, he cried out…“you are dead and gone in your forgotten witness before this truth. Mark it, no, no – there’s far more here than entertains a fitful retina.”

STAND AND DELIVER BEFORE A TRIANGULAR HARPOON: (44)
An urgent newsflash then intrudes into the recesses of this bar; it opens out so as to provide solace before a Leyden jar… no matter how prior. Indeed, the news-caster manifests a hybrid or ‘twenties look – what with his slicked hair parted down the middle, plus its Brylcreem, and a white carnation conspicuous in one button hole. A pronounced banner looms up behind our Radio 4 Johnny; leastways, now that we are on the safe ground of a Task-force being readied, a la the Falklands, for operations in the south Atlantic. Needless to say – and during this outburst – our bandaged miscreant seemed to cut against such “Boy’s Own” fervour. Can we say that we don’t necessarily care for the nature of his jib? Even in another dimension – we couldn’t see what these fellahs had done for Britain, you see!

A BOER WAR WITHOUT MAFEKING’S CRUMPET: (45)
These smouldering rocks continued to broil and lick their wounds – each one of them liberating a sliver of steam up above the moors. It produced a spasm of smoke over its conspectus – isn’t it really like having a dentist called Mr. Angel? Never mind: because a silvery hand peeped out and was altogether discernible amid this gas. It rested almost in a disembodied way and roundabout these houses. Look at this now… Like a shed mitten
from a store dummy (it lay alone); at once apposite, unconstrained, and a glove to end all other such conceits. Can you fix its astrology now? Yet Heathcote Dervish and his chauffeur stumble across this frost or opened tundra. Behind them, the sky swirls with a cerulean fixity; it demystifies its ice… Both men gingerly pick their way towards the impact crater. “Careful now”, suggests Heathcote with a gentle care. “We have to ridicule any semblance of trespass – only now may we stretch over to the moon’s other side, scorpionically. Yes truly, a hand or glove o’ mystery protrudes from the site – it obeys Fate’s linearity. Like in an Edgar Wallace fiction of yesteryear; it was ordained that I should find it.”

MEN IN GIRDLES HOLD BROAD-SWORDS BEFORE THEM: (46)
During all of this commotion – multi-dimensionally – our bandaged Heathcote comes over all distrait; he properly writhes back and forth in his pub seat. Might it be a stool of lacquered or wickered extraction: one which has been given over to the balustrade of so much good? In any event, the background hubbub distills a sensibility like one of Hogarth’s prints; in that a generalised din superintends. A fanciful array of British dress intrudes thereafter – it has much to do with Alexander Howard’s Cavalcade… in which a miscellany of Anglo-celtic customs let rip. Could it be referring to the Cogers, the Festival of the Herring, cheese-rolling, the Red Quill girls or Padworth’s hobby-hose… or Klansman’s horse, perchance? Simultaneously, a grey palaver of sound intrudes; wherein a medley of coster-mongers, clerks, Bow Street runners, minstrels and patriotic loafers break into a song or ditty:

‘Britain, Britain awaken thee…
We, we, we shall always be free
Dash the foreigner, Turk and Jew
We will forever be TRUE, True, True.’
A general chauvinism fills the air – all of which, contrary to the blandishments of a liberal like Menzies-Campbell – is a fine redoubt. But listen closer to what these yeomanry of the guard were saying. “Heathcote Dervish’s the one to watch”, they adumbrated. “He sneaks up on victims in the night --- he’s often aware of an Enemy’s plight; beware, beware a Dervish in the night! He never takes fright --- only to spite --- by one’s morning light --- a semblance of the trite, just bright.” Like Thyestes, in the House of Atreus by Seneca, Heathcote D. is beginning to feel sick to his stomach after this luncheon. Look you… even his companions, Bounteous Elsa Hapgood and Butler James, are starting to become concerned on his behalf. She places a dulcet right-hand on his sleeve arm; its touch was delicate, feminine and refined. “Rest easy, my spouse”, she purrs. “I say, steady on, old chap. You’re coming over all a’dribble. There’s no need for perplexity, here – we’re hardly at a Jake or Dinos Chapman exhibition, after all!”, interpreted his butler.

A LAKESIDE DEPORTMENT; NATURE TRANSFIXED --- MASONIC BIAS: (47)
Heathcote’s shadow leaps up abreast of a great boulder; it spray-paints its own leaving before a genuflexion of pumice. May it prove to be grey or transfigured over its likelihood? By any other circumstance, the rocks around him pitch up to a quickened brown --- could each one be rufous or genteel in its design? Several shards lie around the escarpment or floor. Nonetheless – in the centre of this tableau – one observes the recumbent form of a puppet, at once silvery in tone. Yet no strings – or puppet-master tracings – can be spotted hanging down from an invisible trellis. Such markings are going to be helpfully adorned… they are wiry over an asp’s lost ether. Certainly now, our masterful wizard speaks with his destiny gathered together in both hands. “Look ye, Butler James… our pagan Gods have communicated to me across nethermost yore. It’s in a situation where our puppet-head’s delivered a new outpost, in terms of Eric Bramall’s dwindling strings. Yes truly, never mind the
Edwardian artist Charles Dixon’s *Titanic*, painted in water-colour in 1912, this Titan rises from its own depths. The more so, my dear James, when we consider that this mysterious menace from another world has fallen into our lap. Veritably, my friends and witnesses, we have worked no magic to secure this bounty --- it is the Will of the Gods! Most magisterially… since our string-fellow remains subject to scant restrictions; given that few have come across him outside a booth or fair-ground. A likelihood which means that this *deux ex machina* gazes solely in our direction: it understands that no-one must pass these Masonic portals other than us… In a perspective where classical pillars are raised up before a shimmering cloud of Blue; an anchor and cup were then seen to move, guardedly, atop David Blain’s trespass.”

GO AHEAD; GO AHEAD; AN ARMADA OF SONG IN ITS COFFIN: (48)
Let’s rise above this restitution of ‘Beowulf’… because the singing in our East End boozer has become over-powering. This Chas & Dave knees-up now re-opens many an old wound; it possibly reeks with noisy self-satisfaction. In one corner, various denizens with Brylcreem or parted hair… why, they sprout into song. A definite filibuster eventuates – irrespective of where-ever it starts in the tap-room. Do you notice its discharge… minus any cymbals? Against such wishes, though, one character wearing both a cravat and a carnation raises a glass. While – simultaneously with the above – another jar of real ale is hailed by a bewhiskered fellow in a tall, conical hat. A following-on subaltern, who possesses a waxed moustache, likewise breaks into song. Other subjects of the Crown who join this merry chorus are as follows: an aged or retired colonel, a bow-tie wearing nerd with a pointy head, a monocle sporting rugger player, a smoker of Bradley’s rolled cigarettes; together with a cup-wearing trooper. He’s alone out in front and his sword’s drawn. It happens to be short, thick and blunt: a sabretache then follows on behind him on the floor, needlessly. All those foregathered here pick up the following ditty:~
“Britannia, Britannia, Britannia
We are the way
Forever to stay
Nowhere to play
Always and every day
Nothing to pay:
Irrespective of the Krays
Release all our stays:
No-one can match our rays!

Hip, hip, hooray!”

ONCE UNTO THE BREACH, DOLLY HARPER: (49)
“Come, carry him forth amid these tendrils of mist, Butler James”, uttered Heathcote in a steely voice. “We must lever our puppet-man from the impact crater. Nature has set him amongst us here --- but we shall travel on to the end of this particular night. Like Louis Ferdinand-Celine, our misanthropy must find its ripeness unconstrained. Gather up this manikin – let us deliver his slumbering body to the car! Its capacious door swings open behind us; and now we must escape from one venture into another’s trap. A great prize has been lifted from one chariot to its twin; it crosses over such pillion… nor can any doubt my future destiny. Every such register on our unconscious had to summon up the Ancient Ones… they are the custodians of sleep and wake. Oh my yes…” With this affected disregard, both practioners raise the stringless puppet from his pallet. Lying prone on the rocky ground (he once was), now he sways between two human passengers surrounded by fog. The blue-garbed chauffeur follows on at the rear – with a silver-smith cast before him, his hands are effectively ‘neath the other’s shoulders. Whereas a cloaked mage contrives to carry his charge aslant both knees.
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A veritable commingling of rain, mist and morning vapour surrounds our ambulance crew. They proceed in silence.
WEAR A MASK, TASK, RASP, CLASP, STEAMING ASK: (50)
At the sound of such a chorus… our bandaged carouser becomes increasingly agitated. A glass of wine or pellucid cider sits uneasily in his hand; it happens to be mummified against the implementation of any surgical instruments. Nor can such a living sarcophagus commandeer our attention: it merely looks down from above, face about apex. Don’t we understand that these heads – sarcophagi and all – merely look over from a cascading height… with each carved identity lining up from floor to ceiling? By any reckoning, the tension around this fluted stem becomes more and more pronounced; it causes the glass to whistle and even crack. This pressure looks progressive in its offending curve; it approximates to the unforgiveness of a new resolve. “Steady on, Dervish ol’ Heath”, murmurs a butler… by way of a mild imprecation. But it’s all too late. Yes indeed, the fructified sand – like under a sonic scream – shattered into a thousand shards in Heathcote’s mitten. The anger remained within, however; it had yet to find a ready outlet.

DEVARIANT SPIDERS DEVOUR MUSHROOMS: (51)
It is now dawn on the planet earth. A roadster then speeds across a slope towards some brooks; a trajectory which seems to be chiselled out of the landscape. It has to be an English rural scene early in the morn. A sweeping panorama of arable land lies to one side – wherein, shooting across it like a brazen deer, comes a white strip of road. On it one discerns a hurting silver-cloud… together with a smoky trail of exhaust which curls out of its back. Various old-fashioned English dwellings – many of them worn out of grey slate – add to this abode. Likewise, these cottages and bungalows pop up amid rich foliage; to the lee of which arises a constellation of cliffs. These reconnoitre a structure or assemblage of granite; at once inundated to its wrath or Vorticist, spiritually speaking. As such, each lineament cascades to a vertice: it also feeds geometric abstraction at one remove. Like one of Nevinson’s indents – it adds to its glory through refracted
lustre. No doubt… a discerning on-looker then checks a river flowing aft. A few boats find themselves marooned on it – and they signal one remit too many. (A case-study by the naif painter Wallis looms up here, somewhat expectantly). Let it fall or all come down now… no hindrance may be given to our resultant sky. It silvers a distaff: and is ready to cross or circle cerulean’s lines. “Quickly, my servant, we must rush on to my ready manse… already a fantastic plan breeds in my brain. Away, we shall endeavour to coax a feverish future.”

TWO GAMES OF SKITTLES MURDER NINE-PINS: (52)
Our soldier or Victorian dragoon brandishes his sabre – he holds it before an ornamental vest or surcoat in the tap-room. Against this, a pint pot of heavy liquor soaks a moustache; its under-side finds itself whetted by Brakespeare’s… a real ale brewed in Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. Furthermore, our cavalryman sings in a gusty humour, sword-in-hand and tassels aplenty: what with ornamental stuff and flummery all over his surplice. It’s a bedizened jacket, to be fair. A deep purple sash – of woven silk and vaguely recalling the Orange Order – crosses his mid-riff. Slightly drunk on the mead… he launches into a vaudeville air; a deep bass voice then fills the mint…

Heathcote Dervish, Heathcote Dervish
carapace and spite
by no means let’s fight
it’s alright
to creep up on a foe in the dead of Night.

Heathcote Dervish, Heathcote Dervish
we’re coming for you ---
with no mean crew…

But he gets no farther than this. A shot rings out and this trooper crumbles forward dead. Could it embody a different version of Heathcote Williams’ *The Speakers*? Anyway, our attention is
diverted by the figure of Heathcote Dervish. He stands triumphantly before us, a cocked machine-pistol in his bandaged fist. His lint appears to be luminous in the vague or darkling light. Immediately afterwards, various women start screaming in the saloon bar. Can we interpret its flexed illumination? Although Heathcote Dervish continues to look saturnine: what with a Toblerone head (bandaged) and a grilled grin, a great coat and one billowing automatic. Vengeance has spoken: IMPEROUS REX!

A MIRROR CASCADES VIOLENCE FROM SPENT RAIN:

In the back of a careering cabin, then, Heathcote and Elsa look aprey; each one gazes at a silvery puppet-head… it chooses to wait on a stray bullet, though. Despite the fact that a morning praise (or its glory) seeps in from an aperture – the environment is subdued and off to one side. Rather like the circular mirror in a ship, it flickers like a candle… whether deluded of all mist or not. During this intervention – our husband and wife gibber like two ghouls; their avidity truly plagues them like a sport. To adapt a line from King Lear: ‘As flies to wanton boys… are we to the Gods; they play us for their sport.’ Wasn’t this aught like Edgar’s original rasp? “Look ye, wife”, commanded Dervish with aplomb. “We shall use this good fortune as luck, kindred or insult… He has been placed amongst us by the Gods’ lap – but not in accord with Matthew Arnold’s verse. No. Let us examine this: we shall use Phosphorous as a make-shift, even a cavalcade. For – whether through him or no – we establish a nostrum. It alone can prove a moral taxidermy which is less than Kevorkian… but more than Galen. Since this doll without strings surprises us: and he wanders out --- somewhat forlornly --- from a heavenly keep. Essences and expectorations (thus apprised) we shall use him to prove our magic circle. No mistake can prevent us from offering this hand in Ombre or Brag.”
TOGETHER AGAIN WE STORM SAX RHOMER’S BOUDOIR: (54)

Outside these step-overs (and in a late Victorian alley) two figures approach a pub called “Jack the Ripper” in the fog. It curls or curves around their feet in wisps; & each tendril then seeps out like a snake’s armature. Maybe a copperhead’s nectarine is otherwise hinted at? Certainly – my friends – we need to recognise that one figure was Phosphorous Cool; the other a mechanical variant on a former wraith known as Hermaphrodite X. Our nacreous puppet glistens in the mist with his head on one side; while X recalls Dr. Caligari’s box plus a cylindrical skull. Against this travelling circus or carnival, an old-fashioned cab or four-wheeler disappears. It finds itself to be engulfed in mist. Likewise, an insolvent picture feels the point of this and it reeks of one sacrifice too many. Even though bits of newsprint blow about in the dust – our caleche has already beaten an unashamed retreat. Our travelling post emboldens one back portico or curtain, and this exists in its rear when betokening a Punch & Judy booth. A gas-lamp flickers in its tracery next to such an incline.

REBUILD CHAOS WITH ARISTOPHANES’ LOGIC: (55)

By this time, our coven-leader and puppet-thwart have carried Phosphorous over a threshold; the latter evinces a subtle radiance or glow. A whiff of brackish incense covers the portal – it helps by adding a mesmerism to our abstract. Momentarily though, various out-buildings and possibly a cathedral close rear up in an undefined mist. This curtain or rain-dust floods the aisles; while all of it belabours some stillness. One tall lamp-post starkly neighbours the limousine; and it proves to be a vehicle which has been left near to the curb. A side-door then comes to well up in an eminent pile; it’s a heavy brass aperture to the Masonic temple that betrays a classic façade or solidity. Gathered together as a group, now, the three figures of Heathcote Dervish, Elsa Bounteous Hapgood and Butler James rush into a side-entrance. It opens out onto some Saxon flares, one of which bears an
impress on it of Cool’s features. Yet again, our threefold protagonists found themselves bent over or put upon. “Many have --- in the depths of pantomime --- tried to stop or arrest our guest. All have failed… at least until now. Our manikin has avoided all attempts or capturing nets up to this moment. Let’s examine this, comrades: a token of the divine or intelligent design caused him to alight here… circumambient to our prey.”

SLIP THE NOOSE FROM A PRACTITIONER’S ARM-PIT: (56)

In a plateau of silence, Heathcote Dervish fired at pace and each bullet ricocheted around the pub’s precincts. He also appeared to be using a machine-pistol or a device where the carbine existed beneath the knee. Look at this: any art nouveau drawing of the period – whether by Mucha, Beardsley, Redon, Klimt et cetera – didn’t do justice to it. For Heathcote Dervish’s bandages swarm aplenty – they definitely contrived to spiral or create a rumour around Heathcote’s triangular head. A certain circular nimbus – or affidavit – buzzed around now. Again, a mummified Dervish was heard to roar at all and sundry: “I will cleanse everyone who stands in my way. None may mock the power which levels behind one particular throne. Do you hear me? The ukase that springs forth – in this nobility – is divine. It wastes away upon a plate of indifferent fayre. No sir… you should rather choose to survey the insistence, the puissance, which lurks behind one’s blackened fingers. It all aids the pillory of a new awakening.” With this outburst (then) quietness continues to reign.

A DETOUR AROUND THE HEAVENS SEEKS AN ALABASTER IN PINK: (57)

A tableau now unfolds… it places an exorbitant price on Heathcote’s living room. He sat there, stern-faced, with one fist cupped at the shoulder of his chin. Meanwhile, his features looked saturnine, grave, brooding, magically inclined and even lugubrious. Oh yes, it suffices us to know whether he remains one of Saturn’s children under those beetling brows. A bow-tie can be seen around his neck, but on closer inspection it comes to be spotted with pink and blue dots. Next to him a lamp peels off;
when taken together with a grated fire-place, coal scuttle and pincers. Several classic pictures by various artists – Reynolds, Ramsay, Gainsborough, Constable – provide appurtenances. These line the walls. A new threshold can be crossed and this was primarily by pointing at one’s butler across a room lined by bric-a-brac. Twenty-twenty vision indicates (moreover) that some of these artefacts happen to be stuffed birds in cages. Isn’t taxidermy a privilege of the aristocratic nature? Anyway, a sibyl sits across from our thaumaturge and her name proves to be Elsa Bounteous Hapgood. Next to her – and within this unfolding panorama – one notices James, the butler. He stands like a manikin and he betrays the stiff manner of servants the world over… no matter how tendentiously. Yes again, the latter’s starched collar, black tie, jacket and striped leggings are all of a piece. Open your eyes now and then – do you recall the figure of Parker in Gerry Anderson’s *Thunderbirds*? You’ll continually find that estuary English invades everything these days, you see…

+ “Our way into the future becomes clearer with each passing millisecond”, ventilated Heathcote. “We must learn to strike using Nature’s hottest brands. Furthermore, Phosphorous Cool’s power – even to morph between dimensions – cannot be used against us. He remains out of Time… not exactly powerless, no, but profoundly indifferent to causality. It’s an unknown secret – my friends, servants and allies. Or, if we were better armed by a reluctant Fate, then a marionette’s strings might be cut on a theatrical barge. They trailed on the ground like so many wires or snakes. We are still Seven now --- do not forget it.” (This latter is in answer to Elsa’s questioning; or by way of a Socratic preamble. She had basically wanted to reflect on a puppet’s strength and indestructibility – or its ability to shape-shift into an insect at will. Truly, Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* has nothing on this…)

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Back in our public house – “Jack the Ripper” – all hell finds itself breaking out. It definitely issues forth as an example or illustration of Armageddon’s village. Then again, there is a mysterious cachet here – if we were to be honest about it. For example, why does Heathcoat’s alter ego attack these revellers? Well, it must have to do with a mixture of alienation, mystification and respect. Surely, you can understand now the inner meaning of Hermann Rauschning’s *The Revolution in Nihilism*? To be sure: they reject Heathcote Dervish because of his zombie-like status; while he, on the other hand, finds himself enraged by Kronos’ dreams. All of which necessitates a casual disregard, even a delinquency. Because one element alone suffices and it revolves around a modernist bias – possibly a refusal to dream. Maybe – in this context – Heathcote Dervish’s phantasm might make a puppet-theatre too real, too three-dimensional (so to say)? In real life, therefore, Herge’s *Tintin* wouldn’t care for being humanised by c.s.i or computer software imaging.

In spite of all else, a ground-breaking out take to Lucius Annaeus Seneca’s *Thysetes* comes about at this time. For Heathcote Dervish fires repeatedly at the pub crew gathered roundabout… and we also see a dum-dum/perforated bullet pass through a miscreant. This exploding slug took off the man’s back in a scarlet welter. Likewise, a character in a fluted hat endured a multiple smash-up. His head rocked back – when splintered to smithereens and illuminating Peckinpah’s slow motion (thereby). Against this, a trained hussar reared up in the twilight. He manifested the livery, braid and sabretache of Sir Nigel or Brigadier Gerard – as contained in Conan Doyle’s now forgotten historical novels. Meanwhile, a subdued frenzy curdles the air; it sets the seal on upturned tables, desks and splattered gore. Could this abattoir interpret one of Felix Labisse’s paintings back onto itself? Although perhaps this charnel house indicates Rouault –
what with circular flutes, columns, shattering VR glasses and exploding wood-chip. Several denizens cower behind some chairs and return fire. They sport antique revolvers in doing so. All of these weapons seem to be fit for purpose; and this vaudeville atmosphere becomes quickly crossed with Stephen King’s ‘Salem’s Lot as a result. It subsists in a puppet-show… wherein manikins die, besport themselves and are genuinely undone by Antonin Artaud’s Theatre of Cruelty!

ONE MIMESIS LISTENS TO A SINISTER TALE: (59)
Heathcote Dervish continued his rambling screed, irrespective of all else. “We must use his presence amongst us as a Parthian shot”, he said. “Do you understand? Such ukase as he possesses will not be turned on us – instead all his strength shall be required to greet the coming ordeal. Yes again, we repeatedly dwell upon a beautiful misstatement – especially when this globe realises that wicca defeated him. A masterful puppet of yore or the olden days sacrificed its essence in transit, even while being retrieved from the wood.” “But, my dear husband”, expostulated Elsa Bounteous Hapgood, “any accusation of a like kindred testifies falsely. Kenneth Grant’s or MacGregor Mather’s sackcloth and ashes fails to subdue him. No mage would willingly meet him on a path after darkness. We found him out there by ourselves…” To this rejoinder, Heathcote Dervish replied: “Refuse the foolishness of Windsor’s merry wives, my girl, and wait till you have heard of my plan. Its boldness tempts the springs of Heaven’s trident… Butler James (he turned now to the servant) you shall prepare a potion: one that contains henbane, Fulbright’s lotion, static electricity, bluestone, and the marrow of a baby gorilla’s bones. I beg you to wait upon its hardship!”

DOWN THE LYON’S TEA-BAR, GLADIATOR’S PRANCE: (60)
In “Jack the Ripper” – a pub which only served real ale – all pandemonium continued to break out. Instantaneously, a range of
bullets hurtled through Heathcote Dervish — they passed outwards via his bandaged and great-coated form. Let’s have a look at this incident: since any necessary wraps rose above his teeth — and the latter became grilled in terms of a triangle’s headstone. No matter: any passageway that exists between one dimension and another falls sheer. It also affects those mad eyes; and both of them stare out engagingly from amid mummification. Furthermore, this phantasm’s carbine or tommy-gun repeatedly splutters in his hand — somewhat like a sten gun on a previous naming of parts. “Cor blimey, mate”, ejaculated a rival shooter. “His companion-in-arms looks close to a reaver, wolverine or lycanthrope. Truly, the slayer of those young *demi-mondes* in the East End happens to be a species of Pakenham’s reckoning. Maybe they had to make do with a kick from a false pair of scissors? For it’s obvious that he stalks sewers as yet unplastered over. Whereupon – in a forgotten vista – one alternative Kratos looms upon him with a sepulchral eye. It bears across it a red of the deepest hue. Oh my, this wraith allows a slug or bullet to pass through his anatomy. Could it recall Lon Chaney’s performance in *Phantom of the Opera*, or alternately, has Hermaphrodite X stolen up on us awhile? With this abatement in intent, then, Heathcote D. rushes for the exit followed by tracer fire. May it all come down now – without let or hindrance…?

DO NOT DELAY A RECKONING WITH PURPLE: (61)

Certainly now, our puppet has wakened to consciousness for the first time. He finds himself awake in an ornate room — one which possesses gables, a four-poster embrasure and an ornamental door. An aperture through whose gap Heathcote Dervish and Butler James make a grand entrance… Both of them are then found to be dressed in a baroque or early twentieth century vogue. Perhaps it’s got to do with Tamara de Lempicka’s agenda; or possibly an effortlessness of sheer style that typifies the Ritz? In any event, he wears a studded collar of an old-fashioned cut – plus a thick black-tie, almost a cravat. A silk morning coat or smoking jacket – much after the impact of
Nayland Smith or a bachelor in an H.P. Lovecraft story… why, these are what he besports! A keen observer would also reckon on the dressing-gown he carries… which happens to be slung casually over one arm. A pair of shiny ebon trousers made up the last of this particular couple… a companionship that has to do with one of Ian Fleming’s dress-suits, possibly worn out of tune. Behind him comes the butler, James, who holds a tray on which a tureen or mug waxes clean. A fine vessel (this) it’s probably made from Spode china; and it comes dressed in a brilliantly white adornment, thereby. Next to this Toby jug (sic) on the salver, and by way of a silvery trace, there registers an upturned dish: its companion appears to be a saucer beneath it. All of this may presumably be accounted for by an Anglo-Saxon delicacy; as well as a scenario where the soup or consommé’s heat needs to be kept in. To one side of these walkers – and in contrast to a prone puppet – a heavy gilt frame exists around a Gainsborough portrait: it doubtless depicts a Lady walking in woodland with or without a parasol. A pot-pourri cover-all lies adjacently; and it testifies to an absent odour that wins one over resultantly. A companion-piece in chaos also attracts our attention, however, and this relates to a candle in an up-turned or louvered jar. Again – my friends – all of these appurtenances stretch to the left of our speakers. Phosphorous Cool, on the other hand, rests prone in the middle of the bed, and finds himself to be barely covered by a blanket of Scotch plaid. Or could it involve one of those rags or thick coverlets used in séances? Our main character’s skin then shines like some worn or glimmering pumice; it exists primarily in order to reflect away all doubt. Both of his legs suddenly stir under the covering; and this is no matter how briefly Phosphorous waxes lyrical (to speak of). Surely Grendel didn’t really tarnish a mother’s spite?

**BRING ON THOSE MOUNTEBANKS WHO DANCE AND WOOF[!]: (62)**

Heathcote Dervish finally vacates “Jack the Ripper” at high speed… and he trails many a rifle’s discharge behind him.
Outside all of this, a spectral block progressively glimmers in the darkness – while our bandage fetishist refuses to look askance. Especially when we consider a backwards glance from our anti-hero in terms of a pyramid’s pace (withal); and aren’t his eyes twinkling like rivets? Does one enjoin Wyndham Lewis’ painting of a Canadian munitions factory as an afterthought? Likewise, Heathcote glowers back at his pursuers gun-in-hand – a few shards of glass circle around him as he does so. “Stop him, interdict or desist from such out-pourings, my brothers”, intones a voice which heralds from the pub’s interior. Above a retreating Heathcote D(.), though, a cylindrical setting adjusts its bearings… and it just happens to render a mezzanine redundant. All around him, then, one swirl betokens some early Edwardian designs --- it contrives to lose itself in a morbid thriller a la Patrick Magee, the Irish actor. Didn’t Samuel Beckett hear his gravel-like tones as a diction in his own ears? Anyway, a bandaged waif soon passes out of a portico’d entrance.

A LYNX LIES IN THE LONG GRASS; IT BARKS IN THE NIGHT: (63)

“Who are you; and why have you contrived to bring me here?”, demanded our shiny puppet with some asperity. Yes indeed, his diction customarily intoned a thousand bells or more – rather like a Khitian temple in the dark. Might it endorse such a hollow tinkling? We can see it all now… But Heathcote Dervish’s quick to cover his tracks by barking thus: “In answer to your ready affidavit, we found you out upon the roadway and purloined of all purposes. You were steadfast and yet mildly injured, so like any man of esteem and goodwill I brought you here. Amidst much relative chaos – I heard you ask after my name… ‘tis Heathcote Dervish, Baronet of the realm.” “Sanctimony or moral conscience? Bah!”, scoffed Phosphorous Cool in a light humour. “My, my… how mortals change their ethics like a weather-vane or possibly with their socks, perchance. Given this eventuality, how on earth can you simper on about boon favours? For everything that Man does – from whatever perspective – involves
self-interest and war-like ardour. All else comes close to poppy-cock and lavender; it rejoices at a dog’s wheedling.”

RUN, RUN HAVOC BEFORE THESE PRINCES: (64)
By the by, Heathcote Dervish moved out through the pub’s swinging doors and into a London pea-souper. It swirled all around him when concentric to a centrifuge; while gusts of wind blew newspaper about. Doubtless though, none of this meant much under a swinging pub board or arch… could it be an awning which spoke of “Jack the Ripper” with a question mark appended? Likewise, a flaring gas-mask lay above our heads in a crown or a fluted overhead jar. Heathcote Dervish then burst forth from the pub with a bandaged surplice in tow; whereupon a great-coat and scraggy scarf made up his accoutrements. Our anti-hero stopped quite short in the available light – particularly when he spied Phosphorous Cool standing before him. Our latter presence also looked magisterial in a flowing cape; the like of such a garment closed around his mid-riff and lower extremities. Click, a broadsword or switchblade (even a cutlass) shot forth in his hand; it all helped to add a javelin or bean-pole to a silvery grasp. Whilst behind both of them our robot gazed on blankly – each one of his eyes comes to filter out beneath a breasted torment… Whereby the machine-man’s orbs look rather longingly over a zig-zagging circuit board. Certainly, our Tumble-weed or Hermaphrodite X has noted down better days, whether in or out of a new cybernetics’ ring. “Adopt this fiction”, Phosphorous snarled in Heathcote’s direction… but our other custodian proved to be too wily altogether. “Adumbrate the contrary to Abel Gance’s magisterial film Napoleon”, hissed Heathcote Dervish. “An eagle who stoops to devour his prey in sunlight – or on the stump of a tree (somewhat inevitably) knows nothing but perfection. Doesn’t he collaborate with a Robinson Jeffers stanza… retrospectively speaking? No mercy subsists in Nature – nor should you feel free to consult its witness. It all goes to show – rather predictably – that only one of us can survive this incident. Our meeting – in a sunken or dripping
Whitechapel alley like Angel Alley – entails a fact which knows that just one of us shall leave it. Touché. “Fate decrees my overall witness statement --- not yours!” “Balderdash”, indicated a vexed Phosphorous, “one of our scant forms cannot quit an imbroglio without fighting. Let it pass us by…”

PLAY IT AGAIN, RITCHIE, YOUR PIANO SNAFFLES AT MIDNIGHT: (65)
Reject not this interlude in play-time, my brothers… For – with relatively ill-good grace – Phosphorous Cool has snapped up a proffered dressing-gown. He ties its silken cord tightly around his middle and off. Against this, his silver dome of a skull looks imperial… and our puppet’s overall eye-sockets are accorded no real pupils. Each one of them – in this manikin’s impediment of sight – then blazes ahead like St. Paul on day-go biscuits. Twice blinded thus, he takes some time to meaningfully convert amongst Gaza’s sands. Never again, he thinks… because the lush or plush interior which surrounds him antagonises a wooden sensibility. Most especially – if we take into special consideration his inner delectation as a puppet! Avaunt thee, Heathcote’s servant, James, busily adjusts his condiments in the background – he seems to be stirring some soup. A large, pre-Edwardian barometer lies to one side of our characters: and it reaches out so as to encounter a wall in this reluctant country house. Could it be a clock instead? (Isn’t it one of those stately homes, like Gray’s Court in south Oxfordshire, best superintended by the National Trust?) Meanwhile, Heathcote surveys or steams on apace --- he’s quite clearly the lord of this individual manor. A saturnine gleam bounces off one eye in particular – it comes to us in terms of a Son of Satan. Might Dennis Wheatley have actually been involved all along? To be sure: Heathcote’s brows are seen to be beetling, straw-bestrewn, Crowley-like, and they become increasingly reminiscent of a satyr’s. His orbs glowed or gleamed preternaturally; and they seem to reposition themselves within a variant of Gray’s Anatomy – that is: one which knows nothing other than the turn
of a Tarot card towards death. Doesn’t the thirteenth card stand for transfiguration and joy? Phosphorous Cool, though, actively refuses to give too much credence to Heathcote Dervish – what with those avid looks which were drawn from Austin Osman Spare’s *The Book of Satyrs*… his own nomenclature, (this), for a detour around a mediaeval *Book of Hours*

+ Watch this space now: “None can trust mortals like yourself”, spat our guesting puppet. “Upon your savage sphere that you call the earth nothing exists save war, peasant cruelty and rapine. Mankind does nought out of tragedy or charity --- self-interest alone recognises an outsider. It forecloses on nothing save a child’s grave! Essentially though, an owl in a mildewed tree stands for wisdom, but, in this condition, nowt other than a burnt cadaver will do. In truth, you can only indicate to me Christopher Lee’s crazed aristo(.) or pastor in the film known as *The Wickerman.*” “Tut-tut, such an outburst”, responded Heathcote Dervish after a pregnant interlude. “Remember this: bitterness ill behoves a knight-errant such as yourself. Your fame spreads before any puppet-master’s crossed wires. Do you remain oblivious to the fact that in Punch and Judy, down by a sea-ground’s fair, our main glove lies bathed in a Professor’s right-hand? All of it excuses an oil painting devoted to Kronos’ appetite; the former merely alive to these castrated off-spring. Aren’t their genitals hurled into the sea in order to create teeming abundance or Life? Salute this gesture with a stiff right-arm, why don’t you? James… let’s have some needful broth for our brooding guest.”

CAUGHT IN A CROSS-FIRE IS A PALACE OF DEAD ROADS: (66)

By main and castleguard, Heathcote Dervish finds himself afflicted with a blind fury – possibly it encodes the forgotten frenzy of a Viking berserker. He bellows and releases a strong appeal. Let it go forever and a day… since, with a guardian’s pillion about the membrane, he pushes out. A triangular hood
slants outermost and it serves to enjoin a battle royal. Does the samurai war chant ‘banzai’ come to reverberate in his mind? Nonetheless, a criss-crossed boudoir contrived to rip out these guts and it came covered with bandages – albeit after a conical section. May it amount to the sadic equivalent of a garden gnome? In any event, his irises come to be convulsed like two lead pellets; while beneath both of them a machine-pistol chunters on. PUDDA-PUDDA-PUDDA(!), goes the weapon repeatedly. It happens to be directed against the Phosphorous manikin stretched out before him. “Time to die, devious one”, cries Heathcote Dervish in triumph. “No warfare lifts the salience of this pastel mixture or admixture, particularly when it’s run together with alkyd and turpentine. Never mind anything else, quod our fixity finds itself enlarged in a red eye and hemmed in around scorbutic flesh. A rejection then hastens aboard our after-taste --- now it’s livid and lucky to perish.”

A GUILTY SECRET PURSUES ARISTOPHANES: (67)
Back in a world of adult puppets who have come to life… a small tureen of broth is held in a silvery hand. It gingerly announces its presence – even though a svelte aroma spirals upwards towards a vaulted ceiling. Phosphorous Cool’s head was thereby turned to the side… so as to put an impediment on many such dreams. Yes again, the cleavage of a polished skull closes on its point – it obviously announces its complete or spheroid quality without fear or favour. Can anyone tell the slanting lope of this glance, in that it reveals a quadrant of ‘Eye’ somewhere to the side? Moreover, the beaker within which such consommé is stirred looks like some pewter rendered ajar; it flatters to deceive. Nor can anyone deny whether an orange background supervenes over the whole… at a time when Heathcote Dervish’s stare proves to be avid (indeed). It illustrates no self-division; primarily since this manikin has his lordship’s undivided attention. He adopted the role of a nonchalant croupier therefore – what with one forefinger gesturing across his upper-lip. Did it bear astride its form the quivering antennae of an insect’s
warning? As Sherlock Holmes made clear in the case known as *The Illustrious Client*, nature always builds in an alarming signal… It has to do – in the case of Baron Gruning – with those little tips of moustache which curved away from the mouth. All of this revealed the cruel gash of a murderer’s forethought; and it all came to be reminiscent of those mug-shots in a crime filofax. Doesn’t it betray a luminance proffered by Colin Wilson and Patricia Pitman in their *Encyclopaedia of Murder*?

Still and all, Heathcote Dervish gazes on in rapt awe. (A situation, my friends, where even his close-slicked black tresses add to a distaff eddy. Might they not be emblematic of some of the graphic art left by Beresford Egan?) No doubt… his resemblance to one of Montague Summers’ billy-goats proved accidental. Yet a fortuitous moment needs to slacken off – and it hardly tasks itself over mastery. Most particularly, when one is given over to studying the saturnine affectations of these braves… or could they really be lost Masonic utterances? Maybe even the sensibility of Aleister Crowley’s last look out – as contained in Augustus John’s portrait – comes to mind? Similarly, the ‘Against the Turner Prize’ paintings of Steven Taylor might well figure here. Let us set up a boomeranging example!

“A replenishing tincture of broth slakes your strength, I’m sure”, muttered Heathcote Dervish in a mild manner. Although Phosphorous Cool belatedly came to shake his head. “Any strength of mine comes borne by cosmic rays, irrespective of Eric Bramall’s puppet theatre. His strings have been cut by a pair of scissors long since… Yet I will drink deeply of this draught – its aroma pleases me.” (And when he speaks again our male doll does so almost as an aside… like in a Shakespearean tragedy.) “Men! Even as your entire anthropology teeters on the brink of chaos, you find a means to sustain your amenities.”
LOOK AGAIN AT THIS SPARROW FALLING TO THE GROUND – IT’S COVERED IN FIRE: (68)
We now swiftly return to the adventures of the late nineteenth century, if not to those of a vouchsafed Golden Bowl. Surely the dulcet tones of Henry James composed a book of that title? It suffices to retain all of our needs prior to destruction. Any matter – in deepest and darkest Whitechapel – Heathcote Dervish and Phosphorous Cool confront one another. Albeit in a swirling fog, they both stand several paces apart… all of which responds to the shoot-out in a spaghetti western by Serge Leone. Heathcote Dervish – for his part – has a First World War great-coat around his shoulders; and this proves complementary to the lint pyramid that adorns his head. He fires bullets repeatedly from his machine-pistol, but these ricochet from a sprocket which a robot has thrust up into the air in lieu of a hand. This must re-confirm the existence of Tumble-weed or Hermaphrodite X, albeit cast anew in the form of a miniscule robot… possibly one that embodies nano-technology. “Mind how you transgress the Norns”, hisses a grill at the front of our metal-man. Most certainly – the heroic figure of Phosphorous Cool remains alive to such dangers as these. He congratulates the android at his side: “Hail to thee, in terms of your metallic husk or rusk… let it all come down aft: in relation to a stone mason’s mission or life-task. Surely it encodes that silent feature film from the late nineteen twenties with Lon Chaney, The Phantom of the Opera? Remember never to forgo a cybernaut’s lustre, mon ami, since you are obviously the King of the ‘droids!”

STILL-BORN, A DWARF CONTINUES TO PLY HIS SCYTHE: (69)
Take it or leave it from here on in… Our main character, Phosphorous, keels over as the quilted carpet rises suddenly to hit him in the face. During the course of this, then, the sacred cup passes from his lips – he has drained its filter to his last gasp, you see. Oh yes, only at the moment of severance does he realise whether such a fricassee has been drugged or not. No wonder the
butler, James, evinced such a self-satisfied air. Do you understand? Phosphorous topples forwards onto these rugs as a result: and he does so in an ungainly fashion, surrounded by a dressing-gown. It ends up flapping around his imagined knees. Heathcote Dervish – standing directly behind him in order to adopt a lordly posture – starts to rip off his smoking-jacket. It happens to be made from rare eastern silk. He (Baron Heathcote) is extremely exultant – while his ‘man of all work’ shares in the glee at one remove. Again, Heathcote Dervish – an aristocrat of forgotten beginnings – proves to be the first of our figures up to or mounting the stairs. He adopts such a mainstream task – primarily because he flexes his own Masterdom at this instant. “Foolish dolt, my puppet from another stage! You certainly represent Hogarth’s bountiful fairs of yore; and these help to take up many a prat fall in the circus ring. Unbeknown to you… all and every artist’s figurine of your ilk tilts on destruction’s brink. Heed me, silvery man of straw, I am about to call a witches’ coven… a gathering which will inevitably encompass your destruction. Quick – my lackey of our feasting – draw upon the car. It stands outside and immediately favours our escape.”

DERVISH PREACHES RAIN, IN THE FOG, OUT IN SHOREDITCH: (70)
With an airy gesture our protagonist, Phosphorous Cool, raises his right-hand into the air… basically so as to hurl a bolt of living flame. It serves to justify its own existence (forevermore); especially given the furious hell-storm that erupts. It shoots the dice towards a double-six in one go; particularly when one game of chance must compete with cosmic roulette. Hell’s spawn and all, a shadow features its length and stage-craft; and it throws a thunder-bolt in accord with Thor’s ability to do so. Yessss… this triumphal arch of Otto Rahn’s fire just lets go; and it catapults molten ballast like in a mediaeval siege.

Moving on from these stage directions… a wall of liquid magma or Greek Fire engulfs our termagant. It sacrifices one enclosure
to an urgent sense of ire; only then to salve Etna’s explosiveness with cotton-wool. Don’t deny its compass – for this fiery furnace seems to ‘do’ for Heathcote Dervish, albeit unsatisfactorily. Against such a measure (now) a contrary dispensation rolls up – and it signifies nought but a mummy roiling in flame. Are Heathcote’s eyes – as contained in their mask – then transfixed on cruelty’s art… even though one body after another goes up in pitch? Yet this Heathcote who exists in another dimension, inter alia, comes to recognise his indestructibility… Not being truly alive (you see) he’s incapable of smoothly fleeing from one identity into another – despite an almost plastic ability to survive. In these circumstances, then, white phosphorous or napalm doesn’t burn down to the bone. It entreats silence.

COOK UP THE MYSTERY OF FISH IN A TROPICAL BOWL: (71)
Truly, junk food refuses to feast on its served excrement… ditto. Now look, Phosphorous Cool has tottered on this special brink or cusp… if only to reach out towards a heavily mantled carpet with a bump. Might its corners or extremities betray tassels about them? To be sure: a few moments later a limousine winds its way towards a lonely Stonehenge. On the way, it passes disused out-houses and the shells of abandoned buildings. It essentially masters its own provender – for the bracken of so many forests necessitates torment, whether or not they happen to be derived from Stoke Newington. Heathcote’s vehicle chooses to drive under a wisp of smoke or carbon; the like and kindred of this circles in strange eddies over the car. It bears (loosely) a Rolls-Royce or Daimler figurine at the front. What does Dennis Wheatley have to say in his Gothic novel, The Devil Rides Out – namely, that only those of extreme wealth are left to practice the mystic arts? Still and all, we find an on-rushing breath and spume above the heath, as a fierce wind cuts this way and that across the heather. No gorse makes its appearance – when the silver-cloud glides by. In any event, a blasted house, turreted and with broken windows, lay half chewed over this Egdon heath – it proved to be
almost a Kellogg’s box or a balsa structure ripped apart by a giant. In its loneliness it configured no wants… But – abreast of all else – Heathcote Dervish’s reedy voice was heard over the airwaves. “Listen to me, mages of yore. Before this very night is done, comrades, the globe shall tremble at our power. We are the masters of coming tombs… have no doubt about it… Nor will our enemies be able to decry our curdling balm. All rapture hints at those Assyrian Bulls in the British Museum – i.e., the ones with wings and a darting magnificence, you know. Likewise, once mankind recognises our Spartan ukase – why then, nought shall hold up our route to endless dominion.”

DOMINATION OVER ALL FORSAKES ITS ABSENCE: (72) Listen to me: way back in a parallel dimension a fiery Dervish races down an alley-way, and his arms and legs were a flaming cart-wheel of pitch. Could all of this indicate that J.G. Ballard’s *The Crystal World* is alive and kicking, albeit in some sort of translucent posture? Nonetheless, our roulette-wheeling dervish caroms down this corridor. Might it be, in actuality, the very angel alley which runs parallel to the modern gallery in Whitechapel? Certainly, Heathcote Dervish comes mantled in flame… even though his retreating form sparks a thousand timbers. It must all align avec a poster that comes somewhat sign-posted on a dripping wall. A statement which asserts – in accordance with Lord Kitchener’s vintage – that the female waxes deadlier than the male. Wasn’t this one of Rudyard Kipling’s actual see-saws? In any dilemma, now, Phosphorous Cool glowers after the reclining torch with a halberd in his gauntlet. A mini-robot, like the one drawn from George Lucas’ *Star Wars*, applauds each gesture from the left’s proximity. Furthermore – and next to him – the figures of Elsa Bounteous Hapgood and Butler James look on. They happen to be the first and second excesses… otherwise they are hoist by their own petard. “Begorrah”, witnesses a white-skinned puppet, “his evacuating dark lordship shall not escape from me again. No untrammelled witness can outlast an altar boy’s cry in court!
Remember this: revenge, taken cold, always turns out to be a livelier dish. Do we imbibe the following epigraph from Machiavelli’s *Discourses* (?); namely, the fact that those who wish to erect a monarchy must first kill Brutus, but the citizens wanting to establish a republic shall have to slay Brutus’ sons. It has been written.”

**TAKE CARE OF THE ICED CAKE/SLICE IT IN EIGHTS:**

(73)

A manifest even-tide descends on men’s souls, and it alternates with the universe’s regulation… at least in terms of the menstrual cycle. Let us see: our silvery puppet finds itself lain before a circumference of dust, one which travels out beyond its pedigree (betimes). A stone slab – of the darkest green hue – lies directly underneath his limbered frame. A brief wisp of mist or spume from a cauldron travelled overhead; and it also seemed to be reminiscent of a severed head in a basin of straw. This subsisted elsewhere: or in one of those caskets-cum-wooden pallets within which house removals & antiques are obtained. Deep inside it – and to one side of gilt-edged volumes from the eighteenth century – there exists a phrenological skull. Or – more accurately – it betrays the quality of a porcelain brave; that is, one which shines under lights and indicates a delicate example of Gray’s *Anatomy*. Do we detect a bullet-hole smack through the centre of its scalp; a gap consequently levelling off to a red dye against magnesium’s ore?

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But never mind it: a coven of witches gathers on a foredoomed slope – and in a setting where eight mystagogues choose to travel across light years o’ spirit. They do not luxuriate in the calling of those Three Weird sisters in *Macbeth*; no, even if such an eventuality came to visit in an expressionist interpretation by Steven Berkoff. Let it all ride out on this… since the faces of this clack were shocked, beaten down, estranged or put to grief. They also belittled an intemperate blaze; a factor that merrily fitted itself to a griddle yonder. A brick wall of tiled alabaster – each
square peg representing a tired pavilion – lay behind Heathcote. He stood directly under a flaming trope – what with the marionette’s body immediately beneath him on a dais. It enclosed the offerings of so many saviours; being both silver and white in apportioned lustre. Nor should one forget the blue… Abreast of all this magnificence – and with a fine theatrical gesture – Heathcote Dervish began. “Brethren, let us pray for rapine”, he uttered.

POISONOUS MUSHROOMS LUXURIATE IN LOAM: (74) To one side of our predicament, Elsa Bounteous Hapgood grabbed hold of James’ collar – at least when given access to a world of dreams. All in all, the bell tolled for an adventurer who opened up Ouida’s calm. It requisitioned or spoke up for one of Daphne du Maurier’s romantic stories during a still period. “Quick”, she sibilated, “everything we planned for is lost or contaminated with dirt – especially if Heathcote D.’s allowed to make passage. He must not escape, James. I’m relying on you.” To the wording of this, our Butler responds in a masculine vein. Whereupon, he immediately challenges Phosphorous Cool to a duel. He acknowledges (you see) that in order to pursue one he must first vanquish the other. “En garde”, he snorts, “none but ourselves can rescue a stargate from its past. We must be the ones who make a decision for everything which remains alive. Surely, the purpose of our efforts is to bind as well as loose on earth and in heaven?”

BACK IN PARADISE TOM-FOOLERY WEARS A MASQUE: (75) “Potions or filters, brothers of the hearth, can be used to dampen down a prospective victim. Yet his destruction and our relative empowerment doesn’t occur thereby. Can it be licit; and if so – how will his demise be brought about by witchcraft?” Heathcote Dervish speaks before an assembled throng of mages. The cowl is deep down over his eyes – only to reveal a spectral imprint; a silhouette that fuses with any sepulchral tones issuing from
below. Let it trace its appendages thus… because what we are engaged upon, my fellow magicians, happens to be nothing more or less than *The Fanatical Pursuit of Purity*. Oh my yes, it all has to do with those fluted shadows which pass up a wall in flame. Never again shall we be left to subsist in the matter… but, after the kindred of the Persian author Sarban’s stories, a certain exercise in Yockey’s *Imperium* needs to creep in. Furthermore, does one forsake the difference between ourselves and Richter’s book on Greek sculpture? In this work --- scripted by a curator of classical art --- we see an instrument of yearning. It faces off against these tomb-stones, foreshortening them and leading to arrestation… even lift-off. None may gainsay it; since the ultimate object must be a perfection beyond mankind. Its remit is to transcend – level upon level – so as to justify an eagle’s affront. May we detect a refusal to bottom out into the equal or egalitarian? In such keeping, those of our kind militate against absorption… we also maximise our potentiality, thereby. Summon up the reckoning… I beg you; and forsake each spectrum along its compass. Woe to Icarus who flew too near the sun --- we shall not repeat his escapade. Do you resuscitate those visions of Parisian cranks, in wings, who fall into the Seine from bridges? In any event, our view of these kore, stele or metopes is bound to change over time. All in all, it aims at a point beyond its radius or circumference --- the truth lies in extremes, do you follow? Moderation resembles a curse; whereas a straight line traverses a circle’s curve further out. Look no more, scant ones, than at the head of a giant from a metope in the F temple at Selinus: all of it originates from the National Museum in Palermo, Sicily.”

“Viands, rare herbs and *pot-pourri* may put our manikin abed, but – by necessity – only black magic or wicca’s left-side can extirpate him. Now you will witness his destruction writ large! It can only be encompassed by rejecting a Masonic grave. Nor shall it really contrast favourably with Paul Klee’s painting known as *The Possessed Girl*. 

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WE MUST DESIST FROM EMPTYING SEVEN COFFERS: (76)
In a side-street in Victorian London (now) two figures are duelling with swords; they happen to be Butler James and Phosphorous Cool. A clash of blades takes place between them in a gathering swirl; nor can one really confront the blistering nature of such a fog. Like it or not, their scimitars clatter amid a vortex of wind – a whirligig within which various bits of newsprint get blown about. Could they possibly be Cypriot delight wrappers or examples of the yellow press? Each of their sabres continues to strike blow for blow – while, adjacent to the action, a gas-lamp flickers under a distempered moon. It waxes to an ochre tint that limns scarlet with brown hues. Again and again, these poniards of Sheffield steel break asunder; as our two characters jig about on a puppet’s theatre. Maybe it emboldens a forgiven posture – given that the dolls’ house so implemented could have been owned by Scriabin or Montague Summers? First Phosphorous and then James has the upper hand... albeit swerving to avoid each other’s pointillism or sword-sharpening. All of a sudden these two blade-runners exchanged places – what with Butler James at magnetic north and Phosphorous Cool at magnetic south. Seeking to glean assistance from his inner mind, Phosphorous’ face and eyes become luminescent – and each one holds to a hypnotic effect after Mesmer’s witness! Beneath his silvery cascade of moon Butler James fights on, but Phosphorous had already begun to delve deeply into his sub-conscious. What will he imperil by finding there?

TWO AUTOGYROS COLLIDE IN MID-AIR: (77)
Heathcote Dervish stood before a boiling cauldron; and this was irrespective of the bursting steam that issues from its coals. These are fiery – purple to red – and they set off a bubbling torrent of spume. Seen in the lee of this, the figure of Heathcote Dervish rises up in a hieratic vein. He casts a scarlet mantle upon a subdued dawn; in a situation where his hands grapple with imagined goblins of the air. Like an actor from the Garrick of
yore, Heathcote’s eyes and eye-brows wax middling or beetling. They rear up --- after the fashion of so many cameos by Donald Pleasance, Lon Chaney, Peter Lorre and so forth, especially when playing villains. Further to this effort, the jaw is thrown back; and the hands are convulsively clasped and unclasped: while Enochian verses gush forth from his gaping orifice like a torrent. They may be said to spill the ventilation of one august rapture too far, even when it’s been crossed with the diction of MacGregor Mathers or W.B. Yeats’ verse.

Heathcote utters the following imprecation or chant:

We live by a courageous splurt 
it all goes blurt 
but there is no time to flirt 
in explanation of so much hurt. 
+
Do you reckon to this drama(?) 
registering in Sobibor’s pyjamas 
at the time of a dead lama 
or with the expectation of one particular brahma. 
+
Service the demands of frenzy 
make way for an adventure by Henty 
it notifies one special entity 
by dint of running on empty. 
+
We specialise in the needs of lock-jaw 
in terms of a surfeit of pooh-bar 
let skeletons rain down on a foot-path 
and others deliberate on chutzpah 
while we deliver the coup de gras.

Again now, let us hint at the bravery of those within a circle who find themselves surrounded by candles. They prove to be dark, lissom, chocolate-like and are made from black wax. “Harken to
me”, hissed Heathcote Dervish, “come at my call and within the navigation of my name! Notify your existence to us and christen our breath’s shadowy utterance. Appear – materialise; even manifest a presence at my clarion; the latter being a warlock’s abjuration. Come”, he gibbers in rapture, “at the urging of Heathcote Dervish.” Suddenly a manifestation begins.

THE FUTURE IS TODAY’S PUTTY IN HAND: (78)
Do you detect a curse beyond this horizon of even minds? Let it loose now… since Phosphorous’ mesmerism bites deeply into a Butler’s soul – the former a set-up in which the latter’s eyes gaze on in a built-up lantern. Do you take on board its marvellous fatalism? Anyway, our glistening puppet delves deeply into the other’s mind… only to allow a future inheritance to instaurate its nature. For he realises that his opponent, Butler James, wants to usher in a new world – namely: he wishes to herald an unbidden century. Might B.J. be a member of the Grey Movement without knowing it? Against all of this, a phantasm devoted to a century yet to be milks one’s screen… and it encodes a digital signal from the twentieth century. (After all, this exercise in raw creation or Art Brut captures the post-Edwardian era… most effectively). Wherein – in his mind’s-eye – Butler James delivered up an entourage of shadows. These consisted of a silk backdrop, a television screen showing Bagpuss, a miscellany of punks, teddy-boys, grunge types and skin-heads (a la Richard Allen’s novels); together with Mary Quant females from the nineteen sixties. Such demi-mondes came garbed in short skirts, boots, felt-caps, padded belts and black mascara around the eyes – Elisabeth Taylor style. Perhaps the most arresting image of all happened to be that of Liza Minelli, when depicting the decadent artiste in Cabaret. She sports a feminine leotard, fish-net stockings and suspenders, choke, heavily made-up face, high heels and a bowler hat. Does James see the future in the fag-end of Weimar; rather than what follows it? Phosphorous Cool continues to battle with his adversary, but he cannot help but think: “is there no end to this danse macabre?”
TIGER, TIGER RIDE SOFTLY IN LILAC: (79)
As if by magic (sic) everything gathers pace within a swirl of paint: and it husbands unto itself abstract expressionist lustre… whether white, red, green, black or indigo. Slowly a face and its gestures emerge from a bubbling pit; a license that hovers over a sacrifice which grows from a circle’s circumference. Yet it no longer encompasses Tumble-weed or Hermaphrodite X, no, since a more reptilian fondue dissolves before us. Or should we say that a creature hesitates to come of age amid broth? In looks we find a saurian carapace delivering itself up to us – one that conjures up a prehistoric past well before mankind’s advent. Yessir: the dragon-man floats above our hubble-bubble; and he or ‘it’ then has to choose his lines very carefully in this drama. It comes to quit its omens in a ready manner… For one item releases its vapours before any other: especially in relation to the brick kiln on which it all rests. A livery of such scales surrounds its mouth and these, in turn, refuse to rest unless they embody those levered up eye-lids that crush the orbs beneath. Against any redundant flavour, though, its token ears appear to be ribbed and longitudinal --- albeit after a bat’s potentiality to listen into its own scream. Moreover, a swirling trail of ether surrounds this massive head; one which comes to be known as Mastodon Helix or Skyros/Spyros, (effectively so).

Vaguely underneath our offerant to the task, however, two cloaked arms find themselves raised up in a Heavenly direction… whilst below his cape and rapture everything else is all but turned away. Furthermore, this warlock barely flexes his back and leg muscles… before he lets out an exultant cry. It leaps out from the underside of his cowled exterior/interior. “The will of those Heavenly presences finds an object suitable to their tasking and remit. My word, a monster or Goat of Mendes rises through this mist… examine its codex, I beg you. A champion has emerged; the one whom the Norns have chosen to crush our prey hovers above us. All hail…”
REMEMBER LADY MACBETH’S LEFT VENTRICLE: (80)
Meanwhile, a flaming image or Armageddon hurries down a Whitechapel alley-way; and it runs from pillar to post and filters itself in terms of a fiery crescent. In this divided medley, then, our mummy looks for a new victim amid flaming sheets. For an auto da fe or a climbing matador – dressed in a Klansman’s body – seeks to liberate its pursuance. During the course of such a journey, then, his fiery hands clap about adrift of snow – and this is irrespective of the fact that we are dealing with extreme heat. Various posters or notices come to light on these walls now; in a tabernacle where “Pear’s Soap” or some vaudeville artiste seeks to deliver a message… alive; alive-o. In his present fury, Heathcote Dervish understands the need to fall or alight upon a new victim – and in regular or short order. As King Lear has occasion to tell Cordelia in the play of the same name; nothing will come of nothing: speak again. Yet who should the flaming tarantella of H.D. alight on – if not the myth of a recurrent bourgeois? Might such an individual become entwined – memory for memory – with the steady couple on the bridge at the back of Munch’s ‘screamer’. “Good Lord”, cries out the man in the frock coat and stack hat; in that he has a dim understanding of a meteoric wraith before it’s upon him. Yes indeed, the territory of Hades strikes within an instant – and it also transfixes one Guy Fawkes prior to a necessary vogue. But this Scaramouch now finds ripe faggots piled up around his feet. Is he tied to the stake – by virtue of plexiglass beads or wires…? Nonetheless, a human torch falls directly upon our victim. It happens to be a refutation of Max Stirner’s The Ego and its Own, and in a breaking moment quicklime showers upon him. A total blackness soon intrudes.

ARM YOURSELF AGAINST BYZANTIUM’S ENDURANCE: (81)
Open and aghast, Heathcote Dervish surveys the scene. A curl of hair – together with tufted eye-brows – sprouts from beneath his wizard’s apparel. Now no-one should really look at things in any other way… For, rearing abreast of him in the twilight, is a
mastodon or abomination – all and at the same time tendrils of smoke drift upwards. They spiral in terms of a noon-tide sign; a conundrum which doubtless has to do with a fiery cauldron further on. This unheralded figure goes by the name of Mastodon Helix or Spyros. At one time history and literature knew him by another title… one that heralded the forename: ADAM. You see, once upon a time (or abreast of such aeons) he’d known bounty… or even the rich pickings of grave-yards. (Necromancy had been numbered among his darksome urges, after all). Yet an innocent inflexion gave rise to subterfuge, primarily in terms of expectancy and loss. To rephrase the early pages of Alexander Trocchi’s *Cain’s Book*, every later sin or infraction came to be coruscated in his features. They bred over the lymph of so much scar tissue – only to issue from an iron mask’s failure to blow with these breezes. It also resuscitated trust… or, more accurately, its absence. Because each lust, form of greed, envy, resentment, jealousy and cowardice bore a livid stamp upon ‘its’ features. The mask of every hate --- in other words --- may have travelled across these worlds; there to cloak a million ropes with hemp. Surely, such disfigurement indicates: what? Why, it proved to be the over-loaded bay of so much fury – none of whose circumstances can give any glory to *The Abominable Doctor Phibes*. Mark it now: one level of entropy always militates against another: it seeks to cover over such a shroud with a bloody film. Could it be construed to be rather like Marc Quinn’s efforts – albeit after any taste for refrigeration finds itself forgotten?

STRAIGHTER THAN AN ARROW: (82)
Way back in the nineteenth century, a shimmering spirit chooses to enter a charred corse. It smoulders meaningfully to the side in brackish incense; and the likelihood of this proves to be a perfect foil for such a misalliance. Does one bother to recall the ancient Christian doctrine over a soul’s transmigration? Let it go: since now – long after the facts of the case became known – Heathcote Dervish approaches a vaudeville’s vista once again. No two
matters are truly alike, you see? For a start, one is almost driven to see a circus barker’s cry... despite its reversal. Will a spendthrift bill not obtain to this likelihood, in a scenario where it can only obviate the case of the Elephant Man and other freaks? (His skeleton – to this very day – speaks legions about a jar in the Royal College of Surgeons, in south Kensington, where it happened to be situated. Iain Sinclair makes use of it in his post-modern redoubt, *Whitechapel – Scarlet Tracings*). Almost as an aside to the main business, m’lud, Heathcote Dervish tip-toes towards a collection of Victorian bobbies. All of whom are busy standing around three “Eminent Victorians” – in Asa Briggs’ use of the term. These were Phosphorous Cool, Elsa Bounteous Hapgood and Butler James. Our wilderness finds itself travelled across by Heathcote Dervish – a creature who definitely supports a stack hat within some unfolding mist. A few scratches or tears from the yellow press pass in the wind. Whereupon – and underneath a flaring gas-lamp – a motley crew of Peelers make their case. Bestride of any magnificence, though, a Watsonian figure gruffly approaches the prey: it manifests one frock-coat short of respect… and mantles in the Derby’s direction. A heavy and woven moustache also travels around an upper casement. Does our enjoined butler stoop to hear Bow Bells reverberating in the background?

A LIZARD SEEKS ITS TISSUE IN A SLIT-EYE: (83)  
A saurian raised by Heathcote’s spume had already started to speak; and – rather like a monster in an H.P. Lovecraft story – his accents were guttural. Any dedication to stage fright (you see) has long since gone west, in a scene where mortal sounds welled up atonally. Resembling Arthur Schoenberg’s musical diction (in short), each couplet drained a muddy silence. Every word --- therefore --- took lustre from Samuel Beckett’s anti-novel *Comment C’est* or *How It Is*. Wherein shambolic denizens drag themselves across upturned earth without benefit. None knows any surcease (effectively so); yet they recognise a sibilation due to speech. It preserves the characteristics of Bim
and Bom, both of whom drag their bodies aslant the loam. In a drama drawn from George Speaight’s toy-theatres, however, Mastodon Helix begins to speak:

“Harken to me, drivelling poltroons! My estimation of your blood is as the thickest of lemon juice, do you hear? Now that my fury renders everything serviceable in terms of yonder matrix… since none but I can stand on the basis of its longitude. Do the mathematical formulae which lie beneath me visit a new Gorgon’s sight --- to make use of a courtier’s cry in *Macbeth*? But never mind Fuseli’s romance; my carrion teaches the abomination of a new witness. It always supports no-one other than a curlicue or such wonderment. Indeed, the name Mastodon X ill-serves my massive frame, m’lud, and it’s one that passes across the horizon like a twilight’s beacon. These rough edges can often be planed down by unreason – all acting in accord with the subterranean codex of Goya’s dark. Hitherto, I knew your solvent imagery and burning face masks. Yet now and all, I am well aware of George Bernard Shaw’s insistence on locking himself into a shed or writer’s cabin in order to compose. Whereas – in my case – a parallel with Greek legend causes us to catch our collective breath. It indicates the fact that Poseidon fell asleep on a rock in Attic Colonus – from which sprouted the first horse, named Skyphios, when his seed accidentally fell on the ground. Thus, one of those crooked limestones reached for the stars in its musculature, but it actually recalled a steroid husk under grey lights. Truly, a monstrous heap such as myself shall reach its closure under lightning – only then to see a man torched in a cage of wicker. After all, no druid has ever captured my amphibian tonsure.”

BEHOLD THE MASONIC DRIFT OF A RED COFFIN; IT LIES AFT: (84)

Back in our period devoted to High Victoriana, the multiple blades of our two protagonists continue to clash. Each tungsten fillet pounds on another’s indifference – if only to surmount the
bravery of two rather than four musketeers. Let’s go on to consider this further: the courageous edge to one’s will musters up oblivion at a sword’s cusp. It’s in a reckoning which chooses to accede to *Beowulf*’s logic, particularly in those moments where the hero takes on a fire-breathing dragon. This exists in the saga’s second half; and it refuses to mix mead and water in a manner that might disoblige John Gardner’s *Grendel*. A story that tells this skald’s effort from the monster’s perspective --- talk about moral relativism! Nonetheless – and with a sudden gesture – Phosphorous Cool’s ceremonial dagger smears up and slashes across the servant’s face. This errant Parker reacts in alarm, if only to examine the cut or gash on the left-side. It affixes itself to a divided thespian – especially by dint of those Hellenistic masks which weigh the temperature within. They often transfigure a golden or Grecian dawn – one that finds itself carried away towards an available purple. The whole truth of the matter relies on Loki being imprisoned one day beneath the earth – he has to be trussed up and confined concerning his bodily movements. Heavily fanged serpents then lie above him, contextually speaking, and these drip venom on our half-giant from afar. In order to avoid this molten fate, however, his second wife, Sigyne, captures such ichor in a pewter dish. But every so often she has to pour the silver dinner service away, and, in such a brief passage of time, this eldritch stew reaches Loki. Thor’s half-brother screams… and the shock or reverberation of his cries issue as earthquakes. These cause geologic plates to scour, tidal confusion to rise up and the mountains to shake. Chris Bonnington’s adventures of yesteryear --- in other words --- nearly always touch the void by missing a salutary trampoline. Is it not so, Joe? But still, Butler James turns southwards with a bleeding mugshot; an encampment, most definitely, which remembers one of those criminal profiles by William Roughead. “Curse you, salt-petre”, announces our underling. “The quell of your questing bell shall do nothing for these restive spirits, Khitian or otherwise. No dotard beckons danger from a false moustache; it merely serves to underscore one axiom – namely,
that in a sovran tarot the thirteenth card betokens death as well as utter transformation. Belial take you and feed on your vitals, sirrah! Any such custodianship must greet the day with a severed face (sic) dancing for joy on a burning post.” But Phosphorous Cool replied: “My endangering of your left-side waxes efficacious. It permits the real dimensions of one’s character – outside of the brain’s right-side – to find themselves revealed. Belial feeds on hungry spawn existing beneath a lake’s green top. Algernon Blackwood has nought on such evidence. It raises Ragnorak – only to die.”

SISYPHUS LIFTS A BOULDER UP PEPPARD’S HILL: (85)
Examine this, my brethren! It effectively freezes any temperature behind an iron face-mask. Needless to say, Mastodon Helix’s physiognomy rears into view and it grimaces before a lion’s advent. But – in actuality – the saurian complexion of his diatribe remains calm. It doubtless breaks from one’s special patina… if only to limit spectral ears beyond the fray: these prove to be the mark of a bat’s wonderment. Such offerants scream (potentially) in Gaza in order to see… even though a fragmentary license drifts up amid smoke. These gestures come to be seen later as lily-livered in their cups… doesn’t each one buff the eyes with a snake’s alignment? In turn, our object’s orbs are convulsed, the mouth elongated and serpentine… and the teeth definite molars of decay. Do they need to be an indication of the serpent folk’s cruelty? Let it all come down in breach of Heaven… I pray for such an indulgence, at once stripped and ready for this task. (These were doubtless Heathcote Dervish’s ready thoughts about the matter…) All of it may be resolved, however, if we understand dehiscence, crepitation, rhino skin, scorbatic lustre, reptilian husks… and Austin J. Desmond’s deliberations over warm-bloodedness in lizards. Furthermore, tendrils or wafts of uneven smoke billow up around him… despite the evidence over Pacher’s Lucifer being unable to turn this prayer-book’s leaves. Has Mastodon Helix escaped from an Arthur Machen story, experimentally speaking? Or might it choose to rekindle Fenwick
Lawson’s sculptures? These either indicate or capture the power and truthfulness lurking in wood.

A FISH OUT OF WATER FRIES ITS ONIONS: (86)
Back in the pre-Edwardian fogs, a large bevy of police constables have turned up. They surround Phosphorous Cool and Butler James like a blue wave… but may these waters be lapping inwards or outwards, retrospectively speaking? Our two protagonists have likewise drawn up their sabres by this time. Meanwhile, several of the policemen are holding up old-fashioned street-lamps; many of which happen to be fuelled by a mixture of oil and resin. Every one of them glints or glistens in accordance with H.T. Flint’s thesis on *Geometrical Optics*. One or other of these sapphire misfits holds a billy-club in a gloved hand; while other faces scan an indifferent future. Under their conical hats they interpret a poster painting by William Roberts. All in all, then, Butler James uses the police as his pride and joy. Pointing in the silvery one’s direction, he declares: “Arrest this traveller between dimensions, men! He’s the phantom of yore who’s stalked the streets of Whitechapel. Many a graven image, carved from silent bark with a chainsaw, proves to be down to him. It reconnoitres such spite; nor can one spill the iodine over those wounds in Herman Melville’s *White Jacket*. Take him into custody, officers; he’s your chief murder suspect.” “Let me be”, opines the heroic puppet. “From the depths of my heart, I in no way subscribe to poisoning. I am innocent of these abominable crimes, to be sure!” In relation to which remarks… these Victorian tokens of the ‘Bill’ gather round. What decision will they make?

GEORDIE FLODDIES ARE *SAUTÉED* IN LARD: (87)
A century hence – and around a cauldron of desire – Mastodon Helix continues to mouth stern imprecations. It doubtless achieves divers outcomes – all of them curdling in the lee of this particular Greek Fire. Sufficient unto this day, then … “I grew up afflicted with cosmic radiation”, growled a moniker’s Spyros.
“Yet still, my fatalism came across the universe like a bolt from Zeus’ finger. All of it gave me unparalleled strength – in terms of bringing a city to its knees. Didn’t the federal authorities in Louisiana, when a hurricane struck, call it Katrina? Yes – for devilment – these escapades must wreck the future of such a frothing doll; it only twitches on the end of Hecate’s string. But what of us marionettes? We barely delve into the fortune of Eric Bramall’s *Puppet Plays & Playwriting* – wherein the dream phantasms of a thousand-and-one nights takes place. All told many withering happenings break free now… they line up behind a balustrade of engagement, as was foretold by a Hulton radio picture library. Here an all-father or puppet-master left our legs dangling, and these were signed up for some nomenclature *avaunt* the stage. Outside the sandy mists of Colwyn Bay it found itself to be; and in its confines mahogany stretches away as far as the eye can see. It also travels towards oblivion by way of a cascade: the chandeliers of which mellow into candle-light hours later. It figures already… for a tabernacle upon the wall called to pipes aplenty. These limited a disturbance to the gothic image of a puppet-master. His name went by the following soubriquet: Moustachio Brave Herring.”

**A POLICE ACTION ON ALL FOURS REMINDS ME OF THE BOER WAR: (88)**

The Metropolitan police have gathered around the two parties to this dispute without knowing why. A lamp-light glows fitfully in subdued ochre; and it floats like a bubble upon a fractured horizon. Listen to the following: Butler James is still expostulating – and this’s irrespective of a leftwards tending scar upon the face. “Officers, I entreat your goodness and solitude… like one of those Gilbert & Sullivan policemen so beloved of Howard Brenton. For, in his marxist plays, Robert Peel’s men fail to apprehend a notorious psychopath who was mentioned before as Christie, the Notting Hill murderer. Did not the latter lie covered in newsprint and old ashes – albeit before he rises aslant of a wandering finger? Likewise, his masked otherness
slopes upwards in a dun-coloured mack; the likelihood of this causing a toppling, demasking and honouring of a leaping antelope beyond his fellows. “Who will you choose to believe or blather on about?”, accosted a young bridge builder. On more solid ground, though, the metropolitan blues ask Phosphorous Cool and Hermaphrodite X to accompany them to the police station. Underneath this festival to cerulean lamping, however, the robot called Tumble-weed made a despairing gesture. But the understanding of a world’s pockets and tactics are widely superfluous; given a man like him who flies no flag save his own.” “Fillet it now, my brethren… the limbering up of such tasks helps to illumine every shadow. Surely, it proves to be an example of a resurrection’s clue on even a world-wide perspective? Whereupon various plants require a husbandry that speaks nought of time; it only demands. ‘Will you marry me?’, undertakes our philosopher before the dam. Yet those women cascading through our drama limit its freedom.”

Phosphorous Cool (13) has been subsequently interlarded into a skulking jack-in-apes. Do you consider iced bombs to be such a recognition of one’s skald a hundred years on?

In expectation of the above, one of our coppers grates on a hurdy-gurdy machine: “You shall accompany us all on a visit to the threshing floor. It betokens its own basic spray – one which prevents southern politicians asking some awkward facts. Do you acknowledge our moral trampoline; at once allowing children to be destroyed before their time? A new amnesty lasted until a detergent or Sutro’s raising of Count Maurice de Maeterlinck from the dead. It all has to do with William Roberts’ painting of toy-policemen on a postcard… and its seemingly oblivious quality.”

A WORLD IN YOUR EAR, O DWARFLINGS[!]: (89)

“Moustachio Brave Herring’s face levelled up to that of a ripe cucumber; and it continued to rally around troop movements
which were as yet undisclosed. His mask intoned the principles of an old man, but nonetheless retained an aspect of youth. Then again his lineaments proved to be heavy, needful, unembarrassed and grave in aspect. Less a perspective of the Christian god he was, than an illustration of Odin in terms of *Beowulf*. Even though those two don’t necessarily overlap… Yes, let’s see now… Perhaps Moustachio Brave Herring was a puppet-master – that is, one who existed adjacent to his cabinet of Doctor Caligari. Let’s be fair, though: such a denizen indicates the wrong-headedness of Eric Bramall, in that this marionette or *artiste* never misses a trick… certainly over trestles and their ropes. Might one detect it anew? Against all this, Bramall’s lustre could pick and choose from among his manikins. They basically launched themselves to such a favour of fortune. Furthermore, all of these puppeteers stand above their armatures; and adjacent to many springing back-boards. It also becomes accosted by virtue of some tacks or pins; the like of which hold up a watercolour scene by Ramsay. May it yet morph into a modernist schema by Miro instead?”. You have been listening to the words of Mastodon Helix!

AGAINST A FLYING AUTOGYRO’S TROPE: (90)
In the near mist of a nether Victorian England, a reincarnated Heathcote Dervish approaches Elsa Bounteous Hapgood from a reverse direction. He or ‘it’ embodies --- in physics --- the convexity of so many bowls… let it lie. Again, the mist or London’s pea-souper seems to have cleared; a situation that makes the master of the house’s nearness ever more discrete. Doesn’t such a glory rely on his conical head-piece; i.e., a smoke-stack which stares apiece at this blustering after-life? In the background a Gothic manse raises its charm. No longer may James Purdy’s imagination let rip… when pursuant to the fact that his deep fried Southern Gothic turns the tables on its English genes. Various windows or casements can be seen in the darksome interiors of such a House – it more than lights up damnation ever so clearly in order to spy on it. The policemen
are off and to the side, but no-one interferes with an exchange between a husband and his wife in another dimension. “Heathcote?”, she whispered semi-abstractedly, and with a slight quaver in her voice. “The very same, my darling”, he insisted on *avec* a greedy billowing. Meanwhile – and to the right – Butler James stood beside them imperturbably, and with utter calm. “Cabbie”, he called out abruptly to a waiting atrocity. “Let us leave this spot as quickly as possible… maybe on a rare penny farthing”, insisted HD. His voice etched a muffled tambourine – even as he spoke.

TANGERINES GO PURPLE IN THE BLOOD[!]: (91) 
“There’s always been room for one more, my friends”, intoned Mastodon Helix’s guttural voice. “Yesindeed, sincea star-burst or gateway exploded before a lively portal. The semblance of a meteorite was now seen; and it risked the peak of a disabled overture… namely, one that took on a distracted element even in terms of its ransom. Such a scimitar levelled off towards the skyline – instead of plummeting down in a rage of all witness. A brief gaze aslant this rapture saw the earth’s crust peel away; it thence depicted continents and lakes beneath a misty firmament. A spume-like elemental dances under the stars; whilst a darkened backdrop of our milky way gravitated yonder. It continuously bespoke of a galaxy well beyond a satrap of nothingness… that is: a substratum which led the way to a thousand faery lights. A dispensation, this, that belabours an unsubtle point concerning Spenser’s diction. One Milky Way does not a million flowers make, in other words. What could this flashing comet signify? Why, it had to do with Mastodon Helix… in that the merest thought of the puppet-master, Moustachio Brave Herring, lifted him off his feet and onto another plane. Altogether now, an *artiste* who governs his charges can whisk them away uppermost; and to various points in another direction such as one knows. Further to this, he raised up Mastodon’s musculature – at once carrying him to a trope and fixing on a possibility yet to be. Might it mean salvation for one who skims the galaxy like a
deluded star – maybe so? For one carven idol can be moved to the Fourth Dimension just by thought; primarily so as to allow you to exist in parallel outside Time.”

GUARDIANS OF SKYROS’ GATE: (92)
Immediately our cab moved up from a neo-Victorian abode, and it circled London town looking for future egress. Above all though, the vehicle betokened a will-o’-the-wisp which sailed above houses and out into a dark azure. Truly, the minaret or spire of a Baptist church hove into view: and it all bespoke one tension too many for this aftertaste. Face the facts, will you (?) – because this church’s pyre extolled a secondary virtue. Analysts came to consider it as green in colour. Do you take its message forward in some way? An electronic whip cracked from above; and it was the coachman directing his flying vehicle. Especially now that an autogyro --- patented by the toy manufacturer Britons --- soared into the ether. “Giddy up, Pontefract”, yelled the hansom cabbie. Didn’t Wyndham Lewis posit a ‘Taxi driver test’ for literature in his intellectual autobiography, Rude Assignment? In any event, our three co-conspirators swap anecdotes. They are Heathcote Dervish, Elsa Bounteous Hapgood and Butler James. None save them may effectively register such an affidavit or molecule. “Phosphorous Cool shan’t be able to use legerdemain to much purport… one feels. Extravagantly so, allow him to escape into the paradise of trying to lessen one’s impact through mesmerism! Let it alone, my cousins: Phosphorous will find it impossible to sweet-talk Inspector Lestrade over those Phantom slayings in the east”, remarked their butler.

WILL EISNER’S GRAPH LACKS SPIRIT: (93)
“Each conundrum opens up the way to a new awakening, hereby. For – many moon-times previous to this – Mastodon Helix found himself to be trapped in his Master’s vortex. In a scenario where Armageddon comes to deliver its offering every Thursday afternoon. In such an advent as this, Mastodon’s steroid hammer
got thrown about unnecessarily. It landed at its competitor’s feet without any surcease whatsoever. Does one know or grapple with such a truth? Likewise, the Beast could not turn around without knocking over a concrete pylon: and this was a structure which transposed itself in-between Plexiglass barriers. These were readily devoted to silence. Make no mistake about it: Mastodon Helix found himself to be trapped in a variant of what Hubert Selby Junior later called *The Room*. No matter… *quod* each strange molecular pathway triggered the actual: and these offerings agreed to beam up a portrait *a la* Dubuffet or Hans Prinzhorn. You see, our Puppet-monger or Master of Ceremonies (MC) moved to quell such violence; especially when it realised its imprisonment by the puppeteer, Moustachio Brave Herring. ‘He cares nothing for my strength – measured, as it was, in proportion to East German sprinting’, cried out Mastodon in credit and pain. The owner of this puppet show also speaks of a ‘gawk’ or an anonymous freak; a specimen or example of Lombroso’s kin whom you pay to look at. Above all else, any carnival or fun-fair carries out its damage limitation exercise – at least should one prove to be necessary. It’s all part-and-parcel of Life’s sense of regret. ‘He just seizes us --- out of pure thought rather than malice. It’s a sufficiency of power or puissance; and then he leaves us to rot in prism-like dungeons. These are narrow-sided cells whose walls are nacreous; themselves being manufactured from pearls. Get real, *mon ami* – the way to a wooden puppet’s heart has to be to pull at its strings!’ Surely, such manipulation or chicanery had nothing to do with Donna Tart’s second novel?”

A HALF-BREED’S SMASH-UP; LIMIT ITS LECTERN: (94) Meanwhile, inside the cab our three conspirators hatch their plans – even though it was altogether less than convenient. Heathcote Dervish lay further to the left; and he was on the occult’s left-side. (Again, didn’t Colin Wilson in his ‘sixties book of the same title look upon these malefactors and impresarios like a badly behaved sixth form?) Needless to say,
Heathcote Dervish’s tall hat proved to be pulled down closely over his eyes, and it certainly transformed those disfigured features that went forwards smarting. Next to him and within the relatively cramped cab sat Elsa Bounteous Hapgood --- she looked untroubled and serene. An exquisite mole tapered out on one of her cheeks. Further along, and to the side, came Butler James; an underling who continues to massage the left-side of his face with a scrunched up silk handkerchief. Quite noticeably, a trickle of blood passes down his physiognomy like an unclean eye-wash. Could it possibly resemble an impure variant on Optrex? No matter… “Let us skim over our deliberations once again”, mused Heathcote Dervish. His scarf appeared to be pulled down under his chin – albeit even in an all-encompassing or thorough-going way. “But how can we trust the insane violence which exists within you?”, contradicted Butler James from the cab’s far corner. “We already have before us such a blitzkrieg – and it relates to a public house’s pandemonium.”

LIFT UP THE VERTIGO OF AN ISOSCELES TRIANGLE: (95)
Our hulking rhino, Mastodon Helix, has now broken free from any cages which might have closed in upon him in the past. Whereupon his misshapen claws or mittens – when constructed around their own shafts – reach out towards Heathcote’s visage. It comes over all cowled, Hermetic, occultistic and vaudeville in its *de luxe* aspect. Do we see in such a signification (or a post-dated aspect) the Terence Fisher film of Dennis Wheatley’s *The Devil Rides Out*? Nonetheless – and despite being startled – Heathcote Dervish continues with his spiel. He is determined to be the king of this particular castle, even though John Cowper Powys’ *Maiden Castle* lay a long way off. ‘In another dimension, I remained a prisoner of Moustachio Brave Herring, but now I’m back and thirsting for vengeance. Let your life be a bullet passing through screens; only when you hit a level you can’t penetrate… that’s the end-point. Yet one will enjoy much glory and others’ servitude before then. Mark me’, growled Mastodon Helix, ‘I
mean to make of this planet a play-thing of my charms. It doubtless spoke of those games of bar billiards where no-one’s allowed to win. Now however – all of existence lies on the edge of this whetted blade ---.’ “No, no, you can’t --- Fate and those ancient witnesses of the pyre cannot give permission. Do you harken to it, misfit?” This ricocheted around the room as one of Heathcote’s dictums – albeit a foray which came reversed out in a mirror. It amounted to scant more than Heathcote Dervish’s bleating, irrespective of one error of judgement. Our mage has yet to work out the fact that MASTODON HELIX MEANT TO RULE THIS WORLD!

Even if it only occurred on a puppet stage out in Colwyn Bay… with Eric Bramall or suchlike vaudeville *artistes*. It didn’t really matter… because any such delirium found its way to a paltry piece of earth. A sod or keepsake which sacrifices its masonry over a puppeteering of strings. *Thunderbirds* aren’t always necessarily go, you see!

**GIVE OUT SPANISH OMELETTES WITH A KNIFE: (96)**

Amidst a High Victorian assemblage our cab rushes on; and it illustrates a whistle-stop tour across so many sun-beams. Again, our three co-conspirators are grist to the mill of their extravagance. This time any such positioning comes to be reversed; primarily by dint of one subdued head that is viewed sideways-on. It belongs to Heathcote Dervish – despite inhabiting a foreign body and being dressed up in a frock-coat and tails. Again and again, various traffic hurls or whizzes past their window – it could well be careering motor-cycles, autogyros, hover-pads, spendthrift penny-farthings (possibly powered by tame nuclear energy), dirigibles, air-ships and related Phileas Fogg helium balloons; together with gliders, canal barges, motorised foot-pads, pogo sticks and velocipedes. Heathcote Dervish – for his part – lay like a suffragette to the left; while being pinioned next to the cab’s décor. His hat had some relevance to the one worn by Mister Hyde in Stevenson’s
tale; even though his fable’s set in Edinburgh not London. True again, his visage looked seedy, disarmed, mummified and bereft of moral candour. A cocoon of bandages left his skull’s remit – at once waxing illicit in relation to Bram Stoker’s guild. Wherein various editions of his Egyptian novel, *The Jewel of the Seven Stars*, hid the extremity of its end in order to avoid nausea. (*Nota Bene*: the real edition happened to be the William Heinemann one of 1903, whilst later variants by Rider, Jarrolds & Arrow proved to be abridged. Such amendments seemed to be anaemic, weak and foreshortened). Nonetheless, Heathcote’s ear is misshapen next to his greatcoat; the luxuriant wove of which completes a Victorian day. Heathcote Dervish mumbles something in reply to Butler James’ former assertion – namely, one that had to do with his unreliability; or could it be described as his proclivity for violence? Who knows? “As to any reckless plenitude”, asserted Heathcote Dervish, “you can rest assured. My intelligence relies on other things. It luridly examines the matter.” “You’d better”, pursued Elsa Bounteous Hapgood with a made-up or oval mouth. Her face divided itself truculently as she spoke – and the woman’s features denoted a Royal Flush. (Whether it was flaccid, purged, enflamed, bloated or all over with passion). In the far corner sat one’s butler – who kept swabbing his wound with a silken rag. A steely if determined look played about his mask… albeit one which seemed to say ‘impress me’. Go on…

A BRIDGE TOO FAR OVER ONE PARTICULAR MEADOW:

(97)
We left our drama in a situation where Mastodon Helix’s massive hands reached out towards the wizard’s cowl. Were the aforementioned Mastodon X’s mittens rough, chapped and ill-hewn… while stopping short of any perfection? Yes indeed! For Mastodon has moved from the base of the dais; thence grasping Heathcote’s cloak in a giant’s maw. Intemperate basalt exists beneath them – and it becomes lined with the blue tissue of so much clay. It serves as the cement for a new abstraction. Mayhap
it might be what Ezra Pound referred to as lapis lazuli – or did Socrates not mention it as cyanus in the Phaedo? Needless to say, the behemoth’s crippling muscles glow under an autumnal fire: and this originates from some flames of yesteryear. These flicker in an embrasure in the corner – a brazier occurring outside of any witness’ sight. Around the base of one’s altar or ebon charge, however, one warlock sprinted forward like one demented. He – rather than the master of his coven – seems to realise what eventuates. His name; you ask? Why, it proclaims the title of Splendour Thomas perchance. “Listen to me – to me”, came the gasping voice of Heathcote Dervish. It lisped aslant of the moon’s own retrieval, if only to brush a cannon with a butterfly’s wings. Such obliging gossamer can never bewitch a termagant like this. “Bow down, monstrous one. You must prostrate yourself before me like a votary or a trembling waif. Don’t force me to countermand you with radical measures. I summoned you up from the deep pits – by virtue of my own thaumaturgy: and now gratitude is expected in kindred mead. Seek out the help-meet of your witness, I pray you--.” “Gratitude isn’t an emotion”, sneered Mastodon Helix, “but the expectation of it becomes a very lively one. Mark it: my fulfilment of your kiss was to offer you Kronos’ backside. Do you fear its impact, belittled one? Let me savour some grace and favour from you… For now that I have returned from a welter of flies, one of my very hands can make away with a city’s walls. Do you see me chipping away at its red stone? Nothing else can suffice in my own parlour; within which you have entered as a crepitating fly. Dost thou recall the Vincent Price film from the nineteen fifties called The Fly? Under any other semblance though, I, here and now, luxuriate in my power! It emboldens the sport of badger baiting (thereby)… Let me trample you, little man, into the dust beneath my feet. In truth, you are unworthy to cavil before me. Do you reminisce about Franz Neumann’s economic survey, Behemoth, that was dedicated to national socialist Germany? Why so… Chelmno’s rise is the provender of false riches – nor can any offer you relief with the lees of so
many corpses. These help to deliberate upon a mummification’s interest.” With this he started to whirl Heathcote Dervish off his feet. “Can you expect one like me to bow down before those I may squash like ants?”, roared Mastodon Helix.

“Do something”, squeaked an unsplendid Thomas from the basis of our kiln. Quite clearly now – and at the font of his exhaustion – fear mounted upon him like an estranged peekaboo.

DO YOU HEAR ME, SIR CRISPIN, IN THE MORNING[?]::

Our nineteenth century torpedo continues to break the surface of these icy waters. Don’t count your blessings, thereby. Put it on hold, my friend, since one of these terror tubes mounts to raw creation as its own after-effect. Let’s reckon on this: “You require our aid if thou desires art to be fulfilled”, muttered Elsa Bounteous Hapgood. Whilst Heathcote Dervish’s alter ego bobbed and jigged about like a gibbeted skull. Could it just be the hansom cab’s velocity which contributed to this cause? In any event, the old-fashioned film camera came to concentrate on his features in this silent movie. These were a breakaway from customised estrangement. For – when looked at with a closer degree of attention – his burnt bandages or mummification refuses to subscribe to Alan Burns’ After the Rain. (A modernist novel, this, that had been written in the nineteen sixties and came with a Max Ernst cover). Furthermore, the unlikeliness of such a source proves its very witness, and it mounts to oblivion thereafter. Surely now the facts may be revealed? Avaunt thee – Heathcote Dervish’s features were endwarfed, marble-like, rancid and indicated a semiotic of damnation. They are also wizened, mad-eyed, fanatical, monger encompassing and fervid. In all truth, his orbs gazed on with manic glee under a top-hat --- what ho(!), no-one may write this off. Now we can recognise a burnt mustang beneath the hood; especially when spliced avec triangular teeth… which refer to a Wyndham Lewis portrait of
The Laughing Woman (circa. 1910). His molars grip glass-eyes abreast of their own bandages, in other words.

BRAM STOKER’S VISAGE ENCOMPASSES A GIBBOUS MOON: (99)
Back in the relatively late twentieth century, one’s drama continues to unfold. Within its compress, Mastodon Helix stands triumphanty on a stone plinth – and a burst of flame cascades around him in order to filter out daylight. Indeed, why so? Because these wizards, whether male or female, scatter in every direction under the impact of Mastodon’s entitlement. Various of their number move in a helter-skelter manner, and after a fashion which accords with Charles Manson’s crew. (Note: Manson’s hippie psychopaths used the name Helter-skelter). One of their number, Heathcote Dervish, was held helplessly aloft; while others prance for cover in drizzle and rain. Moreover – when suspended in mid-air Heathcote’s sandals are on show – and they indicate the footwear of one of Papillon’s extras. Needless to say, one of these reeling images lets out a cry --- surely, he’s yet to properly hear about Dion Fortune’s Bull God? Never mind it… since a magenta cowl covers his image: and thereby accords to it nothing other than a penumbra above the nose. A factor (let’s be clear) that reconciles itself to Warlock Splendour Thomas’ grimace. “Flee, flee – all is dead and gone”, bellowed this male version of Pope Joan… as was expressively laid out in one of Lawrence Durrell’s novels. Irrespective of which, Mastodon Helix shook Heathcote Dervish like a rag-doll. He held him up to the light, somewhat roughly, in order to purge him of all misgivings. Let everything be frankly dealt with, here and now, when we announce Mastodon’s word count. Each and every syllable of this oration then enunciates itself as follows…

Might it also be an example of Patrick Magee’s voice travelling over Lear’s pitch and sound? Again and again, this shadow-land trombone issues forth. It has to do with those key marginals of death.
LIGHTNING-FLASH EPAULETTES: (100)
The Policemen now surrounded Phosphorous Cool in a deliberate circle – a hemicycle (it proved to be) within which our silvery puppet glistened like an optical spectrum. The heavy blue wove of their uniforms closed in under a gas-lamp --- a provender that hinted at one removal too far! Yes again, an arsenic and old lace filibuster intruded here – if only by dint of the Ripper’s previous walks… Weren’t these indicative of a ‘gore bore’ tourism which prevails? Nonetheless, one’s silveryn husk teleported itself above the ruck or melee: and with one gesture from the like of Bramall’s fingers he’s free. A policeman was about to declare: “I think you’d better accompany us to the station, me lad” – but now nought supervened whatsoever. “Lor(‘)!”, expostulated one plane man’s copper. “Cor!” expressed another. “He’s levitating – out of all witness – up and away from us. Do ya hear?” Certainly, our metropolitan blue noses were flabbergasted by this white ball – as its particular speed traversed a roulette wheel. Surely, it looked for egress in a socket, irrespective of those red-and-black counters? Could they turn out to be plastic – or not?

A SWIVELLING BRACE PULLED ITS FACE OFF: (101)
Meanwhile, in our instrument of fire, Mastodon Helix stood abreast: and he continuously waved Heathcote Dervish around his head. Like a splintering gingerbread-man, he twirled --- thereby resembling something out of Bagpuss, a BBC television serial of yesteryear. Whereupon two cowled merchants in the foreground ran for their lives… “NNNNNNOOOOOOOOOOOOO!, one of them cried out in livid pain. Nor may such a rhetoric find its form cut off or alone. Mastodon Helix then let Heathcote go – by hurling him into the middle of his votaries. They scattered or found themselves knocked over like nine-pins. As he was cast away – Heathcote’s back turned over a mild somersault… whilst moving on from us. In the midst of being thrown among his fellows --- in agony --- Heathcote Dervish let out a masqueraded shout. It had something to do with massacred nerve-endings; albeit after a fashion that
ventilated the passions within. All of this involves a scintilla of hurt or victimised pride; especially given the airs and graces --- *a la* MacGregor Mathers --- which Heathcote had wrapped around his own shoulders as a magician.

**LET LOOSE THIS CARAVAN OF FOSSILS:** (102)

In our nineteenth century vice tablet, Phosphorous Cool --- accompanied by a robotic Tumble-weed --- spirals away from the constabulary. They wheedle off at a spare rate of knots, and each one is given over to a latitude of nerves. Several of these law-and-order officials are thereby dumb-struck --- nor may they recover from the velocity of this escape! Now and again, a gust of very precise wind curls up behind them – it jigs slightly to the side and flows amid pass-port papers. Moreover, a gushing wind-tunnel strives to enliven this process… while seeking to abscond amid a maelstrom. Various middling Victorians – aside from the out-manoeuvred policemen – give chase. All of them grant a ‘view Halloo’ towards a pursued fox or hare: the like of which have taken off adjacent to a tabernacle of walls. One denizen of *Victoriana* stands out abruptly, and he besports a floppy hat together with a tie-pin, a cravat and extravagant side-whiskers. “Up and at ‘em, me lovelies!”, he lets loose. “No-one masters this provender or issue better than us… We must defeat this poltroon who ripens with the Ripper’s advent. Let it peel away if we’re not careful – there can be no mercy for those who dish the plate! Anyone who denies the author James Hinton’s nomenclature travels in purdah. He indicates a marauder’s transfiguration; namely, one which claims the symptoms of so many gongs and cymbals. Might such a creature rise from waste ground wearing a red-skull? In any event, he embodies the *largesse* of Godzilla in a Japanese monster film, and such a misfit’s bound to crash to earth eventually. Like Icarus in Greek legends of yore – he’ll fly too close to the sun and singe his wings. We have to encompass its fall or closure (therefore); and the notion of one manifestation shuts down lamp after lamp. It
identifies with mischief, albeit if only to lay siege to a Phantom’s name.”

A MUMMIFIED SIDE-CAR RIDES PILLION: (103)
A close-up of Mastodon’s visage occurs now. It wears upon it the mantle of a lizard-like duty, and this is one that afflicts Nature with a forgotten trespass. A saurian complexion abbreviates the eyes; whereupon we come across one battle-hardened entity too large by far. These orbs smack of misfortune or blaze with Fire: whilst the teeth tapered, dragon-like, in a mouth of gold. Can it realise the truth of one of David Icke’s shape-shifters? For, in truth, doesn’t this writer consider the late Queen Mother to have been a closet brontosaurus? Again, maybe his fastidiousness indicates the wearisome quality of John Gardner’s Dragon – when revealed in the latter’s novel *Grendel*. A text wherein the entire saga of *Beowulf* is reconfigured, worm’s side-up, from the monster’s point of view --- never mind its mother!

“Avaunt your witness to degeneration!”, bellowed Mastodon Helix at the top of his voice. Surely, such a crest or cusp indicated that Spyros has retained his Adamic strength – when ripping off such a cowl or mask?

“Your category doesn’t fit any relic of inhumanism. Oh no! I will give you the answers to your own counter-blows before they happen. Listen to this: since it was such a gaggle as you who gave me life in the first place – I’ll be generous… I shall allow the rest of your coven to live in order to tarry after his mistakes. But never choose to forget my power or puissance – I furnished yonder klavern with existence even in death. Aught is owed to me; especially the circumference of your actual travail! Do you see? It avails no-one to deliberate upon the Bloomsbury Group of yesteryear. May you remember Duncan Grant’s art (?) --- tear it to pieces! For morality remains the ability to crush a thousand insects in one palm, or *a la* Palmistry. Let us then deliberate upon
the line of talent which traverses a plane of skin from one side t’other. Reinvigorate Great Granny Webster, why don’t you?”

TOO MANY SEVEN INCH NAILS CURE THIS BREEZE: (104)

Our two desperadoes are still seen to be running in the direction of so many tomb stones, multi-dimensionally. A colourful advent, this: given that none of them can bring to mind the modernist mausoleum in northern Paris... one which is devoted to Oscar Wilde’s after-grief. Still and all, men of iron, Phosphorous and his Robocop scour the entrance to many passages, and they are actually lost in a maze of lanes between Whitechapel-cum-Spitalfields. A gust of blue dust fills the air; it trespasses all around them... so as to discuss one particular imprint or ring. Could it exist in such a Tartarus? Against this favouritism, a number of walls fly indifference’s flag. They incarnate --- if only at one remove --- the reality of Iain Sinclair’s poesy (or proem) entitled Suicide Bridge. Perhaps a deep green advertisement for Cocoa, drinking chocolate or ‘ovaltine’ can be prepared? Despite the fact that Phosphorous Cool quizzes Hermaphrodite X on the direction they might take. “Theseus shall not entertain his minotaur to a game of cribbage on the way out”, Phosphorous evinced. “We may go in circles (round and round again) yet no Ha!Ha! exists to create a fall in a pitch of England’s pasture. Do we speak of a Green Man or a Man of Kent? Yet again: will you reminisce about a female novelist who wrote a book called The Ha!Ha! (?): meaning a sudden dip or gap in an English garden – often at a labyrinth’s heart, and one allowing a guest or a surprised visitor to fall. Didn’t Albert Camus compose a novella known as The Fall?” “You speak truthfully, master”, averred Tumble-weed, “yet examine it this way. Perhaps we should investigate the sewers or an inner parallelism of ducts, in order to elude governance? Or, quite possibly, do you pity the steel of one who leads an entrapment too far... whether naked of each moon-time?”
SAVE THE WHALE; BUTTER ITS SCOTCH: (105)
An arrestation seeks to intervene in our drama presently… For Mastodon Helix bursts through a granite wall which superintends his progress; thereby causing a myriad shoal of boulders and shards to press in. They home in on one especial point – if only to mount unforgiveness and cause a rippling sensation in his licensed back. These muscles soon come to undulate under a parched skin; and they also inundate the wall like so many false phalli in the household of a black witch. Could their crimson cascade indicate a multitude of special colours or tints: such as cerulean, beryl, cornelian, ruby, nacreous impress, adamantine and wax-works? Oh my, truthfully so… this enclosure’s mural forms a falling grandeur around him – even if it just contrasts Diego Rivera’s leave-taking with it. What did Mastodon have to say about it, though? Why… nought but this: “Enhance the availability of Pickford’s model, if you will! Mankind rests on some easy timbers of assault (perchance); and I intend to search for Elderado in the innards of those I have to disembowel… no matter how robotically. Let us examine this filigree: since any desire to wreak vengeance must uncouple itself from unmarinated foreskins. No obscenity – as regards the imagination – can be usefully occasioned here. Even Stephen King’s novel *It* (or *Es* in German) definitely assesses the dark red and black tincture of any lamination. Who knows what the future holds? Your carrion must make way and foreshorten the idea of embalming, even if there’s no longevity for mankind any more. An atomic clock happens to be ticking already – and a needle in the vein needs to march towards Thermopylae. None of Leonidas’ three hundred drummers may be heard distinctly at such a distance. Truly – or by instinct – Mastodon Helix has got much to compensate for. Let rapine feed on my own blundering necessity.”

LOOK! LOOK! AN EAGLE PECKS AT A DWARF: (106)
The serrated teeth of Tumble-weed or Hermaphrodite X are set aquiver, now that they’re down in the sewers under old
Whitechapel. The smell reeks up in an appalling mist, despite the up-turned pavement egg which Herm. X holds aloft. It proves to be grey and textured like pumice in its expanse. Tumble-weed broke the silence first in this dripping emplacement: “These passages of unleaded silt, master, mightn’t they provide some false polish to things? Could the elephant – alone in its tower – effectively undergo the torments of a rag-time which outfaces E.L. Doctorow? Nor can the peace of ages – down here in the latrines – be replaced by anything other than an electric chair. Cast in a dark-blue welding towards black – it obviously intrigues on behalf of Andy Warhol’s silk-screen print. Cor (!), a little bit of what you fancy goes a long way to alleviating gut-rot, particularly at the public’s convenience. Surely a thousand-and-one pipes, inlaid with mirrors, refracts glory on a willed conclusion? And all prisms when metered to these distances, why, they take effect if one balance shoots forth a Newtonian direction. What say you, guv’nor?”

TOMMY-KNOCKERS IN THE NIGHT GO BINGO: (107)
Mastodon’s massive physique leapt away in a fit of pique… in a situation where each limb mushroomed to its own cloud or density of steel. Yes again, the sky over which he prances has turned a deep yellow – albeit with a trace of blue cloud across its expanse. It proved to be willowy, abiding, untreasured and otherwise oblique. Mark it down now: each and every outburst manoeuvred various crags behind it: and these were edifices that helped to define the crenellations of a ruined manse. Such runes – most considerably – chose to illustrate a Hammer House of Horror out Peppard way, and this was despite being one which opened out before weather-beaten elements. Given rural England’s windswept and inclement climate, the hollowed out interiors of these dwellings emboldened one over a building like the asylum in Dracula. A Victorian mansion, this, it occluded to the indifferent purchase of one whisper too far. Dare you detect a kindred utterance? All of this subsisted in spite of Eric Bramall’s puppet-theatre; a domicile or Montague Summers’ pit that
exercises a cascading branch of skins down the years. In truth, Mastodon Helix scrambled across a windswept scene – itself bolstered by watery painting of an oriental cast. Can it involve Kokei’s Japanese *impedimenta*, perchance? In any event, those magicians who were left below issued the following trumpet: “Look at him go, boy! The like of it is rarely seen the other side of H.L. Mencken’s noontide. No sir: this time any different result’s bound to spark a riot. Observe how – Godzilla-like – his paws or hooves cause him to travel through the air in a manner recalling Armageddon.”

A HUNGRY MOUTH CRIES HAVOC IN THE HEAD: (108) Meanwhile, down in the sewers we find our two cohorts – each one of whom stands astride a gushing vent. These can only help the stagnant waters gathering routinely at a moment beyond. It also transpires that the lichen of so much mould casts a shadow, even a nuclear dust cloud, on a neighbouring wall. Let it rest: since the whole point of this levitation is to indicate the dankness within. Perhaps the following scenario suffices: a playlet in which a well of silvery water rushes from an underground geyser; it pollutes any origin with a mixed displacement… (to speak of). Needless to say, our welcoming arbitrage looks at the tunnels round about and knows wisdom: and these help to manufacture one hungry siphon too far. Might it incarnate the principle of a watery mouth, or even the *Watter’s Mou* (in Scots) that Bram Stoker used in order to pen a novel in the eighteen nineties? At once resultant to such an offering – Phosphorous Cool calmly enjoins the following refrain: “I must plumb the resources of my own mentality, Hermaphrodite X. A time always comes in the affairs of men for a silvery sliver. In such a debenture as this, Tumbleweed, I may be able to spy on my alternative’s thoughts. Rather like a restless troubadour or mince-meat merchant – somewhat after the facts – I reckon on an element of cage-fighting to maximise performance. If, psychically speaking, I can lock in on their minds… well, many and varied suggestions tumble aprey around my feet. I shall then
be the master of their secret codicils. Never mind the Da Vinci code, a rebus’ illumination doesn’t cause a hero to falter in his task.” “Can your prey’s locker be left unguarded so easily?”, mouthed Hermaphrodite’s quatrain. “Oh my yes”, insisted Phosphorous Cool, “one license too many will doubtless see me through to an exchange of swords.”

SHOOT VALLEY DUST FROM A RAT’S PAWS: (109)
Beholden to a solemn earth our coven releases its former leader – given the conundrum which declares that he lies bereft and listless like a rag-doll. Certainly, his near corse adopts a weakened complexion – namely, one which strives to raise him from a recumbent formula too many. The consideration of these moments wait agape, and they likewise cross a dividing line into Eric von Daniken’s territory. Might it just sway the ballast of Robert Bloch? Nonetheless, Heathcote Dervish lay dying with a boulder to his rear – and the latter cut off like a conic section (somewhat unobservably). Betokening the radius of a Praetorian’s column, it summoned up the focus or radial of Bulwer Lytton’s scope... particularly if it related to his novel, *The Last Days of Pompeii*. His wife, Elsa Bounteous Hapgood, cradled this broken offerant in her hands – even though sundry cowled figures surrounded her in a miserable vein. A few surveyed the scene behind her; and they were spectral, confused or wanton. Yet grief effectively contrived not to find them out. A previous votary in cape and cowl then lit up the sky to its own barn-yard gate. He chose to offer the following solace. “My dear”, he attempted to console her, “our erstwhile leader lies comatose as a piledriver’s result; the former a throwaway from a circus strongman who litters one cave too many with its bones.” “I hear you ill, argumentative spirit”, interceded Elsa Bounteous Hapgood on her behalf. “The reckoning that we face is to save the Master from Pluto’s doorway. Tell me – as an aide-de-camp to any black-ice – can an unknown necropolis filter its ebon? A way to rescue my saviour from oblivion has to be found. I won’t
be able to face sleep’s taste else. May the Scientologists then prove me to be a lackey over their E-meter?”

A BLISTERING ONSLAUGHT ON A FORBIDDEN HILL: 
(110)
Under terra firma, our Victorian adventurers wait awhile, even though Lon Chaney’s plunge into Parisian tunnels came to be sepia reduced. Do you remember the remarkable instant in The Phantom of the Opera – the silent film of Gaston Leroux’s novel – where the madman launches himself into the Seine, mask in hand? Forget not this: because Phosphorous Cool has placed a thumb and spatulate forefinger next to his temple. What might our guest from a silvern paradise be thinking…? “A configuration comes to be apparent in one’s divided mind. It attracts sovran territory – if only to give up the ghost over primordial tension. Examine this evidence, Hermaphrodite X, a medley of yellow press publications filter on. These trumpet the names John O’London’s, the Pall Mall Gazette, Illustrated Metropolitan, the Gentleman’s Magazine and such like… On its back cover a frontispiece materialises; and it’s been reversed out in a mirror. Let it alone now… yet, without favouritism, one is here to see three characters manifest themselves in a forgotten mist. They are Heathcote Dervish, Elsa Bounteous Hapgood and Butler James. All of them register some co-ordinates in Camden Lock, north London, just down from Chalk Farm in the borough of Camden. Likewise, a covered or established market signals the likelihood of many products passing by on the other side, inter alia, and despite all such abstractions due to the fog. A pea-souper doubtlessly covered their tracks in this imagined snow. Does one even reminisce about the plot of Ian McEwan’s The Cement Garden over this particular rise? It registered an untruth… now that vaudeville artistes have joined an array of puppets on these trestles. Given all this preparation, though, Phosphorous’ meeting with John Dee --- or Skrying --- waxed negative. It definitely blew away the folly of too many tropical fish in a tank. Aren’t they restful for one’s eyes?
STRAIGHT AS AN ARROW: (111)
Elsa Bounteous Hapgood is speaking forthwith. “Are any able to still the dead beat of a fading heart, even in terms of so much forgotten trauma? Could it really understate a brother’s lesion or dilemma (?) – namely, this was one of those pitches which spoke of the body’s left side. Let it be: my lord and master lies dying… shall any of you prove fit enough to disprove this junction? Like a graphic novel – such as Peter Kuper’s vision of Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* – no-one seems alert over emptying out this barrel. Oh, by drear Lilith’s nuggets, who will save him from Persephone’s broth?” “I may have a go at his liberation of breath”, sauntered our silver point. At this intervention, though, Elsa Bounteous scrolled back over her husband’s forehead – if only to mount a mausoleum’s steps with contempt. They were made from pure marble or *lapis lazuli*, and in such a way as interpreted this reckoning. It shone on towards a light blue impress which is nearly always marbled or veined with pink; the latter reminiscent of what Ezra Pound had said in Imagist diction on many occasions. Her eyes slanted meaningfully to the left during these words, and all of it occurred underneath that white streak in one’s hair from early in life. Surely, such a pale path amid the blue-‘n’-black is the sign of a witch throughout past aeons? Be still and all amidst wonder – for her warlock’s body skidded away to a restful plenty, and appeared devoid of life. Who has been speaking to her trace element, then? Why, it happened to be none other than Phosphorous Cool.

DIGNIFY FRUITCAKE WITH AN APPLE’S TART: (112)
Meanwhile, in an irreducible darkness or sprite, our three desperadoes approach their hidden lair. They tiptoed across a wicker-work of dwarves – i.e.; one which lit itself up occasionally with a passing strobe light. It came affixed to the wall via some tracery or other… even though a finger of lightning lit up the scene. All in all, it seemed to embody the aftertaste of John Cowper Powys’ novel *The Brazen Head*. Irrespective of such detours, however, our three characters
moved along a darkened alley under golden globes. At first sight they looked like a pawn broker’s embrasure, but now strange spheroids or globules intervened. Didn’t they incarnate the principle of a lamp rather more? As we said before – our three intimates proved to be Heathcote Dervish, Butler James and Elsa Bounteous Hapgood. Each one of them crept along this duct sideways on – and it articulated a triangular vertex, albeit reverse ways. Can you feel a natural outburst coming on now? Truly, a rich incline pins the bricks to this particular plane; the former a horizontal bar (or access) that doesn’t add one jot to the distant church steeple. It towers over a city’s artery; a mere underground portmanteau (here) which occasions those curved entrances in Bath, Durham or Chester. A brief raised promontory on stilts led to the door… and it came constructed from fine old wood. A knocker of polished brass studded the willow; and it recalled Durham’s cathedral. Butler James – the furthest forward of the trio – made to pluck it first.

IMPRESS A VAMPIRE WITH GARLIC IMPALEMENT: (113)
Let’s thrust forwards into the twentieth century with our tale… For now, Phosphorous Cool has risen from a stone dais whose brick kiln was sovran over so many lost offerings as these. Like those theatres of yesteryear, today’s actors are oblivious to such vaudeville turns who proliferate all agog. Every such music-hall act indicates puppets holding onto a trestle, or possibly Patrick Magee playing Krapp. This is in Samuel Beckett’s drama about an oldster with his tapes in an aged audio machine that magnifies a metallic strip. It stands next to him on the darkness of an unlit stage – where only a lead actor (like Magee) sits illumined. Everything else remains darksome. Around Phosphorous Cool various cowled denizens move away, and they proliferate around so many beach-combers looking for shells… each one of whom shares an internal echo within. “You deserve no pity save rapine”, mused our hero. “But – despite the fact that we are wooden spectres – our Animism gives us an insight into mankind. It understands why a factor of three score and ten isn’t
over till the fat lady sings. A death before its time cannot suit Ombre’s finality, after all. Nor can it liberate the climax of a Patience game played by three hands.” Still backing away or seen in profile (m’lud) Elsa Bounteous Hapgood acknowledges: “Yet let us undo the fastness of a lost keep. What can you do? A principle which imprisons nought loosens no molecules. Neither may a hungry man salvage steak from some run-of-the-mill soya beans. I don’t understand, my vainglorious marionette… cease to offer false hopes offshore. Again I repeat, whatever shall you accomplish?”

SELF-PORTRAITS IN OCHRE HINT AT A SHADOW WORLD: (114)

Back in the late nineteenth century, our three emigres from east London have made their way northwards: and they circle an arctic doorway. Might it embolden some sort of honey trap? Let’s see: now that one’s distracted trio have effectively surrounded their wasps’ nest! A vague feeling of triumph seems to glow in our three musketeers’ loins. Elsa Bounteous, in particular, stands adjacent to a doorway, and the ramp + panel by which it’s reached. She wears a fur travelling hood or wrap; the likelihood of this excludes a provocative ball-room dancing dress underneath. Moreover, a silhouette covers half her face and it exists under one tent pole too far. Does one see its configuration of fives? Anyway, a series of interchanges or wooden blinds lay to one side; and they came louvered up to a sinister point… a medley that harkened back to Angel alley in Whitechapel in the east end. (Truthfully speaking, this is where they had just originated from). Certain barred windows also slandered or occluded their path; and these all strove to achieve an effect halfway between Gilbert & Sullivan and Edgar Allan Poe. Most noticeably, however, we have to treat of the masterful impress left by Heathcote Dervish – especially given his genuine reduction to a phantom this time around. An event – the secret consequences of which – prove to enforce a Ripper’s surreal quality! No wonder that the journalist Patrick Lavelle’s study of
the hoaxer, *Wearside Jack*, had to be published by Ghostwriters incorporated… A spectral essence or bogle, now, Heathcote Dervish passed along like a phantasm or its envelope… that is: an entity which left its own etheric spore *a la* Adolphe Constant. Never mind the fact that he crepitated in London against a dawn’s light! The knocker – for its part – keened to a heavy or progressive abstract; and this represented a nomenclature which lost Durham cathedral in its red eyes. Wasn’t such a crimson seat over-burdened, octopus-like, unfastened or estranged? Our butler James continued to sound his horn – but in a manner altogether distinct from Sarban’s pornography. Suddenly – and with only a momentary warning – he heard that bolts were being shot on the door’s other side.

PORTCULLIS BEETLE; A SHALLOW ENTRANCE: (115)

In one abstract or neon of sound, an exposed palm can be seen limned against the blue. It denotes an imprecation from a panel drawn by Herb Trimpe; and such a story-board senses the outstretched palm print of Phosphorous Cool. He stands adjacent to this undelivered paw; the fingers of which are uncurled before a Thorakian torso. Doesn’t his silvery upper body strength then glisten in a wasting light (?); and it’s a deepening of pthalo into turquoise via a golden span. Now and again, his saving grace alters its compass – what with such a hand signal mushrooming out in order to arrest Fate. No vaudeville act other than this can ask for penance by way of a witness: since a doom-laden palmistry enters the frame here. Nor may it be said that one line within a creased palm, crossing over from left to right, shall traverse a minor irritation’s absence just as well. Surely, it prefigures a talent which curdles to its own astrological profile, given an impediment over such a game of draughts? “Await the witness of my fingers and thumbs”, declared our silver-top milk. “Any power of restitution in me comes from the cosmos – at least in terms of a rectilinear energy-flow. Alternatively, and by means of a hidden ventriloquism – my puppet-master speaks through me in relation to an endless misstatement. *Avaunt thee,*
make him whole I tell ye! Deliver up the quarterstaff of a Demon king in English pantomime… let it be. Transfix this audience, I command you, with Stravinsky’s *Petrushka* and its basic spirit…!”

A SLUG – THROW SALT IN ITS PATH: (116)
Bolts in our nineteenth century door shot back internally, and it reluctantly began to open with an abiding creek. Here and now, slowly, oh so slowly, the wooden door slid open in its portal of rectitude. Oaken or teak in its continuing frame – one yet came over a metal jamb + lintel across its sill. But again, our egress opened inwards – if only to unburden the penumbra of an unshaded light. In the doorway stood an ill-formed or hump-backed nurse: one who alternately held a flickering oil-lamp. Without a book or its candle, it played up one flavour in this set aside glass. To be honest: the sister of mercy wore a tight and low-cut dress; one which was an altogether more provocative answer to a question posed by Florence Nightingale. Do you see it? Because such an object doubtless resiled to a new prospect, in that couldn’t she embody Elsa Bounteous Hapgood when facing off now or etherically sporting new vistas? Above all, any detective work has to seize a mirror-effect – even after its reversed out imagery. In form, though, she wore a belt and a nurse’s cap with a red cross on it, and this Swiss badge proved to be monstrously scarlet in its steadfastness. Doubtlessly again… her brown hair came parted under a white cap… one whose nature is cast aside by a perfect moon face. A plate-like or oval status that belies yesterday’s hump! Moreover – if we were to trip over into the semblance of Igor, the good doctor’s familiar or assistant, might this not be a female variant on the theme? In any event, the matron’s face swivelled like a doll’s; at once porcelain, ovalesque, plaster painted, ruby-lipped and even perfect in its innocence. It evinced a dulcet quality which understood the compression due to Russian roulette. For – rather like a spastic librarian in Henley-on-Thames – she existed deep down inside this basement. Given that the ancient or pre-modern library
happened to be situated under the town hall. Didn’t she allow the author to enjoy adult books from the age of nine? A factor which seemed contrary to all known rules. A notice that itself existed irrespective of those numismatics – namely, the enshrined Roman coins existing in so many cases. Still, in keeping with the early years of silent cinema, our matriarch has yet to vouchsafe a word. No sound passes from between her lips.

A DRAGON’S BREATH MELTS BEOWULF’S GOLD: (117) Furthermore, bolts of liquid flame passed from Phosphorous Cool’s distended palms; and each palm-print contained within it the witness of one blast. (Could the desideratum of Wyndham Lewis’ cultural magazine from early in the twentieth century not come into the frame now?) In this tableau, the manikin known as Phosphorous C. arches his back, primarily so as to launch blistering bursts of lightning upon his prey. These are co-ordinated downwards in parallel beams: and they have occasion to meet in Heathcote’s corse. A body or lamentable object (this is); the likelihood of which almost sports a mummified air… as if it existed in Luxor under a night-shrouded mystery or deeply buried in various sands. Crackling electrical energy inundates Dervish; it provides a coursing vanguard so as to fill the air with swarming fire-flies. An agency that susurrates to a witness, this – if only to divide a realm between Heaven & Hell with pinkish sparks. “Let the power cosmic bask in my plenitude”, declared Phosphorous Cool. “If any existence or under-nourished life exists here, inter alia, let it be summoned forth at the flick of this giddy switch.”

Silence then billows asunder, in order to reign after a few brief instants of action… may it drown.

CYRIL H. LOVEGROVE; A VICTORIAN MORTUARY: (118) The crippled nurse gestures with her index-finger against a yellow background; and this is one which transmutes light blue into gold. Her other hand, however, upholds a flickering oil-
lamp; the latter a glass space or chasm that contains within it a spluttering flame. Like a candle in the wind, we find such a taper mushrooming into an unappreciated cloud. Further on from this, our nurse has turned slightly to the side in order to reveal her hump; a promontory which issues forth as a muddy vanguard like Spion Kop. May it not bear comparison with her mauve or otherwise brunette wig; a colouring that gives a flaxen wash to Thomas Hardy’s *The Trumpet Major*? Needless to say, her gestures indicate the finality of a new disclosure; and it also bears witness to her starch, lintel + cape. It all occurs in a situation where the silhouette of her dark eyes ramifies with a red cross – the former contained on a bonnet above. “Good evening”, averred Butler James in a sombre voice. It reverberated like a distant bell calling the faithful to prayer in a Khitian temple. “Mistress nurse, we have called at your establishment this evening in order to visit your master. Is the mortuary superintendent at home; or mayhap he’s concerned with one of his gruesome experiments? For – like James Hinton’s philosophy regarding fallen womanhood – no deviation from Peter Cushing’s test-tubes can be tolerated. Similarly, Wise’s *Introduction to Battle-Gaming* must never deflect from other truths – namely, the fact which states that Doctor Seward walks alone down his asylum’s corridors. Are you aware that Charles Bronson, the most dangerous man in Britain’s prisons, has written an autobiography? Less widely known, though, remains the information declaring he wore a cage around his head. Reminiscent of Thomas Harris’ characters; and, in particular, where in flickering blue-light Andy Warhol’s electric-chair performs… its wicker format spoke to pthalo’s enclosure.” “Oh my yes, welcome all”, replied our ward sister. Her name was Ms. Igor; and clearly she had refused to peruse Sylvia Plath’s *The Bell Jar*. “The professor has been waiting for your tinkling sound. He will see you now. Do not fear.”
LEAD ON INTO DARKNESS, RED-EYED ONE; DON’T SPECULATE[!]: (119)
Let us fast forwards a century to an on-going drama… wherein Heathcote Dervish’s corse has risen off the ground in casual surprise. A reckless puppet to the last degree of its performance – a look of somnolence or calm crosses its features. May the wizard just be dead or sleeping? Who knows? Yet – poltergeist like – he certainly rises from this dais: and his warlock’s vestments flow underneath him in the haze. Yes assuredly, he floats with a calm or benign mask o’er his face – a visor or its kindred which is clearly oblivious to the unbearable lightness of being. Examine it in this way: a shower of sparks envelops his advanced corpse and streams it with psychedelia – rather after the fashion of Timothy Leary’s brain liquefaction. One model stands out abreast of everything, and this has to do with the puppeteering of so many toy-theatres. For no-one other than their historian, George Speaight, can effectively see the strings marshalling such objects. Off to one side, however, Phosphorous Cool gestures imprescriptibly, and in a way that causes him to stagger back and forth like a marionette. Could it be an example of transference; or a scenario where the sap of one plant masticates another’s rheum? Have you yet to register whether a venus fly-trap feeds on insects, or not? After all, one’s first instinct when left alone in a room with a Drosophila is to kill it. In the words of an American crime fiction writer of yesteryear – Goddamn the blue-tailed fly!

HAVOC IS THE HEAD-MEN[!]: (120)
In an alternative vista of Victorian London, my friends, our narrative grows apace. Yes indeed… For, on the left side of our haversack, Butler James stands to. He obviously wishes to introduce one and all to everyone else, and in accordance with the manners of an Edwardian music hall. His features – when hidden within this temperature – came to be regarded as smooth, ovalesque, unprincipled and relatively untroubled. Leastways – one element immediately stands out: and it has to do with the
scar tissue down his visage’s left side. Seal and paste wise (now) it travels down one aspect of the face… whilst being active on a physiognomy’s sinister tracing paper. A feeling of vague uneasiness (this is) that becomes even more pronounced, especially when the mortuary’s guardian was introduced. He happens to be such an ossuary’s lord and master --- officiously so. A brick kiln exists to one side of him, and a deeper recess continues to exalt its shadows. Nor can we understand so sweetly why blood flows over those unwhetted blades…

In front of us, a man’s vista becomes apparent. He wears a silken waistcoat taken together with a large cravat; and it sports a tie-pin by way of lustre. If we consider it movie-star wise, the skull is long and thin… and it evinces a prognathous jaw or a coif of hair over the forehead. His non-wig proves to be brown in colour. All in all, his cast of character --- even reminiscent of vaudeville or puppeteering --- seems to be familiar. Butler James deems it necessary to do the honours. “My brethren”, he remarks with a flourish. “Mark on your calendars the following treatise, at least in terms of Germany’s forgotten art concerning the Ph.d. Yes sir and above: since I would ask you to put your hands together for Baron von Frankenstein… the scientist, mortician and brain-digger of this establishment.” (In fact, our particular physician harkens back to Brian Aldiss’ thesis in his book, *Frankenstein Unbound*. A tribute, *ceteris paribus*, which preceded the post-modern or electronic folly of William Gibson). Never mind: all of this subsists due to the fact that our Frankenstein looks back to the example of Moustachio Brave Herring. Surely, the existence of one precedes the other’s tirade?

**BREAK THE EGG-SHELLS OF A DELUDED YOKE:** (121)

Elsa Bounteous Hapgood lets rip – once she becomes animated by concern for her spouse. “Certainly, my beloved husband rises in the air like a subaltern of non-identity – not that a sleeping prince necessarily mirrors its absence. He floats off the ground etherically; or in relation to one of Albert Louden’s obese
women. These cry havoc in an untroubled mien over their bed-sheets – especially when compared to the pseudo-intellectualism of a Tom Stoppard play. I actually prefer Ron Hutchinson’s *Rats in the Skull* about Ulster loyalist paramilitarism. *Avaunt thee*… to my side, gentlemen of the coven, this silvery puppet happens to be killing my husband. To my help --- attack him; devour him: prevent him from doing harm.” In saying this, Elsa throws out her hands and her capacious robes then billow behind her. What of other gestures, though? Because a fellow mage, Warlock Splendour Thomas, looms nearby with his cowl having fallen away amid flame. He looks both animated and ill at ease. “We dare not creep upon him out of Nosferatu’s bidding, Elsa. No penumbra may shield us from his wrath. Given the strength of such a silvery titan – one false mood or move could destroy us all! In such a labyrinth, an English Ha!Ha! spots a macabre bend. Likewise, a seventeenth century text like Vondel’s *Lucifer* hints at a magic camera or a purple wine stain too far.”

**GREET THE LONGITUDE OF A GRENADE WITH APLOMB:**

Heathcote Dervish and Baron von Frankenstein are found to be conversing with each other way back in the nineteenth century. For – irrespective of Audrey Beardsley’s artichoke – any black-and-white drawing must hint at Heathcote’s spectre. Given that a graphic impress lies upon us here; and it imprisons purport and hints at a hidden trajectory. This is artistic or happens to be a tendency which moves via Beresford Egan towards one that signifies Ralph Steadman. Doesn’t the line stretch back to Rowlandson or Gillray? Didn’t it also satisfy the savage or monstrous, thereby?

+ By virtue of such a panel, Heathcote Dervish undergoes a spiritual tide – and this was one which cleaves to a ghost at Banquo’s feast. His triangular head waxes pyramidal now – whilst an impress of these stalks continues to surround his limbs. It all denoted a thick bracket or a lock of hair behind a portal,
irrespective of a corn dolly that stands no chance of being consumed by fire! Never mind a redundant soliloquy… Later on, these imprints lurk in some sort of spiritist guise – only to lay siege to phrenology’s brain-pan at one remove. Altogether now, his lustre waxed apple-like --- at once becoming pith to its own severed core. Or – without being fermented into cider – could it be reduced into crab apples step by step? “These matters resile to nothing save a sovran indifference”, elicited Heathcote. “My health forced me to requisition your aid, my dear Baron. I require a new corse, compaction or body.” “But, of course”, composed Frankenstein, “you were right to consult me through your allies. Since a voodoo doll can always be worked from wax; at least in terms of another’s available lair. Or might such an offering impose hair? Because one item which differentiates its revenge hints at a prior nullity. It holds to a comparison with a skull, a token or a cranial midget that provides a rendezvous avec the red and the black. A mediaeval mystery play thereby cradles a white doliocephalic bone in dark light.”

MADDEN THE RELISH OF ONE VOODOO DOLL: (123)
Elsa Bounteous Hapgood continues her spiel; and (indeed) there’s no stopping her pronouns or received pronunciation. It all happens to be delivered in a format that Nancy Mitford called U rather than Non-U. “Address our witness”, she hailed with glee. “It doubtless speeds across the grass towards one’s croquet hoop. Our love quits the advent of a new future. Given that the silvery puppet’s energy flows into Heathcote Dervish, primarily so as to retrieve him from oblivion’s gate. Must you observe its concourse (?); even if the manikin’s very sustenance floods into our warlock. Look! Oh rejoice; let it be released or engineered from beyond a grey matrix. No commingling with nothingness has an opportunity to intervene now; nor can we discount the electricity which surges around his eyes. These orbs --- momentarily disfigured in their frequency --- flicker into an awakening or some such semblance, or absolute. Rejoice! Rejoice! One’s king never dies in a salutation owing to Ombre;
and never mind the stanzas of Alexander Pope. In these circumstances, a red inundation of lace looks out beyond its trellis and it incarnates a hop-scotch; even an abstract expressionist design a la de Kooning. A painter or dauber who definitely does not record such scarlet embroidery. Recall this to our minds, my friends: this lattice or crystalline structure has an echo: and it proves to be diaphanous, shape-shifting, unbalanced, even propositional over Lorca’s blood wedding.”

**RENDER GRIEF TO A STAINED-GLASS WINDOW – IT’S IN HEREFORD:** (124)
Irrespective of any other developments: Baron von Frankenstein leads the way down a brick incline which surrounds the possibility of such a descent. A wall bracket exists high up and to one side… and it occasions a niche that reconciles itself to flaring torches. These are not out of place; since our *troupe* are making their way towards a fully stocked charnel house. Also, Frankenstein’s baron has taken to explaining about the rejection of living tissue. “Heathcote, we’ve been working on a livery of soft flesh; and now you’ll discover which jelly mould can’t contain all those brains. It emboldens so many gadgets. Like those galvanised or twitching limbs in hoary Frankenstein films by James Whale – one dictaphone stands out aplenty. Similarly, it understands that a votary may kneel amidst a roseate mist which shimmers over such captures amid leaded planes… prismically speaking. These events cause the religious and body snatchers to bend down – at least once we have filleted such lintel as wraps our corse. An envelope it testifies to being; the like of it cascading down to an opening witness. Let us pray that one anatomy lesson causes us to celebrate a pride drawn from Gray. All of it repositions itself next to an enabling wall like Humpty-Dumpty.”

**PING, PING; BLING, BLING:** (125)
Husband and wife have been successfully reunited by this time, albeit after Heathcote Dervish’s near-death experience. It
likewise let rip the mantra of so many preying mantis’ silent cries. Listen to me: our chosen couple then choose to grapple with each other… and this’s despite any premature defeats. Various cowls or votaries surround them – seemingly oblivious to Phosphorous Cool’s existence. His silvery beacon has been weakened by such a definite chase. A certain expanse of energy also creases his palm; and it proves to be a nimbus that cannot call upon a hurdy-gurdy man’s witness. We must reckon to such a smoky embrasure --- at a moment where our puppet’s hands deliver the steam of a necessary awakening. Does he eventually stare down from on high to see – what? Well, it may be nothing other than a reddish pilgrimage… one whose kindred basks before a Fauvist screen. Loops of colour then promenade down in a cascade or spectrum. Eventually a scimitar – drawn from Robert Musil’s notion of the man without qualities – enters into one eye-socket over time… by virtue of a serpentine exit.

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL – WHO’S THE WORST OF US ALL? (126)
Proportionately speaking, Heathcote Dervish’s spectre passes down a line of freshly minted cadavers: all of which were found to be laid out on trestle tables. These parted with any percussive daylight, as soon as the eye could see. Whereat – by dint of this particular collusion – corpses were laid out on either side: and faced off against one another in accordance with damnation’s fatalism. Observed from this angle, then, Heathcote moves down each aisle by acknowledging silver, or examining those specimens indicative of Hell’s Kitchen. These variants entomb a massive presence in all their livery; and they lie atop one another sarcophagi to sarcophagi. One token admits its fellows at a moment like this, even though Butler James exults at Death’s panorama. “Incredible, my man”, he enthuses with a favourite spleen. “Let’s look upon an unfolding nightmare that cradles malevolence at Heaven’s Gate. It basically intones a recess from Wyndham Lewis’ The Childermass: where two public school boys, killed in the Great War, await the Bailiff’s permission to
enter the celestial city. A rufous brown or ochre covers our domain; and it maims a colour scheme which draws a finger across an adult face. Could it be a visor; or an iron man who understands the gesture of one deluded eye? Such a socket then became unstuck in one of de Chirico’s depressions. Unhallowed of all main light sources (forevermore) – it dimpled before the Hell-Fire club’s stewardship: and nor can you easily forgo such a coin. This leapt out at yon; and it joined hands while brushing a concrete wall. Surely, this was one of le Corbusier’s efforts deep underground?”

PADLOCK THE DUNGEONS OF A MIND: (127)

Reject Jurgen Habermas! Indeed, a conversation now ensues or breaks out roundabout a coven’s overall significance. Elsa Bannister Hapgood decides to begin the task. “Your plan virtually led to its creator’s demise, my husband. Surely it’s better to live a full life than strain for a purity which exists over the gate’s other side? Certain wags say that with nought above you there’s nothing to aspire to. But – my spouse and warlock – I beg you to reconsider. Our plan has merely been ground into millet, in order to suffer the weak to die.” “Their death rises exactly as the progeny for our raging talents”, urges Heathcote Dervish by way of a ready assistance. Moreover, his asservation might take the bark off a tree in order to solder its roundness. Are we aware of what Max Stirner meant by such creative nothingness? Any road up, Heathcote proves determined to justify his actions... at least in a like manner or kindred. “Avaunt thee, spouse – master of magicks and other tokens of Mordred – we must belabour a puppet’s face in order to achieve our destiny. No campaign of one’s own vintage can ever really treat what Emily Dickinson called a ‘zero in the bone’. No way and et cetera... All that really matters is our manipulation of transcendence. To teach the masses or lumpen to dance to our tune plays an infernal organ – this was itself well ahead of Bach’s peace-time offering. Necessarily so... For, my brethren, the way to activate one’s struggle has to be to ennoble Jihad.
(Don’t we remember, in truth, a dissident football fanzine of yesteryear… one which went under this title?) No consideration and a mass of bunkum… since the holograph of a warrior’s imprint adjusts to a tracery of spent leaves. It understands what the philosopher Julius Evola meant by *The Metaphysics of War*. Let none other than the late John Aspinall subscribe to each kindling’s trust over his gorillas. After all, the natural habitat of Man becomes a jungle of his own making. A notion that happens to be true – even if it’s covered with asphalt or tarmac at the time… This much waxes evidential by virtue of a voodoo doll. It delimits the prospect of the authoress Donna Tart’s forbearance, in a situation where each wax figurine holds a sensibility in trust. Needless to say, any skull-head oft comes delivered in clay or as a maquette; the latter a semiotic for the mongrel who’s born well outside its customary time. Yes indeed, such an experiential locomotion harvests a field near the edge of death’s row: a conundrum in which various skulls are seen nestling on stalks of wheat. Does your understanding differ – and if so – may not a grim reaper offer to scythe down so many heads? In all honesty, it emboldens the spirit of a thirteenth card in a Tarot park. Let us seize its offering: when we find such a skeleton placed next to a bridge of sighs or moans.”

A YELLOW BRICK ROAD MANIFESTS ITS CAUTION:

(128)

In a nineteenth century turn of phrase, perchance, Heathcote Dervish’s spirit passes along between sundry corpse-lines. These recollect the words of Butler James concerning such an ossuary. “Masterful one, thou art free to choose a lissom grove from amongst the most handsome features, largest muscles, mightiest thews and most attractive lineaments --- all of these are yours, albeit when given a placement by Caspar David Friedrich. Alternatively, you may feel that one factor writ large comes abreast of its pace. You are now free, Excellency, to choose a perfect form from this Hall of our Dead.” “Assuredly, my servant from a distinct age of yore”, repeated Heathcote, “nothing suits
me better. A factor of oblivion will never fascinate my vows over Sir Peter Maxwell-Davies’ Fourth Symphony – in that the reanimation of spent matter has eluded science’s refuge for many a year. Let the Age of Reason not collapse before Buffon’s existential headgear!”

ONE NEGATIVE IRON MASKS ITS ANSWER: (129) Elsa Bounteous Hapgood continues to speak within a burst of aplomb or necessary angst. “A failure, husband, to enact Beowulf’s vengeance upon Grendel need not detain our majesty. Nor can we trouble ourselves within a bedizened stupor.” “Regard me, wife, our combined visages might prove sufficient to wrest victory from defeat. An admixture of pain can doubt its own dotage; and none have to properly witness it otherwise. Do you see? Whatever we decide upon now – the fate of so much dye is sealed in terms of a preadventure. No welcome tune finds our accommodation to be licit at this time – given that a memory persuades an ocean to peel back from our chair.” “Unlike Canute…” “That’s correct.” “Yet, if we consider it in terms of ripe corn, Phosphorous Cool saved your life.” “It scant matters save the offering of spent gravy. No such repast crosses my lips. It must engineer the destruction of one cook who exists in clover – despite spitting in a broth which comes destined for a giant’s bowl.”

ZIG-ZAG FROM BISHOP TO ROOK, WHY DON’T YOU? (130) One head in particular has taken Heathcote Dervish’s fancy; and it embodies those qualities of power and malignancy that our mage had come to respect. Each one intoned the spectacle of a local landmark, after all, and this happened to be the Combe gibbet in west Berkshire. Wherein – and contrasted against a spectrum of burnt grass – a high pole measures its length aslant a pale blue sky. The faintest scintilla of cumulus passes overhead, if only to contrast with the ethical high-jump underneath. Its livery stood forward most definitely in a longitudinal aspect; and
this wasn’t any sort of a helix (to be sure). This trestle or counterpart faces off across the beam: and one can imagine two cadavers hanging from either side, and many of them would have worn leg-irons or been caged. A facility which reminds us of the Black Acts during the eighteenth century – together with an after-echo of the same existing well into the nineteenth century. All of these moments of bourgeois ferocity found themselves ably chronicled by a very English, if marxist, historian called E.P. Thompson. Also, didn’t we mete out such punishments to those who had brooked our will in India, especially if gibbeted thuggee happened to be the devotees of Kali – the goddess of destruction?

In any event, thoughts pertaining to the manufacture of dead bodies flitted through Heathcote Dervish’s mind. He had long ago mastered the fact that any new visor must evince puissance and menace rather than good looks. To this end, he stopped next to a jagged edge remarkably like Boris Karloff’s Frankenstein’s monster from the early ‘thirties. Do you wish to enlist its aid without a camp or louche boulevard?

DANCE A HOSE & HAIL ABOVE THE EMERALD[!]: (131) “See”, cried one of those warlocks… a man who went under the moniker of Splendour Thomas. Could not a tincture of Welsh blood be traceable here, even though no connexion with the doleful stanzas of R. S. Thomas becomes apparent? “His strength seems to be unsupervised due to this latest draught. Our legend – or silvery puppet – keens to a moment of weakness, thereby. Can this vessel be half full or half empty, perchance?” Given such an observance, Phosphorous Cool leans on a stone balustrade to one side. His back is curled away from the viewer; and blue-to-white vapour circles up from his exposed hands. These lie flat out or palm uppermost before the Fates! Never mind… since Heathcote Dervish and Elsa Bounteous Hapgood were still conversing. “Dearest one – and yet graven in our absence – we must endeavour to finish our task. Phosphorous Cool and Mastodon
Helix shall be allowed to fit their commotion to each other. They will be encouraged to fight, even to die, should it prove to be necessary.” “Requisite for what, Heathcote, or whomsoever else?”, enquired his wife. Her voice betrayed a plangent quaver. “Why”, he responded, “so that mankind comes to tremble over our control of unseen realms. The general commerce or ruck only begins to quail when they reckon to our command over daemons like Spyros – otherwise known as Mastodon Helix. Our ability to summon up one to quell the other merely contrives to send our voices right round the world. ‘twill envelop a seedy globe with flame! We alone deserve to take the credit hereafter. The science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard distributed an incorrect view, you see. A new religion can indeed be created in the modern cosmogony, contrary to science’s wiles. We are striving to bring it about.”

LOCK UP THE POLE STAR; FORGETFULNESS AWAITS: (132)

Carry on from here, my friends and acquaintances… Given the fact that Heathcote Dervish has flitted down a row of cadavers – all of them lain out on various trestles or plinths. Whereupon these events happen to be occurring in an alternative Victorian England, and in a dimension as yet unknown to our kin. Moreover, a hemispherical East End looms up before us, and this was long before a Kray shot an informer in an evening’s pea-souper. It took place in ‘The Blind Beggar’ on Cambridge Heath Road… where Hackney’s fag-end meets Bethnal Green. Heathcote moved with aplomb above all those corses which met his gaze – or travelled under his finger-nails. He proved to be both present and alone. One cranial embrace sent Heathcote Dervish into raptures! Whereas such a waxen skull looks like Boris Karloff from a ‘thirties flick by James Whale or Tod Browning – to use a term of American slang. A phrenology like this distilled its own essence --- whether it came to be tapered, patient, heavy or blanched. A lugubrious fracturing then mulcted its purpose towards grey; while some untransparent eyes existed.
‘neath blue lids. Face the facts now: because Heathcote’s jagged talons caressed the side of this death’s-head; and it seemed to be pregnant with awe… albeit primarily in spirit. A rough wooden work-bench existed underneath this Frankenstein’s monster. He looked altogether alien aslant some frightful intent, and appeared to be dressed top-to-toe in a mauve jump-suit. (Could it be one of David Icke’s notorious shell-suits?) Surely, every recognised catholic school-boy knows that purple amounts to death’s colour or tint?
+
“This one, thinkest me thou”, pronounced Heathcote Dervish in a stentorian voice.

AN ENGLISH HOBBY-HORSE APPROVES ITS KLAVERN:
(133)
“We are only concerned with a planned observation”, affirmed Elsa’s husband on a rival plane. His wife now hangs back to the side… and her features gather up a latent uncertainty. Let it all rise above you as a spent carrion of Self… Her husband – by this adventure’s mist – finds his aspect to be convulsed: and it then comes across as galvanised, unknown to quicksand or beckoning over any prospect. It also offers little by way of a sandy relief. Listen to this announcement from a forgotten Leyden jar… “An eventuality – such as the one you are determined to dispose of – could occasion yonder puppet’s death. The massive thews of Mastodon Helix could well ‘do’ for him – particularly if they came to blows or even fist-to-fist.” These were the words of Elsa Bounteous Hapgood. “No matter, my dear – death is life… as the sages of an unknown Nemedian chronicle beg leave to say. Occasionally now, we are wont to witness a world wide wrestling or cage-fighting bout. Do you bother to repossess one memory; namely, the one of Dickie Davis introducing Saturday afternoon wrestling on independent television?”
BAKE A CAKE BEFORE THOSE RED QUILL GIRLS STEAL IT: (134)
Heathcote Dervish rears up before or above Baron von Frankenstein (MD); the latter being observed from the side after a primitive German wood-cut. (A very worthy art-form this happens to be: the after-effects of it can be seen in many a graphic novel by Steve Ditko or Frank Miller). His silhouette limbers up towards a solidly Teutonic profile; and it’s one that recalls the administrator facing off against Rowolt in Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis*. Heathcote D. has to be clearly aware over whether Professor F. truly amounts to a reincarnation of Moustachio Brave Herring, or not! In locomotion, though, Heathcote Dervish crepitates on a grid-iron – while a susurration twinkles around his apertures. It all betokens the heaving otherness of H.P. Lovecraft’s Old Ones, to be precise. In a similar vein, then, the dehiscence of Dervish’s form causes a fractured lens: and it demists, oscillates, bifurcates or twists. A hole gathers under the surface of an elongated mouth, and it subsists unto those flashing orbs… especially when taken together with his pustules, burps, fake bubbles, weird splices and tentacles. All of which doesn’t even mention the triangular head-piece that adorns his hood. Do you remember the villain in Gerry Anderson’s *Thunderbirds*?

A CLAXON OFFERS POWER ITS HALBERD; LET’S BREAK EGGS[!]: (135)
Heathcote Dervish continues to apportion blame to a silvery doily… one whom he proceeds to lecture amidships. This is irrespective of those manikin wires: all of which continue to trail tendrils from the ceiling of our imaginary puppet stage. A template (thus) that endorses Eric Bramall’s hair-and-wire act up in the fastness of North Wales. No-one can foreclose on its offering of yesteryear. “Like a latterday Olric, silvery one, you must anoint your libations with the blood of many an alien. Get this: a quest against dangerous monsters --- such as Grendel or his mother --- lengthens glory’s aspect. You shall have to pursue
Mastodon Helix. Do you wish to be part of his destructive reek?”
“I will hazard nought of a like kind, temper or kindred”, issues forth Phosphorous Cool by way of a reply. “I remember all too clearly the rectitude of your treachery. No-one plays me either for a Fool or King Lear’s Tom o’ Bedlam; a figure who’s quite transparently Edgar in disguise. Let us choose to rendezvous with a puppet-playing barge underneath the bridge at Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. It exists on one side of the Thames when marooned by the Leander club – replete with its pink tie. I choose to fight only in those quarrels which interest me. You waste your breath on what words you have to offer, mischievous one! I shall no longer interfere in the maddening affairs of mortals. Have regard for the fact that Phosphorous Cool battles solely on his own behalf. My bishop moves diagonally across the board in order to take refuge in iron, Heathcote.” (Note: it’s the first instance in this long adventure where Phosphorous Cool has acknowledged Heathcote Dervish’s identity, albeit in passing. Nor can he throw a defaced coin against a wall so as to drift into silence. Wouldn’t it be regarded as a downright game of craps?)

A CORN DOLLY FIRES ITSELF ON DISTANT PLINTHS:
(136)
Baron von Frankenstein moves to make a gesture with his hand; and it relates to the way in which Ralph Richardson carried himself when playing Julius Caesar. In this particular tournament any gestures estrange themselves: and they limber away into silence with the nervousness of so much grief. Moreover, Doctor Frankenstein’s face looked avid, gleaming, refulgent, expectant and lit-up with the forgotten glow of so many test-tubes. For – in the words of a near namesake like Dr. Moreau – Frankenstein has fallen prey to the colourlessness of pure research. (A doctoral thesis *manqué*, this, that searches back towards the testimony of Sir Fred Hoyle, the Huxley brothers, Carletoon Coon the anthropologist, Phillipe Ruston, Jack Kevorkian and many another scientist of similar ilk). Listen to his flavoursome rhetoric now… “The operation will proceed smoothly – if we
descall your cadaver of all other skins, my friend”, declared the Baron reflectively. “Can or should our approach level out any other distinctions? But you must recognise one elixir or remedy, Heathcote, and this has to do with your corpse’s sundered nature. Once you have entered into its portals no escape is possible… I feel it incumbent on me to inform you of this transubstantiation, my mage of another age. It flickers like the wing’s candle; and comes at once to be blown hither and thither unto dust. All in all, Frankenstein’s second monster rejects travelling barefoot in the head. He shall strive --- rather more --- to avoid those ice-flows: wherein a nineteenth century authoress had her creature finish up.”

TRAVEL ONWARDS TOWARDS A BEAR’S SPINE: (137)
Phosphorous Cool still continues to reply to Heathcote Dervish, primarily over his refusal to confront Mastodon Helix. “Your rage won’t transfix my heart, O misery”, he transposed. “No articulation can cause me to wage war against my wishes. I only have to yank myself up over the tram-line and away from those who wish me harm. Bless me! Nor do I need to stoop to erect soldiers as my new carrion or provender --- one only has to think of the B-movie with Jacque van Damme and Dolph Lundgren, for instance. They are not the necessary scarecrows of any forthright identity. It is not an example of fire one and see; at least as regards one of your bubbling poisons or water lilies.” To face off against this, though, Heathcote Dervish had swooned to a deadly quiet. He stands directly behind our magnesium oxide puppet; especially as this manikin’s making every gesture to depart. All of a sudden, Heathcote Dervish looks uncertain or slightly forlorn in his conduct; it’s the first time this has happened. One also can’t help notice the rocks lying roundabout; they embrace a character of sandy brown and illumine one too many craters. Surely those beached wrecks and solitary houses, existing out on the margins of Salisbury Plain, won’t prove to be inextinguishable? Perhaps one or two exercises in Dennis Wheatley’s ritualism isn’t always good for the spirit?
Back in Baron von Frankenstein’s laboratory an arcane experiment is taking place; and it’s one which proves indicative of a hundred Hammer Horror films of yesteryear. Look at this spectacle in front of us: it is a tabernacle to alternative science that seems to splice David Icke together with Guy Debord. Now then, several large condenser batteries lie off to the left, and these are cylindrical in their electromagnetic measure. A system of levers or pulleys then limbers up behind-hand --- all of them connected to various hooks, stanchions, grappling irons and interwoven cross-beams. These delineated some heavy joists made of wood or darkish timber, and they took place in a medley where ‘twenties electro-vascular gear gives up Victoriana’s ghost. It shadow-boxed with those rather camp Hollywood films depicting Frankenstein in the early ‘thirties… particularly at a time when the talkies were mushrooming and Boris Karloff adopted the title role. Likewise, a bank of large galvanic generators supported one wall or mural, and each one had obvious connexion switches like burdensome dials. All sorts of trip-wires, meters and registering devices chose to o’erlook this plot. Above Baron von Frankenstein’s scenario – and like in a ‘fifties Bacon painting – a naked existential bulb illuminated the scene. Whereas our aristocratic scientist – for his part – worked away steadily on his monster’s body; a massive forearm of which straddled a podium and let itself off to the side. Can’t you detect the criss-cross marks of so much stitching on this cadaver’s skin (?); it has literally come to indicate the charnel-house offerings of a man-thing. Certainly, our mortician had dwelt long enough in a death-house or an ossuary to collect these distracted bits. Nor can Shaun Hutson’s literature take us away from this lab’s iconic status. Also, a drip led up from the dais wherein Professor Frankenstein’s operation took place, and this eight foot corpse found itself covered over with a diaphanous sheet. It was brilliant in its necessary whiteness… even though a limp and massive arm lay off strangely to the right. It successfully concealed the corpse of Frankenstein’s monster. Whereupon Baron von Frankenstein’s
crippled or hump-backed nurse made her approach... and she carried a small basket or trug of medical implements. Could these work out to be an array of retorts, ampoules, needles, pipettes, draining boards and egg-timers, perchance? Our female Igor cradled them lovingly in her hands. Has she yet outlived the fact that our ward sister was an emanation of Elsa Bounteous Hapgood... at least ectoplasmically speaking? Furthermore – and as a final closure – Heathcote Dervish’s spirit or anima floated over this operation. It appeared to be a jumble of jellified blobs – the remnants of which oscillated in a coagulated way. Above it all, something reminiscent of a Padstow hobby-horse (or hose) loomed in a fractured display. Who isn’t to say whether the Ku Klux Klan originated from these western parts? All in all, Heathcote circled atop a fidgety Frankenstein his wonders to perform. Don’t you know it all bears upon it an X-certificate film classification?

A TERRIBLE ANTIQUARY PLAYS CHESS WITH HORSES:

Meanwhile, Phosphorous Cool jigs up abreast of his twitching wires; namely, these are those tokens of puppeteering that he intends to make use of in order to disappear. He has certainly planned his escape from this particular pit. Is he not prepared to liberate his skills by hopping, skipping and jumping away? Yes indeed, our roles seem to be reversed – and now it’s Heathcote Dervish who looks troubled. He travels along in Phosphorous’ trailing wake – while one of his shadowy minions makes up the numbers. On closer inspection, such a hooded votary can only be Warlock Splendour Thomas. Doesn’t the cowl pulled down over his face indicate a forbidden pleasure... even a guilty secret? Anyway, we have to observe whether this stick or hood obscures his features; in a dramaturgy where these items wax lyrical over a prepared mixture of purple and yellow. To be sure... Heathcote Dervish enunciated his clarion thus: “None may know of our witness before the truth... Understand this, my stranger and enemy, if you desert us the consequences will be grave and
unforeseen. Do you occasionally watch me when masked or in a vermilion oblivion? In this lexicon, my body lies strapped to ancient or galvanic machinery; the like of which saw me shaping up to a blue haze amid dandelions. These also found themselves to be connected by a thousand wires, in a conundrum where each azure spiral reckons on its own spit. Dare one cross this favourite line – primarily so as to understand my swooning beyond a remit? Am I cast in cerulean dye amidst the flesh of my ligatures; a seasoning otherwise bound to liberate me from the banks of machinery above? I plead with you to avoid deserting us, Phosphorous. Examine a puppet’s kindred or kind, I beg you – let it all fall down amongst a drizzling downpour. Surely, it’s electrostatic in its allure; a sparkling raiment (this) liable to refract a body in its walk-on part… when doused with fire? Do you remember Ezra Pound’s beard waving its surrender over a brilliantly squared blue? The whole assemblage then rose and cast aside its offering – a debenture that (in turn) rendered mute a modernist rapture by Chagall, Lowry or Roualt… all of them arranged in no special order. To be certain now, a shimmering excalibur or a tincture of sapphire’d horses lit up a corse. It came encumbered with so many links to the Frankenstein machinery within which I was trapped – have pity, if only by dint of another’s dimension.” “Sympathy multiplies misery for those who suffer in their weakness”, intones Phosphorous Cool. “We basically acknowledge a knife of destiny that cleaves a bondsman to his yoke.” Cool breaks off momentarily, and then comes up against some liberal treacle… albeit from a most exhausted source. An exercise in salon theatre which can only be Heathcote Dervish acting against type. But – in the war of each against all – yesterday’s bravery becomes the carrion for tomorrow’s crows. Let us see…

AN EGG-CUP VISITS HADES WITH BLOOD ON ITS RIM:
(140)
All of a sudden, the spirit of Heathcote Dervish looks down on Frankenstein’s body from above: and the latter’s cadaver comes
stretched out on a dais or slab. With every move and gesture, now, the movie history of the ‘thirties returns to haunt us – it definitely busts a gut over its trespass. Whereupon we notice that Frankenstein’s monster lies in a prone position which merely draws the eye towards his coarse trousers, belt and flaxen jacket. A kind of transponder or electrical head-gear cups his skull; and it doubtlessly serves as the feeder for the electricity that Baron von Frankenstein wishes to impart. “All is ready for your metamorphosis… from one changeling into Thomas Middleton’s escape”, interpreted the good doctor from below. “To begin”, our Man of Science averred, “prepare yourself to enter into the matter of this limitless corse. Do you want it to be restricted to merely those freak shows of yesteryear?”

DEAL IN THE GREATNESS OF SPARTA’S HAND AT CARDS: (141)

Why, let us fast forward to events which pretend that they are occurring in the twentieth century. For Phosphorous Cool was about to cast off and fly into the night-sky above Salisbury Plain… even though such a starry backdrop might be a painted board on a puppet’s stage. Haven’t you interpreted this as an offering to George Speaight’s history of the toy theatre? In any event, Phosphorous cascaded away into the firmament – and it’s almost as if he can fly without the aid of Icarus’ wings! In his mind’s eye, philosophically speaking, he recalls Heathcote Dervish’s fondest forgetting: what with the reality of a blue electrocution victim who fades away to nought. Similarly, Dervish’s body manifests itself anew and it rears up with an elongated eye… or possibly misshapen teeth. All of our vortex swivels around the smoke of a translucent fire. Discounted and yet counter-penetrated… is this how such loftiness should be? My children, listen to me… an account of one of our ranges measures the distaff side (somewhat falsely). “If – as you attest – Mastodon Helix lays waste to a world of paste-board and putre, why, be it so. I shall shed no tears, withal. Surely, such a mastodon must relish the task of exfoliation – rather like one of
those Assyrian bull-gods in the British Museum? Further to our analysis, strength begets its own morality which is bereft of guilt. It luxuriates in a plenitude due to puissance alone, thereby. I will intervene in no quarrels that don’t directly involve me, but Helix’s vengeance strikes me like the roaring of a circus lion. Has Clown Joey proved facile enough to free him from his cage? Regardless of these pageants, though, one’s tempted to declare whether Mastodon Helix embodies this type of deity. One who exists mounted in red nacreous stuff or cornelian; especially when possessed of eight arms and filling a niche in a temple. It subsists in a pale emerald light which was illumined by smoky braziers. Look at such a forlorn temperature again – given that the masses swarm around its massive pedestal like so many ants. They are countless in their irretrievable nothingness. To some witnesses – like Joseph Goebbels in his expressionist novel Michael – such an idol represents Christ. It’s a type of rechristianising in other words… but, in fact, it turns out to be a travesty of the case. Idol-worship, shamanism or fetishism of this kind has to be decidedly unchristian, to be sure. It must have more to do with the religion of the Assyrians than anything else. Didn’t the old testament Hebrews or Israelites call them the ‘accursed of god’? Yet, in these days of days, the culture of philo-semitism will have to be rejected if the West is to revive. No occidental renaissance can be contemplated without it.

+ Could the quest for such a grail be regarded as a fanatical pursuit of purity?

LIBERATE THE SNARES OF SO MANY BORES: (142) Meanwhile, our Frankenstein’s monster lies alone on a plinth – whilst an electrical generator hummed to itself near his massive head. A cranium which was better illuminated by a spot light that refused to spear its contours! These were heavy, somnolent, unfolded, graceless and yet powerful – whereupon his visage definitely possessed a menacing aura. A pair of head-phones existed on either side of the creature’s skull or stitches, and they
looked – for all the world – like an alternative iPod. One large buckle might also be observed at the nethermost extremity of this Frankenstein’s monster!

+ Girding his loins, then, Heathcote Dervish’s spirit passed into the inanimate corse; and it did so through an ectoplasmic transfer… skin to skin. Yes, Heathcote slipped in like a divine vapour or gas: one which may osmotically filter through any partition. What is Heathcote’s astral body thinking during this triumphal moment? “Nothing but the following assists me over wrath’s plenitude”, he mused. “In the offering of my new kingdom, I shall visit any new understandings with a sword… these must remain unfocused forevermore in such avenues. It depicts a grief deep down in one’s well of suffering – but by no means at all congruent with Radclyffe Hall’s *The Well of Loneliness*. Since the truth is that this magnificent new body shall bequeath to me conquests unheard of! Hitherto, all I lacked was a stalker to my prey. Forgive me, great Odin, a cup of bitterness runneth over into a murder of crows.”

**A DEEP SIX HEIGHTENS RAGNORAK: (143)**

A century farther on, Phosphorous Cool jigged away from Salisbury Plain’s scaffolding. In the background his wires trailed over the trestle of such a puppeteer’s hand; and these were tendons (in turn) which levelled off down the back of the stage. It took the residual form of Eric Bramall’s ornate stage-set in Colwyn Bay… wherein the twentieth century’s dark and baroque prince adopted his motif. Phosphorous flew up a screen at once cadenced with azo and cadmium; and it shook at this gesture of a prior engineering. Look at you, O my brothers… Phosphorous’ identikit picture co-existed with an orange sun. These factors certainly couldn’t help but listen to its process of awakening. May one hear a trident being scraped across a floor (?); itself carpeted with the retrieval of so many lost souls. Phosphorous is still liable to turn when startled by such a sound, even if he
happens to be in mid-air at the time. Why don’t you follow such a motion with your opera-glasses, honest to goodness…?

CORPSE REANIMATION IN FRANKENSTEIN’S BOUDOIR: (144)
We now proceed to the energisation of this particular corpse in the nineteenth century. A moment where Frankensteins corpse lies prone on its slab; the former being an industrial stanchion with brass-work fixtures and fittings. These articulated a sort of fairground or workplace apparel – above which the eight-foot cadaver lay dressed from top-to-toe in serge. Furthermore, an enormous cavalcade of electronic sparks fizzed aslant, and they gathered around several globules… each one of them alive to the chance of a molecular fulfilment. Given the fact that we are speaking of mesmeric turbines – every one of ‘whom’ charged itself over a galvanic shield. Globular they happened to be: and basically lit off against circumstance; as a trace-element limbered up so as to free Frankensteins monster. A tourney which then involved rescuing him from coldness. Behind this lightening-cube transformation (sic) a medley of gears superintended; and, like some sarcophagi or coffers of yesteryear, such structures shipped up to a darkened ceiling. --- Even though we can easily see these dials and grids being lost in an electrical haze. On a feminine front, however, both Elsa Bounteous Hapgood and the hunch-backed nurse look away. They are intently surmising Baron von Frankensteins features… irrespective of his early origins in Moustachio Brave Herring. Likewise, Butler James also has his head skewed in the Baron’s direction; and he’s wearing a duffle-coat at the time. Our narrative’s mortuary professor – for his part – encodes an obsessive mien that’s redolent of a mid-fifties science fiction film. Around his temples a spectrometer or a hidden mirror does the business: and it appears to be taped to his upper reaches by some lint or other bandage. But such mummification otherwise leaves him cold – particularly when these hands stroke or caress the dials in front of him. They understate their own purpose in the finality of
causation... especially when one understands that a spectrum inundates these rods: one which negates our circumstances with a binary level of switches. “How goes it, good Professor?”, asks Butler James *apropos* of nothing in particular. “Are you any nearer to your goal in terms of animating a corpse? Will Frankenstein’s monster ever live again outside of celluloid’s lustre? Nor may any discount the progress of science – wasn’t Mary Shelley herself keen on galvanic agency? A progeny which led all the others around Lake Geneva to adopt a similar genuflexion, thereby. Didn’t she compose a novel years later called *The Last Man*? Yes indeed, natural science shall animate dead flesh by freezing out the marrow from its fist. No other exchange can then guard against unregarded bone. Electricity is obviously the means adopted by a modern Prometheus. Harken again to my cry, almighty Professor; does your experiment bear fruit?”

SAVOUR A TAMBOURINE FOR A MILLION DOLLS: (145) Phosphorous Cool has now surmounted a mausoleum of expectancy; the former a structure that’s left way beneath him in a dip on Salisbury Plain. This had come to be characterised by a constellation of out-buildings – all of them wrecked, semi-abandoned, all at sea, left over or circumscribed. For – truly and above board – these pylons looked adrift or otherwise lost. At a time when the edifice’s hulk seemed to be bereft, stilted, dispirited, and with triangular or conical roofs levelling at nought save silence. Whereas sloping planes of light green --- never mind cantilevered installations --- gave off a pessimistic reek. A folly which led off from the open spaces within; especially given that these extended dwellings were open to the elements. Behind our distracted hand (so to speak) we can spy various whiffs or trails of vapour. Might they be clouds, mist or ascending steam? It matters not: since Phosphorous deliberates on this dice call… while he scrambles up a puppet’s backdrop. “I refuse to strive for those who wish me harm. The wise man husbands his own strength, in order to strike with the keenest brand. None shall
accuse me of procrastination or letting the Devil take the
hindmost. I have always striven forward with intent... so as to
impress one’s face upon the mud. Could it be (alternately) one of
those death-masks by Marc Quinn? They are kept extant by
freezing – seeing as how they’re made from blood.”

A LIGHTNING FLASH WITHIN A CIRCLE INDICATES
MOSLEY: (146)
Meanwhile – back in our impromptu nineteenth century – the
eyes of Baron von Frankenstein’s monster slowly open. Each lid
rests on an eternity (albeit of lead) before it chooses to slide
apart. Let’s break free from post-structuralism, now... At first,
the flesh appears to be pallid, unbestrewn and patched up with a
quilt of stitching. Do you effectively take stock of this
awakening? Moreover, Heathcote Dervish finds his new body
difficult to deliberate upon; and it seems to be vaguely strapped
down or maladjusted to such deviance. “My eyes (which were
once bloodshot) gaze aslant. They stare across a tongue of flame
or light situated on a sun-dial... a device that characterises a late
Victorian garden. Many a Sherlock Holmes story was discovered
to possess one. Rest easy, now”, murmured Heathcote in
Frankenstein’s corse, “but congratulate me, Herr Professor. I
breathe in and out of these new trap-doors of provender. All
systems are go; they swell the glands and pass blood through
these veins. Surely – in terms of a multiple cadaver – we come
face to face with one metamorphosis too far? Wherein the black
blood of a thousand gibbets cries out from the ground. Answer
me this, good Herr Professor”, intoned Heathcote Dervish, “can’t
you interpret my release as a new life?” “Yes indeed”, conceded
the Baron, “his orbs have refilled --- but not with cherubs. The
lilypads are bloated and twice their natural size on stagnant
waters. Frankenstein’s creature lives!”

A NIGHTMARE CRINGES BEFORE ITS GREED: (147)
Phosphorous Cool has come to pass a willowy hand across his
eyes. A silvern gesture (this) which sought to hide those wires
that stretch down from the puppet-board lying ahead. Furthermore, the manikin known as Cool had to take stock of one cognisance too far, in that he felt a weakness within him due to his exertions. Also, this voodoo doll in reverse recognised a hint of prior exhaustion, primarily after expending so much energy in returning Heathcote to life. On our anti-hero travelled across this crown’s illumination of brilliant azure – it all seemed to be painted rather spaciously with a golden tint. “What do I reckon will be the outcome of this adventure?”, fated Phosphorous all by himself. “By virtue of the fact that a dream impinges itself upon me – it is at once plentiful and lucid. Might I yet star within its labyrinth; in a manner rather like Ken Russell’s film version of *The Lair of the White Worm*? Necessarily so… given how a blue face has become translucent now. It releases a shoal of electrical sparks; while each socket came unbroken in a shimmering haze. It intoned sapphire’s break with Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle, thereafter.”

**TARGET A TERRIBLE BEAUTY TO ITS CRADLE**

*A LA W.B. YEATS:* (148)

A century back in time, Frankenstein’s monster’s face creases into a grimace; and this giant homunculus is now fully alive. Likewise, there was no need to essay the art of Val Mayerick: since sundry electrical pulsations are seen to engulf our man-thing. Mary Shelley’s most famous creation was fully awake (forevermore), and this involves a bold glimmer in a cadaver’s eye. Large head-phones inundate his skull from either side, and these provide cups for each ear which locate a binary system in the brain. One’s attention is also drawn to those ligatures around his scalp – together with two eyes, both from separate corpses, that lit up the night-sky. They existed on either side of a head’s fulfilment – if only to liberate one of Peter Cushing’s witticisms from memory. Whereupon the mouth --- in such a drama as this --- signifies a misplaced fracture, one which grimaces before its own wakefulness. Some sort of rough cloth lies neatly underneath this bag o’ bones. But – all of a sudden –
Frankenstein’s demi-urge lets out a confused shout: “My arms and legs are trapped in a vice of impermanence… a fact that renders me helpless over biological momentum. Yes, locomotion remains the key to Lon Chaney’s silent cinema, even in relation to a film dealing with a circus’ saturnalia. It had to be called *The One Who Gets Slapped* in 1924.” Given such evidence as this, the requisite degree of power has not been provided to enable bodily motion. His arms and legs waxed stuck or immobile, thereby. “Yessss”, replied Baron von Frankenstein --- in his guise of Moustachio Brave Herring revisited --- more juice is electrically needed for your appendages to be granted a due velocity. Let not the millipede strike out beyond itself… now that Farmer Jones’ spade exists to cut an earthworm in half. Have you licensed your own crow-bar yet? You’re certainly unable to move – lest we permit it.”

Does an electrostatic dream filter out its own observance, if it’s contained in cerulean? Especially when we understand that what subsists in the mind of one character can very easily move across into other brains. Aren’t we dealing with puppets herein, irrespective of Carl Jung’s ideas about the collective unconscious? Never mind any more detours… because a bearded apparatchik swoons under wires. These are of the brightest blue, phthalo, sapphire, beryl, French, nacreous with a glaucous tinge, as well as cadmium sulphur. He comes latticed to a statement of phantasm, merely being circumscribed now and filtered via Varese’s tight-rope… albeit in terms of sound. Here and now, though, any self-portraits wither before their casket; and they festoon an azure silhouette with a spiralling blue danube or Monday. Could D.H. Lawrence come to be crucified on a pine like Attis of yore?

RESIST THE CANNONBALL WHICH BISECTS A PLASTINATE: (149)
Meanwhile, Phosphorous Cool catches one glimpse of a city on fire down by the corner of his retina… it depicts an avalanche of
flame reminiscent of Greek fire. Wasn’t this a liquid or phosphorescent agent used hitherto in mediaeval sieges? Let’s look at it more closely… can it resemble a toy-theatre which blows up or is otherwise ablaze? We are dealing with Eric Bramall’s wagon-load of marionettes (anyway). Another feature also flashes into the memory, and this has to do with a situationist art-work – possibly even one that harks back to child art. Why don’t you take time to consider Peter Callesen’s *Big Paper Castle*, but now ringed with a fiery halo? Phosphorous – intrigued as to the cause of this devastation – moves closer to it, primarily so as to examine any holocaust at first hand. No revisionism shall be enrolled in these early stages! But still, one cadmium filter articulates its mayhem; and it travels onwards with the digital simulacrum of so much light. Wasn’t an ultra-modernist opera by Karl Heinz Stockhausen called the same name? It impresses one immeasurably – given the facsimile to Zeus that fades into what Paul Raymond once dubbed ‘electric blue’. Whereupon a bearded ascetic swoons like one attached, prior and forevermore, to Andy Warhol’s electrocution chair… one making use of bluish dye or woad in a silk-screen print. Listen: a form showers sparks amid toadstools, each one an electron and awaiting Farraday’s nonchalance.

TORPEDOES STREAK AMIDST ONE’S WAKING PURPLE:

(150)
Back in an identikit nineteenth century, we find a nullification of our desires… For Frankenstein’s monster lay awake on an adamantine dais, but his limbs were caught in an infraction. They cannot move. “What ribald implementation of dreams is this?”, averred Heathcote Dervish. (Remember now: Heathcote D. spiritually animates the corse of our junior Frankenstein – yet neither of them may shift a muscle.) “Like a Stan Barstow novel about impoverished emotions, my form cannot rise to an axiom of forgiveness. Look at this: these callow youths have come to inundate their own shores. Why not effectively shoot a hand off an arm that holds an orb (?) – for it’s only then really free to go
and plunge into the heart of a nuclear reactor.” “Don’t confuse us with any false heroics or otherwise”, resourced the voice of Baron von Frankenstein. In offering this dictum (though) Moustachio Brave Herring’s *alter ego* looked down in a condescending way. Moreover, we find that those fire-lighters which covered the professer’s eyes have been displaced, and these were those spectacles that protected one’s orbs. It all came in most handy when electrical fire-storms were being discharged roundabout. All in all, this scientist’s livery seemed to be supercilious, congealed, touch and go – and even latent with potentiality in terms of phrenology’s impress. Do you realise that – in many respects – phrenology proved to be a Victorian precursor to most forms of modern psychology? “Granted, Frankenstein’s creature”, muttered the surgeon, “your limbs are paralysed due to a want of resource. Because power – in other words – has yet to kindle its litmus test over some spilt crab-apple juice. Why don’t you just refuse to see it?”

A gap of a few moments began to intrude, hereupon. Could it then be preternaturally quiet – like after a barrage during the Great War? It was only resultantly that Heathcote Dervish recognised his entrapment. Like yesterday’s iron maiden, he proved to be bound up within the body of Frankenstein’s monster.

ZEALOTRY RETURNS US TO THE TRUTH: (151) Phosphorous Cool makes his way now through a medley of carnage, or misplaced desires. All around his skimming and silvery tone… the world has gone up in flames. Great gusts of fire are consequently blown hither and thither… despite the fact that many a wall is down or had been knocked through. Also, at the periphery of his vision, a crowd of humans gave chase to lies – abundantly so. Their faces are convulsed with fear or perturbation, and they run, jump, procrastinate and then lurch forwards without plan. All around them mistress pandemonium girts her skirts… particularly at a time when Robespierre’s
brother was led to the scaffold after his more infamous cohort. Maximilien’s jaw had already been shattered into many pieces and held in a silk handkerchief, irrespective of the Thermidorean reaction setting a seal on revolutionary leftism. It arrested or cut him off by dint of the guillotine, and this is even though the chairman of the Committee of Public Safety had begun his career by inveighing against it. He later chose to become its very personification. All around Phosphorous Cool, though, a Comus Rout circled its cause at the heart of oblivion – especially when no loyalty can be bought without a bullet in the gut! Such masses are illustrative of Gustav le Bon’s conservative metaphysic, as attested to in works like *The Psychology of Crowds*. Truly, this assemblage ranted and raved like Ensor’s masks – or possibly, those pencil-works of his whereby a skull looks at itself in a fording river. “What’s ours comes entombed in a golden casket within a white rhino’s tower. It may be translucent, limpid or up in the air. Xenephon no longer needs to avail himself of his electorate… and any forays up-country could be limitlessly exposed. Aren’t such creatures nearing the end of all sorts of tethers? Might one detect an Ollendorffian beggarhood – one which dances on the tip of a diamond-headed needle? They were like pin-balls in a slot machine. But what must be the cause of so much riot, distress and folly?”, asked our silvery captive. A moment later Phosphorous Cool spied the genesis; and it was a rampaging Mastodon Helix!

**A FACE REFLECTED IN A WELL’S STRANGENESS: (152)**

“What treachery is this?”, expostulated Heathcote Dervish from well within the body of a Frankenstein’s monster. Are we not really given over to considering James Whale’s film of 1931, *Frankenstein*, at such a moment as this? It starred Boris Karloff as the monster – but now a subtle difference cloaks such an affair. For Frankenstein’s monster lies prone on his dais and is incapable of any movement; when taken together with a pair of electrical ear-plugs that give witness to his prison. Like a man who has been lauded as Scaramouch – but who’s been tied to
some rags of straw and a mask – one factotum waits for the blaze that’ll set it alight! A strangulated sense of arson --- after all --- acts as the basis for Guy Fawkes’ drama. Above this exultation, though, we can see an exhilaration in all the other characters: whether Baron von Frankenstein, Butler James and the female nurse/Igor. She exists to one side of this special tournament. James holds Elsa aloft now (and interestingly) she can be described as wearing Victorian underwear, such as bloomers, serviceable or robust shoes, a bodice and one make-shift bra. Most noticeably, an old-fashioned military revolver lies aslant her left hip; and it finds itself within a sabretache or suchlike contrivance. The nurse – an ectoplasmic relief of Elsa Bounteous Hapgood – just smiles on. Her lips certainly betray an oft-slanted leer, and it’s a sort of biped smirk. Whereupon Baron von Frankenstein, a eugenicist or dysgeneticist who is certainly part of his time, speaks first. “‘Tis no betrayal at all, my monstrous bevye. We have merely captured and made use of you here… in such a way as suits your necessary ambition. Don’t you recognise the circumstance where a wheel-chair enters a tombed gulf, and it closes down the path of a concrete corridor? Namely – one which has been revived by an ancient patterning of pipes that exists above it. Such a tableau seems to trespass on a dank or dismal tomb, a rival which contrives to forever betray the prospect of le Corbusier’s unfinished dream. Brutalism or whatever else now, eh (?) ; given that these ducts will draw down such a chair to a new oblivion under glass. All of it goes to show the sepulchral darkness of a pit: when light plays its relief on raw concrete, itself untreated and painted white in accord with Albigensian brightness.”

WRESTLE, WRESTLE ON THE GROUND AMID ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONIST PAINT: (153) 
Down below – and amidst a maelstrom of frenzy or smashed cars – Mastodon Helix hurls his imprecations against the world. What can really be going on here? Might this amount to a puppet-theatre played in the mind for laughs – wherein a Strongman
endeavours to rip up a telephone directory on one of Aleister Crowley’s tarot cards? Don’t reach for those stars again ‘n’ all… since Mastodon Helix luxuriates in pure power, malevolence and the rites of destruction. A prognosis which contains one implicit outpost; and this has to be a saurian monster shambling forth under candle-light. At first, it casts a necessary shadow on a declining screen – one that recalls the final curtain on a miniature stage-set a la Montague Summers’ Restoration drama. Examine this entreaty, my friends: such a mastodon moves against a criss-crossed pattern of blue-glass, and in a sylph-like manner. May it altogether signify – here and now – a mesmerism or illumination due to the unconscious mind? Could it truly be bred in the bone as before?

PRISE OPEN A DEATH’S-HEAD, PREPARE ITS ONSLAUGHT[!]: (154)

Meanwhile, our plotters have moved in so as to counter-act their coup. Have they been making something of Curzio Malaparte’s book about how to carry out a successful conspiracy, perchance? Anyway, Baron von Frankenstein leans o’er his charge with a menacing aspect – and he seems to have forgotten all care and consideration over the doctor-patient relationship. Do we have another example of Doctor Shipman on our hands? Nonetheless, Frankenstein’s monster looks convulsed with ague or grief, primarily under the influence of Butler James’ and Elsa Bounteous’ arrogant stares. They wax both imperial and inscrutable under this sombre jade. Truly, the after-effects of Heathcote Dervish’s incarceration are borne in on him… one after another. Most particularly – now that a repeated image flits into their creative minds… oh so suggestively. It has to do --- as before --- with a cripple’s movements in gothic stained-glass. Especially when this occurs at a time where smoky beams come up… via a grill on a far wall. These hint at a new token within identity – when taken together with a rubber-plant underneath. The creature in question definitely wanted to transgress the actual; or to leap beyond one forcing ground-cum-prison. Let it
be understood... because, in terms of appearance, our guest limbered up to a palsied freight. (That is to say, mon ami, it’s one which spoke of crumpled newspaper... while riding aslant of a wheeled chair.) In deportment, such a miasma blinked before its own stain – particularly given the momentum of a thalidomide’s release. Again now, such an offering betokened a liquefied spectrum; one that appears lonesome, rag-tag-and-bobtail, spindly, leprous, skeletal and mildly electrocuted as to hair. It all continues to go on now, you see. Further, his chair slides like a metallic contraption across the floor, and it’s one which blossoms, negatively, in accord with fate’s reverse dye.

RAISE THE GATE FOR WARM-BLOODED DINOSAURS:

Phosphorous Cool finally decides to give courage to Mastodon Helix who lies beneath him on the ground. For just moving in a puppet-theatre’s fake sky – when manipulated by Montague Summers – is enough to give one a case of the shakes. A muscle-bound Helix also ripples with various tendons of subdued folly -- all of them liable to let off depth-charges deep down in his anatomy. Avaunt thee! Mastodon glides up to meet him afterwards; and the two plummet down into the sovereign ground.

Against all this, a mortal ‘gator or reptilian entity bulks large in an enabling gloom. Let’s behave now towards those you wish to defeat with a sense of unction (!); and it alone can penetrate the uncouthness of a leathery hide. Will one be able to get a fix on such a transcendence, thereby? Especially given that a Cyclopean red-eye transfigures a slit, if only to create the possibility for a nuclear quake later on. Let it all slide out from under a branch or a cloud of unknowing (now) – particularly if an amphibian’s gesture be mulcted in a Charles Atlas advertisement. “Don’t spray sand in my face, squirt!”, mused a message from one’s sponsor. Do you remember them? It even occurred at a time when a black lagoon creature missed one heart beat too many – only then to explode in a gathering of withered scorn. Still, he
came on across the threshold again – all of which had to do with a carrot before the stick… in terms of a reptile’s enclosure. No more disclosure was allowed, inevitably so. Still & all – and against a gate’s witness – a ‘raptor moved onwards in this quiet ossuary. It doubtless stood as an emanation from Mastodon Helix; at once spiritually speaking and amid all such Masonic tardiness. But Mastodon’s third-brain or reptilian entity travelled its course, and it loomed as a hulk within dreams which offered no quarter over Eros… either in terms of aggression or territoriality. Do you see? Count Richard von Krafft-Ebing then contextualises no greater grief than this.

A BULLET RACES TO ITS TARGET BEHIND A THOUSAND SAND-BAGS: (156)
In a nineteenth century fastness or set of dreams, Elsa Bounteous Hapgood’s features came up trumps. They position themselves over the foregrounded domain of a Frankenstein’s monster – only to thereby liberate a phrenologist’s regard. Because – momentarily and all apace – she releases the fact that noughts can effectively be crosses for those who play this game. Moreover, her iron mask – when delivered in a spectrum of Dumas’ London Dungeon – glowers down on her trapped prey. A Fury she besports herself to be, primarily in order to enforce one’s will over and above the ear-rings with which she is decked out. A rather glacial Butler James stands behind her all this while… in a tableau where sensitive observers can discern the scar down his left side. It was delivered by Phosphorous Cool during their duel in Whitechapel several moons afore. Does one recall that, criminologically speaking, the left side or eye gives a clue to the inner persona… at least from the perspective of folk wisdom? Let us continue to feed on a parallel bar such as this… for, as a metaphor to the above, a cripple raises a hand in order to draw sand-castles in the air. His extended mitten traverses an open doorway – the aperture of which leavens off to a golden blackness. It follows one’s coat-tails all the way back to a yawning grave!
Now then, a grubby T-shirt festoons an absence of electrocuted hair; and a medley stands up from the scalp like a mohican’s shock. It’s delusional, don’t you know? Yet our movie director moves onwards continuously towards answers in dun-coloured rooms – possibly then intoning other jails within the mind. Again, in terms of a bell-weather, a thin hand delivers its consciousness aslant one more vista of sand. The sound is also deafening while the wheel-chair slides, and it definitely has to do with an echo occasioned by rubber on concrete. Yes, such an offering causes our mummy to reach out in the direction of silence, even within the perspective of ‘her’ own grave. Listen to me awhile…

TERROR ANTHRAX STALKS ITS GOLDEN FRAMES: (157)
Mastodon Helix and Phosphorous Cool are now engaged in mortal combat… in a situation where these two puppets’ wires become intertwined. Each one engages in ferocious wrestling, neck to neck, only to discover that the other one has beaten them to it. Must you disseminate its witness? In a conundrum where one large reptile holds with trespassing against a glow: a factor which causes him to slope down corridors of yesteryear. Seemingly though, one question mounts another in terms of a scaly hide – since this checkerboard suits the grievances of so many doves, let alone those squares existing on your average chess board. It eclipses all other shames, you see… despite the fact that a reptilian eye opens to an enclosed windrush. It’s a speck on the old pin-hole camera of yesteryear: and it certainly registers one complaint above Pepper’s Ghost. Most particularly – given that a saurian orb fancies its chances, if not necessarily when tied to a post during the day-time. A scenario in which a retina flecks in the direction of a scarlet livery; whereas its pupil happens to be a dark strip, longitudinally speaking. A matter of scales --- thereafter --- surrounds the blinding susurration of this Eye. It knows no other pineal orb – save one that hangs over a transparent tomb… primarily during an instant where
Phosphorous’ challenge has yet to materialise. Certainly, one ormolu glow must transfigure itself abreast of a cosmic emptiness. Belatedly then, the reptilian part of the brain has to come to the rescue of a cerebration which knows no tics.

BLAISE CENDRAR’S LICE WEARS A GAS-MASK: (158)
Frankenstein’s monster is responding assertively to such blandishments (or wiles) at this time. These give out before one a fake certainty. Whereupon – looking down – we can see whether Frankenstein’s homunculus wears a furrowed brow; together with a snarling mouth amidships. All of which has to be topped off by those Singer sowing machine marks that cross atop a rather square-shaped head. Rectangular it be – or somewhat given over to a combination of those corses from which a man-thing was made. Such a mastodon exists outside of many a helix; and it can only promise never to grant the request that conspirators desire. Do these individuals recognise one particular cat-call; wherein Heathcote Dervish, disguised as already mentioned, refuses to administer one last request? It concerns the truth of transcendence as the gateway to endless inequality. It is always an elixir in relation to the above. But what really builds up in the mind of a new Prometheus had to be the following…

For a cripple’s wheel-chair draws nigh to its necessary conclusion tonight. This helps to assuage the ‘Rocky Horror Show’ awaiting us… somewhere or other. In a set-back like the present one, remember, a spectral chair carries itself forward on wheels of gloom. To one side of his carriage’s egress lay an oblong fissure --- it betokened a new watchfulness in ochre that lit up a smoky halo over its den. In comparison to which these shadows snake away, and they are like ebon marble or sepulchres made from similar sandstone. This greater darkness released the template of a thousand wrongs – itself a slide-show which delineated the reality of two dolls or manikins further on. Each one trespassed on a brief subway: namely, one that continuously saw the sleek planes of two perfect heads. Both of them existed –
furthermore – aslant of various longitudinal gaps. Doesn’t Newtonian physics come to the rescue of Dior’s or Tamara de Lempicka’s world? Most assuredly – in a development where the purple planes of a tonsured beauty offends even pink. Likewise, as in the purely visual era of silent cinema, our liver-birds limit this peculiar impasse and each one stares into the distance like a store-dummy. A distraction then plays upon its necessary witness; and this was one which leads to those smooth arabesques of Paul Bowles’ fortune. The phrenology of a retrieved witness also intrudes here, and it’s an image that tests those oval moments of poise. Can a shaven-headed supermodel, with perfect bones, successfully play Satan in Mel Gibson’s The Passion of the Christ?

LOOK OUT, LOOK OUT(!); THESE STORE DUMMIES PASS IN REVIEW: (159)
Our two protagonists, Mastodon Helix and Phosphorous Cool, continue their brawl betimes. It threatens – most definitely – to open up the Gates of Heaven with its travail… now that these two puppets, wrapped together in mortal combat, grapple for the future prospects of the earth itself. Listen to this ready temperature (most assertively): since their forms are interlinked and even our marionette’s wires threaten to cut the other off. Let’s look at this conflict once more: as Mastodon smashes our Phosphorous tinted one into the ground. A solitary brigand [Mastodon] has successfully outmanoeuvred t’other, so that the silvery sliver lies underneath Mastodon Helix. The latter specimen then lances our anti-hero into the earth; a manoeuvre seemingly reminiscent of a spear tackle in rugby league, for instance. Nonetheless, Mastodon cups his hands together and wallops Phosphorous Cool in the stomach – thereby causing him to stagger backwards and subside upon the loam. Various boulders, bits of rotten sod, turf and a violently green sky all radiate this pasture. Mastodon Helix shakes his fist in power and pride throughout!
Remember now that our objective correlative, in T.S. Eliot’s terms, leads Phosphorous Cool to surmount a latticed structure which has been suffused by a tincture of the deepest red. For – no doubt about it – a stroboscopic indent infuses this pillar like an old factory chimney rising up from the ground. It also finds itself pulsating to one’s lunar gaze, primarily by virtue of an arc-light shimmering over such crimson with a netted effect. It’s a process that wakes up a momentary oblivion, you see, if only to subsume Buffet’s observance amid an abandonment of squares. A perpendicular assemblage, this, which somehow pin-points the evidence of so many oblongs, given such ludic density and torment. But none of the above can do anything in relation to the immense saurian existing below. Can it re-interpret one’s dreams… in a manner reminiscent of the creature from the black lagoon?

WE DISTANCE OURSELVES FROM HOP-SCOTCH AT OUR DISPLEASURE: (160)

In Professor Frankenstein’s mortuary-cum-laboratory, however, we find a wheel-chair which is next to a bank of electrical equipment. Whereupon Frankenstein’s assistant/nurse brings forward a cape and its triangular hood – a barrier that will soon cover a monster’s visage. All this time, he (Fervent) lies on a dais in suspended animation; while Elsa Bounteous Hapgood stands further out and massages a syringe. It happens to be one of those pipettes or museum pieces which adorn the shelves of old labs, or alternately the Royal Museum of Surgeons in South Kensington. Moustachio Brave Herring/Baron von Frankenstein – for his part – looks down upon his charge with a microscopic air; namely, it’s one that finds him exultant over the prologue to a modernist opera. Seemingly then, his features at once wax sneering, over-confident, condescending and easily defined. One of those surgical mirrors also comes attached to his scalp by a band --- it primarily asks surgery to relieve pain by inflicting it. Wasn’t this the inner surface of Robert Selzer’s book, *The Story of a Knife*? “Our witness statement coughs at the interlude of such
“You will recognise the truth of our demands when we put them to you. It certainly won’t help if you forbid our manikins their customary pleasure. First, let’s control the outcome of one of Moreau’s experiments… so otherwise facilitated by Peter Singer’s advocacy of animal rights. No – you remain completely within our power: and it doubtless indicates a foray into grave-time which pensions ease. Do you detect its worth? Anyway, a brief injection of a mind-control serum shall soon place you entirely under our sway. Nurse Igor (he addressed her directly) get Heathcote Dervish dressed as speedily as possible… then place him in his wheel-chair for onwards travel.”

Look you: our metaphor holds as good as before. Leastwise – we now find a situation where the wheel-chair squeaked its way forward. All and everything happened to be closed off in somnolence and gloom. Also, ever since his entrance into this Hilton, one scarecrow illumined a way towards an unlit pavement. He admittedly crossed the threshold in order to remain in the game… squeak; squeak. Yet the mobile chair carried on across one gifted mansion too many; and it basically charged out in an ochre bestrewn haze. A playlet wherein a movement occurred over dank concrete --- the former echoing to a sensory deprivation chamber’s distaff.

A BLACK ENVELOPE CARRIES A SINISTER MESSAGE WITHIN: (161)

Truly and again, these monsters clashed when they’re juxtaposed against the paste-board of a toy-theatre. A minor boardgame (this) upon which the festivities of London town find themselves washed up. One factor necessarily elides into another here, particularly given that the painted fun of a “peekaboo” knows its place within folk culture. Yes and yes some more… because Mastodon’s massive thews now stand in victory over a crumpled Phosphorous Cool. He lies smartly to the left and definitely under the thumb; by virtue of the fact that his silver-toed body
lay prone amongst some rocks. It appears to be mildly smouldering, confused and beaten down. Similarly, Mastodon raises two slab-sided fists in triumph --- both of them encompassing the size of hams which hang up in a butcher’s shop. Mastodon Helix continues to celebrate anew… for he wallows in the character of his strength! Nought else but this can prove decisive in life’s struggle (necessarily so)…

Let’s look at a spectacle that is drawn from the reptilian part of the brain… especially when we have occasion to understand a crystalline shattering overhead. It tears apart the transformation of its own viaduct – in a dramaturgy which smashes a domain of black opal. The glass tinkles on and sets itself the task of rebuilding a stained-glass window; i.e., one that’s been burst asunder like an effort by Stanley Spencer in Cookham. Most assertively – when a spear reaches across these tendrils of destiny; and they were found to be floating amid so many stages! Shards of crystal began to deliver their promise, and they lumbered forth in a mastodon’s direction. (Namely: one that sits precisely with those accusations over whether the dinosaurs were warm-bloodied, or not). No scientist can really act in the affirmative yet… nor need we fall on a red-eyed reptile who looks on undisturbed. His essential deportment recalls Godzilla – albeit in those Japanese science-fiction films of yore. Never mind the fact which declares that a champion, such as Phosphorous Cool, falls upon our brontosaurus from above, even if he grasped the Spear of Destiny around his midriff. A sigil which has escaped from Trevor Ravenscroft – whether or not James Herbert chose to get involved in it. For his declaration – and at the foot of a tunnel marked ‘arousal’ – the man-reptile stood on his hind legs. From one perspective, the EU matters very much – but you have to recognise that nothing will change, irrespective of another’s lustre. Here and now, an overall menu delivers efficacy. It helps you to drop your mechanism and cleave to a professional gentleman! *Ceteris paribus*, these homeland security measures were overseen by players in a culture where they can
be tacked on a blackboard. Spiritually speaking, the truth saw our amphibian looming up bulky, amoral, razor-jaw like and caged at London Zoo. His squat or flat-faced features beckoned to one’s attention… if only to protect many of these crippled stoicisms. They certainly stalked the backline of insouciance!

OUR SOVRAN CORNEA SOUGHT *KRATOS*: (162)

Back in Frankenstein’s laboratory, swirling circles of flesh surround their prey. Each one of them then asks the same question in a different way. Perspiration broke out on Boris Karloff’s features (now), and these were over the facts or *impedimenta* at issue. A blue streak transfixed this available skin – making it padded up to the cloth, studded and quilted, as well as sown up. In the manner of *White Jacket*, a gory medical novel by Herman Melville, a Singer sowing-machine lay at its base. Sweat then clouded a brow without cognisance… assertively so. For what have we here? Heathcote Dervish was crippled within the body of a Frankenstein’s monster in a ‘thirties horror film. Whatever did he think of this – in all inevitability? You see, Heathcote required a permanent cadaver for the future, primarily *quod* his spirit might be lost forever… it could never be at peace as a flibbertigibbet. Perhaps our New Prometheus thought out the following? “Can our treacly one’s chair jerk about alright – either plagued over its stillness or gloom? A form lay to the right in this sepulchral dark --- it caught all of our witnesses unawares over mistreatment. In these circumstances, even a smoky calm ministered to turquoise’s glare – whereupon a single wheel-chair travelled about. A symbolism which hesitated in this glowering cubicle… at least when a spastic had refused to douse himself in flames in order to deliver aught. Could such a visitation be Hermaphrodite X reincarnated? The wheels (meanwhile) seemed spindly; the legs like a stick-insect, and the hair electrocuted!

“Where are you, Heathcote?”, whined our visitor. “I need your assistance, if I’m to achieve traction… leastwise, if my conveyance’s to move. All around me, though, the sepulchral
engine of an NCP car-park glimmers. It chooses to speak --- necessarily --- of le Corbusier!"

FOLLOW THIS ENGINE WITH A THOUSAND FACE-PAINTINGS: (163)

Our hero or anti-hero, Phosphorous Cool, lies adjacent to one craving… although his body’s doubled up throughout. Might all its joints be specially painful? Mastodon Helix – in a customary way – gaped in triumph at Wrath’s gateway, and he definitely hadn’t forgotten his origins in mediaeval corbels. (Those in and around Castleford had transfixed the young Henry Moore). We know such answers now, most truly. Because any news agenda caused him to beckon on in quietness, and his muscles rippled under a bright orange hue… one that guided the Hyperborean within. A factor which also extended to chthonian precepts, and these milked the scene of their own disgrace. He bunched up his fists into two great mallets; whereas his features limned up altogether diabolically. They were at once seen to be heavily browed, fossilised, rasping and aught like a great tortoise! Eventually, he forced his hulking frame in the direction of a classic colonnade. A red number 38 bus – all the way down from Hackney Wick – led one of its number to a Flaxman portrait of Donatello. “I must smash the living daylights out of Punch, my lord. It likewise causes my gigantic feet to rise over Tartarus’ stillness – albeit with various spatulas in tow.” Whereupon – during this discourse – our Mastodon strode across balustrades of wood that have been blown hither and thither; and these were symmetrical as to purpose & size… nor may we forget the streets of ‘sixties London town closing around them. Then again, a Renault car lay bounced off to one side, with a curved or steaming bonnet. In the background, many building fronts and their appurtenances were bubbling up amidships in neo-classical splendour.
TORMENT THE MAN WHO PULLS OFF HIS METAL FACE: (164)

In disregarding one warning ahead of time, Heathcote pressed on apace… Didn’t he recall that moment of splendour… wherein he approached his fifth wife, namely Elsa Bounteous Hapgood? All of this took place in another or possible dimension (perforce). A scenario inside which Heathcote Dervish’s limpid spectre neared her form… as was indicated by the triangular head-piece and its tapering externals. Such a self-questioning led to these expansions (so to say); wherein globular redoubts hurtled around the circumference of this frame. It mulcted towards a decidedly purple glow – within which medical attention, over Butterworths book about tumours, caused him to filter out any osmosis. While, directly behind her, a series of interconnected stained-glass windows were to be found. These saw themselves laid bare by so many entrapments; the like or whose kindred remembered Salisbury cathedral, for instance. Likewise, Elsa Bounteous Hapgood sat on a clawed seat; the temperature of its solace finally being measured with a sword. A few negative tarot cards (or possibly disabused playing cards) fell to the ground at such a moment. Each one then chose to mention its stylistics or variance. A table of excellence (thus) whereby she looked back on the phantom with a withering condominium… even fear.

Now then, in this incarnation, Elsa had about her the look of a troubled blonde beauty… much after the fashion of a young Brigitte Bardot. Fish-net stockings were seen to hinder a short or chav like dress, while her blonde mass of hair streamed down her back like a great body of fire. It chose to forget a folly of cascading water… thereafter. Given all of this, her face, breasts and hands seemed otherwise perfect. They continued to taper to the finish of one of Eric Gill’s resolutions (in other words). Oh my yes… it especially has something to do with those metal objects in her hair, and these were like tendrils of steel within driven snow. Or, somewhat alternately, they fitted onto the Catherine Wheel of Kate Bush’s own nature… and this was
never mind the fact that they resembled the minor spokes of a wheel twisting to gold, on rind stone, amid a vehicle of burnished pumice. Each and every ormolu abstract, then, sign-posted a certainty which said that – within a peroxide mop – she wore bullets in her hair. Let’s sign off for a Mary Rose, in terms of a spectator’s apparel…(!)

**ENDURE THE END OF CASTOR AND POLLUX:**

**BETRAYED TO A PONIARD[!]: (165)**

In any event, Phosphorous Cool staggered from pillar-to-post in a reluctant fit of strength, and at a time where St. Paul’s loomed in the background. Surely, one can see Wren’s dome limned against a bright yellow sky – namely, one that illuminated one of those grand city buildings set up roundabout. True enough, the mausoleums of these city banks struck us as real; while Phosphorous clutched at a wall *avec* trembling white fingers. Such silvery ducts as these stroked some chalk, even though the masonry had more to do with classical bias than anything else. Its brickwork became chipped by kindred mortals *et al* – save alone for the grief of one alleyway too far.

+ Related passions come to radiate sulphur, though, in a playlet where a boot levels off against a cripple’s back. It gives a rejoinder by means of some faint praise… i.e.: one which condescends to spin its own tail, insufferably so. For – rather like one of Edward Muybridge’s moving photographs – this sequence depresses a spinning diatribe o’ wheels. Do you reckon on it? Most definitely, such a doleful ardour moved its sparkling tracks forward – and each link in this daisy-chain chose to dun its mixture. Against a dulcet grey drop, then, some transparent concrete planed itself off against granite. It spun the embrasure of distant watercolours – if only to sweep across this particular wash. Nor can such a cripple stop himself screaming when the blow comes. The boot of either Phosphorous Cool or Heathcote Dervish follows through on its own aftermath (now); at least as regards a livery of electrocuted hair!
Meanwhile, another scenario sought to die before an edifice of wish-bones; and these were liable to creep back into so many funk-holes. Granted: the spirit of Elsa Bounteous’ husband approached her like a flat-nosed lynx betwixt so many liars. Above all else, her husband’s triangular head hoved into view, and it hovered as a magisterial tripod next to some flickering candles. Elsa Bounteous Hapgood – for her part – looked rather despondent and downcast… with a suppressed mien afflicting her lips. These were cast floorwards in an attendant slope – namely, one which curled up around the dolefulness of its pout. In these tram-lines, therefore, her face headed south towards its nethermost pole: what with upturned nostrils and eyes that came half-closed above. Likewise now, the tattoo between her eye-brows seemed locked in its own gammadion or swastika. Also, her blonde mop of hair was all shot to pieces – it essentially cascaded to left and right, with metallic impediments adorning its tresses. These items of subliminal jewellery proved to be like spokes, spikes and tendrils of spume! Heathcote Dervish’s spectre broke the quietness by speaking first. “Ho! Wife, why so silent a look before Portia’s uplift? Isn’t she – when I come to think of it – the wife of Brutus in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*? Wasn’t she also proud and doughty Cato’s daughter?” Silence ensued on this waste of warfare, thereafter. So – in lieu of nothing in particular – Heathcote Dervish tries again. “I beseech you, why has a frosty stillness crept into your habits of late? I sense a cool nimbus radiating from you, in a manner which recalls Anna Kavan’s novel *Ice*.” Still no reply found itself recorded before these griefs.

Meanwhile, up on our puppet stage in north Wales the following tableaux has played itself out. It occurs on a template where Phosphorous Cool jigs about amid piles of smoking masonry;
and these exist levied on either side of various redoubts; namely, one, two, three, four and five. Moreover, smoke also swirled up from broken mens’ bones --- it knew no limits of percussion… necessarily so. A lone Rolls Royce or silver cloud – possibly of a light green colour – stood to one side of this imaginary aisle without a border. Yet Phosphorous closed on his absence and he thereby moved to indicate a new frequency – but he dimly perceived that a revenge against Mastodon Helix loomed closer.

Simultaneously, we find a cripple thrust forward in his disabling chair; i.e., one which leaves a token of respect behind it even as it careers. A cry is heard on a white satin o’ sulphur; namely, one that negotiates a Herculean rejoinder to a plummeting stone. Furthermore, under any impelled blow the toy-swing slips and loses sideways momentum, only to slide and shift. Its emptiness then becomes a travesty to forgiveness or unforgiveness… and any backing swims before the aft, even if one para-olympics cannot vouchsafe its response.

MASTODONS FROM THE DEEP ACCENTUATE HELIXES:

Now and again, a sacred claw moves closer to a blonde tress, and it indicates nothing save a partial witness… not just with lustre, but also over the prospect of rolled gold. A spectral hook (to speak of) almost alights on his wife’s hair, but then it turns around in order to scratch a gaping nostril. Were not these the openings for a new enclosure – one which forsakes all answers, whether steely or determined? It deliberately sets itself afire – if only to start complacency running with a few candles between them. These are small, cylindrical, tapering and white – each one flaring so as to accommodate its own answer. For her performance, Elsa Bounteous turned to look at her husband in profile, her hair (jewellery aside) proving to be turned down… and it smoked to no tricks. Listen to this now…: “I fear that I cannot adumbrate the nature of my disregard”, cautioned Elsa Bounteous Hapgood. “Possibly I may share the fate of your other
lamentable wives, if I go public on this. Like one of the heroines in a von Stroheim movie, I might be too young for decadence before my prime.” “I told you”, snorted her spouse, “I had nothing to do with their very tragic and unfortunate depths. Their violent deaths grieved me – I have to tell you. A situation which harkened back (for us all) to the desperation of so many renewed states. It didn’t even reveal the mayhem of Bartok’s Bluebeard’s Castle… irrespective of those secret chambers containing his wives’ heads.” “I remember Charles Perrault’s fairy tale as if it was yesterday”, she answered.

HARPOON A JESTER’S FOLLY[!]: (169)
So Phosphorous Cool looks up with a despairing glee; and his calm --- if placid --- features are transfixed by a passionate concern. Cannot a passing brave or missionary characterise it as a fanatic’s pursuit of purity… almost after an exercise in religious iconography a la a host of Renaissance artists? These were Botticelli, Mantegna, Fra Angelico, Titian, Tintoretto, Cimabue, Giotto and many another one. Yes sir: Phosphorous Cool’s brow indicated an unction that was rarely seen – save in the idealistic representations of Leni Riefenstahl’s transports, for instance. It basically instills in one what the religious mystic would call an instrument of yearning; a Nietzschean phrase used by Arab police services in the Middle East. Needless to say, his eyes hold in their sockets (without pupils) the prospect of every future development – save only one which portends to a captured nerve, let alone dishonour. Our division of joy stretches out towards a new galaxy – never mind anything else, even a blue Monday. To be sure: any new order of Aryandom has to be based on a progressive instrument or iteration… it will have to face off against nothing other than the nobility of loss. Do you see it? Surely one recognises now – in terms of Time’s apparel – that the limitations of skywards movement can only occur on steps of yellow flame?”
FORGIVE THEM, LORD, FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO[1]: (170)

Listen carefully now, my children… since Elsa Bounteous Hapgood felt moved enough to come up with her grievances. It took the form of a limitation upon speech – despite the fact which sees an amber wife tilted away from one reclining hand. It essentially went near to stroking her mitten, but missed and had to settle for the guardian’s zone instead. Does one comprehend it? Also, her look waxed to a terror in the eyes one was reluctant to see… Yes truly, these adventures into oneself can always comfort such misgivings. These – irrefragably – were Fate’s repercussions. All that her husband, Heathcote Dervish, might ejaculate proved to be the following: “My dearest one, is aught amiss? A problem with one of our three off-spring perhaps… or something to do with one’s great uncle, Hermaphrodite X or Tumble-weed?”

To wht: the wheels of a disabled chariot tip up in a sibilation of Blue – neither of which can then escape from the Newtonian device of perpetual motion. It freezes over any promontory that faces us amidships… necessarily so. Likewise, the punishment for such transgressions has to be a fall from the stars (viz Icarus). Yet again, each offering knows its sense of placement, when one causes this chair to hurtle through darkness towards a transparent floor. None may occlude its ebon tint or exclusion now!

A METAL SPINNING-TOP JETTISON’S IMMOBILITY: (171)

When we come to consider it, our future pathway is delicately mapped. It must have to do with Mastodon Helix’s desire to smash a wall to pieces, brick by brick, and this was primarily by hurling a great fist in its direction. It struck like a pile-driver, throwing masonry from side-to-side… and spraying cement shards after a swarm of locusts. This much happens to be clear… yet, amidst an evident majesty of commotion, Phosphorous Cool draws near. Especially when we consider that the wires which hang over the stage were the gossamer of forgotten dreams; they
linked to one haphazard account over time… the texture of this making a bee-line for so many extremities. All of it occurred in a smart puppet house in Colwyn Bay. Again and all, Mastodon glances upwards now in order to spy his veriest jigging fiend. It certainly has nought to do with a puppeteer’s sound – let alone a salvo of unquiet graves. These relate to the fact that Mastodon stands, hands on hips, looking up at a silvery one on a northern compass. “So, miscreant of our finest hours, you’ve come crawling out of a fox-hole, eh? How can you bare to stand up with those trestles lying above you – each one connected to a thousand wires and attendant pulleys. Listen up, fish-face: my witness to you is a circle of destruction! Might it shadow its kindling to a tainted source; wherein a range of half-heads and mandibles, blown apart, are held in a cyborg’s hand? Oh my yes… come on down to my level, silvery one, even if it cuts up a somnolent disrespect. I shall await your evisceration (now) and thrust you into the flames of a new Kolyma --- to be sure. Come in and die, little one! Lucifer makes work for idle hands, boy, and my novelist’s career has to begin with my first capital letter. Look you to it… I have spied on yonder victim, primarily so as to pulverise thou without grief! Heed me!”

DEATH’S-HEAD MEETS MEAT HEAD: (172)
Finally, we can see that Elsa Bounteous Hapgood had squeezed her hands together… and screwed up her features, withal. All of which was done in order to provide a scintilla of dutch courage… so as to face her husband’s ire. During this process, the woman’s blonde coif hesitated at its own rainbow, and it also led her to blurt out: “I want a divorce!” Tears were actually rolling down both cheeks as she said it… as well. Now then, Heathcote Dervish reacted with scorn, alarm and as if he’d been stung. Furthermore – in the teeth of this display – we gain a close-up on Heathcote’s features. They are slightly helpless, diseased yet undiseased, fissiparous, uncongealing and fraying at the edges. All of it occurring in a conundrum where a brillo pad turns up at the corners… and becomes spotted with brown dots. Each of
these crepitations teases out the ropes of a new enclosure – primarily so as to enliven such blood-shot eye-balls within a decrepit frame. Again and again, though, we come face to face with a visage that’s characterised by the following words: fey, stray, hey(!), pay, may, can’t relieve that day and Quasimodo’s red-letter display. Don’t you recall Lon Chaney’s depiction of him in a silent film during nineteen twenty-four?

In a parallel dimension to parallelism’s locution, (sic), the following has to have its sway. Do we need to cultivate a rhapsody towards Paul de Mann’s indeterminacy – the latter contained in a text like *Blindness and Insight*? To which one is tempted to say – in post-structuralist vein – whose blindness and whomsoever’s insight? Nonetheless, an endwarfment had taken place; whereby a figure lies at the basement of a hooked cross. It embodies less a Christian sigil… and more an Indo-Aryan symbol. These beams criss-cross the corse when viewed from above: and its light-space is limited to the bare concrete lying beneath ‘it’. Every item of this *Pieta* seems determined to play its part in such a threnody; i.e., a dramaturgy that was devoted to various reliefs from Le Corbusier. Hadn’t it all been occasioned by kicking a cripple down-stairs in his wheel-chair?

TWO CYBORGS MEASURE UP BEFORE A WOMAN IN GREEN LYCRA: (173)

Suddenly a piece of wall comes hurtling at Phosphorous Cool’s head; and it reflects the efforts of unspecified mountebanks. These messages of hate must pass on from an understanding of murals, even in terms of Diego Rivera’s wall-painting tradition. (A necessary counter-point, this, to Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s logorrhoea in *The Autumn of the Patriarch*). Yes… since the masonry speeds upon him out of all premiums: and it virtually shatters the glimmering of a silvern puppet. It dances and spins, of course, after the fashion of any marionette enjoying a garrotte. Thanks very much… Yet by jigging to the side in an adroit manoeuvre, aided and abetted by strings, Phosphorous Cool
avoids these hurtling bricks. They – and their attendant brick-dust – shift by at a fast rate of knots. Momentarily, it appears to be a house on the move – after an effect created by William Hope Hodgson in his *House on the Borderland*. Again, when witnessing a violent calm, Phosphorous comes to realise the closeness of such javelins. Each one essentially passes by virtue of a millimetre in either chest; nor can the hurt occasioned by Carl Andre’s bricks intrigue any change here. It definitely looped the loop and turned back, if only to hurl David’s sling-shot in Goliath’s way. Look you: Phosphorous – at the behest of his invisible puppet-master – zooms down towards such boards. A structure of balsa parchments (these were) the likelihood of which backed away from a midget’s theatre. Anyway, no Euripides of the minor stair proved available, so Phosphorous Cool dives down to the final act. A curtain, then, goes up on Restorationist drama in order to indicate Montague Summers’ staging. The playwrights in question happened to be Rochester, Shadwell, Congreve, Wycherley, Aphra Behn & so forth. “Let the final drama begin”, mutters Phos(.) Cool, “in an aeon like this fighting waxes immortal. It overshadows the grief of Achilles over Patrochus in his tent. No sir – what avails us now has to be the strongest vision possible of one man’s going too far. It occasions a knock-about with one’s fists before the greatest care, and it likewise strikes down those craving the knife. Dysgenics rules (in other words); it carries no other valency. In the whole of the world let’s prepare for some *English Martial Arts* by Terry Brown. May the fire-fight commence…”

**TRUTH IS A KNIFE PASSING THROUGH MEAT:** (174)

Heathcote Dervish lay alone in one of Peter Cushing’s sepulchral chambers; the former having much to do with the English atmosphere of a Hammer House of Horror. Yes indeed... for within its confines Frankenstein’s monster (or the new Prometheus) lies abed – together with a clutch of also-rans who gathered around like vultures. During this moment, the impish nurse – replete with a hunch-back – brings up a holding chair.
Does it signify --- even in memory --- the fate of the wheel-chair user with whom we’ve been dealing? Herein, our character or freak-show artiste had plunged to the bottom of an abyss… and inside this a lone hand reached up into an upright posture. It (the MS sufferer) felt beholden to the reality of a splotched and blood-flecked sponge. These events, in turn, sprawled adrift of le Corbusier’s concrete panels. Our mystery play also had something to do with an exercise in misprisionment, whereby a swirl of imagined paint susurrates from below. It travels via the conspectus of Michaux’s art – without really suggesting anything substantial. A violent impasto of such paint likewise hints at de Kooning’s work, if little else. Above this fetish swirl two spiritual essences in blue mist. Could they incarnate the principle of a good and bad guardian angel? Yet – most evidently – one shape on the right suggested a half-naked Edwardian gentleman. Whereas – on the left of our plate – a daemon appeared in its vortex; at once horned, beast-like, unsacrificial and reminiscent of one of Aickman’s wraiths. Didn’t the London poet Iain Sinclair once call it Suicide Bridge?

A NOBLE AFFIDAVIT OUTWITS A PURPLE HEART: (175)
Battle has well and truly been joined (now) between Phosphorous Cool and Mastodon Helix on a puppet’s stage. Surely, this happens to be a scenario where any puppet-board theatre, such as Eric Bramall’s, must face demolition under these weighty blows? To surrender to them remains the thing… Whereas Phosphorous drops directly like a gymnast or wrestler into Mastodon Helix’s mind. Or – more pertinently – does he fly like a speeding dart or arrow right into the heart of its trajectory, thereby? Our phosphorescent one merely slows down now in order to navigate one plot too many (per se), and once there he glows like a sword quivering at a dart-board’s centre. He squirms beyond recourse to available duty; and all of this subsists in a way which causes Mastodon to reach up by flexing his enormous muscles. A manoeuvre that’s calculated (quite evidently) to hurl his assailant from him with all speed. In all of this violent
shambles, Mastodon Helix and Phosphorous Cool represent those wrestlers from the nineteen seventies like Big-daddy and Giant Hay-stacks. Does anyone remember Dickie Davis with affection? To be sure: our protagonists are now given over to pawing, mewing, shifting, gouging, slanting-in and otherwise man-handling. Each and everyone has their favourite holds or grappling-irons of grief. These were occasioned by an advent where Mastodon Helix gave notice of a throw; a feature which leads one to wonder what else might be going on. Yesterday now, such an adventure might have announced a new triggering, but (withal) it seems to confer dangerous possibilities which involve being thrown overhead or crushed like an egg-shell! Why don’t you desist from this, do you hear? For the suppleness of Phosphorous Cool’s body indicates that he stands ready to react to any such spearing. Moreover, the knowing observer recognises a sporting contest once considered to be Ambrosia – or the food of the Gods. It definitely fed off the reality which says that naked, oiled, sun-swept or tanned – and inevitably adrift of the Aegean’s golden & settling light – we understand the enthusiasm of such ‘gods’… wrestling… for what it was.

DOCTOR FRANKENSTEIN LEADS NONE TO VICTORY SAVE SEWARD’S DWARVES[!]: (176) Do the Shah of Iran’s Invincibles or the Waffen SS hold the keys to this kingdom (?); itself a moot point given the spectre of a nemesis who’s dressed all in black. But to differentiate ourselves from a long-standing debate over L.S. Lowry’s cripples – let’s consider the environment in Professor von Frankenstein’s laboratory. It occurs in a playlet where Frankenstein’s monster lies adrift of all consciousness – what with electronic ear-plugs over both ears and wires superintending above. His face limbers up to a flatness irrespective of its regard… the chin of which jutted out abruptly and under various temples. To the side of his animated corse lurked Baron von Frankenstein – or possibly it’s Moustachio Brave Herring in another incarnation. Look you! For he crept on our reanimated cadaver armed with a malignant
syringe. Doesn’t he play games with a conspectus of Doctor Jack Kevorkian at this moment? Furthermore, various items of an electrical agency travel around this lodge. What do we have here (?); why, it’s merely nothing more than cables, binary switches and certain items that go back to Babbage care of Burroughs’ computing… not to mention a fluted or electronic conch. To one side of this foreplay, and right on the button, we notice Butler James in full military livery. He’s positioned with flashy Victorian epaulettes, a sabretache and a handle-bar moustache. Indeed, each end of this walrus peeks out from beyond his cranium. It masters itself thereby; and it chooses to recognise an example set by Lords Cardigan and Lucan. Further back from such a medical pallet – and on the other side of our energised man-thing – stands Elsa Bounteous Hapgood. Or – at the very least – this figurine has to count the cost of being her simulacrum or alter ego. By way of dress, perchance, she had on a nineteenth century bodice --- naked to the waist --- as well as stirrups, jodhpurs, sparkling ear-rings and the accoutrements of Fanny Hill’s underwear. Surely, she melodramatically indicates the turn-over of a music hall artiste or vamp? No such estrangement from ‘Self’ can otherwise be permitted…

WE RETURN TO THE HIMALAYAS OF A NEW WITNESS:

(177)
Look at this, my crowds, and roll up to feast your eyes on a puppet fair most brutal! Avaunt thee, two strongmen – one more lithe and subtle than the other – wrestle together on a parchment now. It definitely goes to show that nothing hinders glory save its own execution. Formally though, our two titans clash in a ready tournament of battle. For – surrounded by boulders, rocks and the hulks of abandoned buildings – what do we find? Why, an amazing or astounding complex results… whereby Phosphorous Cool somersaults gymnastically over Mastodon Helix. He then locks his silvery or shinty legs around his assailant’s head, in a double head-lock, from which he will have great trouble in extricating himself. Momentarily speaking, Mastodon is then
caught off-guard in a bout or rumour monger; wherein Phosphorous turns the tables on him and causes his foe to plummet into the ground. Spear-tackled in this way – Mastodon Helix was momentarily stunned… and the strength in his limbs became flaccid or watery. Do you assess correctly what our manikin has achieved? Because by twisting like an eel over Mastodon’s bulk – he frees himself from a terrific grip, only to pulverise the other’s head upon forcing it into the ground. A semblance of ready dust particles rise up at this juncture. It also goes to show that no-one’s necessarily afraid of Virginia Woolf. On the impact of Mastodon Helix’s big-top with the earth, an onomatopoeic ‘THOOM!’ was heard. Does the latter have the stomach to come back or renew the fray?

ARMAGEDDON’S VILLAGE WEARS RED HAIR: (178)
Elsa Bounteous Hapgood became the first to break a laboratory’s silence. “Once reanimated and in a new physiology”, she seemed to be saying, “we knew that you would attempt to double-cross our potentiality of sorts.” (During this disquisition, the bogle of Heathcote Dervish in Frankenstein monster’s body, could only think the following…: “I began cavorting with multiple corses, charnel house derived, so that my spirit might have a resting place in this bay of leaves. Let’s regard it by virtue of a sacred flame… since my hidden journey, via the example of Samuel Beckett’s Molloy or Malone Dies, has led me to this pretty pass. Yet maybe not everything is as it seems from the outside of such a pericarp or rind?”) Whereupon – in his mind’s eye – Heathcote dwelt instantaneously on the following vista. A diseased theatre must know its own advent, and there happens to be a strange feature of limitation here. It also has occasion to do a walk on the wild side under an electric eel. “I’m dressed in black, together with a white collar and cuffs, and I traverse the concrete corridors of a forgotten enclosure. It denotes an NCP car-park crossed with le Corbusier – even when it’s suggested in jest.” Likewise, his features masquerade under the shadow of one tremulous gesture. “Physician heal thyself; do I not hear its
quatrain? Above me, though, the canopy of a blue spirit-level rises in mist, and it harks back to old silhouetted days of yore. May – after the fashion of Jung – these moral trampolines exhaust themselves on a bed-of-nails? Let it depart quietly, my friend, now we find a tocsin sounding out the quarters – albeit with the bells’ campanology muffled by felt.” Still and all, Heathcote Dervish – in his distant recollection – wandered around an ouroborous’ circuit… the latter entwined on those circumstances which lifted everything above it like an electric eel. When all he wanted to do was dwell on a necessary contagion called madness…

MASTODON HELIX VERSUS PHOSPHOROUS COOL: W.W.F.; HEAD-TO-HEAD: (179)
Phosphorous Cool has now succeeded in leaping on Mastodon Helix’s head – all of it occurring in a tournament or wrestling bout… where one masters the other over ten or twelve rounds. A few sorry rocks lie in parallel around their feet, even if Helix’s misshapen toes do not have it about them to gain a claim on porous sandstone. Viewed from another angle, though, Mastodon Helix’s features are hit savagely and repeatedly from in front… they begin to wilt (then) under the onslaught of these thunderous slaps. Mastodon’s visage, *ceteris paribus*, knows its own gateway and detracts from it… seemingly forever. Yet further, the molecular embrasure around each eye-slit becomes noticeable: and it resultantly puffs up in a scaly, amphibian, porous or handicapped way. Might it go very far down the track in illustrating a species of white leprosy, or quite possibly, those bags around the casements that interr some strange dermatology? Likewise, in and around this demand for lift off, we come across the lightning-marks of such a fusion. These streak away towards the halo of a new sunrise or forgetting…

Nonchalantly – by all accounts – another conflict is occasioned by the inner mind of our combatants. Whereupon one prairie fire looms upon a distrait retina. Yessss… For here I find a trail of
brandy-wine under my feet --- its splendours turn out to be red and are not looked down upon as regards haemoglobin. You take leave of your senses if you attempt to fashion a future from flood-gates; and these often open up a forest to new beginnings. Still and all, one’s organs petrify before a sand-storm; i.e., an event which was whipped up and spills aslant of any attendant fogs. Listen to such a dance, why don’t you? In a carry-on where Phosphorous Cool comes face-to-face with Mastodon Helix… But now the latter has been transformed into a gigantic reptile; thereby lapsing into the brain’s third quadrant. (If one chooses to quantify such researches into a saurian stem – namely, one that lies at the base of consciousness. To be sure: Eysenck or Koestler may be right or wrong over such difficulties). Furthermore, a Darwinian like this breathes in its own enclosure, and it disacknowledges those scales which seep from its crust. These take the form of a rubbery hide. Cellular these were; or definitely liable to build up into a cold-blooded edifice. --- A Scandinavian offerant that was linked to no time at all…viz.: it effectively came fixed to a dark spectrum around its mouth. (A reptilian version of the surrealist magazine Minotaur, this, it fed on serrated teeth). Will we ever know more regarding insouciance’s medley(?); given its red, avid and staring eyes. They possess a darting quality all their own; at once blind, staring, strangely refulgent and yet condensed. Who can operate on such reptile-house disclosures?

METAMORPHOSIS; DOCTOR FRANKENSTEIN’S MONSTER LETS RIP: (180)
“I congratulate you on a beginner’s nuisance value”, assented Heathcote Dervish from his position on a medicinal slab. After all, Heathcote D. has decided to opt for a new physiology; and it is drawn from multiple cadavers… Why so? It was basically because his family and blonde wife, Elsa Bounteous Hapgood, worried about his corporeal future. Could he really survive as a spirit? Yet again, my friends, fate had a way of acting on men’s affairs like the movement of chess pieces on an Icelandic board.
It’s not bad for tyros and upstarts, eh? But Baron von Frankenstein, his hunch-backed nurse Ms. Igor, Butler James and another Elsa Bounteous... they’d all forgotten this surgery’s object. Over-confidence, in such circumstances, can prove inefficacious over purgatory’s results... most especially. It happened to be that our caged waif sought manumission. Surely, his detractors must focus in on a mage without compare?

SHOOT A CYBORG IN THE FOOT WITH A CROSS-BOW:

Phosphorous Cool then brought his palms up in order to slap Mastodon’s face; and a terrific clap or wallop is thereby administered. In this instance, Mastodon Helix’s head hurtles backwards with a snarl – if only to border on near insanity. Paradoxically, Helix seems to stultify and weaken under this onslaught – whereupon our silvern one goes from strength to strength. Or alternately, he incarnates a forgotten spirit of yesteryear... one that’s embodied by those pearly Kings and Queens from the east end. Further – and amidst a blaze of blue – Phosphorous Cool grasps this hulk in a vice-like grip. --- A three minute bout or cage fight (per se) in which his adversary goes down under magnesium oxide... He wilts over cosmic radiation drawn up to this particular. Whereas his frame – even when demarcated from a puppeteer’s strings – slumps down to a music hall’s boards. For Mastodont Helix’s irretrievably broken now!

Likewise, in a tunnel of cerulean or agate, Phosphorous Cool tilted against a lurking reptile. It all caused one stanchion to break down, limit its toxicity and fold-over (thereby). Such a development also occurs in front of an abstract paw – namely, one that’s outstretched after a Pre-Raphaelite painting of St. George and the Dragon. This recoiled suddenly o’er a sound temperature: in a situation where a limb pulsated with its execution... even on granite. Pebbles were then always shovelled up to the side, and they often made up the numbers over nacreous discharges --- at least as pertained to a thrown-out or put upon
limb. To re-adapt Karl Marx: saurians of the world unite; you have nothing to lose save a pterodactyl’s mirror! Why don’t you climb over a picket fence, in order to see Gabriel Rossetti’s portrait of St. George and his dragon? Because its head has been definitely severed at the tooth (that’s why).

FEAST ON A SCARLET ARM TRAVERSING SAPPHIRE’S SPACE: (182)

Behold! Just like a Masonic prayer-board, our Frankenstein’s monster bursts from his bonded garlands. All in a trice (therefore) he raises himself from the dais – irrespective of any compass signals to the south, west, north and east. These surround a wooden casket of the most violent red… on which has been burnt a skull and its attendant cross-bones. The lettering on these meditation squares has faded, basically due to the influence of ultra-violet light. Nonetheless, our Boris Karloff in another medium jerks up from the deck – thence causing his bonds to shrink away from him with so much aplomb. They shrivel and die like electrocuted bounds of leather… no matter what. Especially since this particular Big Daddy is home free of all electrons; nor does he take any chances in relation to convulsed iron. Immediately – and upon receipt of such power – his head becomes encircled within a cyclopean glow, and it filters everything out of an orgone lustre. (In this regard, then, his entire corse comes to be enraptured by an etheric pulsar or quiver). During the course of which, his fists knot and his eyes & mouth become flushed with anger – despite any other perversity. Electrons whizz about and cash in on a sundry brouhaha! Whereupon both Baron von Frankenstein and Butler James are knocked for six. Like a selection of west country skittles left in a row – they are mowed down by one ball travelling at speed. Don’t you reckon on it? Because Heathcote Dervish’s fists – like in a Sarban short story – smash into his nearest tormentors. Moreover – in a manner somewhat reminiscent of puppets or manikins – Doctor Frankenstein and his erstwhile servant are thrown away. It inevitably recalls a moment in Gerry Anderson’s
real life drama, The Protectors. To which the spirit trapped within the new Prometheus’ body adds: “I AM THE MASTER HERE!”

RING-A-RING-A-ROSES, ALL FALL DOWN: (183)
Phosphorous Cool and Mastodon Helix are still wrestling with each other… even though Mastodon is clearly wilting in a beetle-like mania. (Remember: Franz Kafka’s short story The Metamorphosis was written in German as early as 1915). Irrespective of it, lines of cosmic force radiate out from Mastodon’s head – in alignment with the grip that Phosphorous has on his features. These necessarily congeal under the issue of such a rise – nor can one illustration really offer its tommy-gun throughout. All of a sudden one cuts to another image; a scenario where two hands of polished pewter grasp a mainspring. Each silvery palm stretches upwards around a tonsured cranium (now) – one that’s enlivened with either fury or hate. Alive; alive-o, during the consequences of this, various sparks of metal flew off a deluded scalp --- and slowly --- oh so slowly --- Mastodon Helix’s eyes begin to close. They are heavy and somnolent with the dew of unforgiveness. Now then… the jaw-line cracks and falls aslant, if only to witness a croupier raking in the chips… prior to a new insanity. Avaunt thee!

In a new world of unbelief, though, a silver bullet detracts from its target. Can it be living on in accordance with such a surcease? Whereupon a gauntleted hand grasps a spear – in pursuit of lightning’s quandary or one jagged edge. It breaks out into barbed patterns of spray behind-hand (thereafter). Yet again, a saurian out-rider travels down this circumference, and it’s one which glances a blow from a speculative glove. It --- the forked lightning --- also passes along against a dulcet trembling of fives… namely, a barbarism that continuously favours the criss-crossed lattice of a blue screen. Like a ludo board or some form of cribbage, it inundates the half… even though we find ourselves in a vortex or gust: where a mastodon clings to its
dinosaur’s course. Does it really mount this passageway safe in the knowledge that warm-bloodedness is the last needful thing? Such an assemblage won’t pursue Godzilla to its grave. No way: when a shape with exposed limbs wanders or shambles about – only to reconnoitre the dreams of dwarves. Look you… shall a red eye reflect like a Belisha beacon in the dusk?

NO DIATRIBE AGAINST APPROXIMATE ZEROES SUFFICES: (184)

“I will show you the future in a handful of dust”. --- T.S. Eliot, The Wasteland

Does one care. Given that our imp of the reverse screams like a good’un. Have we not made use of a title by Edgar Allan Poe in the nineteenth century, here? Especially when we consider that the nurse about whom we are speaking wears a starched apron and cap. These happen to be the accoutrements of Igor’s feminine regard --- much after the example set by Terence Fisher in a Hammer House of Horror. Examine this… her face remains open to a sleeping grave, and this occurs at a time when a series of liquid dials brooks no reprieve. They adumbrate an old-fashioned radio study… or possibly a modern car’s internal design. Don’t we forget how she incarnates the principle of Elsa Bounteous Hapgood(?) … a woman whose spirituality exists on several different planes at once. “We face an enormous power-source; yielding to nonsuch above us. Observe these Babbage pre-computers --- my masters: and must they communicate anything other than a dancing demon who’s minus its electronic nimbus?” These were exact words which soared above the available terra firma. (Irrespective of any enabling light, you wouldn’t even know of the girl’s disfigurement. A factor found to be reminiscent of the nurse on the Odessa steps in Battleship Potemkin, that is. On many occasions Francis Bacon, the painter, tried to capture this as exemplifying the modern cry).
FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET: (185)
Meanwhile, Mastodon Helix lay sprawled upon the ground, and was otherwise over-ridden by a mantle of fire. This proves to one and all the burden of such an affidavit. Certainly, the hulking orange mutant’s fallen into a state of sleep; i.e., one which enables him to dream of unhatched dragons hitherto unknown. It is no longer berserk. No mediaeval bestiary, in short, could be said to have catalogued their name. Against this, Phosphorous Cool staggers back slightly and passes a silver-foil hand across his forehead. Clearly, this cage fight without walls --- levelled against Mastodon Helix --- had exhausted him. While, in the background, behind his trailing wires a mural rises up, and it happens to be slab-sided. A series of arranged bricks serve as cornice blocks on either end or throughout. The sky remains a dark ultramarine during this tableau, however. Let’s listen to what our gleaming puppet has to say about it all: “He shall sleep the long night under opium’s agency or rest. Like a babe or stripling it will be his/its semblance of slumber. Granted these divine hours: many grains of sand are chosen to pass through the funnel of a timer, there to fete a Sahara’s loss. Do you reckon on it?”

Our reptilian nether entity cascades aplenty; and he continues on amid such corridors as these (regardless). Above all else, this erect saurian approaches in the dust... in order to set free a rectangle of blue. He or ‘it’ moves along in somnolent darkness, abreast of a stillness that is occasioned by red eyes. Look at this now: the lower part of its anatomy lies in shadow; or it speculates about the patchwork quilt of such a leathery hide. This --- again -- manoeuvres so as to crystallise a draining of the deep end, and it signifies one intrusion too far into the reptile house. Has anyone ever read Angus Wilson’s novel, *The Old Men at the Zoo*? Similarly, an orange to brown hue temporises its scales --- whilst it’s busy receiving the livery of crocodiles as yet unborn. It likewise transfigures an early Renaissance map of the world – a panorama which dyes its own skin in order to limit its rawhide.
Only one thing can obviously save it – and this must involve the opening of an eye. It spectres to crimson against a loss of identity – what with those oval shields that have an amphibian’s impress laid across them. Given such a future, this eye blinks amidst leather --- at once scarlet to its core --- and comes over all mulcted, unblinking, shiny or laminated, et cetera. It possesses, again and again, a pupil or inner iris of a stretched black pointillism. Who belabours the serpent folk’s cruelty now then, eh?

A DIRIGIBLE RELEASES ITS ELECTROSTATIC CARGO OF LEAVES: (186)

“Those who dwell in Hell are not dead!” – the Tallis scholars

Above Baron von Frankenstein’s mortuary – and witnessing the heavy artillery of so much lightning – an advertising balloon hovers in the celestial aftermath. It glows with the spectacular core of its messages (abundantly so). Could it be piloted up above by a distinct variant on Warlock Splendour Thomas? Never mind… for like a First World War airship, it traverses the green air beyond our template. But the point here is that a massive surge of power flashes down to an aerial on the building’s roof. This fluted stack delimits a grief pole, if only to soar astride the sort of appurtenance which features in an old episode of Doctor Who. Can any present recapture the BBC serial – albeit mesmerically? Nevertheless, Frankenstein’s slate roof encoded many turrets and flowering rifles, and these then apportioned blame between planes… at least in relation to gabled windows. Such sheets of glass are brilliantly illumined and they trespass on yellow against the dark. No-one fears this resolution again, you see, because our impish dwarf correctly calls this particular shout. It electronically shimmers down from the heavens, and thereby animates the rictus of Frankenstein’s dead hero. Surely everyone can configure, contrary to Mary Shelley’s statement in The Last Man, that galvanic action animates a corse? It runs contrary to Vesalius and Galen, after all --- but
aren’t these supposed to be ‘enlightened’ times? (A *soi-disant* enlightenment, one might say…) But it’s also licit to point out whether Phosphorous was used on the ground, in parks and elsewhere, to confuse Zeppelins in the air during WWI.

ARIES RETURNS TO HIS FLOCK CARRYING A RAM: (187)

Look at this measure of fortune and listen to this… for such a compost manages to combine hope and despair all in one go. First of all, Phosphorous Cool has succeeded in hauling Mastodon Helix over his shoulder – and, rather like an ancient Greek sculpture, one man carries a sacrificial bull across his back-line. Behind both of them lies a wilderness of strings, and all of it adds up to a trestle which is held in a puppet-master’s hand. Could it really be the Welsh wizard known as Eric Bramall – especially when one considers the backdrop to one of his vistas? It comes rather painted with the transparency of a million forethoughts… in a situation where the tinsel of London town, as evinced by its paste-board, twinkles below. Some fires are also seen to be burning over various city blocks… and to westwards points of this. Yes again, the kaleidoscope of a Gotham in darkness lights up below, and it conjoins the mixture of certain elements that refuse to die… such as the blinking of unknown eyes, towers, armatures and signals. Can these be habitations for those damned by Fate? A magenta-to-blue sky supervenes over everything else.

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Now then, one rise in this rictus has to be a lizard which blossoms into a stone, or who continues to face down such qualities with a startled eye. A creature that inevitably looks to open up the nature of an obelisk or its tower, even though such a structure corrodes its witness. It can only really be described as immense; given its penchant to rise majestically like an old-fashioned chimney. It proved to be darksome against the lineament of a red sun; itself a glowing favourite which suffuses the sky with the peace of haemoglobin. As a proposition, it
moves out from its retinal filter – only to encompass a watery web: when illumined by such rubiate clusters. These arrow in upon magnificence; and at once become a tracery for small fractures of chess-board. Or might it refer to squares, in relation to whose temperature one loner appears? You see – on a sulphurous template, riven by rectangles, he holds aloft a spear or the lance of St. George!

WHET THE BLADE OF THOSE WHO SCREAM AT BAY: (188)
Harken to what I utter! For a growing Frankenstein’s monster has been energised by such a release; and he now springs from the dais with his arms pumping, and even his head held up high. An electrostatic cackle continues to discharge its static around his cranium; while his bloated blue-skin finds its husk extended by a thousand lines. Yes…, our deliberate framing of this embargo denotes silent cinema – particularly over James Whale’s Frankenstein talkie in 1931. Likewise, the inner animation of Heathcote Dervish waxes as free as a day; whereupon the energisation of Frankenstein’s monster comes to resemble a Clive Barker foray. All of this occurs in a tragedy where he grabs hold of Baron von Frankenstein, and nimbly throttles him to death… (---) During a period characterised by his life draining away without a gurgle – even though salient retorts, on the other hand, burst under its leftwards drift. Above all else, though, a convulsive hoard of black electrons gathers around his skull, and it mantles to a radioactive oscilloscope… especially when bereft of stroboscopic lights. Whereas Boris Karloff’s physique came across as darkened, replete, untroubled, phlegmatic, self-distanced and unsparing. It doubtless deliberated on a solitude capable of mastering its nature.

CRY HAVOC; A BLESSED BONE SEEKS MARROW: (189)
Suddenly, Phosphorous Cool and Mastodon Helix are seen from afar… as they approach Stonehenge’s outer limits, or one of those shell-like dwellings where covens’ meet. The exterior
battlements stray forth like dinosaur’s teeth – albeit in a way which lets in the light from a distance under a baleful moon. An orb (this is) that cloaks its character in the mantle of some cloud – themselves amounting to a darkened orange on purple. It swirls like a kaleidoscope; or a vortex in one of Wyndham Lewis’ paintings. It’s a matter of lines and longitudinal breast-plates (now)… all of them stripped and in black ink. Similarly, this movement fades to an ochre – by virtue of its dimensional relief. Below – and amid these crenellations – Heathcote Dervish gazes on askance. His head (when seen in profile) indicates a paroxysm of self-doubt; i.e., an indication which speeds up its accomplished gesture over one noon-time. It has spent its last adieu now. Whereupon the two hooded cowls of other warlocks are discerned, and they look upwards after the fashion of denizens in a Robert Aickman story. “NNNNNNNNOOOOOOOOOOOO(!), it cannot be”, expostulated Heathcote Dervish. “Phosphorous Cool has worsted our champion and knocked him cold. Now – like a felon in Spartacus – he drags him through the dust and halt of a manger. Will Peter Ustinov lean forward, in Lewis Grassic Gibbon’s remake, in order to scalp our termagant at a hint of day? Lo(!); all comes to be lost or given up for one spinning British guinea. It revolves under the moon and proves to be bereft of warmth. Nemesis has occurred in the format of Oswald Spengler’s The Decline of the West… Our courtly jouster is slain and abbreviated tokens are squandered. We have lost our shirts ---.”

Given these developments, a red replica seeks some solace in its squares. Wherein a scarlet pillar looms up within an oblong’s satisfaction, and it seems to pass muster over a prospective dive. A promenade that finishes up over a beckoning tower of black glass; even though such an effulgence releases shards of oblivion… all of which fall foursquare of a dragon. Every shattered pane leavens towards some smoke --- no matter what the discharge. It all tells a tale, in an instant, of the West’s revenging spear. Also, this Parthian shot casts everything
asunder… primarily in order to mount a grey gargoyle. Could it prove to be the dragon who waits below amid some mist(?); the latter an accompaniment given over to one plentiful gasp. Our massive saurian then stares up at a crashing Phosphorous Cool; and its scales or torso is promptly delivered from zoology to anthropology. Let it whimper as it rides… for such a Spear of Destiny (or Longinarius) seeks out a reptilian heart. Irrespective of these eventualities, short limbs like the ones described taper away from the body… don’t they recall William Roberts’ constructions? Weren’t they altogether barrel-shaped? No-one crosses its destiny – if we are to believe a saurian’s snout. Nonetheless, our ‘raptor’s teeth have become razor sharp, ungauntleted, trespassing on the lower lip and alone. Likewise, each eye glowed redly in cruelty’s aesthetic --- with or without Antonin Artaud.

BORIS KARLOFF’S TALES WITH A GOLDEN KEY: (190)
In this ultimate scene, our Frankenstein’s monster stands above his former clients or collaborators in war. His massive frame fills the very vaults of such a store; and one gains an assessment of his gigantic thews. For Frankenstein’s creature – in the guise of Heathcote Dervish’s spirit – fulfills the role of Mastodon Helix at the eleventh hour. Yes again, his heavy and lugubrious prospect towers over Elsa Bounteous Hapgood, the dwarfish nurse and Butler James… all of whom are turning and running as we speak. An arch, gateway or tunnel lies further away from them – what with a series of sequential steps slanting upwards and outwards from the mortuary. Only a haughty Elsa Bounteous --- of these Edwardian fugitives --- refuses to buckle and wishes to stay her ground. A risen Prometheus faces her amidships. Whilst as to dress – and contrary to a prevailing prudery – this post-Victorian vamp posits boots, supported mid-riff, bar (if not bra), bodice and a porcelain undercarriage. A keen observer notices how she has started to fidget with a revolver in its holster next to her hip. Perhaps this Browning or Luger is already drawn halfway from its place of concealment? (Don’t you remember whether Herman
Goering remarked, ‘when I hear the word culture I reach for my Browning – meaning the author of Men and Women, The Ring & the Book, etc…?) Still though, and served up as Nelson’s column above them, a dark penumbra or livery of ebon suffused his backline throughout. Whereas above his cubed head – when adjacent to those massive hands criss-crossed by stitches – Heathcote Dervish’s alter ego holds up two conductor wires. These were massive electrical cables which had been severed at source, and carried aloft beyond a giant’s musculature. Surely, such galvanic agents have been retrieved from the laboratory’s surrounds; especially after Frankenstein’s corse faced reanimation at a stretch? It proves to luxuriate in an architrave of skin – at once bluish to the touch. Baron von Frankenstein’s mattoid stood over them, though, and threatened Elsa Bounteous, Butler James and Ms. Igor with juice-splitting threads.

A COVEN OF WARLOCKS BLOWS OUT TEN BIRTHDAY CAKES: (191)
Our license to sin has relapsed from its own tomb-stone, in that Phosphorous Cool had landed in front of Heathcote Dervish, Warlock Splendour Thomas and the other ones. All of them exist in their cowls somewhere at the rear… and as extras in a Dennis Wheatley script. A tendril of smoke rises up from the left-side of a hemisphere; and it wafts across the back of our klavern… let alone those shattered towers within which they enjoy their feasts. Oh yes – it’s Heathcote Dervish, above all, who seems to have had the stuffing knocked out of him by this experience. One imaginary face-mask may’ve been unhinged in order to reveal an array of maggots. They turn out to be breeding fast and loose behind such a cover-all. Yet the threat to Heathcote’s armour is proprietary, perchance, and it limits his seigniorial pride. Nothing more… was he not the Lord of the Manor roundabout? Yet the efficacy of his conspiracy or plan – to showcase aristocratic magic – lies smouldering and broken at his feet. Acting as if within a haze, (sic), his lordship recognises that Mastodon Helix’s body has been placed on the dais. Remember:
it betrays a lively mosaic; or an exotic saraband in red and green bricks. Dimly, he understands the fact which says that Phosphorous Cool was addressing them in an oratorical way. It takes the form of a peroration or proem.

+ 

In the shadows of phantasm a time has come to die, now, abreast of a tabernacle otherwise devoted to sleep. In it, we discover the inner meaning of some of John Strachey’s books before he joined the New Party… because a distinctive pathway through the jungle had opened up for this demi-god. For example: the reptile’s skull seems to concentrate on an aberrant shadow; namely, one that passes over the image of a warrior who’s come for it with a spear! A troubling thought intrudes, though, and it all relates to a bean-feast where the saurian attempts to eat its prey. One scarlet orb always happens to intrude in such circumstances; and it measures grief by how quickly we can turn into a chameleon. But now Phosphorous Cool, the one lodging the spear, swivels atop our spawn’s head and throws himself nethermost-wise. Against and behind him, there intrudes nothing other than a sea of blue rectangles. It’s a cornucopia (you see) to an unconscious version of the Crystal Palace – an edifice way out in south London; and limbering up to the prospect of a gyrating lance. It cuts through the air like a clock’s aggressive balustrade. Could it really be the hint of a tolling bell? A notification which was raised aloft or in silence; as Phosphorous levelled his javelin. It then passed through the ether akin to a supreme testing or darting; albeit in a conundrum where the spear shears into this rhomboid’s stomach. Once lodged there it will definitely test the providence of a new saviour --- whether it’s kitted out in green or not! Can a redeemer thence stand before him (?), and penetrate a scaly hide with wounds? An arrow-head resultanty impinges on these tendons or unripeness, if only to visit a new Golgotha with such twinning. Do you notice it? Most particularly – given the absence of vinegar on a sponge that is held on a spear’s prong and proffered by Longinius. Might those who buy into the luxury of this western weapon articulate a reptilian lobe – i.e., the lowest
feature of an evolved gland? To whit: it happens to be the one which filters into consciousness what the animal biologist Konrad Lorenz called *On Aggression*.

**ELECTROCUTE FRANKENSTEIN’S BIGAMIST BRIDE:**

(192)

“You were playing with us all along”, expostulated Elsa Bounteous Hapgood… a Victorian woman who happened to be half-naked in her underwear. A pistol attempted to smooth down or lacquer her thigh (residually speaking). It sped on beyond the stars in the sky; and yet continued to sacrifice its own halo. “Like orchestrating a child at battleships, cribbage, noughts and crosses, snap, snakes and ladders, etc… you have flattered to deceive a dying butterfly. It was afire.” “Your voice limits its correction”, murmured Heathcote in tones reminiscent of a spirit inside the body of Frankenstein’s monster. “A strapping idealism always leaves us flapping if we play at dice. It rather amused me to see you making your bids and counter-blasts… yet it only served as a fleeting pleasure. Games in the temple of leisure must list sideways over, especially when it comes to blood usage. Necessarily so, a dosage of angel dust causes one to plunge downwards even at roulette. Listen to such an expectoration… a game of brag played with tarot cards has to bring up the number 13 --- thirteen --- namely; the value of death, transformation and transfiguration.” With which sound-bite Frankenstein’s monster brought the cables together *avec* a thunderous clash. They spat fire and coursed onwards towards some renewed doldrums. These also fabricated the facts of either pitch or Greek Flame. It tongued forth angrily; at once spitting, salvaging grief, mushrooming onwards and filling the air with electrostatic shots. At the centre of this remained Frankenstein’s M. or monster. His arms were coiled like tendons of steel; the face flickered massively in the resultant mayhem and each silver bullet tasted like phosphorous (here). While – at random – the bodies of Butler James, Elsa Bounteous Hapgood and the impish nurse were routinely thrown about. Each and every one listened to an
extraordinary witness – albeit a metaphor that recalled a pumpkin which was tested with dum-dum bullets in *The Day of the Jackal*. All of these characters died, therefore, in a surfeit of electronic spume… one that caused them to be electrocuted many times over in such a wind-tunnel. One responds now to the death of little miss imp or our female Igor – she’s been effectively cremated. A hand came to be thrust out, her cap left her head, the nurse’s uniform became vaguely starched, and her body moved in an opposite direction to a counter-vailing force. Soon all three of them were smouldering corpses – but can gross puppets really perish? Likewise, a blue electrical mist enervates our performers (thus so); within which the source of so much pride hastens to its petri-dish. These fly off like notes of star bait; each item becoming acclimatised to its given spore. It cascades from a raiment of sapphire; there to understandably chill to the bone a filament of white-on-blue. This whole scenario savours a xeroxed skull or a cranium that lights up a fluoroscope with stroboscopy – and it cushions a shot from Gray’s *Anatomy*, if only to emblazon a Jolly Roger (*a la* Warhol). It radioactively shimmers and then dies… like a puppet muffled to its very jaw-line.

THE FANATICAL PURSUIT OF PURITY: (193+)

Truly, Michael Farraday’s galvanic agency has proved to be resourceful… never mind such past breakthroughs. Especially given a template where Phosphorous Cool’s wires have raised him above his fellows. Such charges as these gaze up from below. In Beowulf’s final hemicycle – doesn’t our epic hero approach a dragon who’s asleep on his gold?

A yellow beam or luminance falls upon our stage with a certain pellucidity, and it limns the curvature of all available spines, as well as counselling against shadows. Beneath our hero’s raised finger these magicians look on with an upraised nod; while each of them, to be certain of our ground, seems to be dimly askance. They appear to be fazed, uncertain, hesitant and otherwise
hedged in with doubt. Next to them – and slightly further afield – one detects several Doric columns, pillars, rounded cubicles or ventilation shafts. Whereas, in accordance with Solon’s judgement, the body of Mastodon Helix lies prone on an outcrop. It happens to be a natural or prehensile capturing o’ rock… a philosophical posturing (this) which sets aside due indifference to fate or fortitude. Yes, dear sirs and brethren, our hulking brute lay astride a dais of calcified stone – the latter veined by the course granite of so many sulphurous discharges. These collaborated in order to raise each stratum of rock to the level of an art-form, geologically speaking. For his part, Phosphorous dangled one particular finger – and made moves so as to cast down anathemas from on high. A wisp of ashy smoke curled around him as he did so. The mages --- for their indulgence --- gathered below: and formed a phalanx that they might listen to his judgement. “You practioners of the occult proved to be mistaken”, entertained our mercurial one, “when you sought to conjure up a Trog. He was down to fight me, eh? Let me spare you the blushes of your present and future lies… It all betokens the fury which one should feel when an Icelandic geyser shoots up from the earth. Please exempt me from your speeches – let alone your mendacity and deceit. Suffice it to say that your plan to use Mastodon Helix against me has failed --- take it all back now and transport him out of our dimension on double quick time. Patience grows short for all those who might add to your jeremiad – do something about it, I beg you without surcease. Your period --- in terms of a magical fulfilment --- to remove him from the earth shall prove to be strictly limited. Act on it immediately or forever learn to reprieve the anger of his awakening. I would ask you not to jeopardise this orb’s future by procrastination or delay. Utilise such wisdom without a remit of pity. By the look of yonder denizens, you wear the dress or vestments of an ancient cult… one which the novelist John Cowper Powys, in his book Porius about the dark ages, linked to chthonian excess. Perhaps you feel yourselves to be gifted in this regard? Yet – for my own sake – I find your ransacking of
Dowson’s *Yellow Book* to be immature. It also rises up to a gate of splendour – an understanding of a stargate that refuses Terry Pratchett’s witness. Listen to me: you mouth the proems or versicular of an ancient cult, even in Enochian --- you may go so far as to call it witchcraft. But to what object? To my mind, men are still children who repeat profound platitudes bereft of internal depth. Consider yourselves to be mediocre wretches themselves set down at a Giant’s table. This happens to take the celestial form of a bridge which you can never fully understand. Yet (still) your cardinal mistake was to forget the error of forgiveness. Because – in order to travel onwards towards the sun – you have to reach out into fathomless depths and unchartered territories. *Ecoutez moi* (once again): the fanatical pursuit of purity begins with a radical ‘forgetting’. It transcends the prospect of yesteryear… in other words. Such a semblance even goes higher and higher up – in accordance with Nature’s plenitude. Can it be driven justifiably mad before the sun’s concealment? For no-one may properly understand whether morality lacks dualism and it must then find a balance in contraries… a conundrum that has to offset creativity and destruction within an ascending curve. By a deliberation on Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (however) we finally come near the truth – that is: to avoid either madness or boredom Man requires a purpose. In consequence, teleology proves to be a matter of mental asservation… by virtue of the fact which says that without a kindred spirit one shall fall back towards the pit. Certainly and again, an ideal or archetype cannot but remain before one in concert… albeit with a definite grip on reality. Whereupon the seeds of the Superman – whether or not he had about him a skin of delicate silver – have to grasp the tenements of a compacted sun. Unlike Icarus one must never be worried by the approximate impact of flying too close to the solar orb… there to singe one’s wings. Do you hear? The real fault of Mastodon Helix lay in basing victory around violence alone. Mere puissance partakes of the physical matter which has to be transcended; yet everything else proves to be based on an outstripping of such levels. Leave jealousy, material ambition
and resentment behind --- I urge you to this without any assurance whatsoever. Ascend towards the star-gate, my mages, and do so in alignment with a small figure in purple armour rising upwards into the firmament. He moves tier on tier or in terms of the justification of an epitaph… again before any semblance of the same. A new compact with Aryandom has to be discovered now – a transcendence towards an iconic status that liberates energy from above to even beyond the most advanced state. As Savitri Devi once remarked about her own formulation… what I admire most is the prolonged impress of perfection. It’s the notion which posits that Man can maintain or establish an ideal… this remains the heart or kernel of the matter. A refusal to compromise might sustain such an elixir and it speaks of a perfectibility for each species or race. Every ethnos must then seek its quintessential aporia or upper abstract – possibly to limitlessly extend it farther afield. Remember: even within an august grouping the difference between the superior and the inferior man will be the distinction between a near-god and a worm. Yet, despite being on the cusp of perfection, the golden key necessitates a further evolution beyond categorisation and towards the ‘divine’. It involves the rejection of decay and the emancipation of ultimate forms of strength, you comprehend? Irrespective of the fact that it remains an ascendancy conceived in mortal terms… Man shall emerge out of one unholy egg into higher and more rarefied forms of vitalism. It encodes Bergson’s Creative Evolution, do you take my drift? Caucasian eugenics will ultimately reckon on the rise of those who represent the suns of their own solar systems… do you partake of this elixir vitae? Within our dramaturgy, then, a meteor towers over a parabola of rocky asteroids. Reach out in order to release the power within you, therefore. Although one always has to bear in mind the fact that to progress to eight-limbed status from a termite heap one must have plenty of fuel! Recall also --- my former enemies --- that movements like european revolution virtually flirt with madness by opening up to the solar glare. Never mind: let us examine contrary valences which come to mind. Given the
pabulum wherein an unknown Nemedian chronicle can describe the superman as a rope cast between mountain peaks and over an abyss. Yet such oiled or woven twine can also be said to be on fire… not to destroy it but to release energy, thereby. Hoorah!”

AN EPILOGUE OR *FIN DE PARTIE*: (194)
Beethoven’s ‘Ghost’ piano trio as a portent to his unrealised opera *Macbeth*…

Do we recognise any motivations that besport or bear up a sour face? Do not despair… for such a guardian of the tomb always flies in the face of a distracted rapture. The West’s Spear of Destiny doubtless penetrates the torso of a gigantic lizard – one which evinces some grey solitude (or leather) aslant of some blue-ribbed gaps. These press or question those who might go forward towards oblivion, in a manner whereby a lance penetrates various amphibian cover-alls. It all occurs in a drama where a weapon levels distress upon a darksome bulk – thereby to crystallise nothing other than a fragmented Golgotha. Moreover, this javelin transposes its residue of passion, primarily by taking off into another generation of suffering. At this pitch, however, the magnitude of such broken lips calls up to those who wish to take breakfast with cannibals. Surely, a blessed relief shall come from this carnival of spirits – thence indicating a grave folly that speaks of a grinding of teeth? Might we surmise over whether a breakthrough against all forms of orchid can take place(?); an impromptu dive into the depths, this, which comes up trumps over Longinius’ shaft. It remains transfixed in a saurian’s stomach; at a time when Mastodon Helix’s arms spill open in supplication or appeal. Ultimately, they must cast off in the direction of some extra time; the like of it resembling an armature or mediaeval joust… a shafting or break with the past that seeks to deny the cedar of a rare tree. All of our Greek tragedy of the north, though, came to be occasioned by the deepest sapphire tint – an arrangement almost designed to spread the word as to its viciousness. Let this go why don’t you… (?), now that one particular stick casts itself freely from its broken-
backed magnificence. Could it illustrate Odin’s or the Wanderer’s staff? Needless to say, this tip of the eye-sore burst its bounds over perfection; the latter illustrative of a segment where an unparalleled jump occurs against an indication of deepest blue. Didn’t the author Malcolm Lowry write a novel called *Ultramarine*? To be sure: a spear of Longinius’, with or without a vinegar-laced sponge, snaps into two distinct chunks… and without the benefit of a residual crack. Whereas – in terms of a microscopic hindsight – a reptilian half-man drops away and this is quite possibly out of all sorts of dishonour. Look here: such a spearing frees itself from a green torso – one which belabours its form down below and that causes any direct claim to cross its currency in blood. Several specks of the above, in a scarlet or abstract lustre, gather around a pregnant female dinosaur at her brood-time. A conundrum which draws its conscience towards an end of all bullying; possibly by backing away towards a template of azure. This emboldens --- yet again and once spoken of --- a spectre of cerulean or pthalo squares. Necessarily so, this saurian athlete recalls a study by Praxiteles – at least in terms of a perfect body or gait. Yet it definitely emboldens one far-flung capturing of reality too far, in that any Charles Atlas poster or figurine has to get away when speculating over a livery in green. Emerald or russet --- in pursuit of blisters --- happens to be the colour here as a frame falls backwards, amid tinkling glass, into a sea of smashed eddies. It all smoulders to a kaleidoscope of broken crystal.

+ Almost forgotten – now and then – in the lie of the land afore such circumstances we can observe a speeding tram. It contains Phosphorous Cool and a robotic version of Hermaphrodite X, the wraith, on its upper deck. Both of them were heavily disguised and the Victorian streets flashed by on either side of them. All of it became an evident or surrealist blur. Nevertheless, at this conveyance’s front there stood a perambulating robot. He illustrated a space which was stolid, ultra-British, top heavy, foursquare, top-hatted, Toy town-like and heartily wearing a
union jack waistcoat. This figurine also sported gloves and a conical morning-hat above a central piston… or stick. Where are our heroes steaming off to? Quite possibly, it has to be the mortuary superintended by Baron von Frankenstein… a puzzle that Edgar Allan Poe would have left to languish in the Rue Morgue, even in London.

But, in such a domicile, we find Heathcote Dervish about to depart the venue. Spiritually speaking – you will remember – he had come to animate the corse of Frankenstein’s monster, irrespective of his desire to outwit such facts. In a celebration of this (then) Heathcote lowers an armoured mask or tin-head over his appearance. Momentarily, it obscures the character of his vision and blocks off one star-gate from any new ennoblement. Furthermore, our anti-hero moves aslant the exit – by dint of a mezzanine or a disacknowledged stair. It ceases to reek of corpses in its imagined ducts of air… therefore. Behind Heathcote Dervish – and at the back of his swishing robes – we notice that the skeletons of his victims continue to burn with both error and pitch. Like the master of all he surveys (plus a torch flickering in a distant niche) our tin-head departs. Recalling one of Herge’s ‘Tintin’ villains… these multiple blazes glint off his iron head. A rood or runic symbol (this is) which resembles Sidney Nolan’s capturing of the Australian outlaw, Ned Kelly, in paint.

To complete a resiling notice from one accomplished reason… let us examine the following facts. It definitely eventuates in a swirl whereby Phosphorous Cool, the silvery one, limbers up the stage: and his progression chokes off one distance or abstract too far. Why don’t you deliberate on such an episode more clearly? It obviously leads to the silvern one scrabbling up the sky, and he’s destined to be heaved off Eric Bramall’s set in North Wales. A backdrop to these wires or trampolines can now be negotiated; nor may Bramall’s swift puppeteering prevent a painted globe or earth from soaring away under Phosphorous’ leap. Such a
mercurial jump will always touch the suit of diamonds in heaven… decisively so. A tinted backing – vaguely reminiscent of a fairground peekaboo – lights up this toy-theatre behind our showman’s residual rise and fall. Phosphorous then manoeuvres abreast of certain stars, spheroids, gulfs, small planets, asteroids and orbs. A trail of vapour also follows his cradling. Will a Bottler go out and around the front – so as to collect pennies from those children who are lined up at the crest of their playhouse? Who knows? Root-toot-toot! Yet, in any event, one silvern manikin or his handler knows that his triumph has been laced by transcendence. It reconnoitres the earth anew, but unlike Gaia not as termites upon it.

Finally now, he was reeled in towards an overhead lighting batten which existed above everything else on stage. It is situated over the proscenium arch in order to inhibit the manipulators least of all. Doesn’t this medley just advertise Vance Packard’s hidden persuaders in another way? But Phosphorous Cool had basically vanished – he’s disappeared (henceforth) or merges into the strobe lights once and for all. LUX… Phosphorous Cool’s become nothing more than a bright footlight on a marionette stage. “Goodbye, my children, goodbye!”

THE END
AL-QA’EDA MOTH

a novel

An introduction

‘Al-Qa’eda MOTH’ is a Western which finds itself divided into a three-pronged attack upon the senses. The first section or spearing deals with a nineteenth century narrative that typifies the many films of John Wayne --- one thinks (in particular) of Stagecoach (1939), Tall in the Saddle (1944), Fort Apache (1948), The Searchers (1956) and The Alamo (1960). The second strand --- by way of contrast --- involves a twentieth century version of the same story line. It relates to on-rushing chronicles such as The Wild, Wild West, Australian efforts like Romper Stomper and David Carradine in a B-movie named Alien X. The third progression on our chess board, however, intellectualises this process and provides a template for dreaming. It could be described as the collective unconscious of the novel’s leading characters. Using William Gayley Simpson’s Which Way Western Man? as a briefing or sounding board --- Harlequin Thoomey, Toblerone Harpie, Old Man Smithers, Blackbird Leys Dingo et al speculate on Western culture and its future. Can such a debate contribute to what Maurice Bardeche called the defence of the Occident? Our interweaving stories then combine in order to hint at a new Titan’s creation.
Al-Qa’eda MOTH
A Western without horizons…

Cast of characters:

Harlequin Thoomey
Toblerone Harpie
Old Man Smithers
Blackbird Leys Dingo
Axon Tree
Lift Spenser Wingate
Pond Granite
Egghead Morgan
Rapacious Quicksilver
Low Termagant
Porcupine Jones
Sheriff Eugene
Geronimo, a Red Indian
+
Various Old Western archetypes or placebos…
Dingo, a child

PROLOGUE: <<<This work consists of three interconnected narratives. Parts One, Four and Seven et cetera take place in the nineteenth century. Parts Two, Five + Eight et al subsist a hundred years further on. Whereas Parts Three, Six & Nine and so on exist in dream-time. It has to be these Dramatis Personae’s unconscious. Not even Roy Rogers – in Westerns like Colorado, Robin Hood of the Pecos and Cowboy & the Senorita – can outface this. All’s clear now, yes?>>>

‘Everything has a remedy save Death’ – old Proverb
ONE: (1)

Didn’t a distinct poster motivate the breeze? It doubled up its tragic absence – as if straining ‘it’ against the wooden post’s adornment. In substance, then, this rough brown-paper was hewn from many leaves – what with a single anvil beckoning to the stars. On this template a Colt 45, waxed visible or evident; and it happens to be the world’s most powerful hand-gun, after all! Nicely put, it could blow a fellow’s head clean off at a hundred paces! In summation – therefore – our print depicted a cold-eyed wanderer; together with a slouch hat which neatly spliced a face in two. Behind it a turquoise sky limited some reindeer, but it also let out vultures from their keep. They circled a white sun while moving in tandem. Definitely so, our figure now held a right-angles pistol; at once merely aft to a face or perpendicular to its future. No teleology then inhibited this regard, particularly given a steel-barrel’s glimmer… resultantly so. We also find that an orange beard mantles a face in terms of its scrub. It took no-one really by surprise; at least when it occurred underneath those ice-blue marbles. A serge jacket gifted a tailor’s way or task – especially when out of Wichita’s haberdashery: and the latter was surmounted by a red neckerchief. Violently so, because it claimed its offerant if only presumably to die. For Louis L’Amour has left a vacant star here by a hillside – and this was not even to speak of Clark Gable’s performance in *High Noon*. While our Avenger’s hand held a six-gun within it – a gesture which presumed to come on blind, foursquare, undelivered, Rodin-like and super-masculine. It remained steady if devoid of four pins; and each of them derived from a chaste metal or held a vista up. The name or signature at a poster’s bottom reads: Harlequin Thoomey.

TWO: (2)

In one rival dimension to our own a Harlequin stood aghast. Moreover, his form came green-garbed or russet, if set against a skeletal face’s effrontery. A large machine-gun stuck out laterally from his belt, in terms of a bluish hint it was possibly an Uzi.
Various threads of snow and ice tumbled around him; being fit to be thrown over or themselves reddish specks. Yes… didn’t a steaming barrel add to these woes’ peregrinations? Furthermore, what arrests our attention has to be a skull… one which howls or is fit to curdle a cranium --- presumably after Gray’s *Anatomy*. It bewails a wound and screeches to a Banshee’s status – or it chooses to mulct a severed head’s revenge. Might it combine Elisabethan tragedy and an early Iris Murdoch novel? Similarly, this death’s-head cries dolefully – what with brazen sockets carrying an orb: when taken together with flaring nostrils that were chiselled out of bone. Alack(!), the mouth fell open bitterly – as a Head caromed and skimmed within a moon-beam. You see, it’s alerted to its task… while blood-red light hurtles about after Rothko’s intervention. It comes laced with snowy storm; at least when traversing a gambit from cadmium to violet *via* alizarin. Now none but Thoomey really knows this film-poster’s violence!

THREE: (3)

In Harlequin Thoomey’s unconscious a vision swirls about. It transposes on nought save immaterialism… even though the first, second and third story segments represent a thrice-storeyed mind. Perhaps it embodies a multiple play by Samuel Beckett – like his early work *Eleutheria*? Regardless of this – one character with a clown-nose stood in a grey-tinted space; albeit abreast of a blanched face. He mouthed words which were presently misheard even amid these lambs’ silences. Furthermore, another mountebank was dressed in harlequinade or as Punch’s Clown Joey, and he came forward merely to lop off a nose’s frustrations. These puppets outface one another after silent cinema’s fashion or in mime. What better, therefore, than a nightmare to examine Oswald Spengler’s thesis *The Decline of the West*? Especially when it is set within a Western’s architecture, even a spaghetti one…
FOUR: (4)
To be true to our tale, though, our vigilante (who basically went under the name of Harlequin Thoo mey) pursued a gang of bank-robbers up into some northern hills. This troupe was led by a father-‘n’-son team called Old Man Smithers and Blackbird Leys Dingo… why, they’ve confiscated the assets of Standard High in Eugene, Oregon. After which they all moved up into the mountains. As insurance they took a kidnapped bank teller with them. Her name’s Toblerone Harpie. What they hadn’t reckoned on is a small family detail – namely, she happened to be Thoo mey’s wife. By purloining one; they’d outraged the other!

FIVE: (5)
Whereupon – in another direction or dimension – Eugene’s Oregon spreads out before us in the nineteenth century. It existed as a small town of hopeless assurance. Surely now, a dull green-light affected its listlessness – what with several oil-lamps flickering in niches? They’d abandoned glory over an emerald head – at least when seen from the side and with a cheroot sticking out aslant. Wooden boards lay up between twin gamblers who were playing poker’s dance – albeit with one trusting to a short trilby; the other relying on conical ware. This came fluted off to a grave; together with a bow-tie situated underneath… and neither of these grappled avec skeletons. A sequined enclosure lay off sideways-on and it belaboured a card-back’s design. It tapered away to a left-end in view. Similarly, a youth or stripling in a buck-skin jacket made his way over to one offerant; and it was reddish in its bloody hue. He faced Harlequin Thoomey’s face full on; the latter being sequestered in a booth near the saloon’s door. The lawman wore a brown slouch hat – of padded felt – high up on his crown.

SIX: (6)
The robbers had infiltrated the bank at three-thirty p.m., and this took place just before a cash reckoning up. The stained-glass floor reflected indebtedness – if only to usury’s bounty. Needless
to say, all of them wore stockings over mug-shots, and these barely half-covered the face after Colin Wilson’s & Patricia Pitman’s ‘True Crime’ lexicons. Weren’t encyclopaedias a staple “Enlightenment” foil? Nonetheless, a machine-pistol’s bullets ricocheted into the roof – primarily by way of a warning which opened Loki’s hand. Also, each scavenger carried a large grip-bag in either fist… so as to slake up the green inky dye. Whilst one bank employee in particular came to notice, at once apprised by a masculine vision. Her hair announced a flaming tincture – itself midway to an orange blonde. Whereas her lips and eye-brows were perfect, or symmetrical to Tamara de Lempicka’s vista. A close-fitting purple dress rose up over a heavy bosom. Its skirt waxed exceedingly short beneath a tight belt. It limbered up so as to reveal a muscular and tanned pair of legs… no matter how perpendicularly. This curvaceousness belonged to Toblerone Harpie… married name: Thoomey.

SEVEN: (7)
A spectral dawn of our vision drew on H.J. Eysenck’s estrangement. Most effectively, our clown-nose examined another’s chin – basically so as to weep over redundant fissures. The middle-aged man stood his ground and looked mildly affronted. Did he happen to be bare-foot or also sporting an open-neck shirt? Gesturing theatrically, our variant on Trevor Griffiths’ Comedians made so as to pull a neighbour over to his chest. He resisted – rather after the playfulness of silent cinema, together with an electric organ coming up through the floor. In this it betokened the aftermath of a movie house like the ‘Regal’ in Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. No sound was heard, but such a marionette mimed his avoidance of subordination in dumb-show. Undoubtedly… could our legatee to von Laban be the bank-manager who’d been threatened by the raiders… somewhat spasmodically? Let’s wait to find out…
EIGHT: (8)
One figure stood afore another in a hushed silence. Altogether now, a dim silhouette sought solace – essentially by virtue of a recess in this bar’s dwindling astral. A post – of a brackish purple if lit – divided the two participants. One came seated behind a horizontal plane made of brownish wood. Isn’t this the ‘good, clean’ timber of which Aston was oft to speak in Pinter’s *The Caretaker*? Light streamed in through a sequined avenue… it flooded in over both champions. But its impact resiled to an optical illusion which was possibly kept out of sight… in that the window frontage had been taped over by a design. Primarily, it resembles the back of a sequence of Waddington’s playing cards. You know, these are those squares on which a man’s shirt can be lost… whether it be over stud poker, whist, cribbage, gin rummy, bridge or whatever? While our other protagonist stood – with his legs apart – and *avec* his booted heels braced on running boards. Each foot carried a spur at its rear. His hat – on a brief net of twine – lay halfway down his back. Yet – by the light’s trickery – he seems to be inundated with claret, Ribena, rubicund flow and all such glows. They sprouted up – when lit by imaginary pulsars – and came to surround him with a roseate effulgence. This blood epiphany happened to be a pink portrait melding into cadmium – as limned in napthol. It also stood out with quinacridone by way of crimson; at least before sprouting as permanent rose. All of this refused to permit alizarin from becoming violet’s Quin… especially when limiting its permutations… What about magenta’s fate, I hear you cry?

+ “You Harlequin Thoomey?”, spat out yesterday’s youth. (He clearly remained unapprised of Tony Blair’s ‘respect agenda’). “Who wants to know?”, replied our stalker. He was looking – if he but knew it – at Blackbird Leys Dingo.

NINE: (9)
The vigilante filled our screen in a world which had become devoid of aught save snow. Its icy fondue unhinged one bracket
with various twigs (or broken bracken) festooning a grave. ‘Jet’ white it was; within a grievance’s towering edifice... For an Ice Giant’s daughter has slain those who might come after her – particularly when travelling across these wastes on an iron sledge. The terrain of Fennimore Cooper had given way to Jack London, even though Harlequin has read neither party. Still, his breath froze in those puffs of ice-spleen as were carried forwards on the air... while his face remained chiselled amid frost’s impermanence. The jaw – for its part – came up granite-like; at once transfixed, though it was, by an icicle beard. Meanwhile, a cheroot refused to light --- match-wise --- on the implacable air. But, in this respect, his wide-brimmed hat seemed to breed watery spears; they encrusted its rim whilst falling down a’pieces.

Didn’t Thoomey transfigure a living sculpture, here? Essentially, it recalled Cesar’s blank edifice with the former ‘rusting’ to black ice... as was suggested by some welded iron. Executed in 1958, it rose up by twenty inches and underwent the title *Personage*. Yet it re-interpreted a miniature menhir; at once dolorous of a new monstrosity or hinting at a castrated dinosaur. Who’s the American scientist that decrypted their ‘hot-bloodedness’ (?) ... why, it’s Adrian J. Desmond.

Harlequin Thoomey merely continued to breathe out ice-fire!

TEN: (10)
But what of our desperadoes’ dreams? For hadn’t our Harlequin moved closer to his prey – albeit primarily by placing his mask next to another’s visage? In this regard, it betokened a spectral intent’s silhouette --- no matter how emboldened by a German wood-cut. Certainly, the red nose is off and waxing shiny in its dawn... whereas his human rejoinder looked shocked or vaguely put off a stroke. The prior visage definitely re-invigorates the bank manager, Porcupine Jones, amid a grey dry-ice swirl. Above all, one of Asger Jorn’s original statues comes to mind in
this interaction. It illustrates a Second Horizon – by dint of Punch and Judy’s expressive semantics. Moreover, this misshapen Ricardo’s circus wails to punish… whilst forgetting Fred Tickner’s residual animism.

ELEVEN: (11)
The date had become eighteen eighty-nine in Eugene, Oregon. A light blue sky has trespassed on this ceiling or roof, and it occurred outside a saloon which lay open to the street. By evidence of virtue, several wagons trundle by in contrary directions. One of them appears to be a covered cart; the other a stage-coach drawn by two teams and passing a rival way. A clap-boarded hotel rises up on the main-street’s twin side; it is suffused with dust and liable to pass unnoticed. Its teak balustrade hints at purple or a magenta-dyed wood. Whereupon two American voices percolate up out of a bar or over its swing-doors… especially when they’re confounded from cantilevered balsa. Yes… a yellow glow intrudes farther inside this den. “Praise tell, I’ve heard crows’ whisper”, intoned Dingo in a Sauk City drawl, “that you’re huntin(’) two soldiers out ways and beyond a prairie. This the truth?” “Your blackbirds construe a correct call, but not a mating, youngster. Holbein once painted a falconer – yet given your purview the collective noun for crows is MURDER!”, replied Thoomey.

TWELVE: (12)
Within a rhythmic gun-sight our vigilante moved along. Whilst – like a vampire – he cast no silhouette snow-wards… if only to encumber the ground’s specks. On a level he strode on – albeit with glacial ice-sheets superintending or passing by from side-to-side. Oblivion didn’t open his gate for him, no, since a frozen lake lay distant and it pretended to die under a giant’s breath. It encoded a rink for skaters on which was fastened some apparel’s livery… primarily by dipping down to a Kelvin’s fondue. Necessarily… because Jack Frost’s measure is painted in spleen or it lay out across lapis lazuli’s temples. Wasn’t Ezra Pound
fond of those words? Anyway, they certainly drove a sheen from pearlescent to cerulean… when taken together with purple mountains rising up rearwards. These appeared to be frozen, congealed or dancing like plastic before a dawn’s sprite. Christmas trees --- amongst other bushes --- festooned the slopes… often nestling into inundations halfway up. Whilst topping these ranges came some blue ice; whereby Prussian met cobalt and it occasionally took place in pthalo’s absence. Above beckoned a sky – merely Frenchified to its essence – upon which white specks mooned aloft. Down below, though, heavy drifts caked the trees so as to leave them to rear up like tendrils or fingers. Weren’t these the digits of fallen juggernauts (?); at once wilting to silence or poking through things like a palaeontologist’s ribs. Such gulfs of stillness reigned sheer – although Harlequin Thoomey just walked across them.

THIRTEEN: (13)
But in circling our vultures’ dreams a landscape comes out mint. Within which – to be fair – our Harlequin slumps down with a ‘divine’ shrug! He stands at a stage’s imagined corner – when abreast of new developments and with one shoulder higher than the next. Some sort of mackintosh covers his body with its brown outer-pelt milking a grey tincture. Like a marionette cast aside, he remains still throughout this ordeal… with one hand in another’s pocket. Isn’t his face blanched in its longevity (??); plus a mop of untangled hair thereby contradicting grease-paint close to the scalp. Yesss… For – deep in this imbroglio – he stands at one vertice of a lit-up stage: together with a cauldron of loose-light passing around. Behind him the banker, Porcupine Jones, virtually keels over in an ergonomic chair. It’s made from plastic resin with steel struts; the latter being suffused by dry-ice’s mists. These swirl around its extremities; both uninvitingly as well as in a serpentine fashion.
FOURTEEN: (14)
Our Western vintage has returned… in no matter how limited a way. Deep inside it, *ceteris paribus*, two characters drawn from folklore face off against each other. One sits far from torpor; the other stands with a glinting gaze. Resultantly then, a sequence of squares *in lieu* of windows balk clear --- they also transpose playing cards onto a widow’s face! In comparison to this, Harlequin Thoomey’s features wax dark-blue in a bushy tumult – while his companion flexes both gun-arms further out. Blackbird Leys Dingo still wears his tasselled jacket, though. “I don’t reckon much to bounty hunters, mister. ‘Specially those who are pursuin(’) the Republic’s war heroes, you get me? The freedom of Jackson Pollack’s canvases way back in Wyoming; why, they entreat fear’s semblance or ghost. Do you recall his early vehicle in the Tate, *Naked Man with Knife? Yessum…*” “Your broadsheet – or abstract expressionist ditty – avoids me, stripling. Yet our thoughts concurr through deviance, since tracking a man’s illegal in Oregon. It’s a statute of state law, gubernatorially enforced. If you run into any Union troopers or bailiffs doing so, immediately report them to the governor. For my part, I seek no reward.” Harlequin Thoomey’s *doppelganger* has been speaking way back in the nineteenth century. “You’re looking into the wrong mirror, brother! Why propose a joke glass – whereby the body comes to be distorted like in yesterday’s fun-fair? I’m calling yuz OUT!”

FIFTEEN: (15)
Our snow pursuit continued apace… but an avenging asteroid has touched the earth only to leave a trace. Perhaps it intoned a momentary thawing of these banks? Nevertheless, young Dingo had seen this persuader through a rifle’s scope. “Daddy o’ mine”, he yelled, “some sort of lawman keeps on our corns’ trail. Yeah… You can spy him over an ice-rise; thence blowing aside vengeance’s spume. He harrows our course without respite. You ask about his rig? Why, he’s gutted about the gills. Do you see that long coat of azure (?); it hangs down from the shoulders to
the calves. Whereas his thickened trousers are serge; at once likened to music-hall pantaloons (though they be). Each boot trespasses on a spur or toe, and it looks to a grim holster in a belt upstairs. His neck, however, finds adornment with a scarlet ‘kerchief… the former under a wide-brimmed fedora. It’s patched up in the form of some snow; especially given icicles which peer out around its brow. Yessir: a black cigar burns in one’s fire-slit – despite the ice that circles amid reddish flecks. It dies before a lost skull’s portent; itself merely screaming prior to birth… somewhat headlessly. All the time, though, frozen petals whip around in a whirligig and his breath staggers to a halt in a fashion which ventriloquism has discarded. How fatiguing!”

SIXTEEN: (16)
Lest we forget a tableau of dream: one darkened mass looms up behind Joey’s Clown. Who does it resemble in unforgiving silhouette (?); why, none other than Harlequin Thoomey’s alter ego in future centuries. He strikes both poses – while speaking to a silent camera. Furthermore – and under a lowering dreamscape – a woman walks towards the arrayed troupe. She wears a short black-dress, together with an ebon top and matching boots. Even from a far curtain – or when observed with opera glasses – she has to be Toblerone Harpie.

SEVENTEEN: (17)
The youngster, Dingo, is already halfway out of his holster’s upkeep. Doesn’t the leather flash greedily within the bar… or its entrails? Simultaneously with this gesture, though, the drinking-den’s backdrop looms into view: and it recalls a vista of sequins and crescent moons… albeit diagonally placed. All of which intones a stereotype or pantomime: whether one speaks of Merlin the Mage, Morgan la Fey, Mordred and even a bedizened python. Oh yes, Blackbird Leys Dingo was now observed from the side with a right-hand motion, and a Colt 45. emerged from an imagined sabretache. A trill or whistle’s heard from beneath his upper-lip… while the tassels on his jacket flow roundabout, thus
embodying the pullulations of a jelly-fish. (Fennimore Cooper would have been proud. Do you also remember Conan Doyle’s story, The Lion’s Mane?) Pursuant to such a fiat, then, the youngster mouths words throughout his assault. Let’s listen to them now: “I’ll cut you in half, reprobate of a law man. Don’t you think a beetle’s entreaty’ll slice any ice with me! No sir – never mind: a moth hunter doesn’t have compassion for the lepidoptera about to be netted. He just stalks his prey from tuft to tuft – rather like the naturalist Stapleton in The Hound of the Baskervilles. Morality’s merely the price on a head about to be severed! Meet here for the slug… soon to issue from this tube.” He makes leave to fire his weapon.

EIGHTEEN: (18)
A century ahead, however, two recusants hold onto an AK-47 assault rifle. Its barrel simpers willingly and starkly amid iced-tones. Their names are Old Man Smithers and Blackbird Leys Dingo – being a provider of jism and an off-cut respectively. “Try to grow some brains, my boy. What ya see above you is compacted snow and its ferment. It’s loose – by way of existence’s cycle; you get me? One shot will bring it down on us a millionfold; like an avalanche in a ‘twenties Weimar film. Have you forgotten The White Hell of Piz Palu starring Leni Riefenstahl?”

+ Remembering this, his son retreats into a tribal sullenness. “T’ain’t fair, Pah!”, he whines. “‘S only doin(‘) my duty to the clan. He was up there; I tell ya – our pursuer reckons on patience. Couldn’t I detect his shade looming up or pursuing us across iced tundra… after the manner of Frankenstein’s burst? Do we reminisce about Mary Shelley’s novel – with the monster and his creator together again on frozen water? Any road up, ‘tis unfair to burden me… especially when the family’s interest revolves around this sword.” (He waves his tommy-gun amid snowy air). Can’t we really see a sculpture here – enacted by Niki de St. Phalle – and depicting a strong man who conjures with his muse?
It’s entitled *Le Poete et sa Muse*; and it vaguely assesses Aleister Crowley’s tarot showing a circus He-man. This Man-mountain’s soberly dressed, but also hurtles his erotic spirit in the air. She’s diced up to the feminine in gaudy colours… and isn’t this an example of the *anima* at work?” “Which spectre lampoons whatever beast?”, leers his sire.

**NINETEEN: (19)**
In a rival vortex (then) Harlequin’s nose and lips encastellate Mister Punch’s; in that he stands to one side throughout. (Although he doesn’t have the gall to finish off a nineteenth century silhouette). Toblerone Harpie – meanwhile – has emerged from these mists so as to light a cigarette at dead-centre. The flickering carbon illuminates a face – one which distills an absent suffering. Could she be a more svelte entreaty; after the fashion of Jane and her dachshund Fritz in the *Daily Mirror* during the war? Maybe, but then she’d have to support tattoos in various places, together with lingerie or split-skirts. Might this armature frighten Ann Summers – or otherwise lead to thongs, lace, suspenders and stocking-tops? Certainly, a refutation of *The Decline and Fall of the Freudian Empire* seems visible now.

**TWENTY: (20)**
Before Dingo can move independently a gloved fist hits him right in the face. The calf-skin glances from his chin and falls sheer. It leaves a pink star upon a circumference of yellow light… as the desperado’s head lurches back. Virtually so, this blow has taken him unawares or sideways-on, and he catapults to the floor under its influence. Most definitely… By response, though, Harlequin Thoomey bursts into song or speech. “Ingrate, you befoul breathing air --- by virtue of a fist. Nor can you seek out freedom within this gauntlet’s remit. Begone… you are without worth.”

+ As an additional gesture, the swinging doors of this saloon open outwards so as to deposit our vagabond upon the soil. More
pertinently, he’s been thrown out head-first into a dirt-track ---
his hat becoming dislodged from a hooligan’s head in the
process. Doesn’t his body hazard to a blizzard; at least in terms
of a magenta’s dye? Furthermore, the doors’ wooden-boards
clatter as he passes through them… only for Blackbird Leys
Dingo to lie in the street! Again, Harlequin’s fully-hatted figure
casts the miscreant aloft with a hand gesture; at once held in a
shadow’s panoply. He’s dismissive in the extreme. “Feckless
rabble”, are his scant words. Perhaps Harlequin Thoomey has
perused Gustav le Bon over items as contagious as socialism –
not to mention crowd or mass psychology? Behind him ochre
gloows tightly in order to be fit for purpose.

TWENTY-ONE: (21)
Old Man Smithers then becomes a zig-zagging visage. His face –
as he regards his son – looks menacing or given over to finality.
The nose looms bulbous amid pallid cheeks; whereas each eye
squints like a false marble on either side of a revolving trap-door.
In black-and-white light (so to say) every iris aligns to a distinct
colour by way of misprisionment… or is it a parallax view?
Indubitably, the forehead tilts sheer and this was less with brains
than H.J. Eysenck’s foreboding over criminality. Yes, Cesare
Lombroso was right over villainy’s gallery in *Criminal Man* –
the latter photogravures are on loan in New Scotland Yard’s
Black Museum (as the case maybe). Ask William Roughead for
an entrance key, why don’t you? Yet Smithers’ parting lies to the
left or possibly perpendicularly… as befits a slice through the
hirsute which levers itself up. His hair-strands, though, were
stingy, dormant, rat-like or otherwise miserable. Each one
necessitated a disused brush… although primarily by way of its
minstrel.
+
The Old Man’s ears stuck up like mud guards, each one tail-
gating to a silhouette further off. An ear-ring looks forward
brightly to such a resolution. Whereas the mouth sags down
imponderably, so as to draw the face towards nemesis or a
stringy plastinate. Certainly, Smithers’ teeth are misshapen, some are missing and others slope like Stonehenge’s blocks. Do you get the picture? A brief circumference of stubble – hewn to its best – surrounds a lower jaw. No-one can afford to miss it…

TWENTY-TWO: (22)
A visage nearly always dreams on beyond its own sand castle. Most definitely, it was time for the banker to reappear and possibly as a leading alienist. Porcupine Jones looked doleful now – what with a tone of misery stamped on his mask. Both lips were curled down; (you see): and for some reason he was lacking a tie. A silk number, it had passed into oblivion over a neighbouring chair. Each hand is clasped before him --- somewhat defensively. While Harlequin – who masqueraded as a circus clown – leered around him. Didn’t the rectangular face come within a scintilla of his scalp? Whisper…whisper: in our silent movie, here and now, our mage continued to give Porcupine advice. Undeniably so, and even though a grey cloud billowed in the background… Thoomey’s lips opened and closed. Don’t we detect a whisker of Malcolm Bradbury’s The History Man – almost by default? Anyway, our malevolent pixie leaned on – if only to dive down into existence’s marsh. Might it be salty or like vinegar to the taste?

TWENTY-THREE: (23)
The town’s trouble-shooter lay in its own dirt. He had been readily despatched – primarily by dint of a blow to the chin that had been delivered by a gloved hand. In the face of which – Blackbird Leys Dingo’s skull stood dormant. The light purple saloon doors lie motionless now; when next to the sequined alabaster that conceals a window. This intones, if you recall, the backs of some playing-cards which range over a whole set. Regardless of such shenanigans, Dingo’s corse traversed an X-axis. It remained waiting for a lift off, even though coloured by an opal and pearlescent hue. Occasionally some yellow intruded. At this moment in time, though, boots with two spurs attached
came to a standstill. Their owner’s leather hinted at a sapphire dawn – while the cowboy concerned moved towards this bar. He staggered his gait suddenly… so as to look in. Slowly he pushed aside the swinging traps, thence to purposefully gain admittance to a drinking den or shebeen. Eugene’s sheriff has decided to take charge.

TWENTY-FOUR: (24)
A MODERN WESTERN… Having accurately described Old Man Smithers, we must name his errant son’s tattoo. He – for the truth’s part – betokened a gargoyle on a Yorkshire church or chapel; and of a sort which influenced the young Henry Moore career-wise. Above all, his snout embodies a corbel’s dexterity – if we are to make use of a term for a northern ‘groyen’ (sic). These were primitive or archaic images --- possibly Romanesque --- that litter churchyards and mausoleums. Many of them are provincial stayers or boundary markers, such as those in Castleford. In a scenario where traditional craftsmen show off a form’s dexterity through truth to materials. Let’s examine his apex fruitfully – after Roger Berthoud’s fashion.
+

Resultantly though, Blackbird Leys Dingo’s snout illustrated a crane’s stalk… at least when projected at an angle. Above his eyes a fringe of hair appeared --- at once dirty and dishevelled. A bowler hat sat atop it; one which was reminiscent (in its way) of many of Beckett’s tramps: whether Vladimir, Estragon, Pozzo or Lucky. Meanwhile, his eyes seemed to be glassy and watery; as if over-flowing with cruelty. You see, sentimentality and self-pity are sadism’s elixir. They feed the basic instinct of Abraham Maslow’s needs… albeit pertaining to a lost hierarchy of bone. Any road up: this face curved down longitudinally like an anteater – when given to snuffling for grubs close to the ground. Even an occasional snivelling noise can be heard… whilst the lips were gumless, rimmed, lacking in salience and oracular. His teeth came on irregularly; they bit on a hollow reed and drooped with portentous saliva. All around them – and by way of
protecting stalks \textit{circum} an orifice – stubble sprouted. It refused to be ironed down… To sum up: isn’t Blackbird Leys Dingo’s physiognomy worth hanging?

TWENTY FIVE: (25)
Our dream-scape, however, continued as regular as clockwork. Could it be a way of predicting the future? For we’re left now with a depiction of an itinerant banker, Porcupine Jones. In close-up his face looks pasty; together with a seriousness about the brows. He talks in accordance with our silent visuals, even though none can respond. His hair loops over the scalp or tonsure, and the remainder of it swoops down towards one’s eyes. In this mute realm Porcupine’s mouth moves convulsively. He’s obviously making a point of some heaviness, but it’s vitiated by his clown-lips. Or – more accurately – this has to be down to grease-paint’s effects; especially when the latter’s applied by Harlequin’s ghost. Most transluently, Jones continues to mouth on without words… but surely John Cage is dead?”

TWENTY-SIX: (26)
“Well, stranger”, whispered the sheriff, “perhaps ya ought to have introduced yourself before dealing with riff-raff… speaking locally.” As he intoned this, however, the lawman’s elbow lay adjacent to a door-post. One arm proved to be going upwards or was held in the door’s crook; while the other nestled against his thigh. A few digits certainly lay in striking distance of a six-shooter. His basic dress resiled to brown – what with a hint of journeyman’s orange about his shirt and hat. A tin-star glinted amid some appurtenances. Way behind him the saloon’s wooden frame hurtles away --- it comes to resemble a purple balloon. Or has one of Rothko’s meditations intruded here?

“Hello sheriff”, replies Harlequin Thoomey. A silence exists momentarily between them. “I motioned round to the shack you call an office, only to find you out. But I bethought me that you’d
turn up here. Yonder hot-head lies motionless in the dust, yet I stretched him out to kick his heels. Don’t you recognise those spurs which no longer spin… by virtue of reflecting the light?”

To link actions to words, Thoomey then snapped a match into life. It flared briefly in the bar’s glow and thence spangled Harlequin in motley. Truly, in this instant, his frame became convulsed with a blue-to-yellow mix. A black cigarette jerked into life and smouldered at one end. “As to my business in Oregon, I’m with the Pinkerton agency. A detective, you see?”

TWENTY-SEVEN: (27)
A century or so further forward we notice that a father and son stood in a blizzard landscape. “Nothin(‘) approaches some vegetable existence, son o’ mine. The place revealed by this gun-scope shows no trail. It reconnoitres silent snow over forgotten pathways. Doubtless then, this hillock lies empty upon Hyrakanian ice. Look you, boy: our sighting-rod sighs naked before us. It daunts a vigilante’s prospect, even at this distance. A bare breeze accounts for such a blasting – rather like in a Thomas Hardy novel. Shouldn’t that really be one by Jack London?”

To which his toothsome offspring retorts: “Pappy, pappy, pappy… I saw him; I dun huh. He was tall and nasty, I swear to you. Like a gaunt scarecrow, his frame waxes impervious to iciness. Vengeance lay in every pelt or creature’s fold, and it was just liable to crease its gun-leather. Our nemesis has no face whatsoever, you can reckon on’t: it merely entertained a sphere without features. It rested under a ten-gallon hat… but still John Wayne’s withered arm held a hunting rifle and pursued us.”

Old Man Smithers rubbed a chin pensively. “Maybe we oughta check it out?”, he mused.

TWENTY-EIGHT: (28)
Multi-dimensionally, our capering Harlequin holds his temple theatrically. He seems to be gesturing oratorically on this windswept stage. But don’t forget that we’re dealing with an opera here – minus its assemblage or bric-a-brac. Could it be in
black-and-white (?); rather like an old Rediffusion cube from the ‘seventies. No way: since the colours of a cathode ray oscilloscope assault our senses, if only momentarily. It’s only now that we notice a mackintosh over Thoomey’s shoulders… a covering which sweeps down to his feet. Does our instinct betray us, mon ami, or must one’s Clown burst into song? Possibly captions could be arranged:

Oh, look, look
he’s reading a book
by hook or by crook
we’ll silence that rook.

TWENTY-NINE: (29)
The lawman’s slender form moved forward gingerly amid the longitudinal stretches of a green room. Might they intone those white backgrounds on which L.S. Lowry painted – despite being a tad reversed? Certainly, the wooden panelling recalls a portmanteau offering that flits around this zone from three available sides. An oil-lamp hung down the centre of the apartment; especially given the breeze of its contempt, but without flickering in undisguised gusts. Remember this: a flagon of liquor which was tinted blue traversed a barrel’s side in one corner. While the gloved hand of our apostate law-giver held up a badge: it read Pinkerton Agent, Harlequin Thoomey. (The card limbered up to yellow – by way of a red surround). Our sheriff eyed him disobligingly over a droopy moustache. “Shoot mister, you don’t come with a Pinkerton’s labelling… do ya take my meaning? It is earnestly meant and without a dog’s intent.” “I appreciate such disregard as that”, mouthed Thoomey. “Do you notice my tarot? Regardless of which – I’ve been tracking two men with a company of wolves. Their names are Old Man Smithers and Blackbird Leys Dingo, pere et fils. Have their surnames become synonymous with Raymond Tong’s Necessary Words (?); or does such a passage accord with Roault’s passion? Know you aught of either of them – depending on poison ivy’s
ability to spring up from the ground? Even bind weed constricts life so as to unburden it of pain…” In the manner of the Know Nothing movement that existed prior to the Confederacy in the eighteen forties… our sheriff waxes mute. After several moments he rejoinders: “Who should mark them when they’re adrift of a fire’s hinterland?”

THIRTY: (30)
The rest of this criminal clan had surrounded Old Man Smithers and Blackbird Leys Dingo. They went under many descriptions or multiple heads – rather like a Hydra. Their significations were Axon Tree, Lift Spenser Wingate, Egghead Morgan, Low Termagant, Pond Granite and Rapacious Quicksilver… What visages can match the emptiness of their shaven skulls – particularly under those turbans? Why, the one known as Axon Tree looked up at falling snow and this was irrespective of a beard dripping roundabouts. On his upper pelt he wore a red baseball cap – of a lumpen proletarian or trailer-park vintage. Both eyes happened to be made of glass or resin – yet he could evidently be seen through Plastic’s remains. Do you remember the cover of Guy Debord’s *The Society of the Spectacle* in the black-‘n’-red edition – and replete with a century of goggle-wearers or voyeurs? Anyway, his neighbour or comrade in this Comus Rout consisted of Lift Spenser Wingate. He rode on Charon’s boat across the Styx with a full head of mutton. On it can be seen a strange dial that’s rather reminiscent of a ‘speak your weight’ machine. It came to be positioned between the eyes and above the nose. Whereas one orb resiled to falseness and found itself replaced by a calibration or metal filter (thereby). In his frame this character waxed tall and he was well over seven feet – plus a piece of zirconium dangled from one ear! Don’t people call it white gold? Egghead Morgan – on the other hand – stared straight ahead with a fixed expression on his face. He wore an exaggerated or populist hat on his cranium; together with a coat-of-many colours which stretched down to his knees. Both of them were tattered and beaten about… Whilst his face slanted off
to a hirsute sluice; the latter doubling back on itself with angularity or vulturedom. For his part, though, Low Termagant stood out with a prominent skull instead of a normal pan or dip.

A large straw – of the sort used with fizzy drinks – poked up through a crack in this Gray’s *Anatomy*. Likewise, unfriendly sockets couldn’t take away from those sabre-teeth or molars; and they grinned on next to forgotten mouse-traps! Various straps cascaded off his body --- also --- so as to indicate imprisonment and even misplacement. Whereas our two remaining freaks, Pond Granite and Rapacious Quicksilver; why, they possess a three-sprigged beard and a punk rock look, respectively. You see, Granite reposed towards a patriarch who was naked from the waist; whilst Rapacious Quicksilver had about him a clown’s livery. Could he be a performance *artiste* who trawled for the Russian state circus? Against this prospect, however, he recalled a malevolent Boy George – what with reinforced eye-brows, blackened eye-liners, magenta hair, green lips and a baby’s safety-pin through one ear. They all stood in a posse around their captured woman, Toblerone Harpie. Were they in conclave?

**THIRTY ONE: (31)**

Yet our dreams continue to one side of this cleft – even though Harlequin Thoomey leant over a table in order to peer beneath. He was delineated as a Glock – somewhat resultantly. While he did this a great mass of dry-ice mist wafted about in the background. Under the table a half-naked Old Man Smithers gathered himself together. He seemed to be painting an abstract doodle or daub, and it smeared away across the floor like a worm ouroborous. Might it have been a Jackson Pollack; at least when judging by immediacy or impact? Behind both denizens – and in subdued sepia – a shadowy bulwark loomed up. Surely it had to be Harlequin Thoomey’s *alter ego* (?); when enacted after the fashion of a million braves… even phantasies. Yes, this numinescence happens to be our troubadour who doubles back after a festival of worms. Let’s listen… for haven’t any other bravos burst into song?
Smithers, O Smithers
what do you do?
there are so few
<unlike you>
who smash up a pew.

THIRTY-TWO: (32)
The nameless lawman’s question still reverberates about the bar.
“Should I know these two miscreants?”, he sneered. To which –
and by way of response – Harlequin Thoomey adopted a stoical
mien. “I imagine so, constable, since they left a trail across snow-
bitten wastes… all of which led me here. Eugene in Oregon’s the
place, you infer? For, when on a journey hereabouts I interred
one of them in an icy tundra or barrow; and it peeled away with
Kelvin temperatures for all the world to see. Even as I buried him
pelt-deep some specks of drying ice flecked about me. Wasn’t it
freakish? Because the one known as Egghead Morgan is left
beneath the loam or moss, and he was frozen to the touch of a
blizzard’s ice-queen. I had to place two copper coins – whether
cents or bits – over his deluded orbs and these were outstretched
in the sunlight’s direction (as they are wont to do). I closed those
lids myself – what with two brown gloves that were taken from a
distracted hand. Nor did my Christian conscience and puritanism
forsake me… for you know that I’m a Mormon, sheriff?” “Uh-
huh”, murmured his ‘colleague’. “Well, I did my duty to a
cadaver about to be devoured by eagles.” “How’d he perish?”,
rumbled the tin-star. “I stabbed him through the skull and into the
brain with an ice-pick. On an occasion where he’d attacked me
with a Columbus Marine fighting knife, do you take my drift?
Like a revolting Jew or Trotsky of future years – and with or
without Isaac Deutscher’s exemplification – I played Louis
Mercador’s role. A finality of history has to be its causation…
and one needn’t consult leftwing revisionists like Eric Hobsbawn
or E.P. Thompson to realise that. Indeed, I walked away from the
graveside which was effectively stuck on an incline… albeit with
a wooden cross attached to its meat. Those who don’t walk with
the Lord – or in accord with antinomianism – shall perish by his knife.” In so saying he looked directly into the sheriff’s eyes or discs, and, by contravention of this, our small-town lawman glanced away. Whereupon – or in a state of reprise – Harlequin Thoomey re-interprets one of Elisabeth Frink’s MEN: whether they be bearded, clean-eyed, grizzled, trailing a red neck-scarf, cheroot puffing or hat-slanted. May he encapsulate her sculpture First Man in 1963?

THIRTY-THREE: (33)
The gaggle of Old Man Smithers’ clan has already collected on a snowy embankment. For their lord and master had given orders over the hunting down of a possible pursuer. Might he represent a vigilante of the near future? Still, two mugwumps tramp off into the frigid distance or its cellophane… and they proved to be Axon Tree or Lift Spenser Wingate. Meanwhile, their ghoul’s whisper – or Old Man Smithers’ words – echo in their skulls. “Check out that humdinger, my children, ‘n’ make sure… if necessary, uncork those blades so’s any blood runs sweet. Is it black or red?”, runs his stentorian ode.

Toblerone Harpie – at once oft-mentioned – stands halfway within this group’s circle. Metaphorically speaking, she’s up to her knees in snow… but actually, her near-nakedness greets a dawn of blazing blue. May the woman be wearing an all-over leotard and clout, or one just destined to encompass so much wrap? Perhaps though – under a rival dispensation – could it betoken a sequined bikini which reveals a heroine’s flesh (plus boots)? Throughout all of this… our vamp teases like a calendar girl, while lying down avec a claw on one thigh. Alternatively, she gestures triumphantly and wrestles with a mannequin, or glares after a Medusa and pivots as an artiste devoted to eros… whilst looking for a sleeper’s neck & kissing a youngster’s lips. Amid such heterosexualist discourse – he comes over as stunned! Can it recall Josef Thorak’s sculptural relief, The Judgement of Paris, in 1941… albeit reversed out aways? For who can catch
Nietzsche out, though, when he talked about a beautiful woman never feeling the cold in *Beyond Good and Evil*?

THIRTY-FOUR: (34)
Our clown, Harlequin Thoomey, had doubtlessly waved to an absent audience from afar. Whereupon – in this vernacular – his hand springs unnaturally from the shoulder… almost after the fashion of a Roman salute. Do you remember the hard Praetorian flashes of Crassus – as was delineated by Lewis Grassic Gibbon in his novel *Spartacus*? Similarly, Thoomey’s mack reared up spasmodically: while the eyes gleamed on in their sockets… rather preternaturally. The darkness then closed in around our minstrel; with the latter shrilling towards a day’s birth. Let’s be clear about all this: Harlequin is commenting on Old Man Smithers’ effusions… with each one careering across the floor in oil-paint, as they were. Could they be described as Jackson Pollack’s brillo (?); albeit merely cascading to a lighthouse of red torment. Or perhaps we have the following in mind: a Lego collage by Maurice Esteve, or nausea’s reworking by Bram van Velde, and a swirl before dying by Andre Lanskoy… let alone Jean-Paul Riopelle’s vertebrae.

*Paint, glorious paint don’t you feel faint? nothing but feint disclosure... or taint.*

+ “Paint, paint”, reels off our songster.

THIRTY-FIVE: (35)
Our characterless sheriff has come to view Pinkerton Thoomey with respect, yet not real *gravitas*. No; that psychological depth-charge is too much. “Okay, alright… positive lawgiver”, he trilled. “These two Belial spawn, Old Man Smithers and Blackbird Leys Dingo, they’ve passed through Eugene like a
grain of sand in the stomach of a bear. Both are long gone into the woods with red coats – as accompanied by Charon the ferryman in accord with Caspar David Friedrich’s example. Yes sir: their faces were mirrored by gigantic teeth like ‘raptors, with each molar pulled back from the gums in apoplexy. The sinews around the neck also held fast --- being muscular in terms of a prior pulsation. Whereby each eye maximised a scintilla of scarlet; especially in its detached livery of orbs. What of the hair, though (?) – particularly when viewed as one entity, and it creamed to rat’s-tails… while slanting from the head in a Mohican’s drift.” “Neither of them remain in this vicinity?”, enquired Thoomey almost casually. As he essayed these words, however, his visage looked craggy, grim, crenellated and silhouetted via paste. His hat slanted down right-to-left from 45 degrees – with his half mask penumbral or otherwise bleeding to perfume in an outraged garden. May a text like The Garden of the Supplicants --- by Octave Mirbeau --- come to mind? By means of which sapphire collides with ruby; so as to contrast hot and cold, even a dance of the brave, and a Stonehenge’s configuration made from old cars. A trail of black cigarette smoke wafts upwards throughout this ordeal. “No”, replied Eugene’s tepid saviour, “these siamese twins have left Doctor Caligari’s cabinet. What are their infractions, Pinkerton? List each crime… an invisible audience begs you to!”

THIRTY-SIX: (36)
Out in the arctic wastes a gang stands about listlessly. A thick mushroom of snow pelts down; with each and every snowflake coming to resemble a grenade. This Murder of Crows continues to await its orders, primarily because Old Man Smithers barks like a drum major. “You now, listen up: I’ll skin a votary who doesn’t abide by my concept of leisure. What to do if we find some braggart who’s skulking on the ice out there…? I’ll tell ye, my family and its familiars. Why, I’m going to remove his flesh from its hide and this was basically by severing spleen from fondue… in order to cake a name-plate with blood. Comprehenez
vous? It works like this: I’ll cut this hydra’s multiple heads off… so as to mount them like plaques upon a wall. Might they embody moose-heads, a bear’s maw or the coverlets of foxes so adorned? I see it all now: each and every one of their skulls is essentially clothed in its pericarp, and bids up masonry thereby! But when merely registered – what will I put under a trophy? The answer comes to me: an ormolu template with the wording – ‘Here lies a Droog(!); Old Man Smithers’. Yet never forget the final scene: it depicts me hammering away at a work-bench or drenched in gore, and covered by an apron & with a hatchet. Above me the torsos of those slain sway on pulleys – rather like a butchery store or an abattoir containing much meat. Yesssss… it evinces zoology’s Kolyma. A scenario wherein bloodied six packs oscillate on wires, and are thus winched to safety or oblivion. Each one being eventually pulled down to the surgeon beneath… haven’t I gone beyond even von Hagens in this grand guignol?

+ “YEEAAHHH! Pappy, ne plus ultra, the way you talk I want to play with myself…”, snickered Blackbird Leys Dingo. To which his father replied by grabbing hold of a son’s throat. “There’s no dirty-mindedness allowed here, boy, mark it! At the first sign of onanism I reach for castration’s steel. You see, masturbation is weakness and degeneracy in a man. Avoid the eunuch, I beg you – for how else do you think they reached Mozart’s top notes?”

THIRTY-SEVEN: (37)
In phantasm’s last sequence our supreme leader’s alter ego approaches this wooden trestle. It illustrates a shadow kingdom or an exercise in puppeteering… wherein Thoomey’s actual incarnation stands revealed in life. (All of which contrasts with his fictive mask and goes under the title of Harlequin). Can this tarot indicate number one or the Fool’s reign? Yes or no? Whereas – underneath a Victorian work-bench – Old Man Smithers briefly draws a playing card from Solitaire’s pack. Moreover, the template picked recalls a Seven of Diamonds and
its back bears upon it lime-green sequins, etc… In exasperation with the above Harlequin Thoomey breaks into song:

First painting
Now cards of fortune
What have you done?
He’s wilting –
Will you importune?
Or munch on a bun?

THIRTY-EIGHT: (38)
Our eldritch Western continues to gather pace nonetheless. “I ask you, Mister Pinkerton, what constitutes their infractions… or by what means do these tombs meet the sun? May we speak of layered battlements – purposefully cantilevered as to skulls – and picking out Minoan culture’s dexterity (albeit reversed?) A gigantic cranium when tessellated in rare mosaics now limbers up across the sky-line. Each dexterity wore thin to its eyes or it looped around cavernous sockets… at least in terms of its relief. The mouth, however, depicted a gate and it led into Assyrian munificence with ant-like mortals picked out as motes.” “I agree with your remembrance”, Harlequin Thoomey replied to Sheriff Eugene, “yet forgetfulness forges a barrier between us. It recalls those images and reptilian birds on poles. Every one of them screams at the day or it hints at Palaeolithic death’s-heads. Don’t we register the slow emergence of quills from a saurian state?” “Assuredly”, whispers Eugene, “but list Old Man Smithers’ and Blackbird Leys Dingo’s infractions; when these were themselves reminiscent, in their way, of Savonarola’s auto-da-fe.” “Where to begin, my High Noon refusenik? For these Union troopers hunted down the Red Skin. They took part in anti-Indian campaigns; the latter just correlated to the Civil Wars’ end. Our brood up-ended Washington Irving’s biography of President George Washington thereby… primarily by denying First Nation rights! Yessir: Smithers’ clan was involved in Geronimo’s capture – in a dramaturgy where they’re all pursuant to the
Republic’s battle hymn. Whilst the native put up his hands in mute surrender – with a feather quivering in his black hair and a purple cliff lying behind him throughout. Old Man, Blackbird, Axon Tree, Spenser Wingate, Egghead, Low, Granite & Quickrape were all then decorated by the Grand Army --- pending discharge.”

THIRTY-NINE: (39)
Two monstrosities now tramp off into snowy ridges roundabout. Needless to say, each one of them possessed a forgotten name – whether Axon Tree or Lift Spenser Wingate. They both carried large blades with them on account of an inability to shoot, and due to the danger of an avalanche. A massive branch which was itself laden with frozen water topped and tailed its filmic image: only straining to release its potentiality thereby. It slanted laterally or diagonally across the scene, rather like a bishop moving in Slavic chess. Might it be similarly august or otherwise austere? Behind them the wind screeched in hollows and crevasses. A white tide or blizzard superimposed itself, and thence blinded all to its imponderable results. Again, a woman’s voice came loughing across the frigid air. “Let me go, I beg you. Your need for me becomes improvident in these wastes. It entreats pity’s absence or solace --- basically by way of a stony law. Could it be Doric after Homer’s manner? In saying this Toblerone bent over… with her posterior captured in a skin-tight suit. Did it blend avec her golden hair’s dome and thus interpret a model’s pudding-basin look? (Possibly so, since Dominique Francon has intimations of Tamara de Lempicka’s queens in Ayn Rand’s The Fountainhead). Admittedly though, Old Man Smithers had passed the male menopause and he evinces no interest in foxy wiles. “Still your mouth, girl!””, he bellows.

The terrain unfreezes its windy cascade and moans towards Bedlam. It recalls those hooters or tannoy’s – even a belated cacophony – which opens Gyorgy Ligeti’s Le Grand Macabre. A
score that attempted Punch and Judy’s honesty *a la* George Speaight’s authenticity. It whistles with spite…

FORTY: (40)
For – when one thinks about it – could such a clarion or tocsin reach into this dream’s territory? Regardless of which, Toblerone’s hand caresses a Seven of Diamonds, and this was primarily by turning it over and presenting it upright. Her husband’s – Thoomey’s – shadowy form envelops her… albeit in a playlet where she looks up at him earnestly. “We use these cards as a rejoinder to phantasy”, she stimulates the ether with abruptly. Isn’t this the first time that a character’s spoken or let rip within oneiric lore? Certainly – yet it merely serves to add to the other’s displacement, essentially by reckoning on such smoke as curls between them. Surely a cigarette teems visibly in her outstretched palm? Perhaps the correct image to adopt here, *inter alia*, is over whether Felix Labisse went to paint in abattoirs or not. Wherein Toblerone’s face comes out etched or mock-silhouetted; at once firmly boned to its source and black eyelinered. Her husband broods beyond within some situational light. “This happens to be a Western, yes?”, she drawls in expectation or expectoration. “So why not allow the text to dwell on Western art?” “In accord with Spenglerian notions of decay?”, opines her spouse’s hat. “Yes and no”, our *femme fatale* teases amidships.

In a delineated, cinema-streak of Lux we found our clown. He holds up a calendar of salt *in lieu* of a garden’s sun-dial. Aren’t his features scored in primary colours and rather like a German wood-cut? He begins to sing:

*Western decline’s a perpetual quest*
we give it our best
*but won’t let it rest.*
FORTY-ONE: (41)
“So what price on their head, Pinkerton? What did they do?” Having said this, then, the sheriff’s voice trailed away like sand through a shoot or an aperture. “On the basis of their war-record town after town opened its arms. Yet they were to be sorely disabused. Medals are just tin simulacra, after all.” A moment’s quiet then follows this peroration. “You ask after their criminal follies, officer. Well”, inscribed Harlequin Thoomey, “they proffer an exponential ease. The growing of monstrous heads, Hydra achievement, a riot of Comus, cannibalism, poisoning wakes, guillotining without Thermidor, involuntary euthanasia and homunculus cultivation: these were among their sins.” Harlequin fell silent after this, so as to punctuate his grammar’s imprecision. Meanwhile, Eugene merely looks on. Perhaps he realises that vermilion horses ride dawn-wards and they nearly always do so amid a shoal of coins. These latter cisterci fall from above or they meld into the dust. While a third horseman (whose Apocalypse is blue) turns within some smoke. But superintending all of this – a ‘Wanted Poster’ for Old Man Smithers wafts up and its dexterity is yellow… whilst passing to silver. When – all the time – Smithers’ wears a battered Grand Army hat plus a tiger neckerchief ‘n’ braces. He fires a six-shooter repeatedly at a pylon on which this promotion has been affixed. Do you see? Maybe, possibly not: since this conscious stream passes through Thoomey’s brain-pan… no matter how surreally.
+
In contrast to the above, though, Eugene’s rolled cigarette caracoles in its breeziness.

FORTY-TWO: (42)
“Silence bids golden in its completion”, luxuriates the Old’un after the woman’s plaint. In this regard – however – his finger points in a broken canal’s direction or course. Despite the reality of continuing snowfall… a sunken anger begins to rise. Does it convulse such a wrecking crew? After all, who can read such
non-humanist minds? Especially when one is speaking of fireflies who gather over a disused marsh or mossy stream. Each now stands around the girl with a Head-in-one’s hands… after the fashion of a decapitated rind. Is it aslant the vision of Maximilien Robespierre? No doubt: but surely creatures with stroboscopic eyes which exist on lively stalks lie abreast of this moon. An ochre disc it is or happens to be: one that rises within a sky that represents grey mixed with green! In this mental dungeon or esplanade, then, Old Man Smithers has a toad throne… while a suppurating liquid mass lay before him. It bubbles, hisses, pops and crackles within a vat. To one side, however, there forms up a cavernous interlude and it’s made up of skulls… no matter how compacted. These are base about apex to the nineteenth century Anatomy Act – whereupon Axon Tree’s jaws fall open continuously. Adjacent to such a ruler, per se, Lift Spenser Wingate slides up and he’s merely replete with a conical nose, golden streaks, bright lapis lazuli orbs and Tyrannosaurus Rex teeth. The molars of which are nothing but incisors… with all of them fondly looking at the saurian tail beneath. Moreover, none of this even goes on to mention his cap, feather, nose-band and cranial bone-arch. In a family like this (so to say) such crepitations amount to indifference’s sweat.

FORTY-THREE: (43)
Toblerone Harpie now talks on progressively… for any who wish to hear. “Do you detect a deliquescence in Western art, my husband?” For Old Man Smithers’ face was half-cadenced and brimming; or it happened to be flattened out mask-wise. One quadrant reveals a daemonic Punch… at least when set ahead of its embrasure. White-washed it is or can be construed to be – especially if redolent of a vicar’s surplice that’s been turned to ice. Possibly one of Wyndham Lewis’ lithographs comes to mind herein… minus Michel Leiris’ taxonomy. These clown lips find themselves curled from behind a card which was sequined to oblivion’s diving. Must one’s expenditure suit its seven curses – over the implementation of a deliberative Whist? Yet a Guardian
angel stands over the other side and he wears a mask – together with a sword between its upraised palms. Further to any of this (however) our mannequin hints at Brancusi’s ellipses and does so by dint of some white chalk. “But where comes formal desecration within modernism?”, intones our Harlequin. “It savours of an internal relapse”, encodes our moderator, “primarily towards the primeval or quite possibly the maniacal, dreamy, onanistic and solipsist. Take Max Stirner’s *The Ego and Its Own*, cross with Wyndham Lewis’ *The Demon of Progress in the Arts*… and give a stir. Hey presto(!), you’ve arrived.”

FORTY-FOUR: (44)
Oregon’s Eugene sits beholden to two Men of Iron and this was irrespective of Andre Wadja’s film. Because Harlequin Thoomey’s head is seen in profile by way of some balsa and saw-dust, and with a cheroot clenched between his teeth. The full hair, beard and moustache are still discernible – what with a sombrero which has been dyed to a sapphire’s elixir and points to the right. A thin corduroy of smoky ash moves perpendicularly… thereby seeking the ceiling’s boards or uppermost casements. Our sheriff begins a forgotten conversational *aporia* in the following way. “You may be correct in your diction, Mister Pinkerton! For your information, though, the Smithers’ coterie did pass through or down main street. But shoot… to a gang like that, sir, Eugene’s a mere chicken bone and not even Mario Puzo could pluck up the interest. We don’t possess a bank or a credit union, and Wells Fargo’s intermittent in its stay. Too few crumbs from a Giant’s table or by dint of Jack’s Beanstalk, I guess.” Harlequin Thoomey’s reply then came after a lugubrious glottalstop. “Where did their fancy take them to roaming?”, he asked. “Up yonder”, the semi-marshel eagerly enjoined, “cross-ways like, and by treading down the valley, possibly with plunging feet.”
FORTY-FIVE: (45)
Our heroine-victim seems to be surrounded now by snow or slush. May its ice-sheets render a coming nemesis redundant? Truly, we need an ice-queen to complete the picture… but wait a moment: could she be among her kindred already? For Toblerone Harpie rears up now --- at once all-reigning and naked save for a shaven intrigue. A loin-clout covers her vagina – while its satin radiance dazzles the dust. Above this, though, a brassiere marks time by way of a shoulder-pad; with each one covering a delicate teat. It – in turn – goes on to sub-contract a collar which lies about the throat and behind this a great foam of black-hair spills down her back. Her head, however, has altered its aspect under a peaty light: with the former being little more than a subterranean and transparent blue. Next to this harpy – and around such a vixen – a monstrous retinue gathers itself together and each one is a refugee from Milton’s lost paradise. For example, Egghead Morgan stands out with a mediaeval helmet on his crown; albeit when rescuing his latticed skulldom from grief. He’s adorned with a tattered cloak, a broadsword and a Hospitaller’s shield. Likewise, Axon Tree howls at the moon; an orb that was brushed, as it is, avec a lion’s-mané’s teeth. Each eye stares out preternaturally within some reddish coals. Whilst alternatively – and on the other side of this gathering – these offerants from Tobe Hooper’s Texas Chain-Saw Massacre make sport. Here’s Lift Spenser Wingate carrying an axe – the blade of which curves down supernaturally towards a slice. His format resembles a Church’s corbel or demonic gargoyle – what with bat’s-wings, slanted eyes, horns and heavy rib-vapours. Wherein we can see that Old Man Smithers’ other creatures – as measured by darkened amoebae – are joined together hip-to-hip. These consist of Low Termagant, Pond Granite and Rapacious Quicksilver. Each of them measures a new bestial consciousness (somewhat residually): whether it proved to be ursine or wolverine… and by a canine’s turn. Quicksilver – who bears up last – recoils to a miniature item or bonsai’s cabinet, plus a wizened micro-head spoiling towards ichor. It happens to be black in colour.
Toblerone had wanted to say: “Help, let me go, no-one needs me… it’s so cold!” But it came out garbled or encrypted differently. “It is hot where we’re going”, she intones.

FORTY-SIX: (46)
Our dreamy sequence then returns outside of all progressive or linear notions of time. A period during which Toblerone Harpie pushes out her lower lip – rather lugubriously – in order to give a truculent air. Are we to comment on Old Man Smithers’ movements (?) – whereby he lies askew of his target and with a cards’ castle erected before him. Harlequin Thoomey and Toblerone Harpie (a husband and wife team) look on distantly. What playing-drives does Smithers’ drool over now? Why, they could be cards which are devoted to his erstwhile ‘Family’! By this vernacular, then, they were alternative birthday tokens or McGill postcards with any ‘what the butler saw’ obscenity removed. First up, Pond Granite’s calling card goes a’begging and it revolves around an ebon flask (perpendicularly). Wasn’t there a ‘thirties noir magazine called Blackmask? In this Damien Hirst effort we notice that a scrawl of chinese white paint intrudes. It has been appended with a brush’s fattened end… rather after William de Kooning’s example. “Behold my crucifixion”, it smears. “My creed is goodness’ destruction. I became an enemy of society from an early age. My mind can be described as a creative nothingness. Nought really eventuates from Stirner’s pit (you see). Like science’s confabulist – A. E. van Vogt – in his criminological essay… I’m always right. (A large blot of white lead obscures some graffiti here). Rape always makes way for bind-weed’s intercourse. We live in a pestilential age… do we not?” This cardboard’s backing – once formulated as a square now – shows a poniard on a green ground. Through it all our clown-chorus has been singing… albeit internally.

*Crime’s a state of mind
we know our own kind*
we’re society’s rind.

Give us some hope
we cannot cope
let us choke on a rope
like any old dope!

FORTY-SEVEN: (47)
“The valley has taken on a pond life’s foray or cusp”, rumoured Sheriff Eugene. (Did he already have this name or might he have acquired it, somewhat retrospectively?) For his part, though, Harlequin Thoomey – a bounty hunter extraordinaire – remained non-committal. “You reckon”, our James Stewart continued, “that these outlaws canvassed quite a blow? ‘Specially when they learned of their isolation. For every farm out there had been evacuated.” “Why so?” “The railroads bought them out without a silver dollar to spin upon a tombstone… rather expectantly. For once they ram an iron-horse through these timbers they’ll be nought else. It’s a fait accompli, you understand? Those displaced will rejoin their family groups, but now… why, it’s a Golgotha: a deserted skull-like entity… just set aside for a negative fate’s edification. Tendrils and branches grow up through the barren soil and each cloaks the ground with silence’s weeds. Such tares --- on occasion --- grow up via lost eye-sockets that litter the floor. They happen to be dirty green in this threshing arena. The entire Smithers’ clan have ridden into such a desert, morally speaking. Don’t they illustrate Giacommetti’s sculptures – when carrying staves – and with elongated eyes on pods or stalks? Under a dirty yellow-moon their horses roam about; themselves basically smeared to cadmium in lieu of light. If you want to earn your commission, Mister Pinkerton, then the trail leads out into a malign fiesta. (He points yonder). Ever read B. Traven, huh? How about a whiskey ‘n’ soda?”

+ Fundamentally – by suiting his deliberations to the task – Eugene uncorks a bottle and begins to pour.
“Female mouths remain silent!”, snorted Old Man amid a flurry of snow flakes. Truly, the wind whistles around him like a hacksaw blade or its spore. At this point – however – Rapacious Quicksilver starts up. He musses Toblerone’s hair with a thickly mittened hand; while Egghead Morgan holds a sabretache to her throat. Heavy lumps of ice-water continue to cascade around them throughout. “Plenty of ways to extract one’s chill, girly”, he rumbles… To which Blackbird Leys Dingo’s response epitomises an Icelandic geyser… “YEEEHAAH, Pa!” he yodels. “How’s about a moment which is devoted to gang-rape – albeit by way of a ceremony? A carousal with the wench is a rite of Thongor, surely? For her form’s stripped naked from beach ware – together with a cylindrical gold-ring on every limb. Aren’t we just a spider that pursues these palisades; thereby swinging from our web? Oh so delicately… because, in this instance, the brown male tarantula has its master class; primarily so as to fall from the heavens with a blanched arachnid. It then has to labour in some shadowy pitches…” Whilst saying all of this – and in expectation of more – Blackbird Leys’ brow coruscates with passion. All of the above occurs (however) under his battered bowler hat – itself rather like a variant on Samuel Beckett’s Pozzo in Waiting for Godot. Do you remember such an elusive diction? ‘This is Lucky. He’s my slave.’ ‘That’s not lucky.’ ‘He’s lucky to have no illusions’, et cetera…

But still, Leys’ Blackbird gibbers on after the fashion of an Australian wild dog. His eyes glow exultantly or almost exorbitantly, and with a preternatural touch… In that instant, therefore, he’s more infamous than Denis Nielson! His coarse fibres – when aided by some spittle’s rat-tails – squelch lividly. Indeed, the youth effloresces like a tumour… while his cheeks adopt a pale tallow. To follow on from which… his gob-slit opens tumescently and like a poisonous snail he devours a fish. It hangs open on a latch whilst dribbling rheum or spray, and such a process reveals wisdom teeth which chatter on their own. Has
he actually been renting *Caligula* by Albert Camus from a local library?

FORTY-NINE: (49)
Yet our phantasm’s sequence still presses on and it’s rather like the caves under Medmenham abbey… themselves a repository of the Hell-Fire Club. Here and all, a new card stands revealed under an arching or orange light. Old Man Smithers – now somewhat Adamite and youthful in appearance – turns it over on its dewy back. Do we fear some compound interest over the matter? Because an adjacent cowl seems to be still-born – what with a leprous or insecure instinct under a Dominican’s hood. Moreover, such a mouth appears to be succulent or roasted; and it merely gives a simian’s gesture towards these unfolding twins. A brief scoring – using a compass or a scissor’s blade – surrounds this dark cube. It indicates a dream-like fecundity… For in slumber the card’s chattel – Lift Spenser Wingate – walks with you horizontally. He moves between dimensions rather like a trigonometrical feat; primarily so as to bypass the Hell-Fire Club’s steward known as Paul Whitehead. Isn’t the latter contained within a prison that’s replete with a Grecian urn, a boxed skeleton and a flickering blue-light? Wingate’s card also has some scrawl across it: it deliberates over whether criminality involves a left turn. (A progression into *The Bishop of Hell and other stories* by Marjorie Bowen which feeds on destruction’s path, primarily by opening some sluice-gates). Presumably they come to impinge on identity… irrespective of how they came to be under Oxfordshire’s soil or no. Resultantly then, Toblerone Harpie sings in the background…

_Benjamin Franklin’s house has children’s bones_  
*children’s bones*  
*children’s bones*…  
_Hail and Hose thereafter._
FIFTY: (50)
In this third gift of plenty, however, Harlequin Thoomey and Sheriff Eugene stand looking at one another. But already Eugene is pouring himself a stiffener; a factor which is itself pursuant to a golden whiskey’s slice of glass. His shadow creases the table afores he raises the tumbler to his lips. Viewed aslant ways now, the lawman’s profile seems guttural in its moustachio’d longing. A red glow suffuses the whole shebang or bereavement… especially when set against the bar’s surrounding green wood. “Can I tempt you to a draught’s tincture, my friend? May this Hell-Fire Club’s steward lead you astray? For truly, our cremation’s urn has a fine medallion on it which is named after the Greek physician Aesculepius. Should one mix it with pitch and water – so as to suffuse it with wine’s fumes? Yes and no; *odi et amo*?” “I thank you kindly, but the result has to be negative”, responded the Pinkerton. “Such liquor heats a carcass, to be sure – yet what about the truly spiritual?”

+ Declaring the facts to be thus, our man-hunter bursts through some swinging doors that capture sunlight.

FIFTY-ONE: (51)
“We were hopin(’) to rake you home like a nightmare passage… and all of it occurring before attending to our task. But we wouldn’t want you freezing to death, imponderably so! Or otherwise we’d have to unthaw those thews… albeit unbidden towards midnight.” Whilst announcing or essaying this --- by the by --- Pond Granite held a scimitar up to Toblerone’s throat. “What do you… intend?”, she sobbed. For, and as steady as she goes, Harpie no longer waxed quiet so eloquent as a child of desire. Evidently then, her body was no longer wrapped in a red brassiere and clout; nor does it exhibit a tanned flesh to the wrists. Neither were her hands hurled provocatively behind her nape – thereby fingering a flowing mass of hair. No: this young woman just appears to be afraid now.
Resultantly heretofore, the third card in our predictive reading has been turned over and it reveals pitilessness’ trope… at least in terms of Axon Tree’s lucklessness. This encounters evolution’s blade in consequence, if only to inspect a square circuit out of an old physics text-book. Do you detect such a source? It revolves around a rare plenitude of condensers… all of them attached by hooks and sprockets to a trip-wire. The device illuminates enslavement by being driven from its den or isolation cube, and it gnashes one’s teeth in the night-time. But what does Axon himself say about the matter? He ruminates thus: “a cosmos sickens and perishes. I alone reign supreme in my punishment of worms. ‘Look behind you!’, the children shout – particularly when experiencing an absent force. For bullying is essentially a bladder’s breathing! It means that such hop-scotch will be played with severed heads or beads. Lo! My dung-hill in West Wycombe reeks of Jenny – the pirate’s moll – in Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera*. She screeches about class war or vengeance; and isn’t this what Howard Brenton called practical communism?”

To the accompaniment of which… our clown spreads his arms out wide. Could he possibly be caterwauling into an invisible mirror?

Behold revenge’s electrolysis
leading to abundant paralysis
out of every sort
only to be bought
or customarily wrought
in front of any court
and by all means fought!

In our nineteenth century vintage, however, Harlequin Thoomey set his horse towards galloping straight up the valley. It was
transparent really… since darkened mountains crept round to the north. They proved to be powerful, brutal, hulking and distant. Moreover, each one testified to a sugar loaf before a brazen dawn… and, in lieu of this, the ground screwed off when addicted to some green turf. Its hue limbered up aways – primarily by acclimatising to a higher incline and becoming studded with a tree’s candelabra. Some russet brown fitted into one’s picture or sunset… and in the foreground a severed log lay up-ended. It appeared merely diffident as regards some idle boughs and contrasted with Oregon’s sky-line. Didn’t it swoon down with blue velvet (?); at once studded with cumulus and becoming proportioned to magenta’s streaks.

What’s that (?), Thoomey thought. Am I being followed? For – sure enough – the loam reverberated to some rival hooves. These pounded on the sward and they caused Harlequin to twist about in his saddle.

FIFTY-FOUR: (54)
Old Man Smithers acted now with decisive venom and aplomb. Purposively – by sweeping his rifle butt in a circular arc – he knocked over two of his sons by striking them full in the face. As a result, apple-juice and citric gore littered the snow; and it took the form of blood and rheum. It pelted or splattered the available habitat; thereby crushing all around it like broken pineapple pieces. Now the two offspring so challenged or brutalised were Rapacious Quicksilver and Egghead Morgan. Both of them subsequently ploughed a lonely furrow on this tundra’s ice. Yes… while Blackbird Leys Dingo spied on agape before his daddy’s wrath. Surrounding all of them a turquoise sky swept downwards or waxed tellurian, and each heavy snow flake sank like a wraith. The wind circled around and sucked up like a banshee in ulster-scots’ myth.

“I’ve told you boys afore, Rape and Pond, you must have a mind to keep your thoughts PURE. Otherwise I’ll disembowel both of
ye out in these arctic climes – if only to leave your bleeding torsos in the snow. You’ll then betoken one of von Hagens’ plastinates at the finish-line… at least in terms of a creature who’s been skinned to the teeth. My, my: if you treat a wild flower like dirt she’ll spawn refuse… do you acknowledge it? A father’s wrath has to reminisce about Odin in its vexation – what with a disembodied eye that floats above the spume. Yellow it is – particularly when taken together with an embroidered sack of such a pedigree. Cannot it move like lace or on a twisting course; so as to observe reality through an enlarged pupil? Hear me! For Galton’s eugenics must be fit for exposure in order to annul criminal genes. We shall harness Boas, Mead and Levi-Strauss to our chariot, and this is basically by vanquishing Lombroso forever. My clan will then prove social anthropology’s efficacy in a single-handed vista. Why so? Because crime has to be environmental or civic, irrespective of a society’s babe. Grundrisse or foundation marxism comes at us with a price tag attached – namely, lumpen proletarian justification. For – in accordance with Sartre’s Saint Genet or Foucault’s Discipline and Punish – criminality wishes to be a form of anti-bourgeois rebellion. But my family shall testify that environment remains paramount through planned breeding. Criminals are made and not born! Mark it down – and even in the Sabine Women’s rape we can create new Cains out of Abel’s loins. Do you remember Durer’s sketch? Our kind, Axon, must find a way to affix an addendum to Alexander Trocchi’s decadent Cain’s Book. We reject palaeo-conservative ‘judges’ like E.O. Wilson, Carleton Coon, late Koestler, Alain de Benoist and H.J. Eysenck. Do you see? Our relatives or kindred understand that the planned ravishment of Toblerone Harpie can only deliver Joan Crawford’s Trog. Comprehend this, my brethren, in the orgies of Kaos magic decent scum may emerge!”

FIFTY-FIVE: (55)
We find that our dreams thrive on emptiness like those caves in West Wycombe which we discussed previously. In this scenario
another of Old Man Smithers’ cards has been turned over in order to reveal a new dawn’s infinity. Look on now: this redundant fondue leaves a large space on the back of a pack made by Waddingtons. It squares off to a hop-scotch pattern which is marked out in chalk and written over by Tipp-ex (just). Since each hemispherical circle – as is held on the card’s reverse – patterns away to a rectangle’s semblance by delimiting blue dye. Rapacious Quicksilver (one moral cretin amongst many) drools thus: “Intellect was merely a matter of refined rain or mercury… even if it happens to occur on the skull’s inside. Let’s see now: my particular debility lies in a paedophile direction. Could it be characterised by Lewis Carroll’s Queen of Hearts? It’s hard wired, you know? Nothing can be done… save to castrate us from the very beginning. Because we suffer from a lesion on the frontal lobe which prevents us from full adulthood and it’s aft of the brain-pan. We’re grotesquely immature and pre-matured, you see. Hence you are free to observe our itinerant infantilism and childishness… for we remain incapable of mature or erotic correspondence thereby. All of the ideologues who emit these mephitic fumes, like Raoul Vaneigem or Tom O’Carrol, miss their target as a consequence. Since immaturity has to be the key here… Didn’t the bi-racial freak, Michael Jackson, store over five hundred dollies in his bedroom? Yes, a house of dolls – that’s the fashion! (Although surely not with the trespass which M.R. James meant in his story, *The Haunted Doll’s House*)? No: all of those drugs I’ve smoked coalesce in one Denton Welch extravaganza – where small arms and legs pile up in a higgledy-piggledy fashion. Now it embodies a doll’s hospital above a toy-shop or booth, and this bounty emerges from one of Angela Carter’s basements.”

Adjacent to our reclining panorama one’s clown chorus begins to sing. Might he be considered to be a male version of Liza Minelli in *Cabaret*? Certainly he impinges on an Aristophanic idiolect. For his coiffure reigns in orange dust – while his nose and lips
recall a mummers’ Bessy, and his lips are choreographed by rouge. Let’s listen to our circus’ verse:

\textit{No paedophile’s absent}
\textit{seen other than solvent}
\textit{or predictably dormant}
\textit{can summon up Stormant.}

\textit{Mac, unsheathe your knife}
\textit{Rule 42’s not a life!}

FIFTY-SIX: (56)
A horse thundered into the foreground against an orange hint below. Whereas – in the sky beyond our ken – inter-connected pink streaks mulct into some yellow above the trees. The stallion – for its part – appeared to be a darksome blue… as some dust moved around its hooves’ travel or travail. A green sward crept around its stem – whilst various conifers mushroomed amid purple granite. “Hold it up there!”, hollered a pursuing shade or jade. Can we take it forward from this? Because all art aficionados will know that a German movement – as defined by Kurt Schwitters – took its name from such blue horses. Surely no-one can feed on Wyndham Lewis’ essays \textit{Men without Art} with impunity? “I’ve come abreast of you, varmint! No man humiliates me like Gloucester under Cornwall’s boot”, snarled Blackbird Leys. Yet, during this interstice, another image comes into Harlequin Thoomey’s mind. It has to do with a black-garbed version of himself; at once younger and moving across an abandoned tundra. A landscape swirls in a white recollection of it – rather after a blanched Rothko with anthropomorphic shapes hindering tonality. Yes indeed: even naked limbs become discernible in a frieze such as this. Whereas Thoomey, the Mormon, strides forward blade-in-hand and over his shoulder is slung one pale-putty’s body. A mask seems to be worn aslant our Ensor’s double --- it effectively covers his captive’s face. Who might his burden be other than Blackbird Leys Dingo?
The scene had calmed somewhat, but only by virtue of a victoriously achieved peace. Several of Old Man Smithers’ sons lie sprawled about on this snow-scape. One of them, in particular, has a redoubt of white water covering his wrist*. (*The individual in question happened to be Pond Granite). It streaked onto the impermanence of an icy gesture; together with a woolly mitten gesturing beneath. Now Rapacious Quicksilver continuously rubbed his head’s soreness, if only to search under a capacious balaclava. While Blackbird Leys Dingo gazed on sullenly from afar – and his demeanour mixed belly-aching with subdued lust or ennui. Wasn’t he about to start whining like a hyena? From all of these miscreants, though, a thin spiral of breath rose up into the ether. It turned into a twister only then to die or evaporate, in turn, like some ne’er-do-well smoke. For her part, Toblerone Harpie stood at a league’s distance from these malcontents… albeit in the guise of a creature of phantasy. Moreover – and somewhat instantaneously – the eroticism and vampirella sheen seems to have left her bereft. She no longer affects any bravado or haughtiness, but rather a sense of diffidence, shyness, insouciance and a momentum towards pluck’s absence. A dull grey blanket surrounds her lissom form at this time, primarily in order to keep out Jack Frost.

Whereas the major figurine in this Brechtian tableau, Old Man Smithers *excelsior*, stood to one side of a carousel’s past. His arms were folded crossways in a patriarchal mien or cast, and the oldster’s *capo di tutti capi* aspect looked augustly at the snow. (But surely we are speaking seasonally rather than imperially or religiously?) A potent brew of Capstan full strength occasionally twirls to a spiral or mezzanine, and it wove smoke up between his fingers. Soon he would address his klavern or extended brood.
FIFTY-EIGHT: (58)
But – on another plane altogether – a further playing card has been turned upwards for our edification. For – let’s not forget – that Old Man Smithers’ lies on the ground or a floor made from lino… albeit when manufacturing a card out of Mies van der Rohe’s architecture. One of those items produced belongs to Low Termagant. Whereupon we find that its back details his psychoanalysis… all of it in red felt-tip or a violet’s shading. Could it embroider on Thomas Szasz’s or R.D. Laing’s denial of mental illness? Anyway, our collective clown-face chooses to deal with a ‘Uranian’ necklace; at least when next door to an inebriate square or carding. It (the image on the back of the card) comes fixed like a tattoo… something which has been impregnated by glaucous wires and depicts the Tower. This resonates as a tarot card that delineates chaos, defeat, nihilism, annihilation and what St. John called the Last Judgement in *Revelations*. Yet this red gossamer or smoke screen also describes Low’s homosexuality. “Inversion”, he daubs by way of a preface, “relates to a biological premise. Forget social or cultural theories of causation *a la* Otto Weininger… as outlined in his book *Sex and Character*. My debility has to do with a female hypothalamus in the under-brain… itself a downward tending or spiralling parabola which occasions adolescence *viz.* Freud. Yet underneath it lies paedophilia or the effeminacy of one’s dour youth. Didn’t Alec Waugh call his autobiography *The Loom of Youth*? Let’s leave it to William S. Burroughs’ molester aesthetic in *Wild Boys*… or, somewhat alternatively, a trajectory which begins with *Queer* on its way to *Cities of the Red Night!*”

+ Termagant has ceased speaking now – even though we’re left with The Tower’s munificence. It breaks through at dawn… plus we detect a turquoise colour that’s all lit up by a blue shimmer; and it also involves linseed oil and orange. A pineal eye superintends every available rainbow’s destruction. Didn’t Henry Miller and Goethe call it the cosmological eye? Our clown too – provoked by this Glock’s alternative rendition – starts to croon.
One pansy, one pansy, one pansy too many
‘ll unplug a gun
what fun, fun, fun
to see them run!

FIFTY-NINE: (59)
The outrider had already caught up with him – leastwise afore an
involuntary turn. His pursuer’s features flashed up before him…
weren’t they Blackbird Leys Dingo’s? Yes sir. For Leys’ look
reared up against an azure background – what with a saffron
neckerchief around his neck and a sombrero behind. The
youngster’s hair – now that we mention it – comes stringy and
light brown in tone; itself being adjacent to a jacket’s mauve.
Observe its course now… since, in Thoomey’s mind’s-eye, his
assailant has been reduced to a mouth. In this version of the
television series Bonanza, Dingo’s orifice jabbers on. First we
take cognisance of it from the left, then below, now as a singular
abstract or fluting like a diva… before disappearing altogether.
Its final release occurs with a loud POP! Even more, and aslant
of this dissolution, Blackbird Ley’s face morphs into a union
trooper’s… that is: one drawn from President Lincoln’s army. In
which, mutatis mutandis, and under a blue-peaked cap, Dingo’s
mask splurges like a Bacon portrait in a polymorphous fashion.
“I’m calling you out, Pinkerton!”, he cries. “Only the fittest
evasion curdles any steel. All prevarication falls sheer at once.
Refuse to disoblige my necessity, why don’t you? Fill your hand,
you son of a bitch… slap leather!”

SIXTY: (60)
Old Man Smithers has begun orating by this time. Like Edward
Bond’s marxian Lear, he extracts eye-balls mechanically and
with a measured tread. Lend him your eyes and ears I beg you…
if only briefly. “Listen up, poltroons! A day of reckoning is upon
your cranial lurch. We may be out in nowhere’s middle, but this
visitation frees us to cut to identity’s quick. It’s transparent
really, since, in the mind’s eye, one dwells on the viscosity of
blood. Assuredly, I open a shelf behind me in order to release an unborn baby. It happens to be fixed in aspic or in suspended animation; whereupon a mutant emerges silently on a dais. (Note: Saddam Hussein’s secret police – the instrument of yearning – were alleged to keep prisoners in this manner.) Nonetheless, our babe comes fully formed or otherwise he’s concertina’d in a covenant of rags. It resembles, *inter alia*, the gigantic foetus which floats in space and that ends Arthur C. Clarke’s *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Most definitely... because an embrasure’s spectrum or its raised skin lies over the child’s forehead. Otherwise he’s as bald as a coot or some such; and he possesses a diamond studded ear-ring on the left-side. When one considers it, though, even his smile has a sinister ambit. NOW HE’S THIS FAMILY’S FUTURE! Make no mistake about it… my children. For a circle or community like our own shares every meaty dollop. We require some newish blood or a red-herring at its source. Furthermore, whether our rutting results in a son or a grand-son makes no difference to me! Like all criminals – philosophically speaking – we’re consequentialists… do you take my drift? For us, then, intent means nought in today’s broth. All that matters involves getting what you want, here and now! Yes…? By all that’s unholy in Bosch’s proboscis, what’s keepin’(‘) those boys?"

+ Toblerone Harpie merely looks away with veiled worry and disgust now. A part of one curtain has certainly been raised… could it be her future? She must act against its resource at every turn.

SIXTY-ONE: (61)
Still – multi-dimensionally – a playing card has been turned over in order to lament its backward design. May it be a keepsake in velvet; if only to primarily draw out its diagonal parquet? This one treats of a leper’s domain – namely, it concerns Egghead Morgan. On his primus or stove you can detect a naked scalpel… it essentially depicts Louis Ferdinand Celine’s surgery or
haemoglobin. Moreover, such spume finds itself outmanoeuvred or contained on a black square in relation to Modernity’s affliction. Yet Egghead speaks for himself across vistas of sound and fury, or pertaining to invisible ink’s usage. “My drug addiction leads to no moral consequences whatsoever,” he says. “All lies silent before these ethical graves, you see? Having one’s veins open to the sluice warrants nullity or nothingness. Furthermore, in William S. Burroughs’ *Junky* the terminal addict grows purple skin like a reptile’s hide… Because all junkies are weak and amoral enough for aught else. Isn’t it then a case of Bad Sukie? Yeeessssss… never trust us, since lying stares up at opium eaters as a motif. We take drugs out of boredom, but repent at leisure. Crystalline sheaths develop around our hands and mouths now; yet only later on or by ‘cold turkey’s’ dint.”

*A crocodile moves underground:*
*it won’t be found*
*or rendered unsound*
*never mind being bound*
*by letters…*

“Have you even registered Bram Stoker’s *Lair of the White Worm*?”, yodels a clown.

SIXTY-TWO: (62)
In the nineteenth century we find that two cowboys – Harlequin Thoomey and Blackbird Leys Dingo – are squaring off against either’s twin. A merest freeze-frame before this their two respective horses – one a white mare and the other an orange stallion – halt near one another. The sky behind them bifurcates -- one half is tinted blue while the rest proves to be starkly pale. Next to either warrior – and passing left of oblivion – a grey-granite suspension rears up amidships. Truly, Dingo’s not alone when he bellows or ejaculates: “Behold, unofficial lawman, I’m the Angel of this North! Do you recall --- as a dare --- the outstretched arms belonging to Anthony Gormley’s statue? Any
road up, no escape from this iron maiden seems to be probable… especially when one appreciates a flight of steps which leads nowhere. It cuts off in mid-space or air only to rig its own defeat.” Momentarily though, our Pinkerton fails to reply.

SIXTY-THREE: (63)
Back in the late twentieth century – however – two myrmidons trudge out into our snow’s distant breaks. They pass equidistant from a gigantic oak – itself adorned with icicles, the amplitude of which cascades down restlessly and even without shelter. It also casts a large silhouette on white icing or fondue; and this has to measure the shading of Tyburn’s tree. Most definitely – since the two brothers take exaggerated steps that are aided and abetted by the natural slush below. At a far distance – and to the side of its remit – a forest’s interior sticks in the memory. It consists of some magenta trunks and boughs that trail away towards one’s allegory. Could you come across Snorri Sturluson’s *Poetic Edda* here? In regards to which – does either brother detect a gathering of nerds or vassals; or could it be the sunlight’s trick? Whereupon – in either Sibelius’ tone-lands or Strindberg’s paintings – one glimpses the North’s lightless vistas… together with darkness’ coagulation or the mystic bronze of melting ice. Our twin desperadoes happen to be dressed in wind-breakers, boots, knives and winter-hats. They are treading out the perimeter of a Frost Giant’s daughter; i.e., one who was merely held up in the snow-mists’ roundabout. Doesn’t she tempt men beyond a battle-field and Flanders’ pasture (?) ; or even to their veriest doom at the world’s rim. A template wherein our sun lights up a cosmos most sheer – so low is it and coming in on top of those very drifts! Polar bears meander a tad further out and the *aurora borealis* (or Northern lights) come a’twinkling. Do these followers of a white Kali pause to understand their mission? Hadn’t their chieftain – Old Man Smithers – asked them to scout abroad so as to uncover a possible pursuer? Axon Tree and Lift Spenser Wingate stop to converse in their task… whilst blinding snow swirls aplenty.
SIXTY-FOUR: (64)
Can you disclose its breed time or moment of reclamation? Because Toblerone Harpie – in a dream festival – stooped to pick up a card from a thronging pack. Might it be Death or the number thirteen which indicates absolute transformation? Anyway, what’s written on the reverse is what animates her. For it codifies Blackbird Leys Dingo’s hermetic. In this respect, then, Dingo wheels his chair along the ground in a manner that’s forlorn of all mist. It squeaks as it traverses some concrete, but also remains silent at an alleviation’s turn. Suddenly he rears up in a doorway – the likelihood of which corresponds to a dark tunnel. Each noise-plug repeats itself and becomes increasingly irritating, rather like the tannoy at the beginning of Ligeti’s *Dance of Death*. Certainly Dingo’s whine echoes in these chambers… yes, even at a time when the language licks at zero and comes to be delicately etched on his card’s back. Ahead of him – or abreast of these sepulchral tints – several mannequins glow in the shadows. Each one of these figures waxes flesh-toned or pulchritudinous in a witness’ terms. Evidently then, the angularity of these modelled heads – when carved into rectilinear planes – recalls Marc Quinn’s efforts. Can you tell that these are part store-dummies; whilst they hint at a return of Flaxman’s putty… somewhat restoratively. But like all cripples – even speculatively – Blackbird Leys Dingo starts lashing out. His words are as follows: “Shut off the ‘disabilist’ discharge, my language clears it away apace! It’s not for me a position or a piece of white ticker-tape – albeit at the starting-line in the para-Olympics circa. 2012. Aren’t they supposed to be in London’s East End… a territory which finds itself choc-a-bloc, as it is, with ingrate immigrants and doleites? No. I claim such privileges by rite of ugliness or deformity, and this is whether they are suggestive of Quasimodo or not in my own branding. Leaven my bread’s flour with some spittle, I ask you! Because – in accord with Erich Fromm’s *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* – one only assesses beauty through its opposite: namely decrepitude. Beauteous starvation assists a criminal urge (therefore). Reject
body fascism, embrace a spas(.), exalt a crip(.) and risk the day! I demand my Francis Bacon portrait that has been cut up in slices and still gesticulates over Isabel Rawsthorne’s reserve. To repudiate able-bodied tyranny loosens a thousand stays – like with Queen Caroline. Corsetless, didn’t her belly flop around her knees? Oh yes, an unheroic or dog-in-the-manger attitude suits us. We’re Thalidomide’s toasties --- always fit for purpose!”

*Cripples, free-loaders, runts to boot
get out on foot
by any possible root
irrespective of soot.*

>Toot, toot!

SIXTY-FIVE: (65)
Our invisible camera pans across now onto Harlequin Thoomey’s face. He’s parked his horse to one side momentarily; at once pursuant to conflict… or, at the very least, his own O.K. corral shoot-out. A hat lies aslant his head, the brim of which comes down to a shadow over the lawman’s visage. It suffuses a grey penumbra – together with a texture that leads onto a beard’s template, if only then to point towards magnetic south. A brilliant purple such as this – when embroidered with whiteness – lays itself open to affected cumulus. Nor can we avoid those streaks of French blue which tilt like Hockney’s lines or dints… at least when contrasted with Thoomey’s dot pattern. Can you dismiss printing’s pointillism – especially when drawn from Lichtenstein’s example? Resultantly though, their horses whinnied and circled behind them as if sensing ensuing conflict. A lightish sapphire-cluster fell as either man gained control of refractory mounts… when this proves to be pursuant to various rocks carved like a grey gargoyle. Each cowboy stood occluded before the other’s rage; whereupon two six-guns reared out of Dingo’s holsters. Behind his assailant a conifer moved slowly in the breeze. Mesmerically speaking, Harlequin stood gauntly like
the pulp character *The Shadow* or a figurine who advertises Sandeman port. Yes sir – but in the batting of an eye a long-barrelled weapon left his great-coat in order to cleave a bullet through Blackbird’s shoulder (necessarily so). He screamed, fell backwards and dropped both pistols.

Whilst – correspondingly or in an Enochian transcript – Leys’ wheel-chair clattered down a stair-well. (Don’t we understand that the mind has many mansions?) A blood-curdling cry accompanied this digital drop. When above him two spectral overlays – a young curate and the Devil – swirled in etheric mist.

**SIXTY-SIX: (66)**

Two brothers had fed themselves livid with the snow which surrounds them. “Oik of ours, there’s no soul roundabout. Do you reckon that we’ve searched enough in this requisite pit?” came Axon’s trill across the slush. “Keep at it”, hazarded Lift Spenser Wingate, “daddy’s liable to cut out our livers ‘n’ fry them – leastwise if we disobey orders.” What they didn’t realise was that their quarry, Harlequin Thoomey, watched them from above. In this integer, then, may it come about in an undated way? At least within the format of unchartered minds… because it has a reminiscence to Josef Thorak’s *Judgement of Paris*, executed in 1941. Wherein a naked God looks on; at once spoilt for heterosexual choice and adoring his muse. Could each gesture of these *belle dames* supplement his prey – especially in terms of an untenanted entourage? Quite possibly… since a woman’s décor, prior to penetration, is to facilitate the deed. Aesthetically though, our blood brothers have other shapes about them or in their frontal lobes. These were Bram van Velde’s loose ditties or swirls, and each one was comparable to the artist’s friendship with Samuel Beckett. Yet in this *Aesthetic Theory* we cannot help but notice Maurice Esteve’s pyjama daubs, Serge Poliakoff’s potato shapes, Alberto Magnelli’s cartoons without the strip, Jean Michel-Atlan’s bicycle tyres, Hans Hartung’s juice acrylic or Henri Michaux’s looming tumours. Hadn’t Beckett
argued in his *Conversations with Georges Duthuit* that this transition portended nihilism? Certainly our protagonists – in this post-modern Western – betray distinct notions. Each to his own thereafter… yet may it strain credibility? For would village idiots like Axon Tree or Lift Spenser Wingate (both) entertain artistic roads? Isn’t their level more likely to be John Boorman’s *Deliverance* – as scripted by Jim Dewey? Indescribably so… since abstraction indicates either the brain’s helixes or a dog’s breakfast. You decide.

SIXTY-SEVEN: (67)
Our last card has fallen now or finds itself reflected in one of Riopelle’s blood noodles. Initially speaking, Old Man Smithers had attempted to build a castle with them under the table. Lo and behold, though, this final Ace of Clubs happens to be his! Would that such a scenario wasn’t the Adams Family’s buccaneering, unconsciously speaking. It combines various semblances to order in its diktat or spleen. First off, a gossamer element or thread trills across the imagination. It looks diaphanous, see-through and lacking a doily’s absent humour… nor can our clown be referring to the rival D’Oyle Carte company, even in jest. Precisely at a moment when – behind this darkened square – a threatening beating of wings is heard. It registers a raven’s cry; at once merely keening, pounding its wing-span or waiting to consume flesh… after Edgar Allan Poe’s poem. Yet also – and next to a leathery hide – a horse-dragon thrashes across this available space. Might it be a hippogriff of yore; as occasioned by a stray mouth with teeth which trails a perpendicular spine in its wake? Above this resolve, then, a pound coin circles in the sun. Its sterling adventures capture and reflect each light-beam in a picturesque manner. But, on the other half of this calling card, one finds a signal for a guillotine or scaffold. Possibly it happens to be a Bic. snapshot or a ‘what the butler saw device’: one that’s reminiscent of Robespierre, Couthon, Saint-Just, Hebert, Roux *et al*… Do you detect it? Because – in light of this
disacknowledgement – Old Man Smithers just opens his arms to treble:

Bling, Bling...
I’m falling, calling, caterwauling:
as ready as a mouse
or caught like a louse
behind your house
in order to deflect one’s nose ... Raus, Raus!

SIXTY-EIGHT: (68)
In nineteenth century Ameri[k]a one notices that Blackbird Leys Dingo has hit the ground screaming. A bullet – itself reminiscent of the Jezail one that had gone through Doctor Watson’s shoulder – had passed out of his. He lay upon the ground and moaned plaintively. Both of Dingo’s orbs were streaming lachrymosely at this time. His body sprawled prone on the sand – what with one fore-leg higher than the other and his free arm nursing a brutalised jamb. A yellow pitch hovered around these two figures; a glow which resultantly engulfed both figurines and gave to them something of a Greek tragedy. What betokens Harlequin Thoomey’s lustre, then? He buzzed over his beaten rival rather menacingly now. His form also silhouetted towards a blue halo… albeit in a manner which revealed the latter’s wide-brimmed hat. In his fists he continued to carry Blackbird’s revolvers. He held both weapons by the barrels, having denuded them of bullets. No slugs then remained in these pistol’s chambers. Moreover, as he looked down on this flogged cur, various words from the Ancient world flooded into his mind. For hadn’t Heraclitus, the pre-socratic or sophist thinker, declared the following to be true? ‘War is the father and monarch of all; some it makes gods, others it sets free, still more it enslaves.’ But such a semiotic was wasted on a bragart or a stripling like this, he mused. “What are you going to do, man?”, whimpered Blackbird Leys. “Do?”, reflected the victor. Unhesitatingly now, he became aware of a line in Goethe’s Faust to the effect that in the
beginning there was an action. Stimulated by such dialectics our hero snapped the cylinder out of each fire-arm. They were unsoldered with a violent snap… much like a twig breaking suddenly amid a forest’s silence. Could it recall an incident in an Algernon Blackwood story such as *The Man Who Loved Trees*? At this blatant catharsis, Blackbird Leys Dingo started to scream. “NNNNOOOOO!” he bellowed.

SIXTY-NINE: (69)
If we fast forward a century or so then our narrative finds itself in a driving snow-storm. Out of which a booted detective or bounty-hunter stares down on a passing brigand. He moves to one side of a negative ice-flow --- almost out of range --- or casts a spectral ballot like one of Poliakoff’s pieces. Down there – and dressed like pygmies or dwarves in Wagner’s *Ring* – the twinned plastinates known as Lift Spenser Wingate and Axon Tree zig-zag about. They carom or ricochet rather like pin-balls in a slot-machine under Plexi-glass. Adjacent to such hardened flurries, then, these ice-worms call out to each other given the season’s debris. “Can ya catch sight o’ the Lawman?”, crackles Axon. “No glow here, womb monger. I reckon he’s flown from this particular igloo. For – like the main character in Spielberg’s *Duel* – he doesn’t know when to stand and fight.” Likewise, this giant tree casts a shadow on the men who pirouette beneath it. Whereas each of our lone wolves summons assistance or booty, and this is relative to the poniards they carry in their gloved hands. What they don’t realise – when pursuant to Norse sagas like Njal’s – was that each shout pin-points their position. As unerringly as radar or sonar – in other words – they sacrifice various diagonals on Death’s chess board. Will Albericht, in Arthur Rackham’s draughtsmanship, draw away his hand from Hagen’s knee in time? ‘You did promise me the Ring of Power, son’, he wheedles.

For now – upon crossing their co-ordinates in his periscope – Harlequin Thoomey leapt down on Axon. The tree comes
between them and a rope flails around his plummeting form. Wasn’t it an eel in the first garden which solicited Man for free will?

SEVENTY: (70)
Still a question time over cards continues to subsist amid our dream characters. Despite the fact that this exercise in poker, whist, snap, solitaire, gin rummy, bridge, cribbage, etc… falls sheer. All such lacquered story-boards – when architecturally arranged by Old Man – are blown to the ground. Possibly he didn’t build them up correctly (?); or more pertinently a windy gust collapsed this castle. Harlequin looked at his wife who now savoured a vista of shattered cardings. Let’s enquire further: since such outraged words will necessarily illumine our puppets. “One’s battlements have collapsed --- no matter how encoded”, breezed Oregon’s lawman. “No fear – because all of these suits are subsumed into the Tower which happens to be a precise alchemical sigil (this). It agglomerates all other fractions – irrespective of whether they be a five of Clubs, an eight of Diamonds, a Heart’s Three or Colin McInnes’ blackest of Spades. A number 2 (this is): a treacly or feminine numerology that’s definitely not an Ace.” A finger then massages a Tarot’s corner. It shows up a Masonic illumination or curiosa; the fall of which indicates a nature that’s at once resultant, possibly unwilling. This dramaturgy falls – as in Camus – towards a waked river: when the latter happens to be streaked with Cruikshank’s lines. Abreast of all else, a Pineal eye supervenes by casting its halo or rainbow: a notification in which every available tint smoulders inside a spectrum. Do we adjudicate over Crowley’s efforts that were drawn for him by a Lady of the manor? It suffices… in a presentation where gold, effluvium, onyx, cornelian, ambrosia, nacreous pearl and ormolu all approximately yield.

+ Whereas on this staging’s side – or held in Shakespeare’s brazier – a lonely mountebank struts his stuff. He refutes the hanging
accorded to Lear’s Fool in Act Five of one particular play. Suddenly – and with arms wide open – he bursts into a woodpecker’s chant:

_A Tower or citadel
denotes destruction
abstraction
_Apollyon
_inanition
_masturbation
_and reverse cognition._

It transforms Wyndham Lewis’ painting, _The Siege of Barcelona_, into chalk!

**SEVENTY-ONE: (71)**
Before silent cinema emerged Blackbird Leys Dingo was to be found writhing on the ground in nineteenth century Oregon. An enormous dum-dum bullet had perforated his shoulder (you see). He yelled, cringed and shrieked – all of it being pursuant to a larcenous heart. Can’t you tell? “Blast you, Pinkerton!”, he sibilated. “I’m all shook up and done in… yeah. How can you break up steel with your bare hands – in a manner that’s like Zeus’ or Wotan’s grasp…? T’ain’t natural, do ya hear? Any road up: a mouth exists in a grim fashion and at a wall’s base; together with some mural etchings or tracery roundabout. It calls out when riven hoarse and susurrating, or prior to its dissolution from sight. While understandably either you or I would have to bend down… especially when close to some expectant brick now. But spent orifice or no --- listen to me --- my Man of Iron. For such an oral valve screeches to a pop – albeit when pursuant to resistant agonies or resulting from a prior fear. First it trills in Adler’s maw; then it yodels before stretching into a smirk or a beacon… all of it coming abreast of one particular countdown. No mortal shreds such weaponry without mittens – it’s contrary to nature.” “You’ve obviously failed to read Huysmans’ _Against_
Nature”, responded Harlequin Thoomey in a bass tone. “Bluntly speaking, your speech-hole lies sideways on and it can’t fathom existence otherwise. No pulsar can really leaven such foundlings, since I wore gloves in order to mishandle a Colt 45. Look yonder: you kneel silently before my entreaty – rather like a votary in church or a northern chapel. While my silhouette --- at least presently on horseback --- cleaves to a known edge. It presumes to manage a sky’s new spark; given all of the abstract foliage which exists at a distance. Most pertinently… this occurs where claret mountains level off horizontally or are articulated like South Africa’s table complex. They measure the future in terms of orange or yellow streaks (just so); and these were limned towards sapphire or filtered via white.”

In saying this, however, our hero turned his mount around and headed on out. A valley lay before his gaze and its gaunt aspect startled each retina… drenched, as it was, in sunlight. By contrast and herein, Blackbird Leys Dingo can only howl like a hyena. Does he at all represent Grendel after Beowulf has wrenched off his arm?

SEVENTY-TWO: (72)

In a repeat of such a filigree (sic) our sheriff has hurled himself from a tree’s enablement or shift. Down he plunges in a scenario where his body is sequestered to a dull grey or a rectangular brown. Amid all of this, then, a thick twine circles a lawman’s navel and it unravels its own circular concourse (thereby). Could it lash like a whip and thence afford one Pythonesque entry – or do its uncoiled motions indicate defeat? Verily, my friend, an answer lies below or in the shadows of upended Time. Axon Tree passes beneath and happens to be oblivious to the hurtling object about to hit him from above (just so). For – obviously – he cannot recognise its entreaty… and even before such an impact Axon Tree shouts out to his brethren across the blinding snow. “Ain’t nothin(’)

“Ain’t nothin(’) here, Wingate! Loneliness breeds at Dasein’s core and spreads disease roundabout. Look you: these wasteful
silences mask funk and they chatter inanely like anatomical skulls in Gray’s design. Didn’t H.V. Carter actually do those draughtsmanship cores or a lithograph’s apples?” All of a moment, however, this Tarantino screen goes blank --- primarily by indicating a nexus or onwards movement. Hasn’t Axon T. really discovered that words are traps or snares? They pin-point a target’s aperture above Snowdonia’s mount. Also – as Paul de Mann discovered in his text *Blindness and Insight* – it’s treachery against oneself to attempt their defeat.

SEVENTY-THREE: (73)
In another dimension, tilt or spectrometer of dream Harlequin finds himself talking aloud. Isn’t it what Samuel Beckett – in his post-modernity – called staining the silence? Surely now, none of John Cage’s concern with vedic *aporia* needs to intervene here? “Adumbrate this”, he begins, “an aleatory aspect in Western art has proved to be its desecration. We merely need to canvas Cornelius Cardew’s or John Tomlinson’s improvisations to realise this. Both end in defeat – and through pre-scripting’s absence – they indicate a tonal graffiti. Consider, my wife, a visual synonym for it… and shouldn’t we look at Arnulf Rainer’s *Kopf Gesicht* which was executed in and around 1966?” “It’s not a beneficent interest”, she interrupted. “Maybe”, he ploughed on, “but observe its inarticulate symmetry, why don’t you? It commences planless, obviates nothing and ends in defeat. It also trills out an uncomprehending exchange or bite, and Tracey Emin’s conceptualism radiates its own poverty in comparison to Memling.” “Yet let’s consider a work like Karel Appel’s *Untitled* from 1921”, she mewed by way of a response. “Equally abstract, its planned absence leads to a balance or serenity out of which peers a vacant need. Or – at the very least – there’s a semblance of representationality that seems pursuant to a visual addenda.” “Possibly”, he rejoined, “but the mere subjectivism of looking obviates such an intent. It precludes --- almost by definition --- a heroic imprimatur. These art-works return to Bakhtin’s Formalist tunnel or green-house. They do not hate, because they cannot
love. Moreover, their partial hegemony encodes a civilisational paralysis or trauma in our artistic life. Almost literally now – no-one can paint or sculpt beyond this cul-de-sac.” “You insist on pointing out that it’s consequentialist art?”, she asked in a low voice. “Without any concourse or doubt”, he inflected.

Whilst intoning this, however, a spiral of demi-urges scrolled above him. It thereby delineated some conic heads, music-hall craniums or sundry artistes of yesteryear. They were piled on top of one another in a manner that was vaguely reminiscent of Burra. Isn’t it obvious (?); since time’s carnival comes close to enclosing his dreams. For – pursuant to de Chirico’s Commedia delle arte or Picasso’s mardi gras – our Punch and Judy start hitting one another. They use batons or staves in order to do so. By contrast to the above, our clown engages in comic operetta rather like Gilbert & Sullivan.

Don’t look at Modern art
modern art, my friend...
it’s a steal
what can it reveal?
or conceal
by Taubman’s deal.

Basquiat, Baselitz, Ruscha, Copley, Jaar, Spoerri, Bill, Bury, Long, Danziger, Tinguely, LeWitt, Christo: what a bisto!

SEVENTY-FOUR: (74)
Slowly – and with an aching parsimony – Harlequin Thoomey’s horse moves effortlessly across the sands. It lies out in front of him – albeit rather after the affection of such dirts as these. In Jack London’s prose we note that such fried mud stirs in the wind with a violet livery. While overhead the sky lemons into a deep blue as he rides in nonchalantly. A range of mountain peaks pile up at a distance and each one is snowy capped. Whereas – in the foreground – the crooked fencing of a rodeo or a rancher’s
enclosure closes up. Every strut lilts away towards a trellis’
indifference; whereupon even a cross-beam takes its place on
yonder matrix. Moreover, a stallion and its rider then catches the
sun, *en passant*, in a way which emboldens Helios’ design. Isn’t
he camouflaged in mauve thereby (?) – even though emerald or
beryl grants its tissue: given such solar luminance.
+
Surely Pinkerton Thoomey has strolled into a valley farm?

SEVENTY-FIVE: (75)
When Marshal Thoomey’s assailant hit the ice a century hence
one sludge-like intonation reverberated around. Perhaps it
embodied one of Berio’s or Stockhausen’s pieces? Nonetheless,
a musically concrete ‘crunch’ ensued --- onomatopoeically. This
was followed up by a sickening ‘thwok’ that sounded like when a
neck’s been broken. It hangs by a thread – at once bobbing and
grinning – over a spinal tap’s residue. May the victim’s head be
skewed back so as to lie behind the left shoulder? Adjacent to
which (though) Grendel’s brother rather than mother listens up.
His ears are pricking. “That you, Axon? What goes on now amid
a murder of crows? I feel vaguely worried by your absence… and
into my mind comes a dream-scape or phantasm. It depicts a
man-beast or a troglodytic simian who’s breaking an apostate’s
back. Can it be a cosmic joke or not? If so, it would be the sort of
jape which Caligula enjoyed --- at least prior to assassination by
his own Praetorians. To be sure: this miscreant’s skull lies behind
his shoulder – as already inferred. His orbs were glassy or
inhumanly dull, and within moroseness’ grip. Yes: a ghastly grin
or a pregnant leer delineates his visage. A benumbing --- this ---
that has been picked out from one of Sheridan le Fanu’s short
stories. Whereupon the spine flops about like used elastic or
putty, and it falls in on itself after cantilevered fish-bone. I am
vexed. How shall one mark it? For his torture chamber resembles
the Clink Museum which was set up by a kinky Bishop of
Winchester in order to build swag. Various shields glint from
tarred walls; themselves being cylindrical and granite porous.
While burgundy curtains billow from recesses amid diaphanous partitions, and with torches guttering in niches. *Cui bono? Sibling, come in!*

SEVENTY-SIX: (76)

Harlequin Thoomey and Toblerone Harpie – man and wife – continue talking in this sepulchral gloom. They are hidden by multi-dimensional clouds throughout. These blossom around them like confetti – while becoming attuned to Stygia’s fondue. Let us see this clearly… for she stands to one side of him with a nonchalant and ironic look. Her head veers to the side in terms of some Vorticist license or cusp, and is redolent of Froanna in a Lewis portrait. A long white cigarette or a King Size exhibit effloresces like magnesium oxide between her fingers. “So do you insist”, she remarks, “that modernism delouses tradition and leaves it null and void?” “Essentially”, he rejoinders in a voice both hollow and resigned. “It incarnates a *Shoah* or a disparaged testament by fire. Let us take – by reason’s postulate – a painting like *Silves*. Its paint has been controlled by Maria Helena Vieira da Silva. A partially representational work – it smears a cityscape as seen through water’s reflection and in terms which demonstrate awe. Do you follow? It emboldens Ayn Rand’s *Fountainhead* – at least when visually encoded by Frank O’Connor. For its steel architecture comes at a price; especially when inside Mies van der Rohe’s casing.” “How so?” “Well! it delimits abstraction’s possibility via obvious inaction… dialectically speaking. Because even a semi-abstract canvas – such as the one outlined – affirms hermetic estrangement: it basically carries forward an autophagous image.” “Meaning?” “Da Silva’s work nullifies abstraction by virtue of a partial statement.” “So – by this token – you would prefer abstracts *tout court* after the fashion of Fred Thieler in *Untitled (W.10.57)*.” “Not necessarily, sweetheart, since total opaqueness engenders indeterminacy. It humiliates assertion – it renders subjective the objective rather than the other way round.” “Can it obtrude the curator’s role too much – thereby making him into a shaman?”
“Evidently, bourgeois formalism exalts both the critic and the dealer, but not necessarily at an artist’s expense.” “Yet on occasion, so?” “Percussively: but a latent threat subsists alternately.” “Where art thou?” “Here: one doesn’t have to subscribe to Jean Gimpel’s thesis in *The Cult of Art*, even though modernism encourages siamese twins.” “Name them…” “Why, they happen to be madness and nihilism.”

Our clown’s eyes roll in his head – intellectually speaking – and they move from one protagonist to the other. Cast in such a light, therefore, he embodies a Glock’s turn in Trevor Griffiths’ play *The Comedians*. Enter stage left…

*Abstraction’s a cat  
not a rat  
nor a ferret  
or a stoat  
but a goat:  
twinkle its toes!*

SEVENTY-SEVEN: (77)  
Thoomey’s stallion continued its canter or delivery, and it by-passed the stanchions put up roundabout. They were wood-timbered or cast abroad as struts, and proved to be waspish over these unbroken sands. Furthermore, various shrubs surfaced at their bottoms – presumably they are of a hardy or perennial breed. One cross-beam or pole – in particular – registered upon Golgotha’s ashen limbs… in that it betokened a crucified armature. Needless to say, the ochre tints of Giotto, Cimabue, Fra Angelico, Mantegna, *et al*, paled before this Western starkness. Harlequin sauntered on between-times; albeit moving across these frames at a slow pace. Whilst – with a background’s effrontery – a sapphire or a limned farmhouse baulked at an adjacent compass. Beyond its blockhouse rhetoric a fleet of magenta mountains rose up sheer or fast, and their snowy caps glistened in the sun. A star (this) which peeped out from above
them; the latter being lowly cast in its proximity and streaked with cerulean. Fatally – any dye has been strewn about – since the desperadoes’ trail led here.

SEVENTY-EIGHT: (78)
Wasn’t the blood pounding in Lift Spenser Wingate’s ears? He certainly looked about him without somnolence now. For his head found itself arched against blue’s brightness --- throughout which large snow clumps continually fell. An orange pylon covered this haze, but it lay higher up in the atmosphere or its compromised mist. Seemingly then, all of the trees around him were wintry and ashen… together with slush surrounding their lower perimeters. Wingate’s mitten clenched around a blade – whether independently of all else – and his features looked to be frozen. Momentarily, they stood outside time. His lower face came grizzled and stubbly, as well as accentuating its planes from below or underneath a cap. All in all, such a physiognomy wintered on its discontent… primarily by remembering Elisabeth Frink’s *Goggle-heads* from the ‘sixties. Weren’t these the apotheosis of male brutalism; at once celebrated to a fault and crying out against feminism? No matter… for Spenser’s bent lies captured in a triangular dimension or causeway of thought. How does it materialise, then? Why, it relates to one peregrination alone or above, and this adopts an alien’s mantle. Whereby a heavily armoured trunk + gauntlets – together with a green face – lilts towards the Iron Cross at its centre. Instantaneously though, Lift Spenser Wingate spies his brother in the snow – albeit off to one side and *in lieu* of any explanation. His trajectory has taken a leftwards tilt… but whereof doesn’t he move? “Axon, what ails thee, bro?”, he stammers. He soon discovers that no answer boomerangs back in Oregon’s sleet.

SEVENTY-NINE: (79)
Our couple’s Socratic dialogue about modernism unfurls further… In all honesty, neither of them can have scanned Tomislav Sunic’s article, *Art in the Third Empire*. But no
matter… since Harlequin Thoomey’s visage limns a penumbra: one which is at once dark, swirling, Baroque, even princely. Amid this eldritch stretch – however – he summarises a point: “Why don’t we consider Henri Michaux’s splay, Untitled, that dates from 1975? It configures some gouache on paper – even if it’s like fractured bone in terms of a multiple enquiry. Moreover, this counter-blast – to egg on Marshall McLuhan – finds a felt-tip script which was formally designed for blotting-paper and liable to a wasting disease. (When out of nowhere, perchance, Jockey Wilson’s arithmetic in biro fed its way to the shredder.) It preconfigures an absent notification and portends a semiotic nullity. Didn’t the marxist anthropologist Levi-Strauss deprecate avant-garde art? For him, the effusions of anthropological sculpture were a primitive idiolect… whereas their post-industrial counter-part, as in art brut for instance, recalls a gutter savagery lacking in true primitivism.” Toblerone interjected here: “So, by this codex, a Hans Hartung pastel once owned by the French ambassador to Cairo – J.L. Simon – embodies a misstatement. Could it be an ejaculation? Or, in an alternative rendition, it incarnates psychic vomit from the underclass.” Harlequin coughed quietly as he glanced away. “Few bohemians register as lumpen-proletarians, except when it comes to cashing in their state benefits. Yet again, the real point has to be suicidal mania or a visualisation of Henri Barbusse’s Hell.” “The first existential novel of the twentieth century in 1906, you mean?” “Naturally…” +

Our marionette pirouettes to the accompaniment of some hurdy-gurdy music. Was he an alter ego for either Harlequin Thoomey or Blackbird Leys Dingo? Who can bureaucratically list it – especially when one becomes exasperated by Max Weber’s ‘iron cage’? Still and all, our clown continually blinks amid his greasepaint. Whomsoever shall positively miss it – at least when an eye-ball extraction device exists in Edward Bond’s play, Lear? (He’s a harlequin – that’s right: an alternative to Bestre… when
the latter was a *farouche* in Wyndham Lewis’ *The Wild Body*). Unlike George Barker’s *The Dead Sea-gull*, he begins to sing:

*Nihilism*

*a quandary*

*or want of spice*

*in a trice*

*please be nice:*

*and if you can’t – be horrid!*

**EIGHTY: (80)**

Harlequin Thoomey had found this farmhouse to be completely deserted. Its recesses were darksome and subdued – primarily by way of some comparison or other. Internally – or within a fastness’ leap – a door stood brazenly open with a yellow reflex down towards one plane. Isn’t it obvious? Because signs of hurried departure lay all about… A window was broken adjacent to a right-angle – plus an astute eye amidst dimness discerns various benches, bottles, ampoules and rags thrown around. Above all else, a thick wooden table – made of hewn or crossed beams – looms out of this museum’s clink. Could it be considered as an interconnected series of cells, perforce? Regardless of which – a knife sticks into these timbers abreast of some wine jugs and cloths (whether symmetrically arranged or not). These artefacts bring forward one of Matthew Smith’s still-lifes on an ouija board. Given this… Harlequin Thoomey thinks to himself: “A struggle’s sign ricochets from right reason. For whatever family subsisted here in – no railroad bought them out… since every scintilla of evidence indicates their abduction, and not sheepishly either. They certainly fought back. Truly, my prey seeks a false note in a grave’s security.”

**EIGHTY-ONE: (81)**

Lift Spenser Wingate has seen his brother’s corse now --- it is spread-eagled on some black-ice further on. It lifts a fixity towards an exercise in forgetting… only then to peel away from
its carrion by dint of a snowy owl’s beak. Do you recognise that this fluffy bird (a symbol of wisdom and heresy) regurgitates its food? Incomparably so… and such insights remind us of a Robinson Jeffers poem. His brethren travels quickly across marshy tundra now – what with a mere outcropping of dead pines staring into the distance. For Axon Tree – on closer inspection – seems pinned to the earth via gravity… so strapped is his particular sacrifice. A thick, treacly, Baroque gulf surrounds him --- it subsumes a core’s silence at the heart of Euripides’ rewritten Medea. Let it be so… because Axon waxes cruciform after Mel Gibson’s vintage or performance. But – at this aorta’s kernel – a logarithm of inexactness mounts apace. It hints at hidden slaughters like a man-shadow – a kindred of which disclaims its own insignificance. Can liberal modernity hear us aright? Not precisely: since political correctness --- in its filth --- can never kowtow to the eagle in man. It fears heroic cruelty and remorselessness (you see). Ceteris paribus, Wingate springs forth from quietness’ trap at this time. He bivouacs on – somewhat boundlessly – when interpreting grief or refusing to. He approaches his prone brethren on ebon’s slush (thereby). Vaguely, and with a low G-factor I.Q., he notices a blade, spike or poniard sticking up perpendicularly from the snow. Might it be one of Chris Bonnington’s tulwars? No matter: quod ‘Lift’ has forgotten various lines that were learnt by rote at reform school. They came from D.H. Lawrence’s poem St. Mawr. ‘Before and after the God of Love’, the text-book said. ‘Reject Christ; embrace Nature’ – it intoned.

“Aw, Axon, get you up now… for remember that no marionette’s a fallen puppet in our tribe”, he cried. Soon Lift Spenser Wingate had caught up with a relative’s scarecrow which lay pitch downwards.

EIGHTY-TWO: (82)
Our conversation proceeds apace between two amateur dons, Toblerone Harpie and Harlequin Thoomey, in another
dimension. She distills a cigarette end into a rounded ash-tray… rather nakedly. Its embers melt, susurrate, rupture and twist --- all of this occurring within a folding or envelope that consists of tobacco and its paper. One arm briefly crosses over the other in a slightly defensive mode; while she stubs out the rest into some glass. Residually though, her discourse begins thus: “Take Nicholas de Stael’s Composition which was put down on canvas sometime between 1914 and 1955. Most quixotically, it alienates its abstract bias by performing measured interludes of tone. Whereby each shard indicates a nihilist’s summa, in that it refracts inconstancy through a dark glass. Every dialectical awakening – as in Raymond Aron’s Dialectic of Violence – mitigates against viduity. It tempts the void to adopt a balmy oblivion.” “So, you agree with Samuel Beckett in his Dialogues with Georges Duthuit, that de Stael, Bram van Velde, et al, all tempt nullity? They cross over into nothingness --- beyond even Sartre’s net.” “Obviously so… since an opposite valuation to Rauschning’s Revolution in Nihilism awaits.” “Beckett trumpets it, however – for him, Fay Wray’s scream in the original King Kong is altogether too narrative driven. He exults only in despair – that is, of a sort to be found in abstract expressionism.” “But these are the European school…” “Too true: Michaux, Poliakoff, de Stael, van Velde: they recognise Stavrogin’s vision in The Possessed, albeit subtly reversed.” “Why so?” “Because ‘satanism’ results from formal desecration or the vile, and they lack the stamina for true transgression.” “T. S. Eliot once stated a similar quandary. Let’s remember that ugliness involves two prior mesmerisms – the first lacks power; the second revels in it.” “What about racial inequality?” “Well! After Count Arthur Gobineau’s example, primitive art maximises savagery’s due and yet it invariably repeats its course… thereby tempting bathos.”

While Harlequin Thoomey and Toblerone Harpie, our couple, continue to talk on… H.’s look-alike prances and capers about. Has he ever read George Speaight’s volume on Punch and Judy, or is he incorporating a Cindy Sherman photograph? Like Lucky,
in Godot’s waiting, his coin-in-the-slot machine starts up. Surely it’s an example of mono rather than stereo sound?

*The devil’s in the detail*

*retail*

*tell-tale*

*pigtail*

*or cocktail.*

*Huzza, Huzza!*

**EIGHTY-THREE: (83)**

A slouch-hatted form now turned his attention to a barn. It lay aslant of the main buildings with a blue-rinsed décor of fine wood – itself somewhat reminiscent of Aston’s dreams in *The Caretaker*. Without good habits, then, its vista looked back to the farmhouse… in a situation where the latter spread out towards some yellow bliss. Above it an azure sky fell sheer – if only to rendezvous with yesterday’s diagonal of cloud. While roundabout his reddened tread, perchance, a brown sandy plain swept away. It rose to a hillock due east of here… at least when taken against a gate’s lost enclosure. Nonetheless, Harlequin Thoomey has been thinking throughout all of these moments: “Numerous signs of an unsteady or speedy departure rise uppermost. Like castanets, they clack their presence from the ground. Since – as the Red Indians designate – a thousand-and-one dirts hint at such a silence. Each voice then knows its serpent’s tread… irrespective of Roland Barthes’ semiotic. Clearly, our kidnapped family left in a hurry – and by dint of their horses’ noise and snorts. Warily, this tale’s Pinkerton invigilator peers into the stable. Minutes pass by greedily, but he takes his time.

**EIGHTY-FOUR: (84)**

Lift Spenser Wingate had already run across this Freeze in order to reach his brethren on the snow. Can you foretell the outcome,
O astrologer? Because he lay prone upon a snowdrift *avec* a spindle or a trail of mist rising from his snout. Nor did this come at all unbidden – especially given the absence of eyelets in his sockets (discernibly so). Upside-down he sprawled (now) and this was plus a tooth-pick in his guillotined fist. A strand of ice-crystals which were merely heralded thereby (sic) then separated a horizontal zig-zag or a distinction between planes. Whereas – above Axon Tree – his brother’s hand patted consolingly at the body. “Who’s cut at that tree’s roots?”, he buzzed. No answer came back from such retreating turf as this. Meanwhile, the sky which levelled off at a Kelvin horizon (*per se*) came to screen a magenta deluge that was pin-pointed with white. Possibly… if we took this information sideways-on then Axon Tree wore a mask. It moved momentarily from an alternate dimension --- self-reflexively --- and this manifested itself by two enormous eyes. They gleamed like bronze discs or pewter plates; when taken together with misshapen teeth, a saurian muzzle and straw-like hair. This vision laughed uncontrollably. “Heed Lombroso’s warning”, it whinnied or peeled, “crime does not pay. When you consider it, look what happened to me…”

EIGHTY-FIVE: (85)
A smidgeon of smoke cadenced in one zone’s alternative… For – even when Toblerone moved down to its holder – we can see a fivefold extension. This was an example of Lambert and Butler… rather understandably. When we consider that each cigarette came to be stubbed out on glass; a process which was itself laden with duty if it comes to heavy ware. Up and down her fingers went – while depositing a fresh stub or ash-end in the receptacle. An ebon screech also accompanied such a descent… whilst her lips moved convulsively throughout. “My husband, let’s comment upon an Oeuvre’s nihilism. Why don’t we choose to look at Antonia Saura’s *Crucifixion* (?) – at least when rendered in oil and gouache on paper, and commenting on a crucial Western pictograph. It indicates a meaningless retrospective; in that it posits nothing but existential *angst*. But
that’s not in an obvious way like the ‘fifties artist Buffet, no… Because Saura’s marking continues an inconstancy; it denies narrative; it rejects preconfiguration or the cartoon. Each daub then leads to indeterminacy’s constellation – especially given modernism’s fear of affirmation. It twists and turns on a knife’s direct statement (thereby). Such solipsism loathes directness and it reeks of bourgeois evasion. What began – somewhat inevitably – as a social protest in paint against representation has ended up as corporate wall-paper. All of which is due to cowardice, funk, cultural deterioration, ennui and exhaustion. Occidental high culture has lost its nerve – hence its capacity for aleatory improvisation.” “But surely it’s without a theme or is otherwise lacking a narrative: i.e., an arabesque on which meaning can recurr.” “Abundantly so, a thought precedes its marking and not the reverse. If you insist on an improvised crucifixion --- triadically after Cimabue --- you won’t achieve it.” “Yet what about Francis Bacon, say?” “Ah, there you have a prognosis that veers into mendacity.” “Explain…” “A modernist imprecation in the working returns to an Object regardless. He paints from the mark – yet rejects abstraction in order to recompose an image.” “In other words, he reaches through non-determinacy to meaning – primarily by a skull’s efflorescence.” “Are you saying that he had an icon in mind… no matter how dimly?” “That’s right: since his duologues with David Sylvester conceal a point.” “Which is?” “It’s the extent of his use of drawing --- or mimesis --- prior to modernist technique. He betrayed ultra-modernism, even at its apogee, by preconfiguration. In this context, then, the utilisation of Velasquez’s portrait of Pope Innocent X or Blake’s death mask were canards. They hinted at a recognised intent.” “Being?” “He understood graphic art’s limitations… somewhat necessarily. By rejecting abstraction’s inner logic – he notated a cautionary realism. Thus, as Lord ‘Grey’ Gowrie intimated, his was a conservative revolutionary art. Beyond it stands the silent film and graphic novel; and he probes farther forwards so as to return.” “Why?” “Because – in Suzie Gablik’s words – modernism has failed.”
Momentarily then, our mountebank bursts through one of Fontana’s canvases or dead screens. He embodies the spirit of Carter’s of Maidenhead. They are a steam-fair assemblage or mechano company. ‘BANG!’, he successfully breaks this palimpsest.

_Buggery_  
sodomy  
_paederasty_  
_dung:  
_Bacon’s had a run_  
_what fun_  
to fire Zoophilia from a gun!

EIGHTY-SIX: (86)  
Our hero’s sombrero’d head peers round a door – now that he’s become aware of what creeps amid boulders. His hand is convulsed towards ochre under a midday sun – what with a sapphire brilliance overhead. “A possibility may have escaped me, though”, Harlequin mused. “This family’s capture – rather like an Attic bull, could be close at hand. Supposing they haven’t left at all… what then? Similarly, I have to be alert for traps or snares – like pregnant wires laid across entrances or linked to dynamite some paces beyond.” Suddenly – atop some brownish dirt – his spurred boots come up against a trip-wire. It seems to be made from sullen grey cloth, plus a sweeping naples yellow at distant points. All in a moment – his boots are gleaming in the haze, Thoomey’s shadow zig-zags and the booby-trap snaps. Didn’t the U.S. defence department in Vietnam dub them anti-personnel devices? (They even published manuals about them which were laminated in bleached titanium and called _Unconventional Warfare_).

EIGHTY-SEVEN: (87)  
A hundred years further on and in the late twentieth century, perforce, a white-gloved hand squeezes around Lift Spenser
Wingate’s throat. AARG! Seemingly, it has come from nowhere – but, in actuality, this disembodied mitten had lain underneath Axon Tree’s body. Hurrah! It struck like a cobra or a rattle-snake – thereby uncoiling a la Vishnu in one of his incarnations. Immediately then, a pressure-point was located underneath Wingate’s ruff and adjacent to his neck’s tendons. A loud ‘snick’ is heard – itself pursuant to a snapping armature… while Spenser’s arm sticks out perpendicularly. It enjoins one of Anthony Gormley’s sculptures in its frozen grace. Aren’t they cast from his own anatomy – albeit after the Angel of the North’s exemplum? Again, Lift Wingate’s mouth dropped like a portcullis or a mediaeval gateway… whilst trailing rheum. (This latter froths to a close once the bell sounds for last orders). Both his eyes – though – stare maniacally into the distance or its twilight: and each orb looks dead, mesmerised, seized upon or hermetic. They illustrate fish-eyes in a taxidermic specimen like a bloater or a carp, roe, pike, skate and electric eel. Nor does a meta-sculpture by Damien Hirst come to mind… Whereupon – and above Lift Spenser Wingate’s tonsure – an ultra-marine sky rises aslant. It happens to be dotted with frozen ice-crystals which festoon the day. Also, a lone tree cries out adrift of plumage and its trunk seems to be half-buried in drifts.

Adrift or throughout all of this Axon Tree’s corse lies vacantly in space. Lumps of snow cover it over now and our zombie’s eyes lack retinas. They plague any Whiteness with themselves. For all the world they embody those sluice gates that characterise a doll; i.e., a Victorian effigy with marbles. These are its eyed sockets (mechanically speaking). Perhaps a profound silence characterises this vista. It hangs over Tiresius’ wasteland.

EIGHTY-EIGHT: (88)
In our personnel’s unconscious, however, Toblerone Harpie and Harlequin Thoomey debate like two ol’ Cogers from the eighteenth century. Isn’t this the inner meaning of our Dramatis Personae? Above all else, Toblerone looks down towards the
floor or its tiles… whereon she spies those cards thrown by Old Man Smithers. Each one has to be a personality index that’s devoted to itinerant clan members. Moreover, her cheeks are slightly flushed with a dulcet or Burne Jones tone when assessing these plates. Could their resources amount to story-boards which were painted on bamboo by Kurosawa in Japanese cinema? Still, mascara streams down a maiden’s flushing cheeks – with each line radiating a constellation or a New Wave gyroscope. She holds her hands in front of one bodice too far. “Listen, if we take Mario Merz’s Untitled as at all relevant… then its reverse adds nothing to our graffiti even if signed. Mark it – the painting of this void becomes more evident than ever (though).” “Do you register Samuel Beckett’s codex – in his Dialogue with Georges Duthuit – where he talks about colouring nothingness? He relates it quite insistently to Bram van Velde’s Oeuvre; but it applies more generally.” “Yes, a viduity or a commingling with nullity… that’s what he requires. Certain fellow travellers at Transition, the avant-garde magazine, thought his rants might damage van Velde.” “How so?” “Oh, merely over whether it could harm his painterly desires --- van Velde being an innocent or naïf, turpentine excepted.” “But Beckett’s Not I lacks the viscera of Wyndham Lewis’ Physics of the Not Self... it just advocates nihilism tout court.” “Possibly – yet one has to side with Stirner here: since the true nihilist might have to reject his views as an affirmation.” “He could still approach it in stages (though) after Beckett’s affidavit in Comment C’est.” “How it is, in English, as an attempt at a positive statement, you mean…?” “Verily, thou hast said it: where sub-human creatures move forwards agonisingly in mud’s plenitude… like Bim and Bom. They are situated on a plenitude of melting earth, you see. It must be a version of Dante’s fifth Circle of Hell, and by the lights, no love!” “Beckett dredged it up from his unconscious or reserve – primarily in terms of an artistic stream of consciousness.” “To prove what?” “Why, just the fact which says that writing was totally autonomous – if not automatic.” “Again, to what end?” “I don’t know… possibly so we can say that silence is marginalised
or excluded, or even a note’s left like ‘Kilroy’s been here’.” “It makes a difference?” “Indisputably, certainly to a theorist like Theodore W. Adorno who dedicated his marxist Aesthetic Theory to Beckett. He rallied around a sub-utopian deconstruction in a situation whereby modernism, in its hermeticism, resisted absorption.” “Into whatever else?” “The bourgeois spectacle – one presumes. Because all of these figures – when using their artistic antennae in Ezra Pound’s phrase – despair at Western civilisation. They are its culture’s after-echo, embers, false rage, misplaced anxiety or turds. Each one of these writers – Beckett, Pinger, Trocchi, Rechy, Bayer, Hubert Selby Junior, Kerouac, B.S. Johnson, Burroughs, Leonard Cohen and Acker – believe it’s all over.” “It is now… with them. What they misunderstood was that radical experimentation is Art’s research and development… or R&D. We have basically chosen to reach modernism’s minima moralia or nadir; it’s in eclipse.” “When you can go no farther forwards, where shall we go?” “Back…”

Meantime, our clown rocked one way and then another on an available hobby-horse. HEE-YAH!, he panted – if only to himself. May his rocking-horse be a trojan mare on stilts and beholden to some tensile wood? His lord-‘n’-master besported a Ricardo’s mask – plus a red nose, rubbery lips and roseate cheeks. A curl or twirl of black wig circled this blanched pate.

Nothing’s a bore, a store, a four, a core, a pore: even a Law. Nowt’ll come of it: speak again. Even Lear’s Fool knew as much...

EIGHTY-NINE: (89)
The barn exploded in a sound’s cornucopia or the colours of many rainbows as yet unlit. Its roof – inverted to a V’s constellation – burst off; primarily so as to inundate Greek Fire with incandescent pitch. Given to boiling it was: especially when we recall that this molten ichor was used in mediaeval sieges. Hurrah!, bolts or flaming tropes lift off like crazed fire-works
zig-zagging to the heights... somewhat inebriately. An enormous "BLAAM!" is then heard; thence registering a prairie’s after-shock or an earthquake roundabout. The whole barn shuddered as a consequence – together with subsidiary walls giving way pursuant to a version of Memling’s ‘Hell’. Or its transcription leavens to a baked offering... with each inferno reaching down to a pastel’s boiling and tumult. All considered, then, a colourful medley interchanged every which way: plus a tincture of lemon’s yellow meeting azo in terms of cadmium or brilliant crome. Truthfully, what are we to make of indo orange when it morphs into pink’s portrait? Alternately, red’s cadmium enters quinacridone by means of naphthol. Can you see? Whilst permanent rose adjusts to alizarin’s crimson. Will it permeate or violate magenta as well?

NINETY: (90)
A century’s proceeds continue to adorn us, however, now that vengeance leaps apace with a fistful of dollars. (Most remarkably, when we consider Alan Moore’s graphic novel and film, *V for Vendetta*). Alienated from this, though, Harlequin Thoomey fastens Lift Spenser Wingate in a death-grip. They compulsively hit permafrost together amid the reigning dye of such a brilliant White! Our avenging angel, the Pinkerton, had hidden under one scragged corse – if only to tempt another moth towards its flame! Yessir: both of our emblematic villains have fallen and their eye-sockets are without retinas in Gaza. Moreover, these two rag-dolls have aberrant knives... each one of which stands still as poniards in the haze. Beneath this tide lurks some French Blue; whereas a sarcophagus really comes out to meet our speed merchants. It consists of a zig-zagging course *vis-à-vis* various polar regions... almost like a grave looming beneath them and this is no matter how outside Time. Peace be unto you... For the snowy scalp which exists above this frigid earth has been opened up so as to refute Turgenev’s centrism. A wilful silence supervenes over everything again, since in such
quietude there lies a pitiless justice. Isn’t Harlequin Thoomey – by way of another incarnation – an angel of righteous wrath?

Behind him a great oak spreads its icy boughs… no matter what esplanade continues to be ploughed on beneath the surface. There’s no route out of here, my friend! Because with those fallen skewers or blades, Harlequin cuts out their hearts and holds them aloft. Blood then showers or sprays a redundant mountain nearby. He laughs heartily or uproariously, and his cachinnation reverberates on the frosty air. Whereupon – through much ice-mist like this – he displays two aortic jellies to a Grey Eminence beyond. Wotan would have approved. What does Odin declare in an imaginary Edda as yet unwritten (?): if a man comes against thee, cut off his head, and place it on a stockade adjacent to your blood clan!

NINETY-ONE: (91)
Still, the brazen unconsciousness of our characters continues apace. For beneath Toblerone’s feet a spread of art-cards litters a carpet’s surface – itself dense with imagined almonds. Do you detect their light? Anyway, her toes, under a taut black skirt, rest naked on this pile or its accustomed weave. It began here – somewhat necessarily – even though her demeanour rejects a hippy’s charge. Nor do the names bohemian, yippie, alternative society monger et al, account for this change-sheet. Possibly a follower of R. D. Laing would be more accurate a toast – viz. in a designation’s terms has she tied herself in Knots? “Ecoutez moi, if we take one of Albert Louden’s works sold by Sotheby’s in July 1998 as a bench-mark… then it feeds directly into Jean Dubuffet’s topic of Art Brut or raw art: the nature of which impacts directly on insanity.” “You’re intimating that Appealing Nude, for instance, is the product of a diseased mind?” “Not necessarily: it’s merely a converse dialectic or lesion, since modernism affects or introduces interiority.” “But without Bosch’s instantiation or insight, because his genius maudit or phantasia has more to do with High Catholicism than the
Maudsley hospital.” “Evidently, if one tacks against representation then one has to go inwards – thereby penetrating farther into a twilight zone. Do you recall those phrenological head-pieces cast in china clay or tough resin, and indicating one’s moods? Well! in Louden’s case the nude is tremulous, buttock-clenching, roundabout, elongated and serpentine. It moves abreast of transverse planes – the latter indicated by lines of flood and bar.” “Do you readily articulate it thus?” “So-so, yet our basic point has to be its insistence. For one of modernism’s secrets was that it originated from mania, alienation, anomie, catatonia and instability. Emotional bipolarity necessitates the creation of new images (you see).” “Could they have been seen before?” “Not once but twice: since psycho-art has made a cult of Antonin Artaud. It crucifies the surreal --- primarily into the more surrealistic. It becomes a matter of David rather than Paul Gascoyne. Furthermore, in Anais Nin’s Diaries Artaud’s eating habits are digested, but this need not concern us. What convinces us has to be modernity’s magic camera – i.e., its introversion or dream-time.”

Toblerone Harpie puts on a Harlequin’s mask and sings:~

*Louden’s in the dock*
what luck
*heedless of Spock*
frig a duck!

*Obese women abound*
or run aground
*as items found*
on castration’s sound.

NINETY-TWO: (92)
Amidst an all-consuming flame a distant curlicue or figurine shifts across our vision. He emerges from a holocaust of dots – only then to smooth his passage through Fate’s wilderness.
Mayhap, this *Shoah* evinces a horse’s bewilderment or distress, but any confusion suffices under a collapsing roof. Similarly, to adapt those lines from Tennyson, flame existed to his left, fire to his right, pitch *avaunt* and bellowing flames before… and yet into death’s valley rode the six hundred. Still more ardently, then, a blue-dappled stallion emerges at pace with a dust-cloud cleaving to its hind quarters. Whilst another horse steals the show and it’s limned in dun ochre. It succeeds in cannoning into a wooden bulwark before driving off in Farmer Jones’ direction. Do you remember skimming the pages of *Animal Farm*?

Needless to say, a flame-sheet boosts its own Glory --- primarily by roaring and bellowing prior to extinguishment. Past all sense of muster, though, Harlequin Thoomey broke cover from this furnace with a torrent of ingots caroming around him… somewhat incandescently. His physiology then blurs or finds itself shot through with orange… all of it seemingly abreast of Dante’s fifth circle. Whereupon – and amid caracoling sparks – he emerges carrying a foal. The young animal is shaking with terror. Perturbation quivers in every one of its limbs, but Harlequin doesn’t share it.

NINETY-THREE: (93)

Our twentieth century Thoomey has become aware of certain facts now. One of which happens to be the inner mind-set or delirium of two despatched criminals: namely Axon Tree and Lift Spenser Wingate. They both dreamt similar purgations by way of appearance. For – when he slew them – a joint reel passed through their brain-pans… respectively speaking. It consisted of a giant or malignant toad which was reminiscent of Hans Christian Anderson’s fables. This amphibian or flip-flop lay atop their chests… whilst everything else became elongated and spectral. Occasionally the scaly opened its mouth in order to reveal Old Man Smithers held by a circular tongue. He cried out in bewilderment and fear: “AIIEE!” But suddenly the frog’s ambit alters significantly and Axon sees his image reflected in its face instead of a crazy kermit. To either catatonia’s left or right
he notices a graveyard’s perch – what with the necessary appurtenances, crosses and gates. Who is to say that it doesn’t register Stoke Newington’s exercise in the Gothic… at least by way of an abandoned ossuary? Look up, look up Spenser Wingate and play the game! Miraculously though, our web-foot climbed aboard Wingate’s chest and its orbs stared blankly, retinalless or without a flicker of emotion. There seemed to be no front or back-brain activism whatsoever here. Yet it started to speak up instantaneously. “Axon and Lift, my errant children, you’re surplus to requirements”, gurgled the frog. “This storyboard no longer enjoins you.

*Dead, dead, dead*
*in the head*
*no need to wed*
*or smartly bed*
+
*Kiss, kiss, kiss*
*be sure to miss*
*a princess*
*all’s amiss*
*what bliss!”*

Could our toad of Toad Hall – in no matter how thin-lipped a way – be waiting on Toblerone Harpie? So that one peck on the cheek might transform him into Harlequin Thoomey. Isn’t it a matter of glandular transference, thereby?

**NINETY-FOUR: (94)**

Our two personifications – who reckon on the rubric of Toblerone Harpie and Harlequin Thoomey – continue their Platonic dialogue about the nature of Western art. Partly to fill in the time, my friends, the Pinkerton’s wife gets down on her knees. She folds both legs beneath a short black-skirt and starts to collect some art cards. Previously they had been strewn about across a carpet rare… or were these plates really ink-spot tests
from psychoanalysis? May such a rebus mimic a display of mania? “To confirm this prognosis, however, we notice that modernist art refutes film’s trajectory”, our female counterpart wondered aloud. “All of which relates to Cindy Sherman’s photographs”, he replied. “Don’t they stimulate a needle-point; primarily in order to hint at unmade flicks?” “Possibly, but cinema has taken fine art’s narrative role – why deny it? This, in turn, created a crisis for intellectual representation which forced it inside the mind. Various interior monologues then grew up --- themselves the equivalent of Beckett’s oldsters in bins.” “You refer to the Irish nihilist’s End Game, where, as in Behan’s Queer Fellow, a sensory deprivation chamber waxes dumb and blind. Surely it’s a pre-emptive strike at super-realism? A playlet within which these characters masquerade as a freak-show – as contained in a black box after a nuclear exchange… mutually assured destruction and all that.” “The dark livery of its cube, you mean? For this pin-hole camera lacks an aperture to reverse the plate through. But nonetheless, it tracks a sadistic short-cut to Horst Bienek’s The Cell or Hubert Selby Junior’s The Room.” “Look at it this way: stop or freeze any frame in a von Stroheim film – irrespective of its black-and-white status and a mono soundtrack after digital remastering. Doesn’t it then look like an Old Master? Let’s consider the scene in Queen Kelly – where a Ruritanian maiden is whipped downstairs by a Queen of Hearts. Or alternatively, what about the degenerate depiction of Tully Marshall in the unfilmed Poto-Poto… when he plays Yan Vrenen? Examine also – my friends – the mock-crucifixion with Nicki and Mitzi in bed on either side of Cecilia’s corpse. This occurs in Part II of The Wedding March known as ‘The Honeymoon’. A large, fleshy, Tridentine crucifix lolls between them – it outdoes even Mel Gibson’s The Passion of the Christ. Finally, we ought to look at Mae Murray in The Merry Widow… whereupon, in a wedding gown, she passes across a pellucid floor on which has been traced a zodiac. Her virginal status is soon contrasted with the polar bear-skin beneath her feet.
On either side of Toblerone’s head, though, two reflective clown faces gather their chins. As time marches on their resemblance to wood-cuts becomes more and more pronounced.

*Film’s no restraint
it’s taken away paint
by heedless complaint
but no real constraint*

+ 
*T’ain’t it so, boss?*

NINETY-FIVE: (95)
Back in an exploding stable during the nineteenth century Harlequin charges forth horse-in-hand. He has rescued a miniature horsy from a fiery oblivion or limbo… and do you recognise what’s afoot? Since his figure comes wrapped up in a flaming rapture – together with a foal who’s slung across either shoulder. Even the very ground rises around him in pitch – as liquid fire embraces its make-belief! Only its earthen quality retrieves it from utter chaos… whereby a horse’s blue hooves cascade in the foreground. Does it speak to that German art movement, *Die Blaue Reiter*, which once dwelt on sapphire yearlings? Or may they wallow in the shallows with each passing facet: whether this be cerulean, ultramarine, cobalt or French? It proved to be the sea-green quality that suffices or over-reaches itself. Anyway, Harlequin Thoomey emerges from this steaming bubble… particularly when abreast of a door-frame’s kaleidoscope that tilts to the side. A young horse --- still alive --- quivers around his head --- whilst yellow and red tracery licks at a nearby pyre. It continues to soar above all other offerings.

+ 
One factor becomes obvious now – at least in Pinkerton Thoomey’s refraction of the real. It betrays no other anxiety than this; especially in features which are pink going on purple and founded on red. Let’s see: it definitely intimates that Smithers’ gang care nought for animals; and their welfare leaves them cold
amidst such blazes or scorch. Have they read Savitri Devi’s *Impeachment of Man*, perchance?

**NINETY-SIX: (96)**

A century further on we notice that various icicles fill the sky… many of them re-interpreting H.P. Lovecraft’s anti-god Nyarlathotep. It (the heavens) lie haphazardly across certain myths which pertain to a Frost Giant’s daughter. She hasn’t consulted these rivulets running down the rock or pursuant to likely runes. Rather… all of the available Smithers’ gang – Old Man, Blackbird Leys, Pond Granite, Rapacious Quicksilver, Egghead Morgan and Low Termagant – have adopted an Indian file. They are strung out like penicillin in darkness… albeit when moving towards iced-water’s transparency. Old Man Smithers went ahead – merely attached to his brethren by an invisible rope – and masking the drifts or proving insufficient to a day! In this uncertain way, then, one ounce of anti-freeze mushroomed a conscience or its duty: when refusing anxiety and not embracing what Emile Durkheim called *anomie*. Surely none of these gangsters can be aware that sociology began with his study on suicide in the nineteenth century? Similarly, these heavy drifts mantled towards blueness – while leering at a waste’s expectancy. For a moment Toblerone Harpie is thrust ahead of them and comes attached by a halter to Blackbird Leys. Thus, each pillar in an interconnected column feels a need of some support. Because – like Doric pediments – they move to substantiate Indigo Jones’, Christopher Wrens’ and Nicholas Hawksmoor’s architecture… it always bleeds out to a lost beginning (no matter how resultanty). Even though – and igloo-like – it can only exhibit a degree of salience through upturned snow. Will one see its devastation overturned… leastways in our lifetime? Regardless of any of this, however, the odd sapling sprouted from frost-bite or levelled off against tundra under mercurial locks like these. Meanwhile, a magenta horizon brooded over sleet’s form or its ready impact. Yessss… no icy sludge can really stop a slippage towards burning in an aftermath
of books. (At least if we want to understand Ray Bradbury’s inner logic in his s.f. novel *Fahrenheit 451*: the temperature at which pages light. Incidentally the film of this work – directed by Truffaut and possibly occurring under Lucien Rebatet’s eyes – has a fascist aesthetic. Understandably then, elitism must take a pride in its forms…)

NINETY-SEVEN: (97)
Our Punch and Judy confab or dialectic continues apace in another dimension. Most particularly… when the two protagonists who visit silently happen to be Toblerone Harpie and her husband, Harlequin Thoomey. But where is the baby? Any road up, Toblerone has collected the cards or brochures, and she holds them to her stomach in a prim fashion. “But what of primitivism’s connexion to modernism”, she avers, “as concerns a savage teleology or mirror?” “Rather than a necessarily primaeval mind, you follow? Well! it all relates to the pace of an outsider’s onrush or speed. Because Dubuffet’s concept of *Art Brut* – somewhat imponderably – demarcates possibilities from the outside in. It happens to be elemental. It also indicates a provender of alienation, mania, mysticism, drug usage, perversion, desperation and lycanthropy. Let’s consider, for example, Antonio Saura’s *Madonna* in its bleary paint. May it articulate uncleanness’ role (?); and this was possibly within a dithyramb that pursues no sound.” “Most particularly, the articulation of freakishness hints at its observance… hence one registers modernism’s obsession with low, carnie and mass culture. A hint of Grand Guignol, *en passant*, has much to do with an itinerant modernity… do you see? One only had to think of Picasso’s harlequins, de Chirico’s *commedia della’ arte*, Lewis’ Bestre amid Flemish *Wild Bodies*, Ensor’s masks, Walton and the Sitwell’s *Façade*, Jim Dine’s ‘car crash’, ‘sixties and ‘seventies happenings, Schwarzkogler’s mummy swathed in bandages, morph sculptures like *Death of a Hippy*, Actionism, La Fura dels Baus’ negative circus, Arnulf Rainer’s *Kopf* or Niki de St. Phalle’s *Le Poete et sa Muse*. An endless scroll can enfold –
quite easily – before one’s gaze.” “Didn’t B.S. Johnson, an English post-modernist, speak of a list’s sanctity?” “Thou hast said it…”

Talking of a clown’s desiderata, my friends, our death-mask limps before us in some subdued light. Its coils form a comedian’s architrave when seen from the side… wherein a red nose remains bulbous throughout. He warbles the following:

Hippy
yippy
happy
choppy
dippy, weepie, zippy: pip, pip!

Our roisterer opens his arms wide to impart the following. “According to Doctor Berg in his two volume work The Sadist, a loon provokes an erection by hanging himself! His case study was Kurten, you know, the murderer upon whom Fritz Lang modelled M.”

NINETY-EIGHT: (98)
Harlequin’s Pinkerton noticed a speck in the distance when he turned from a flaming affray. It reflected askance or in terms of entrapment – after those holes in shutters which Sir Isaac Newton used. Do you recall this? He initiated optics all on his lonesome – basically by refracting light-beams through prisms in his Cambridge set. Thoomey mused about this for a second before dismissing it from his mind. But what he spied intrigued him… since the barn burnt like a lofty pyre: especially when reminiscent of a viking’s cremation or the penultimate scene in Beowulf. To whit: the decaying shed spat forth its juices and spurts – much after the frequency of Domenico Gnoli’s painting Desk. A roseate glow surrounded its timbers and caused them to rear up, pulsate, froth, rise, swell and scrawl. In comparison to this, however, Harlequin Thoomey’s features were limned in
light blue... but some mortal origami sufficed, since his nethermost portals waxed rather ebon. Let’s be clear about this: looking up and spying a light under a gibbous moon an optical spasm shot across the valley. It passed straight through a Pinkerton’s iris… only then to invert off the eye-ball’s back prior to jigging itself aright. In this incident, then, our vigilante knew that this incendiary handiwork was overseen – probably by a pair of military field-glasses. After all, weren’t the men he pursued ex-soldiers from Lincoln’s Grand Army? One doesn’t really need to peruse William R. Brock’s *Conflict and Transformation* to ascertain it. No – because an outcrop at the valley’s head or cusp reflects a glass (instantaneously). At last… he has detected the Smithers’ gang! They are all up there – merely shrouded in violet and distant from the moon’s effulgence.

Furthermore, abstractly tall pines kept still continuously… each one as straight as a pikestaff or a toy soldier. While a granite or pumice cliff lies over to the right-hand side. The essential zodiac, though, happens to be this: Old Man Smithers’ *cosa nostra* --- plus any hostages they have seized --- are holed up in a pine cabin. It was situated on a stony bluff way up in Oregon’s sky and at a cleft’s summit. Why, back in Eugene they’d called it Scaramouch’s Fort… presumably after the character with the elongated neck in Punch and Judy. Isn’t he an extension of this puppet theatre’s clown, Joey?

NINETY-NINE: (99)  
All of our fleeing desperadoes – as well as a trapped female spider – adopt a single file. They walk into an oncoming blizzard or its hail storm. Necessarily then, conversation between members of our Comus’ Rout dribbles on inconsequentially. Despite all of this, Toblerone Harpie and Blackbird Leys Dingo strike up the band. Don’t you know that it’s good to talk? “Why are we continuing this furlough… if only to progress into sundry griefs later on? Your brethren or comrades, Axon Tree and Lift Spenser Wingate, have yet to return to us. But still our march
into desperation and across a skull’s vista tempts various slaughters. Do you wish no other life than this, Leys? It vexes fate and avails you nought from these runes at sunset. Can you be anything other than carrion, my boy? Look at this now – for it helps to foreshorten a nightmare. Let’s imagine you’re contained in a toga which is died orange and that exists inside a metal drawer or its envelope. Yes, it acts upon a sheath or one of its torpedoes is found to be enclosed in a medical thriller by Robin Cook. Is this aught your utility marches towards – only then to be trundled forth on castors like a truckle-bed so as to serve Loki’s patriarchy?” “Enough wench, your tongue moves like a metronome in the head. Learn to curb its excesses… To facilitate which – why don’t you look upon Old Man Smithers’ or Pa’s face? In repose it stifles debate through self-congratulation – while its inner nature chooses to recoil when more actively engaged. A critical Guardian Angel, then, when weighing perdition’s souls would see his miscued eyes, rank breath, toothlessness and didicoi status. We wish to rape ‘n’ kill, see? For in our hatred we depict ugliness and a wolverine’s perfume. Indeed – amongst ourselves – debility cautions against unborn cancers!”

“Any path… Axon and Wingate must take a chance on their future course. If they don’t make it then one will slay and cook the other! Didn’t divinity once hear Abel’s blood calling to him from the earth – especially when pursuant to Durer’s Cain? Make amends for it now: either they catch us up or we die here --- including you.”

ONE HUNDRED: (100)
A fog of unknowing curls around dreams and it poisons the loftiness of hitherto mentioned conceits. Toblerone gazes sharply at her spouse – while a Bishop moves diagonally across their aesthetic lustre or chess board. “To be true, we must return to a prior dialectic in order to dislodge its facts. Remember when we compared silent cinema to Old Masters in particular? What
gestures do you stylistically encode?” “Well! the venus in furs deportment in Queen Kelly speaks of some former tropes… Let us first consider the dead Christ supported by angels which eventuates from the Lombard School in the fifteenth century. (Whereas Max Nordau’s degeneration theory might then cut across three correspondences at once). The first is Pedrini’s Salome with the Head of St. John the Baptist… wherein a tough-minded nymph besports decapitation and it happens to be reminiscent of a medusa in Bram Stoker’s Lair of the White Worm. Similar echoes can be seen in the brassy Herodias’ Daughter by Piombo or they reappear – when redoubled with lightness’ macabre – in Cesare de Sesto’s Salome. In it a dulcet Kate Moss steals immodesty’s show and this is without heroin’s touch… whereas an obedient servant holds up a rind whether it’s headless or baptismal. Needless to say, a classic touch reinvigorates Christianity by fusing pagan truth to it (primarily).”

“May we denote a sacrifice, though, in terms of von Stroheim’s Calvary?” “Most persuasively, since numerous cavalcades indicate a Golgotha or an unhindered ossuary. Let us also examine Dali’s Passion in its prior or reverse perspective. For – in Pollaiuolo’s template – we will be able to detect St. Sebastian’s martyrdom… but over a naked Christology we shall have to look at Castagno’s Crucifixion (or possibly Giovanni Bellini’s Pieta and Mansueti’s Symbolic Representation of the Crucifixion suffice). Yet again, Matteo Di Giovanni’s St. Sebastian stirs a blood-pot… whilst Pesellino’s crux, Raphael’s version and Niccolo da Foligno’s triptych avoid any gore whatsoever. They indicate a sacrificial serenity.” “Innocence, my husband, what of that?” “Take your pick: we can have numerous examples of the Madonna and child by Pintoricchio, Romanino, Signorelli, Tura, Previtali et al… and even Reni’s Magdalene achieves double-top in this darts game!” “Who can fathom a clown to sing it – particularly after Gilbert and Sullivan’s Topsy Turvy? No way: because Longhi’s Rhinoceros won’t exhibit at Ricardo’s big top.”
Weave some rope, let’s hope, don’t mope, we’ll cope…

ONE HUNDRED-AND-ONE: (101)
“HOOO-EEE-YAAH! Will you look at that burning out-house”, cooed Old Man Smithers. A pair of military-issue binoculars lay before his slits and they reflected mayhem in their discs. For the barn stood out twice-over on the glass – primarily so as to reposition a holocaust which came astride of infinity. All of this occurred in a scenario where fire lifted from its roof – thence going straight up in a line. Looking out, though, Smithers’ hands were entwined with felt gloves… and their colour was fawn or light brown, and they steadied each lens. Whereas a pale green effulgence – whether pearlescent or emerald in hue – limned his background. But our gang-leader has already started to speak: “A grave salutation meets such a fate, my children! Our pursuing Pinkerton – hired by destructive agents – is now kaput. Obviously, he’s gone down beneath our blades or poniards. Aye, so must all perish who brook dissent like this. Truly, no-one may challenge one’s propinquity or gene line; and pity’s answer breeds a new enslavement. Remember – in accordance with Cocteau’s novella Les Enfants Terribles – that cruelty enhances respect.”

ONE HUNDRED-AND-TWO: (102)
Amidst an all-encompassing blizzard our two protagonists, Toblerone Harpie and Blackbird Leys Dingo, continue to converse. Initially, he’d viewed her solely in erotic terms… whether either as a vamp or a corrupta (sic). Hadn’t she pranced before them in a provocative smooch – albeit irrespective of any Kelvin temperatures roundabout? Maybe it’s got to do with a Devilina’s gesture or timing (?)… whereby she resiles aslant his gestures (alternately speaking). Wasn’t she naked, momentarily, save for calf boots, a G-string and brassiere? While a purple cloak which was itself edging into a silvery lining stretches away like a mantle behind her. Further, her limbs were sheer, brazen,
honey-tanned, athletic and yet aesthetically pleasing. Perhaps – like a von Laban dancer such as Claudia Minne Boyle-Vercrysse – she represents a gymnast in light training? (This happens to be artistically speaking, you understand…?) Around her various steps occur and their marbling was characterised by serpents, salamanders, pythons, cobras, side-winders, hippogriffs, copperheads and the like. All that proves to be missing, however, is Mephistopheles or ol’ Nick, and he stands to the rear in a manner more reminiscent of LaVey than Goethe. In this vision, then, his conspectus looks crimson, muscular, cross-armed, grinning, George V bearded and Satyriasis-laden. Simultaneously, he also encodes a centaur such as Nessus whom Hercules stuffed with a shirt! Beneath the waist he’s a horse, you’ll wager or register… and come to think of it: wasn’t Anton LaVey Roman Polanski’s spiritual advisor on *Rosemary’s Baby*? Various skull-heads – or the craniums of forgotten prisoners – surround a Goat of Mendes’ hooves. Certainly, it’s a far cry from a-madding crowd – let alone Madame Blavatsky’s Prometheus or a light-bringer to man. In an eye’s flicker – therefore – such female-filled fantasy has gone… whilst Blackbird Leys Dingo recovers the fact that Toblerone Harpie remains now.

ONE HUNDRED-AND-THREE: (103)

Heraclitus’ notional dialectic continues vigorously in a third dimension. Might it involve a multiple compartment TV; or a screen filled with diverse images like an astronaut and Mickey Mouse? Notwithstanding this, Toblerone Harpie turns towards her husband, Harlequin Thoomey, who exists in the shadows. “Does primitivism enfold modernism’s intent?” “Most definitely, beloved, since modernity wished to confront the *fin de siecle’s* effeteness with angularity. Hence we are able to detect a needful brutality or a savage effrontery… and surely a *farouche’s* wiles confound an overly refined drawing-room? Do we remember Jackson Pollack urinating in Peggy Guggenheim’s fire-place? Or, more dexterously, how about Jean Gimpel --- of the gallery-owning family --- writing a tome called *The Cult of Art: Against*
Art and Artists. Yes indeed, primitivism certainly recounts a ‘Blast’ – itself the title of a Vorticist magazine, if you recall. Can Wyndham Lewis, William Roberts, Helen Saunders, Jane Dismorr, Ezra Pound, Eric Wadsworth, et al, really manage a robotic furnace by themselves? “One supposes that they projected a thesis before the advent of Lewis’ antithesis – namely, The Demon of Progress in the Arts? By any redoubt, then, Nicholas de Stael hints at a ferocity’s misstatement… if only through a formula’s derangement or ambient void. Undoubtedly, a desire to paint such an impasse tempts viduity above all. It ends up with those Anglo-Irish longueurs which were primarily captivated in Beckett’s Proust… a work that double-headed over Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit.” “Yet does de Stael’s deconstruction tempt form away from itself; especially by creating against the piece?” “Maybe – but to what end? A statement’s finality clears it of misprisionment’s charge. If – perforce – art speaks of its purposes in a whispering hermeneutic, then what about life? It betokens formalism not any reduction in content. In this regard, wifelet, Henri Michaux, Serge Poliakoff, Jean-Michel Atlan, Hans Hartung and Nicholas de Stael (just mentioned) are all absence’s barbarians!” “But isn’t that a purely conservative thesis which accords with the Trousered Ape by Duncan Williams?” “Of course, yet restoration always misplaces its format or moral croquet, and under such criteria even Monsieur Blot’s neo-baroque harpings won’t provide an answer.” “What shall?” “Very simply, it would have to be an architecture capable of transmitting meaning or philosophy. Let’s end a heuristic motif throughout culture – and in future creativity must escape from a mirror’s semiotic or stopped reproduction.” “By?” “I’ll instruct you: it should further narrative, representation, history, the cartoon, prior intent, illustration and gradually work towards a mark not from it.” “I see.” She shuffled the art-cards in her hands… while refusing to notice a clown’s approach.
Pitter, patter, splash and blather; I’ll throw some paint,  
To mark a feint, or make a complaint, by Tapies’ taint.

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FOUR: (104)  
Low Termagant turned away from a night sky before him in the nineteenth century. Like Odin’s vacant socket or eye-ball – his vision scanned a horizon without stars. Black indeed was such a trough, but ‘Low’ grasped these binoculars in either fist. “What if he ain’t defunct, Pa?”, he whined. (To be truthful, his conversational manner lacked delicacy or finesse, and it trod on a laughing hyena’s heels). “Won’t that vigilante, the Pinkerton, come a’running with six-guns ablaze or firing at each mouth?” Whilst adjacent to him an oil-lamp illumined bare boards – plus an orange barrel off to the side. Meanwhile, his sire – Old Man Smithers – lay on a bunk with a Bulgarian cigarette wedged between his teeth. Certainly, our eminence grise’s deportment has altered in the direction of a carpet bagger’s delight. Hasn’t the cause of Northern Union or reconstruction suffered a reverse in consequence? Because Old Man Smithers was dressed in a cutaway jerkin or cast-off – as afforded by his membership of the Grand Army. Didn’t General Sherman once march to a drumming beat through many burning plantations in the deep south? In a cavalcade where amidst flame and rising dust negroes hollered in the night… to make use of Henry Miller’s The Air-Conditioned Nightmare. (Much of this also revives D.W. Griffith’s classic film, Birth of a Nation). Needless to say, Smithers’ tunic wore a light-blue sheen or talc… and upon it a corporal’s single stripe appears. A slouch hat then leans forwards on his brow – primarily in order to furnish an apparition. In his hands a pack of playing cards does some business… but what games will he play? Solitaire, snap, whist, bridge, stud poker, blackjack, cribbage, gin rummy etc… all of these can acknowledge a token of pleasure. An Ace of Spades rears prominently – flicked up now by a thumb – while he cuts these lacquered backs. However, Old Man Smithers’ torso is limned in
red: whether it proves to be scarlet, wine-coloured, roseate, poppy dusted or lotus chomping.

Suddenly Old Man addresses his errant son in these terms: “Listen up, boy! Maybe that lawman, Harlequin Thoomey, frazzled and fried in our trap... i.e., the one lain with dynamite in a barn down yonder. No-one’s read Papillon’s *Banco* around here, I take it? But, even if we didn’t finish such a manikin, there’s no need to fret, drear one. For we’re well stocked up with vitals like turnips, potatoes, onions, eggs, chicken, beans, coffee and biscuits. Why, it’s over-flowing in its abundance... As to weaponry, *mon ami*, cast your mind back to a video called *Sexy guns & sexy girls*... within which we’ve got long-distance rifles, lugers, a sten and even various automatics. To finish – all I can say is: ‘Mister Pinkerton, come on down!’ Haw!”

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FIVE: (105)
Like in either Pirandello’s or de Chirico’s oeuvre we find that two manikins are addressing each other. One happens to be female and the other male. Could it be some pretence – no matter how absurd – at Puccini’s Punch and Judy (?) ... you know, he was the character whom English culture once called Porsini. Didn’t he drift across or between dimensions in those dawn days? Even though the notion of Judy’s nagging – except in Cruikshank’s lines – escapes from any conduct’s appraisal. “Take that, you old trout...”, he squeaks via a professor’s swazzle! (Ask a veteran Punchman such as Geoff Felix if you want any more information). “Do you wish to live like a specimen in Gray’s *Anatomy* or jar?”, Toblerone asked. “You’re young and still relatively free. You may have a larcenous and treacherous heart, but so far you’ve only convictions for homicide, rapacity, mendacity, theft, digging up skeletons and playing marbles with their eye-balls, blasphemy, obscenity, tax evasion and narcotics... Why add to it?” “I’m no longer an adolescent...”, Dingo drawled in reply. His face looked vaguely indignant throughout. What was their captive suggesting? While
– during this procedure – his features waxed youthful, dewy-eyed, switch-bladed, insolent, truculent and psychopathic (withal). Little has really changed from before --- by Lombroso’s bladder --- and despite phrenology’s error a criminal physiognomy exists. Do you recall the adage? Namely, if you place a mirror down a lag’s visage or half way across then the left-side stands out. Touché! Yet Blackbird Leys Dingo’s mange was or remained full-on. It inspected a glass which happened to be grinning, bowler-hatted, toothsome, rat’s-tailed, inebriate, jugged, all aglow, sweaty, covered in stubble and sadistically inane. You see, criminality is biological. Like the dissident commissioner’s analysis in Julian Barnes’ novel about Conan Doyle – it results from alienage or a genetic predisposition to asociality and anger. It runs in families; and it often stems from miscegenation or blood impurity. Late Koestler, Lombroso, Eysenck, Yochelson and Samenow, Wilson and Shockley are much closer to its source than Michel Foucault – an environmentalist. No way: reprobates of this sort were born and not made. Reclamation can occasionally suffice – as the world witnessed in Joseph Beuys’ salvation of Jimmy Boyle who later went on to sculpt and write an autobiography. But it’s momentary and occasional gravy. For punishment always fits the offence --- it solves all our problems.

ONE HUNDRED-AND-SIX: (106)
A debate ensues between our peaceful minions in the fourth dimension outside time – namely Harlequin Thoomey and Toblerone Harpie. She looks back at his graven image; even as a clown’s hand looms behind her. “But how can primitivism in the arts be prevented, if your analysis be aright?” “Look at one of Cy Twombly’s effusions, for instance. It mulcts out to black and red’s impermanence – while summoning up one’s headstone. A child would be embarrassed to festoon its necessary gloss! Yet it’s not involuntarily primitive or a case of talent’s absence… save with an individual like Basquiat. No; it presages exhaustion or a post-industrial repletion: whilst every other insight looms up
in a half-formed manner. In this regard, then, a chthonic turn looked for a species of adventure, but it ended up milking its own silence. It also had to do with undue specialisation at the end of the nineteenth century (primarily speaking). Undue taxonomy appears effete – particularly to insecure minds! Furthermore, in a revolt against late Romanticism a fin de siècle decadence finds itself speared.” “By what?” “Bluntly, it has to be a form of classicism come round again in modern guise.” “Does it at all relate to mania or psychopathic art?” “Most assertively, every element of modernism is fuelled by insane aesthetics or the custodianship of outsiders. A phrase which uses the French-language term Art Brut – or raw creation – unmediated by culture.” “Outsider art, isn’t it sometimes called?” “Immeasurably so… and it relates to Jean Dubuffet’s theories that emerged from surrealism, Andre Breton’s movement. Yet this theory winds even further back: and it has to do with mystical, Romanesque, cave and other arts… even the example of children’s painting.” “Didn’t Dubuffet daub himself asunder in terms of a Sotheby’s catalogue?” “Rather assuredly, his graffiti has modulated many an auctioneer’s shelving in recent years. Take, en passant, a work like Arena with four People – it, minus day-glow potato prints, would flatter a four year olds attempt in poster paint. For the whole assemblage relies on a trick… in that it’s knowing in its uncreativity. A half-competent painter wouldn’t have the courage, you see?” “To shame the devil, you mean?” “Infinitely so, although one’s tempted to say – what about Aleister Crowley’s paintings, then?” “Certainly, but we’re talking about serious art-works here… and we allow Augustus John’s pencil-wash of the Great Beast, elderly and in decline, to pass by on the other side.”

Our clown’s grease-paint reflects in Harlequin’s eyes or retinae, and this is despite a shadowy realm lying aft. Has he – perchance – come to terms with himself? Great dollops of chiaroscuro dance on White several leagues away…

*Madness, sadness, catalepsy all around;*
Fry some bacon, I’ll be bound!

ONE HUNDRED-AND-SEVEN: (107)
Scaramouch’s perch stood vacant in its possession, even though a pale moon raised its disc in effrontery behind it. Moreover, this Oregon sky adopted a deep umbra that waxed towards ultramarine… but was otherwise known as dark blue. How can we describe the rocky outcrop on which the cabin rested? It lay concertina’d over with stratum upon stratum given over to geological tiers; while the granite appears to be post-molten, condensed or even frigidly cool. Could it accord with a title allotted to conservative thought such as *Saturn’s Children*? Remember now: this planet’s identification with Kronos leads to a self-devouring, a dehiscence or even a cycle of time. Hence the desire to conserve everything in comparison to Goya’s autophagy: wherein an all-father eats his brood. (Presumably this is why centre-right thought tends to be pessimistic *a la* Cowling or Scruton).

But we’ve interrupted Old Man Smithers’ address to his gaggle amidships. “Attend to me: soldiers of love… yeah! No-one can touch us in our redoubt. Why so? Is it because of linguistic harshness… in a manner reminiscent of Robinson Jeffers’ *Medea* when freely adapted from Euripides? No sir: it has to do with one’s hostages… all of them driven into this corral by Fate! Ain’t that so, Pond?” He gestures widely and freely with an open hand – it happened to be coloured French Blue, emotionally speaking. His son replied: “‘Tis gospel truth, daddy!”

ONE HUNDRED-AND-EIGHT: (108)
Her face found itself lit up within the warmth created by its glow. Didn’t her hand then lead off with a supplicant’s gesture? It beckoned upwards and beyond – somewhat after a Renaissance image like Francia’s *Madonna and Child with an Angel*. A green sward or wrap surrounded her shoulders… while her reddened mouth, taut cheeks, bottomless eyes and fiery hair… why,
doesn’t it recall Duccio’s school vis-à-vis *The Annunciation*? Or alternatively, may Dosso Dossi’s Female Saint come to mind? Yet also, a contrary image announces its presence: and this has to do with Piombo’s version of *Herodias’ Daughter*, at once nursing a Baptist’s head! Let’s examine her semiotic… for wouldn’t Jonathan Dollimore consider it to be a power-play which was redolent of revenge tragedy? “Do you want to live like this in the future… always hiding or on the run, eh? Look what your life amounts to – it’s just robbing banks and an endless brush with the law… is that it? Think man, a cosmos awaits you – including many beautiful women.” (She allows this thought to fly; whereby invention serves as a mother’s desire. Or might she have Josef Thorak’s sculpture *The Judgement of Paris* in mind? It happens to draw on a prior example by Niklas Manuel Deutsch. An example within which a stern Paris, naked and pre-eminently male, makes his choice from three muses. All of them are nymphets who play with their hands).

ONE HUNDRED-AND-NINE: (109)
All of a sudden our clown seizes an art-card from Toblerone’s grasp. “May I presume, dear lady? Surely one of Miss Jean Brodie’s class peruses multiple panels – especially as regards Rinaldo Mantovano’s *Rape of the Sabine Women*?” (She gasps ‘AAHHH!’, but this Raffles has already purloined a silver plate). “I fear”, he lisps hysterically, “that your analysis lacks a racial dimension. If I may be so bold, dearie, it refuses to pin a tail on the donkey! Like divers hands – such as Evola, Brown, Yockey, Oliver, Celine, Shaw, Belloc, Eliot, Chesterton, Pound, Barres, Wagner, Devi, Maurras, Rassinier and Shahak – I reject philo-semitism. In the words of Hans Jurgen Syberberg – replete from his epic seven hour movie *Hitler; a German film* – modern Western culture wears a Khazar mask. Unlike the portmanteau covers to Eugene O’Neill’s plays, ancient Greek faces have been replaced by something else. No longer Cycladic or blank in their manner, they similarly refuse Doric encryption. Dare one see it? For these coverings or facial screens are no more likely to be
oval, lascivious, ormolu, brazen and uncomparisoned… now that they have altered themselves from masques of comedy or tragedy over an Attic gate. Instead, each resembles an Ashkenazic kabuki wherein slit-eyed visages, plus strong nasal projections, hide beneath rabbinical hats.” “But, my lecherous clown, how can you justify your credo?” “Easy, easy”, he jabbers, “all cosmopolitanism engenders formalist dissolution. It melts, deliquesces, deconstructs and breaks down simultaneously. Didn’t Jacques Derrida choose to call it Prisms? In any event… to be aesthetically inside and outside a culture (reverse-ways) is to deliver up a worm ouroborous. Do you recognise my image? It involves a serpent being directly cast from a Titaness’ womb or devouring its own tail. Dare we even mention Thetis?” “A miraculous theorem, Glock, yet where be the evidence?”, pondered Thoomey. “I shall instruct you”, cachinnated our prat-faller… who was now raised up to a Ring-master’s heights.

*A painted surd, turd, bird or axial curd acknowledges nought save Clement Greenberg’s WORD.*

ONE HUNDRED-AND-TEN: (110)
Back in nineteenth century Oregon a couple grab hold of one another within a stove’s relevance or hold. It relates to a stone flue which passes across a range of wooden boards – themselves vertically empanelled. Hadn’t they been cut down or presented to the elements? To finish this touch… some tins lie across adjacent shelving or lintel – all of which have been levelled or planed down to one’s earth. A few items of a residual toilet or crockery sprawl on a neighbouring table… while Pond Granite sits across it with a loaded rifle in his lap. Remember now – in this dramaturgy – Old Man Smithers’ off-cut, Blackbird Leys Dingo, has been despatched by a dum-dum or a perforated bullet. Whereas the other retinue are halved or twice devised in their kindred. Each one of these six, *mutatis mutandis*, possesses kin elsewhere or even at a nose’s turn. To make it clear, then, Granite wears Lift Spenser Wingate’s face lifted off his own by way of a
mask! Whilst Low Termagant and Egghead Morgan betray a Cycladic covering – what with Rapacious Quicksilver and Axon Tree looking on amidships. Our Patriarch though, Old Man, remains unchanged from one century to the next. Their captives are subtly altered, however. For these glove-puppets come to us as nineteenth century farmers… whether they happen to be male or female. The woman doubles up as Toblerone Harpie – if only by way of a Pre-Raphaelite virgin. Likewise, her man re-interprets a gaunt prairie dweller or hill-billy… despite whatever spin one may put on Biblical ken. Yet his earnest frame is belied by a clown’s mask; itself redolent of Chipperfield’s or the Russian state circus. He occasionally removes it so as to reveal Harlequin Thoomey’s younger version… whereupon, and huddled next to both parents, a young boy peeps out. Periodically, he wears a mini-circus face mask – albeit one that’s pulled down for his usage. Could he be Punch and Judy’s baby… although suitably tempered by a stick-figure’s license? All in all, our tableau invites comparison with a wood-cut or block by the illustrator Clifford Harper. The infant concerned has to be the land-tiller’s son --- by the name of Dingo.

ONE HUNDRED-AND-ELEVEN: (111)
In response to Toblerone’s ‘seduction’ or svelte intrigue – Blackbird Leys attempts to ward her off with a blow. He throws out his arm in a perpendicular arch… somewhat after baseball’s or cricket’s fashion. (Even though we might be talking about French cricket, really). In relation to this negative ballet Harpie stumbles rather… whilst her foot plunges down into the snow’s relief or defile. All of these milliseconds we notice that sleet continues to fall during this contremtemps. “Temptress – Xenobia, Lilith, Hecate, Tanith, Jezebel, Herodias’ daughter, Lulu, Semiramis, Pabst’s Blue Angel, Devilina, Circe, Aphrodite, the Nereids, Sirens and Echidna. Begone from behind my left-side, you’re trying to inveigle me away from my family!” (A bizarre echo here – a factor which is more redolent of Mary
Whitehouse’s National Viewers’ and Listeners’ Association than a banned film like *Scum*).

But one factor remains dissociative – above all else – and this has to do with our Harpie’s motivations. For she has seen her husband busily creeping from the forest and intent on revenge. The trunks – accustomed to a dark firmament recalling Algernon Blackwood’s *The Man Who Loved Trees* – screen his approach. Moreover, his forelimbs are outstretched – plus the reality of blanched hands like a music-hall *artiste* or a magician’s assistant. These reach out --- in reverse --- for his victim’s throat. Whereas a gully of blue snow lies between them and it descends on an imaginary screen only to filter the light’s attack… irrespective of a skeleton whose fall was sheer. Didn’t such a medical exhibit haunt Mister Punch? Although rumours of a bad conscience akin to traditional morality proved to be premature.

ONE HUNDRED-AND-TWELVE: (112)
Our clown has an art-card in ‘its’ taloned grip which exists independently of Sade in the Vincennes fortress. Doesn’t the latter show him bloated out and gargantuan, or rearing and effete in terms of some criss-crossed brick? Wherein his scorbutic features take on a prison’s shade or shift, and this was no matter how realistic Ed Tudorpole’s survey of madness. Might he be thinking about Peter Weiss’ play during this perusal? (Editorial note: he means *Marat/Sade*). To whit: “What do you note when looking on deranged blobs, eh? Could it be an ape’s mislocation or a scenario where simians’ daub abstractions in their cells? In this instance, then, it combines Will Self’s *The Great Apes*, Angus Wilson’s *The Old Men at the Zoo* and Brigid Brophy’s *Hackenfeller’s Ape* in one helix. None of these even comes near Wyndham Lewis’ *The Apes of God*, however.” “Too true; yet abstract expressionism enables one to dream. For – like aleatory music – it is purely existential, heuristic and consequential. Nothing exists prior to it (in other words). It may originate with Tom Wolfe’s *The Painted Word*, but it ends on a masturbation
phantasy.” “Do you really think so?” “Most assuredly…” “I bow to your greater wisdom in the matter.” “Nonetheless, wheretofore can such stimulus lead?” He holds up one precise image or art postcard. It records not Baselitz’s inversion, but rather Bram van Velde’s gentle confusion. This canvas radiates chaos magic which scrawls across a match-box top. In it vague emanations striate as pulsars or quarks. It luxuriates upon an intoxicant dysentery or a brown radius withal. Truly, toilet-training needs to begin before one reads Petronius’ Satyricon in the original Latin. Is it open to any doubt?

Sludge, mudge, fudge,
we all begrudge
a million dollars
for Barnaby Rudge.

ONE HUNDRED-AND-THIRTEEN: (113)
What do we make of the four gangsters who are holed up in their chalet? Was each of their faces elongated or psychedelic in their visual aspect? Moreover, can such a menagerie deal with the trope that lies before us or them? If we configure these scarecrows as a House of Cards then let’s take a look at their patriarch, Old Man. For Smithers’ seems to be playing checkers or draughts with himself… and this is irrespective of a board’s absence. In accordance with Willie Ryan’s book Scientific Draughts then Floyd Payne’s strategy lay adjacent to these squares. Apparently the white pieces were to play and draw, or even win within a distinct zone. What arrests our attention – though – is that Old Man Smithers morphs suddenly into a dinosaur with a furry coat, long clippers and a studded jewel beneath his neck. May David Icke have been right all along? Never mind: since his three sons were variously multiple or abject in character. Whereupon Pond Granite – who happened to be deeply implicated in Lift Spenser Wingate – hid his trophy behind some masked anger or aplomb. The armour in question, however, appeared to be synthetic or over-embroidered in its
resin. Superficially – by the by – what looks like a German Iron Cross (second class) peeps out amidships! Whilst one bravo’s face torques in a direction which insures that it’s green, pupilless and pointy-eared. Further to this (my friends) Low Termagant and Egghead Morgan also wax monstrous… albeit with a totally crushed or discombobulated face on either side of the mirror. Various extremities or appurtenances then wiggle or waggle thereafter… nearly all of it on the basis of a duffle-coat’s collapse. (Possibly Alexis Lykiard’s amputation novel, The Stump, comes to call?) Finally Rapacious Quicksilver and Axon Tree weigh in – and they are wearing an old World War II or government issue helmet. American manufactured, it comes down around their ears – plus an accompanying strap. Could Otto Dix have painted it any better? Anyway, their visage proved to be bestial, flayed, wide-nostrilled, throaty and eye-revolving. Perhaps – at another conscious level or stratum – it floats free of their sockets like Odin’s balloon!

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FOURTEEN: (114)
In the late twentieth century Harlequin Thoomey brought his fist down hard on Blackbird Leys Dingo’s scalp. Didn’t the stripling then let out a cry before slithering down to those snowy caps? Certainly our Pinkerton’s mallet connected with full force and splendour. “AAAIIIEEE!”, his victim caterwauled or cried out. A million stars filled both of his eyes and this was prior to an imminent collapse. What thoughts or stray gun-shots ricocheted in our man-hunter’s mind at this juncture? Who knows (?), but possibly he left this bottled message for another to find. “I’ll kill him later… primarily when Toblerone has gotten clear. As one’s Nemedian chronicle foretells, he shall be gutted like a von Hagens’ plastinate. Isn’t it a freak’s destiny to be exhibited after death?”

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FIFTEEN: (115)
Our clown held images abreast of a hero or its Greek sculpture, and his eyes twinkled over a dais or whitened board on which
shimmered abstract offerings. Can they be reminiscent of Hughie O’Donoghue’s *Irish Sea (Study)*, perchance? Maybe it exists in terms of a billowing incline and with water piled high in mid-Atlantic wash? Up, up and away – or by way of spume – crashed these green bottles that refuse themselves any easy passage whatsoever. Nor will the like of them be splintering into shards or littering terminal beaches *a la* J.G. Ballard. No. For one feels inescapably drawn back to Jack B. Yeats’ work here, but with less direction or impasto. Likewise, another card in our Jacques LeCoq’s hand is by Karel Appel or a familiar, and here a coloured streak limbers up to some poster paint. It cleaves to a kaleidoscope where stroboscopic light pulses… only then to levitate beyond primary impulses or by dint of a swirl. A further tarot card – when captured in vaudeville – has to do with Alberto Magnelli’s futurity; and it curls like a science fiction drama or seeks to uncover a gyroscope’s brown study. “What do you notice in a soul’s rebus or Rorschach test?”, enquired our Glock. There was an aggressive tone in his voice and he held an image directly under Harlequin’s nose. In design it helps to recall an artwork like Marcus Lupertz’s *Prometheus*. Might he come forward in order to give fire, light or balm… and prior to feeding an eagle when chained to a rock for all eternity? As to today’s turpentine or linseed oil… an image splits off and dines on deranged mirrors. It also interprets Robert Selzer’s *Anatomy of a Knife*… wherein octopi are festooned in squares. A pale flesh colour – pink to its river or abundance – then inundates the swash. Surely this codex lacks any resource or even a resolute energy throughout? By any calculation, then, all-father Zeus has triumphed… especially if Lupertz’s fire-giver wears a clock’s mystagoguery.

_Come hither_  
_go thither_  
_can we_  
_or thee_  
_for free._
What do you see?

ONE HUNDRED-AND-SIXTEEN: (116)
Our mother figure has taken up a defensive part in the nineteenth century. She wears a bright green-dress and her hand gestures --- somewhat accusingly --- at an accompanying Comus Rout. Haven’t they kidnapped her kindred and ‘sectioned’ them in loneliness’ hut? Rare wooden boards rise behind her in a perpendicular fashion – albeit as concerns a trellis work of brown. Her husband wilts beside his wife; together with a bandage wound around the latter’s scalp. It traverses two ways or paths; by virtue of sloping from left-to-right. To one side of him – and down farther than a distaff’s incline – leans a boy. He’s very small in size… with a tousled mop of blonde hair over preternaturally brown eyes. Meanwhile, their assailants stand about brandishing muzzled guns… and each one is silhouetted towards or scores with the Blue. The woman speaks indignantly like Euripides’ Medea – although in reverse circumstances, ethically speaking. (Surely G.E. Moore’s morals can’t intrude here?) For isn’t this Toblerone Harpie – circa. the Reconstruction period – and improved upon by motherhood? Her voice’s pitch lilts upwards like a soprano playing Salome in Strauss’ opera. “You’ve got no right to keep us imprisoned, do you hear? Our boy – who’s wearing Glock’s gloves – keeps a’sickening. He’s liable to go down with a fever… most regularly. Doesn’t your cruelty embody that of various clowns who flaunt Tommy-guns whilst wearing Billy Smart’s cover-all?” Her interlocutors remain as mute as stone. Can they intone or entomb --- in petrifaction --- an Easter Island sculpture? In vacuo, her husband intervenes: “Hush Tobey, these brigands won’t understand.”

ONE HUNDRED-AND-SEVENTEEN: (117)
Toblerone Harpie screamed again and again now that she was in her husband’s grasp. Could it be Relief’s onset or the tolling of a new dirge like at Black Narcissus’ culmination? Do you
remember Michael Powell’s classic film? Anyway, Blackbird Leys Dingo lay sprawled in the slush… nor can disjointed ice revive him now! Roundabout or circumambiently his relatives continue to prance. Like Scott of the Antarctic they are wearing a combination of ski suits, ice-masks, dungarees, serge, dirty flannels and busted out prison uniforms. Behind them and sweeping away rearwards one notices an enclosed forest. It has crept up on one *avec* dead stalks, brazen tree-stumps and heavy boughs… all of them laden with light purple camouflage. A hemispherical union (this) it perfectly matches the continuing snowfall. “Hey, what goes on?”, this terrorist family cries out in unison. Aren’t they a groupuscule or cell fighting their own *intifada* against life?

For Harlequin Thoomey’s grabbed hold of his woman and he twirls her around, marionette-like, in order to enforce obedience. Yessir: Toblerone releases a Banshee’s howl at this juncture, but her husband is already eyeing the opposition. They – to reverse our mirror’s image – open their jaws slackly so as to pant and cry. By this reckoning, then, the Smithers’ crew are definitely wolverines or Reynolds’ *Wagner the Werewolf* after dark!

ONE HUNDRED-AND-EIGHTEEN: (118)
Our Jester’s hand obscures a star; and yet we fail to deal with Maximiani Portaz’s *The Lightning and the Sun* here. In this scenario he held up an image before his *alter ego*, Harlequin Thoomey. Surely our mountebank offers up the immortal remark: “what do you see?” To which our hero replies: “Many things… in a precise order of will and prerequisite it begins with *English Church Craftsmanship* by F.H. Crossley. Herein and after, I’m free to adopt these temperatures: such as a gargoyle with ramifications of a northern corbel, for example. Again and all, I notice this existing on an exterior’s asp --- at once held over at St. George’s chapel, Windsor. It depicts a leering extremity who’s actually backing onto a column’s plight. Furthermore, one form appears leonine or otherwise happens to be fixed to a fatal
flooring. (A threshing plane, that is – if one takes my meaning). Whereas its appurtenances or orifices embody a pregnant ant-eater who’s merely been snuffling the ground. Attached to this, however, and curled in its grasp one apprises a moaning or crying child. When it’s bound over to release itself – we appreciate nought save blood! Moreover, we are alive to Wyndham Lewis’ *Childermass* falling sheer now that its verbal task-master looks forlorn. Certainly the babe ventilates a hullabaloo or a brouhaha. It cries to be relieved of its suffering --- so it lives. Whereupon and around a serpentine extent our Leo writhes in fire – only stopping to gain a silent joy at this precedent. But enough of John Cage – indeed, his pretence avoids an appropriate piece such as Arthur Honegger’s *Joan of Arc at the Stake*. Behind it a lintel plays percussion with its jamb – if only to support alabaster’s finery over a trellis. Most definitely, I could instruct you more… save for the fact which says that your art-card shows nothing but pitch.”

*Rich, ditch, snitch, pinch, lynch, cinch... kitsch!* ---
opines one of Leo Sayer’s clowns. *Send them in!*

**ONE HUNDRED-AND-NINETEEN: (119)**
“Now, now, ma’am”, lisped Old Man Smithers, “we comprehend your grievance and belly-aching. Assuredly so, every man-jack of us sympathises with your plight… truly. Our kind understands what it means to give birth to Titans and even a two-headed tiger shark. Yesss…, as a red-light would have it, we’re liable to burst into tears and start bawling right away! HAW!” With this Old Man’s visage creases into a toothy grin. A large federal Union or a Grand Army hat adorned his lobes… and its rim pitches up either black or blue/black-and-blue. Could it be a Northern carpet-bagger’s homburg (?) – itself redolent of Sherman’s or Grant’s puritanism and march to the coast (thereby). Immediately a rubiate filter rises up across him and it contrives to fill in an imaginary square. Whereas – in his grasp – a thick Italian cigar protrudes… and it is somewhat greasy or slick to the taste. (Each
one of these Big Berthas takes around an hour to smoke, you know? For its end flares like pitch bubbling up… and may it celebrate Professor Gunter von Hagens’ corpse art, albeit in dumb show?) Vaguely then, Old Man Smithers remembers a mime between Revenge and Andrea’s Ghost in Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*. He casts it from his mind once its vigilante qualities become apparent. Regardless of any of this, though, our rolled tobacco leaf happens to be ‘Antico Tuscano’, 1818.

ONE HUNDRED-AND-TWENTY: (120)
In a white hell, which recalls one of Leni Riefenstahl’s mountain efforts, Harlequin Thoomey carries his wife away. He runs at full pelt with Toblerone Harpie slung over one shoulder. Do her pink leggings glisten in a noontide’s sun that shades into a darksome glow? Admittedly, such light breaks a crystalline surface which is nearly pitched at rapture and bears a blanched undertow ‘neath it. It forgets its structures… only to shine effulgence on a whiteness thence turning crimson through a saccharine filter. Can it be reserved unto snowy owls, who, in naturalist documentaries, pluck at their prey with incisor beaks merely to regurgitate them later? No matter: since in a manner that reconsiders David Carradine, at once fresh from Tarantino’s efforts in a B-movie where he hunts down aliens… Harlequin still sizes up his enemies. They pursue him across this tundra’s crispness (rather resultantly) – a terrain or steppe which was breaking, fractured, icy, slippery and petrified. All of this incarnates various passages in J.G. Ballard’s novel *The Crystal World*; regardless of how ebon-iced they proved to be. (A text that prefigures the congealed quality of a cancer beyond any sense of metaphor… no matter how nacreous these pearly gates!) Likewise, Low Termagant and Rapacious Quicksilver let rip thunderous oaths as they chase this husband-and-wife team across the ice. Both frost-biters carry mountain knives, staves, fire-lighters, brandy-snap and chalk. Whereupon – and to concentrate on a notion of alienage – perhaps Harlequin Thoomey can ultimately see beneath superficial flesh in order to reveal a skull, if not depths below. A
Kelvin temperature lurks in these recesses; and didn’t Edgar Allan Poe call it *The Tell-Tale Heart*? Essentially then, Thoomey’s vision discerned demons or hooved ones who lurked under an egg’s-head. Couldn’t they be splintered, bug-eyed, horizontal in latitude and multiple armed? Further, each of their mouths contains at least twenty-six cavities. Ask Lawman Thoomey about it – because this federal marshal can tell them at a distance!

**ONE HUNDRED-AND-TWENTY-ONE: (121)**

In Old Man Smithers’ collective unconscious various items are astir – amongst other matters we could mention. One of them involves our clown or Harlequin Thoomey’s *alter ego*. Does one follow it up? He holds a forgotten art-card in an adjustable mitten. To be sure, one’s mountebank stares at it fixedly – with his normal side, Harlequin, hovering nearby in a foggy background. “What do I detect in this absinthe’s grip?”, murmured a dreamy Grimaldi… a character who happens to be a patron saint among Britain’s funny-men. “Well, I’ll tell you – one and all – plus a beaten plate of eggs! It has to do with ochre’s swirl – itself belatedly melted down into Jackson Pollack’s abstraction. Do you remember his *Naked Man with Knife* in 1942 (?); and prior to the CIA recruiting such business during the Cold War. Any road up… to my deluded mind such paint reallocates itself and becomes suggestive… but rarely cloacal. No – an injustice falls that tree! Because my retina conjures this up: it discerns a hairy simian who’s obviously masked up and carrying a bathing beauty. She waxes gymnastic, muscular, art-tart like, virginal and Pre-Raphaelite (vaguely speaking). Could it be a heterosexual Gluck that’s been abandoned as a keep-sake? Truly, this image looms from “What the Butler Saw”; at once care of Mirror Pix and by way of Hulton Getty. Undeniably, it goes back to before silent cinema, even, where coin-operated slot machines gave a thrill!

*Still, bill, kill, trill, Nihil, fill, ol’ Lil --- where’s it going?*
ONE HUNDRED-AND-TWENTY-TWO: (122)
In nineteenth century Oregon our Pinkerton has succeeded in climbing a cliff. Whilst the moon subsists ahead and to the left – with its disc signalling a pale slice like a radius on a compass’ isle. Certainly a mount juts out in terms of Scaramouch’s promontory: and it rises beyond the chalet while finding a resonance inside or alongside it. Can this hut also bear a striking resemblance to George Bernard Shaw’s cabin? A longitudinal fabric of wood (this) it served as a box… wherein a left Nietzschean wrote out his life monastically. A light shone from its western end and thence came to criss-cross the glass. Likewise, a dun-coloured brown which folded into grey then suffused both the shack and its surrounding granite.

Meanwhile, our hero – Harlequin Thoomey – has mounted a neighbouring perch and he succeeds in doing all of it without Chris Bonnington’s assistance. Didn’t Aleister Crowley consider himself to be a mountaineer… irrespective of a film like Touching the Void? Perchance – this rock-scape was limned in blue with a rising smart of cerulean. A situation where each filigree tapers away on either side of Thoomey’s left and right hand. Also, sundry bushes blossom up which were themselves spiky, cactus-like or Yucca… at least in terms of a prior perennialism. Each tuft or rabbit-warren then stares out; and is thus reminiscent of a television film like Duel. Correspondingly, a north American bird perches on a branch all a’twitter… it flatters to deceive a breed much sought after by H.P. Lovecraft and known as a whippoorwill. Against the grain, though, Thoomey surmounts a defile; and when we examine it aslant his entire frame is red or blood suffused. Why so? Essentially because – like Charles Bronson in Death Wish – he incarnates vengeance.

ONE HUNDRED-AND-TWENTY-THREE: (123)
A century later amid ice pillars and snow Old Man Smithers stares at an errant chip – namely Blackbird Leys Dingo. He is
muffled under an ice giant’s bank… while massaging his head with a gloved hand that’s fit for purpose. Gloomily, Dingo gazes up expecting the BIG FREEZE or parental excoriation. Old Man points an accusing finger at his face: “You ought to be ashamed of spent conduct, my boy! Call yourself a man and a warrior… why, you’re no better than William S. Burroughs’ *Queer* or Kramer’s novel *Faggots*. Doesn’t the delinquency of John Rechy tamper with your head-piece? Avaunt thee! In life’s plenitude you’ve come up wanting on the plane of genetics, my friend. Listen: those who ascend to the summit do so by walking on others’ faces. Your chance came a’begging – it was squandered and now Erda has turned her back. It’s finished, do you contemplate it? As in John Gardner’s book *Grendel* – where Beowulf is seen from the monster’s perspective, you’re left (h)armless at the end. Face it! For you, t’would be better to crawl away and die… alone of all spore.”

ONE HUNDRED-AND-TWENTY-FOUR: (124)
At this instant in time our Harlequin hurls away a William Roberts postcard in disgust. When behind him two figures were dimly limned or cast in copper; they each stood out against such a fortune. Both of them appear to be encased in egg-cups – what with their lower extremities so conjoined. Might this be Pond Granite and Lift Spenser Wingate combined? A trail of Siamese twins or electrical circuitry then manoeuvred between them. It trespassed from head-to-head – merely to break with Brian Aldiss’ philosophical notion which was occasioned by his novel *Barefoot in the Head*. Don’t they enjoin – in this regard – two pin-balls while relishing a cue? Rather like specimens in the surgeon’s museum, south Kensington, with foetuses bottled in formaldehyde… we can see an Elephant man in green-glass here. What message in a litre suffices from all this? Furthermore, this Tweedle-Dum and Tweedle-Dee have started to speak across one another. What can they be uttering about the place? Lift Spenser happens to be the first to opine: “Look, your thinking is kak-handed!” “Why so?”, Granite’s Pond replies. “Mainly by virtue
of the fact”, intones his brother, “that Humpty-Dumpty’s semiotic proves to be imprecise. For this cuddly egg sat on a wall and frustrates a curate’s synonym by doing so. It breaks up an omelette’s passage by refusing a bit-player’s role.” “You mean it’s good and bad in parts?” “Precisely, what recalls us to our senses – between-times – has to be Humpty’s post-structuralism.” “What?” “I’m referring to the fact which says that Dumpty believes words mean what you want them to – like critics such as Katherine Belsey, Terry Eagleton, Malcolm Evans and Jonathan Dollimore.” “Alice retorts – ‘No, they don’t; they have a precise definition. A dictionary – like Chambers’ or Webster’s – fixes it. Language isn’t heuristic. You can’t make it up as you travel along.’” “‘Want to bet?’, scolds Humpty-Dumpty. He then falls off the wall and smashes his shell into a hundred pieces.”

Amongst such blokes, you’ve got to choke, it’s no yoke… yodels this dream’s clown.

ONE HUNDRED-AND-TWENTY-FIVE: (125)
Left alone – and standing on Scaramouch’s fort or perch – Harlequin Thoomey surveys the scene. A sky-burst entrammels him and it basically pins him to a blue locution. For his part, an ochre masquerade fillets his format withal. “One item brings them within distance”, reflects our Pinkerton. “This bluff, Scaramouch’s point or whatever else lacks a basic necessity… even a cover-all. Naked in its brazen traps, it refuses to provide shelter for those who might surmount it. Also, hostages have been seized, probably an entire family from a deserted farmhouse in the valley. I must proceed cautiously – like a wolverine who captures a doll’s-head between its claws. But, evaluating every angle, there is a way to break in and it necessarily utilises fear.” As a token to his skald or intrigue, Harlequin puts his gloved hands together. Instantly he produces an eerie purchase such as AAAAAEEEEIIIOOUUU(!); and it rings out across one’s arbour. Within the shack Egghead Morgan stares wild-eyed… while a
sandy-coloured dervish covers his breath. “What was that, Pa? To me, it sounded like a damned soul’s liberation. In a bent certitude the Prado looms up and in it you can configure Memling’s hellishness… wherein shaded demons, waving a necropolis drear, pitch forward naked termagants… all of whom yearn in torment. Didn’t Ernst Junger prefigure it all in his *Copse 125?* A scenario – behind whose metal doors – the Great War flared up either as a revolution or as killings on an industrial scale.” Old Man Smithers remained unmoved, however. A shotgun’s silver streamer – when abreast of a rancher’s turquoise jacket – scans a wall’s azure without comment. “Nothing doing”, the Old’un coughed to deliver up. “It’s just wolves out at a distance who are reconnoitring our bluff. I tell you, Egg, don’t let it turn your bone marrow to water.” Yet – even on utterance – the finger-shadows of various Red Indians appear silhouetted on such a phrenology. (Especially when we remember that Egghead Morgan died earlier in this narrative!)

ONE HUNDRED-AND-TWENTY-SIX: (126)

Desperate to make amends after his *faux pas*, Blackbird Leys Dingo follows his pappy’s snow troughs or foot-prints. Nor can our young scallywag – or leprous mendicant – forget his father’s ringing or Parthian shot. “Get your sorry posterior removed, Din. A man-thing who allows himself to be crept up on… why, my loins must have misfired. I DIDN’T CREATE YOU!”

+ Hungry and desperate, then, Blackbird Leys sloughs on after Old Man… thereby trespassing on his wake. Ahead of him lies a tableau of white rain that’s occasionally punctured, as it is, by stick-trees which stand out in mauve light. His patriarch moves ahead of him withal – seemingly oblivious to all difficulties. A brief palisade of snow that’s rather like iron petals continues to fall. It flecks their clothing or attire, and interrupts whatever eyes and boots they might have on. Moreover, Blackbird Leys flexes his back in an attempt to catch his sire up. Listen to this now… “Don’t leave me, Pah o’ mine. I’m unfit to continue with these
particular cross-keys. I swear to take him down – do ya hear? Why can’t I cut his mangy throat or suck out those eyes with a midget’s breath? Maybe like Mime in Wagner’s Ring cycle I’ll don a magic cap in order to transform reality? Previously a lawman caught me unawares, but now I guard against confusion through psychedelia…” Whereupon a disembodied eye floats on a pink wind. It is embroidered around the edges or happens to be caught up towards velvet like a pale ormolu. Yet inside its casing – perchance – an eye-ball tilts in knowledge’s direction and this is primarily by recognising its sheen. Underneath it strange tendrils move around and they are rather reminiscent of an octopus’ legs.

ONE HUNDRED-AND-TWENTY-SEVEN: (127)
Multi-dimensionally speaking, Low Termagant examines our future together. He stands behind a clown’s face or lies askance of ‘its’ left side. All of this occurs during a period where our Harlequin’s grin, inanity, grease paint and capacity for delusion becomes more and more pronounced (residually). Here again Termagant – somewhat akin to a character in Clive Barker’s novels The Books of Blood – wears a balaclava. It suffuses one’s features – rather like a liquorice spore and adjacent to a glove’s face. “I say, Grimo(.)”, beckons L. Termagant in an upper class lingo, “what’s wrong with the Turner Prize?” “Just about everything”, responds the Clown. “First off, let’s examine these efforts in their own crock or chamber pot. Take Damien Hirst’s shark in formaldehyde – the one everybody recognises (instantaneously so). Its form pokes out amid green dye and within a hammer-head’s leyden jar – only then to renounce some progressing torpedoes. Moreover, this taxidermy wears an exoskeleton in the form of a crate through which Peter Benchley’s vehicle passes. Didn’t Will Eisner encompass Moby Dick as a graphic novel? Independently then, Hirst called his Old Man without the sea The Impossibility of conceiving Death in the mind of someone Living.” On an Old Man’s mentioning, though, do we hear a stirring beneath oaken tables? Anyway, Smithers was
down there and he seemed to be impatient of all other sound. “Yet”, continued our Max Wall playing Beckett, “Hirst’s folly leads to auto-destructive art or kaos, and not in Metzger’s configuration either. Since he hasn’t ‘based’ his creation --- it will rot away to nothingness over time, in other words. Or – at the very least – it’s going to shrink, gradually float towards the tank’s bottom and flip over. Pure alcohol or ethanol is what’s required, you see. In fact, in order to keep his fish going he should have immersed it in this and injected it too. Didn’t it fetch six million pounds at auction (?); it’s amazing the way this figure keeps popping up.”

Our troubadour then opens his arms wide. For like Frankie Howard, a Cabaret character or one of Mel Brooks’ The Producers… he yelps:

There’s no business like Shoah business
like no business
I know!

ONE HUNDRED-AND-TWENTY-EIGHT: (128)
Momentarily – and on hearing the wolves without – our kidnapped father pipes up. He wore a bandage around his black shock of hair which slanted it from left to right. Behind him a scarlet backing arose as a stocking filler – it showed his face to be livid, blanched, pasty, expectant and fervid. Also, his moustache twitches somewhat… albeit rather like D.H. Lawrence in full spate. Weren’t his teeth grinding together in a like expectoration? Presumably he wore a pale blue-shirt that shaded into white… whereas a yellow nimbus played with fire above his head. It pulsed or flashed on and off stroboscopically. Within this aura a Red Indian chief becomes visible in a full head-dress. Could it delineate Sitting Bull, the Sioux leader, who alternates now and again like an exercise in Op art? Already
then, Harlequin’s younger alter ego – minus a Grimaldi’s mask – has begun speaking or orating…

“Fools! You underestimate these disturbed spirits of yore. You’re on their ossuary or disused burial mound, you see! For the Red Man’s kami are Animist or liable to manifest physical objects. They resemble a poltergeist – by either whizzing through space or screaming at the dawn.”

“Shut up! Cease your croaking or so help me I’ll…”, rasped Old Man Smithers. But – for the first time – he seems to be rattled.

ONE HUNDRED-AND-TWENTY-NINE: (129)
All out of places to run Harlequin Thoomey has arrived at a sheer rock wall. He looked around him desperately, but could see nought save a magenta edifice rising above some alabaster. It towered off onto a distance’s perch. Likewise, the snowy deluge filtered away from him abreast of an envelope all around. Surely its outer extremities looked ultramarine in an uncertain light? Again, he felt trapped or cornered, and the grey mackintosh he wore billowed out like a bat’s cape. It filled up with frigid air – only to let out an exhalation thereafter. Moreover, the shadows of his two pursuers over-arched him… both of them combining together like a negative dance. Could it re-interpret Sir Arthur Bliss’ dithyramb from his ballet Checkmate? Let’s see: a penumbra overhung the scene and came cast before treason. Perhaps momentarily --- or dissociatively --- Patrick Magee’s performance as King Lear comes to mind. Yet we soon abandon this notion… since Low Termagant and Rapacious Quicksilver share one particular shadow. It overlaps, morphs, dribbles and deludes any sense of expectancy. Do both heads then interconnect in a siamese manner? Although each of their shoulders now sports a poniard or knife – albeit in dream time. It rears towards its prey.
Hunting down some archetypes – or within all of our characters’ minds – Harlequin’s clown and Low Termagant are busy conversing. (Each one of them can be seen from the others’ profile – at least when viewed sideways on). Yet a Greek exercise in dialectic carries on between them. Could it be a debate betwixt Thrasymachus and the rest, or possibly Graf and Rudolf? Anyway, Termagant rumbles on beneath his balaclava: “Concerning the Turner prize… surely Marcus Harvey’s Myra comes to mind?” “Really, I suppose you’re referring to its pointillism… an image that’s allegedly made from kiddies’ hand-prints? It has less to do with Seurat (for sure), and is more about potato shapes or cut-outs.” “Remarkably so, it all relates to a folie a deux… a scenario where a man and a woman are engaged in psychopathic crimes. You know, the kinetic or supra-realist elements epitomise Gabriel Rossetti’s Lilith. A portrait which was based on Lizzie Siddal combing her hair and that only hints at laudanum’s slumbers.” “But where lies its originality?” “Nowhere – it merely exists in order to offend or bait the bourgeoisie. Clearly such a process combines Galla’s picture --- as set down by Dali --- with Lacenaire’s autobiography.” “The one he wrote before ascending to the guillotine, you mean?” “You’ve a variant on Tom Wolfe’s The Right Stuff, there… basically because he experienced what Myra Hindley should have shared.” “I take your point, matey, and who cares about Lord Longford’s judgement?”

He loved Myra… pyrotechnicon:
who’ll match her fate?

Our family group – superintended by a younger Harlequin – then retreated to a cabin’s interior. Could they be suffused with a greenish light at such a moment? Certainly their gaolers were captured by the moon… as its pale radiance reflected like a lattice on their shoulders. This, in turn, trailed a grid across
wooden boards… especially when compared to a stove or rough-hewn implements above such friezes. For his part, Old Man Smithers still wore a Federal or a Union uniform; and it discharged a dark-blue tint plus a yellow stripe amidst gloom. He appeared to be highly agitated. Beside him two of his sons – Axon Tree and Rapacious Quicksilver – gaped askance. As you will recall, these siamese twins over-lapped so as to compose one form. Don’t they comport the freakishness of yesteryear or last century… wherein a human slug crawled around a stage-set? Any road up, Axon-Rape’s corse pointed beyond its own glass. (Won’t atomic radiation that’s been compounded with sand produce the same effect?) “Look-ee, Daddy-o”, burbled a misfit, “aught flits before our gaze like a mirage. One moment it’s there – limned between red-woods – and the next absent. Correspondingly, it lets loose a cry in a lycanthropic manner.” “AAAAEEEIIIOOUUU!” “Do ya hear it, Pa? Because – even when it’s gone – the moon’s tarot shines on. It spins disc-like and comes to resemble a Roman coin. Afterwards we notice whether a trail of blue mist crosses her face. Doesn’t the lunar represent those feminine, mystical, treacly, emotional, tidal, menstrual and stagnant forces?” “Again Ginsberg’s Howl was heard abroad: “AAAAEEEIIIOOUUU!” “Shut in tarnation up!”, bellowed Old Man Smithers. Was he losing control?

ONE HUNDRED-AND-THIRTY-TWO: (132)
Cornered in his labyrinth amid the snowy drifts, Harlequin Thoomey turns at bay. But where will he find a minotaur or a ball of string? Regardless of which, he rears up over Low Termagant and Rapacious Quicksilver… and he almost describes a gorilla protecting his young (thereby). “Look at the Lawman”, sneers Rape, “he’s all outta puff ‘n’ run.” “Yeah…”, agreed Lout… who nodded vigorously. “Now’s our chance to crucify a saviour without Golgotha! Doesn’t he typify a grizzly bear who stands erect on his hind legs with bristling hair and chest? He’s guarding a mate, you see. Yet – heretofore – we’re in a position
to skin him and treat the carcass as a rug. Perhaps Toblerone can walk across it on a polished floor in order to savour our victory?”

Facing destruction or nullity, then, our hero ponders the future: “Hope’s vanguard has deserted us. Maybe Fortune’s wheel – plus various candles in its sockets – had spun a full circle or revolution. It remains true that we have momentarily drawn the Death card. Let us face it further, the figure of Toblerone in her skin-tight lycra fulfils no hope. Whereas – and immediately behind us – a mauve or rubiate rock-face rises sheer. For, like rats in B.F. Skinner’s mazes or Pavlov’s dogs, we’re trapped, hemmed-in and hazarding nothing but slaughter.” During this soliloquy individual diamonds continue to cascade… although with a rasping and crunching underfoot Old Man Smithers, Pond Granite and Egghead Morgan come up. Each of them waves a titanium blade about in the freezing air. Don’t their thoughts crystallise on a greying ether?

ONE HUNDRED-AND-THIRTY-THREE: (133)
Between dimensional doors a close-up occurs on our clown’s jump-suit. Assuredly, his painted face will do, but might this bring back the Hood amongst Gerry Anderson’s puppets? “Returning to the Turner Prize”, mused our cachinnator, “let’s examine Marc Quinn’s oeuvre. After Goldsmith’s college he has achieved fame with a literal blood-mask. Here it is: and it consists of haemoglobin, stainless steel, perspex and refrigeration equipment. Although Quinn happens to be tapping a tradition which involves a wax frontage to death. (To whit: the expressive skins of Beethoven, Cromwell and Keats pass muster … all of them denying a Cycladic uniformity). His thirteen ton sculpture in Trafalgar square, inter alia, plumbs new depths… it also delineates a pregnant thalidomide victim, Alison Lapper. Yet – to renew our appeal – Quinn is returning to classicism via disability. If you will, he’s adopted a ‘politically correct’ pose in order to reach Thorak’s Atlas by legerdemain. (After Europe’s second civil war, 1939-1945, this sculptor sought asylum in
Turkey). Whereupon – and in a later work – our M.C. adopted a mode of gymnastics in a negative manner. Herein a contorted Kate Moss, the junkie super-model, finds herself depicted in Flaxman’s vein. Maybe Quinn aims at a static Rodin; or alternatively does he seek Dobson’s means through Gaius Cibber’s effects?” In confirmation of all this, then, our Harlequin massages his chin.

_Traction, reaction, fraction, compaction:
No breaker’s yard can break Breker!

**ONE HUNDRED-AND-THIRTY-FOUR: (134)**

At this hourly even-tide time presses onwards and it relentlessly impinges on this chalet… so as to sift each grain through an hour-glass. Already the farmer, a younger version of Thoomey, talks incessantly. Does he detect the dodge which the Pinkerton outside is trying to pull (somewhat instinctively)? “What you hear beyond us and howling in ochre’s darkness has to be Anton LaVey’s advice to Roman Polanski. Do you know that he was a religious advisor on the film _Rosemary’s Baby_? It’s the wolf-spirit, baying treacherously at the moon, which you discount. Could it be a war-wolf of presumed excellence? Never mind the damage done… since, in phantasy, these pack-animals riot and slither around a mausoleum that’s girt with snow. Whereas inside or on an ebon dais sits a fleshless skeleton adorned with a crown. A wolverine-spirit remains holy to the Red Skin, you see? When we consider whether this spit or cliff, known as Scaramouch’s Fort, still retains its animism… an allure which attracts elementals to materialise from the ether. You captured their leader, Geronimo, didn’t you? Maybe a shaman who’s anthropologically capped dances in a wolf-skin without? Dare you open the shack’s door and take a chance on it?” “Mendacity ill-suits you, land grubber”, hissed Old Man Smithers in reply. But – clothed in his serge uniform – he continued to waver like a flame. Suddenly a low or throaty cacophony is heard. “AAAAAEEEIIIOOUUU!” it reverberated all around. “Be
silent!”, shrills Smithers. “Reckon on’t, agrarian. Fear won’t nibble at my heart.” After this statement Old Man lashes out with his pistol’s butt. He swipes his prisoner across the forehead. 

THWACK!

ONE HUNDRED-AND-THIRTY-FIVE: (135)
A century further on our Patriarch continuously holds forth. “Listen up, brood time! Conversation detracts us from a necessary skinning or deliverance. For – between our pericarps – we possess five knives or scalpels.” “The total’s SIX!”, yelled Blackbird Leys Dingo… as he made his way over to them at a side-winder’s pace. Truly, he traverses this tundra like a glowing ice-worm! “As I remarked”, proceeded Old Man, “we need to forgo a passionate indulgence… imperturbably so. Can you expel it? Because if we circle him our blades will enforce a tattoo like moon-lit dancers. No matter how niggardly it seems… we’ll bleed Thoomey like a mediaeval leech. By virtue of the fact that our vengeance kindles apace or in-between, and it resembles ancient conspirators who are gathered under an apothecary’s crocodile. Most assertively, it knows no other bronze or distaff, and by this ballet’s end a pursuing detective becomes a flayed scarecrow.” (He gestures farther off – somewhat airily). “At the denouement even his wife won’t recognise him; and didn’t the surrealist Antonin Artaud call it a theatre of cruelty?” So saying it – a dispassionate observer watches Old Man Smithers’ face under the microscope. It luxuriates in its meaty folds: at once avid, greedy, vengeful, porcine and convulsed with near-lust. May Louis Adamic clock its temperature at all accurately?

ONE HUNDRED-AND-THIRTY-SIX: (136)
Avaunt these matters a dreamy sun-dial displays its minutes, hours, seconds and other loot. Won’t such a ligature cast its shadow across this treachery? Meanwhile, our circus performer has been addressing Toblerone Harpie. If you glance away quickly then you’ll miss Grimaldi’s white hand on her shoulder. “As regards other Turner Prize entrants”, negotiates Glock, “let’s
shift a frisbee onto Jenny Saville’s daubs or mopes. These inculcate bloated, obscene and naked female bodies without any redeeming attractiveness. Many of them are hung-up --- abattoir-like --- and recall chickens on a meat-rack. Perhaps she means to infer the Richardsons’ victims/slags in south London? Anyway, her images wax anti-idealistic, deliberately repulsive, ugly and feminist by turns. They hint at a lesbian nation without its dildo or phallae, and Andrea Dworkin’s separatism becomes obligatory in relation to these sausages.” Listening to this, however, Toblerone Harpie remains statuesquely to one side of events. Furthermore – when seen in profile her features delineate a yearning ideal. Momentarily then, her visage recalls the twentieth century’s greatest artist and femme fatale: Leni Riefenstahl.

Jenny Saville’s degenerate art, carp, lark, bark, start, tart: no will triumphs here!

ONE HUNDRED-AND-THIRTY-SEVEN: (137)
Pinkerton Thoomey moved across black-lined rocks under an adjacent moon. These slanted adrift the horizon and coursed laterally from left-to-right. When one considers it, therefore, fate has granted them a brilliant impress in terms of a purplish granite. Whereas our moon carved out a disc or an azo’s pale yellow… and against its pallor Harlequin’s silhouette limned like a dancing foal. He leapt up onto his toes in a sprightly fashion. Like a veritable flash he capered – whilst pirouetting and turning a la Nijinsky on shod and spurred feet. Alternately, small items of stone came away --- rather haphazardly --- under his balletic tremor or tarantella. Why does he gyrate so persuasively or calmly, an observer asks? Our answer is simple: he wants to approach the hut’s blind or deluded side. To begin with… he stared down from Scaramouch’s bluff and various branches or wild aspen, possibly fossilised to white wood, surrounded his billowing trench-coat. Whereupon the moon – lacking a gibbous indent – mantles up everything carefully and in such a way as to
isolate Shaw’s cabin. It lay directly below all other considerations, longitudinally speaking. Above us though – and within the mystagoguery of those present – an orange skull hovers in the twilight. Didn’t it really incarnate a wolf spirit, thereby? It also wore a Red Man’s war-bonnet replete with feathers around those empty sockets or orbs, and some clenched teeth. Moreover, its lipless and receding gums opened and shut… primarily so as to articulate a cry. Nothing came of it and no sound rent the air… but around its floating nimbus several warriors or braves cavorted on horse-back. They brandished feathery spears, axes, hatchets, tulwars, bows and arrows. They likewise whooped and hollered. Again silence reigned and this was despite the disembodied cranium zig-zagging madly in yellow or green ether… together with its jaws working convulsively. Have we been writing a supernatural Western all along?

ONE HUNDRED-AND-THIRTY-EIGHT: (138)
Irrespective of being a hundred years ahead – my friends – our narrative quickens apace. In this Aeschylean scene we notice that six characters creep up on Marshal Thoomey. He stands stock-still; thereby repositioning one of Thorak’s sculptures before this mason fled to Turkey after the war. Hereabouts Old Man Smithers, Blackbird Leys Dingo, Pond Granite, Egghead Morgan, Low Termagant and Rapacious Quicksilver edge closer. They are hunkered down amidst clawing ice-sheets. Each of them is then bent double as they approach… like a bunch of snivelling dwarves. However, out of their butchered hands and clothed in woollen gloves certain knives trail. A wisp of etheric breath or undelivered heat spirals up from their mouths’ corners. Set against this, though, heavy dollops or flakes of congealed water continue to fall. Close by – a centimetre here; a millimetre there – this wrecking crew slithers nearer. Point-by-point they become compacted and move up. Soon their blades will come to droop before Harlequin’s submerged toes. “Steady lads… and we have ‘em!”, burbled Old Man Smithers.
In our characters’ haze or their collective unconscious Toblerone Harpie drew up a chair. It is no longer one of those unergonomic ones which are made from plastic and metal. No. It happens to be a sturdy or wooden effort. She levers it out palm uppermost and her black top – in its tightness – accentuates her breasts’ line. “Do you mind sitting down to a game of draughts?” she asks her husband sheepishly. “Not at all”, he replied nonchalantly. Hasn’t he been circling around in the background amid dry-ice swirls for quite a time now?” “Will this painted clown – abreast of a million fair-grounds – be my opponent?” “Assuredly…”, she responds with an assertive whisper.

See the discs --- black and white --- move upon squares --- replete to a clown. They take on a diagonal hop, skip and jump – switching each way in order to alleviate cramp.

Can we get those Persian Jews – Saatchi and Saatchi – to donate an art-work? Let’s work on the following principle: winner takes all!”, jeers our Clown.

Louis L’Amour’s or Zane Gray’s wolf spirit reappears when pursuant to an aggrieved nothingness. Unholy of holies… it’s on a rival rockface looking up the valley and down which a non-existent cavalry would have to enter. Immediately behind such a carapace the moon leers or preens; and it fills the chalet’s glass with a transparent disc. Unbeknown to Old Man Smithers’ clan, however, Harlequin Thoomey holds up his coat-tails in silhouette. Might it have been a man or a beast? Old Man starts violently as soon as he sees the apparition behind him. Already he grasps a Derringer or a Luger in his fist… and it tails away from this non-commissioned officer’s uniform and hat. A single stripe or a centurion’s sigil stands out. While – to one side of him – runs a rough-hewn table which is constructed from raw planks… It holds some rudimentary utensils such as a tin mug, a
kettle, spoons and simple earthenware bowls. Above this an old-fashioned oil-lamp limbers up and its mechanism sports a cadmium-yellow flue. Whereas – by contrast – Egghead Morgan carries a Colt. 45 that glows blood-red amid any contracting litmus test. “Do ya ken its quicksand, Pa?”, trembles an underling. “Be quiet!”, thunders Old Man Smithers. “T’ain’t nought available, my brethren. Yonder’s a mirage or a fancy which proves unamenable to science.” “You’ve used a double-negative”, suffixed our Egghead. (He was obviously eager to affirm grammatical pedantry – even in American English). “I’ll gut the first stripling who confronts my will!”, responded their patriarch. Truly, Egghead Morgan/Low Termagant, Rapacious Quicksilver/Axon Tree and Lift Spenser Wingate/Pond Granite all revere Old Man Smithers as a Moses. But has he foregone killing swine or their piglets?

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FORTY-ONE: (141)
A century farther on our concentration has to be on Harlequin Thoomey’s face. For it narrows in about the eyes when adjacent to a panning-beam or its long-shot. Yes indeed: his elongated features are equal to a new tasking or issuance. But it’s the orbs which arrest such diatribes as these; they also foreshorten a moment’s stillness before this Battle of Maldon. Why so? Because they set about an eaglet with its dark blue – only to relieve such a primary token. Whereupon – and contrary to any other license – a grey filter superintends over these slits. It masks a coming sepulchral tint; thereby registering a lugubrious entry or a closing off to new possibilities. A swollen interlude supervenes now – primarily in terms of two Anglo-Saxon warriors fused together. It deliberates upon pink or violet; whilst casting an ebon shade. What can our Harlequin be thinking about? Why, it’s merely that Old Man Smithers has overplayed his hand. Given this… a Joker grins inanely from a pack of cards which just casts yellow ahead of a sport’s defeat! In any event, those other lacquered boards in this five-card trick were the Six of Clubs, an Ace of Diamonds, a Jack of Spades (nought else)
and a Heart’s twosome. “Hmmm…”, mused Thoomey. He played with a high-eyed Joker in his mind throughout. “No card can be excluded until this game is over. Hope’s eternal defeat rests easy on itself, you see. Let the music in now! When we cogitate over whether the cold snap we’ve been enduring will last forever. Anyway, heat up this ice and you’ve got boiling water.”

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FORTY-TWO: (142)
In an increasingly intrusive dimension like this one our clown smirks under a peaked cap. Surely our draughts challenge between Harlequin’s two versions has already begun? Wherein those brisk discs – both black and white – spread across longitudinal squares. Here one’s troubadour commences with white and possibly moves a checker diagonally. It traverses the pediment 11→16 on a numbered board. But – when beholden to all hallows – our circus-man dreams negatively about Tracey Emin’s ‘Unmade Bed’. Such a manoeuvre fills two nonchalant squares with nothingness… albeit only then to waste space with its fitness. Correspondingly, a Ring-master’s gaze can sing the following… no matter how blanched in manner:

Bed-stead, ready, unready, pure red; cold dead – do you unfurl a jingle, m’lud?

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FORTY-THREE: (143)
Old Man Smithers continues to sweat in his clap-boarded chalet during the post-Confederate era. For – without situationism’s split from left surrealism and by way of lettrism/a movement for an imagist Bauhaus – it perches on Scaramouch’s Fort. If we listen closely then we can hear Old Man mouthing: “You’re misaligned, boy. Those Red Men have never evinced any special powers… Later on and after the War of Northern Aggression our klavern massacred ‘em like rodents. Howdy-doodie! Do you recognise those trills which originate from Al Jolson’s The Jazz Singer? I instruct you, twin-head: we burnt them out with brackish incense and on a summer’s day. It was like firing kilns
or killing ants’ nests – both of them deep in some Alabama grass. Our dum-dums mowed them down – babies – and they illustrated scant eldritch pants whatsoever. Certainly no shamanism, witch-doctoring or mysticism helped liberate our task. We made their raddled corpses twitch with bullets. Goddamn, it gave us pleasure… no more; no less. Harken to me, children o’ bleat: there’s nothing out there in the darkness… nor can there be a wolf-spirit or a somnambulist’s turn! As King Lear intones after Canute’s example (AD 1016-1035): nought comes from nowt, speak again.”

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FORTY-FOUR: (144)
Wasn’t the moon out above us now? For it worked its way through the trees’ spidery traces… wherein each branch sets up a lattice against the sky. Harlequin Thoomey edged forward within this vortex. Now he controlled a negative spur between a chalet and its sea… no matter how imaginary. Closer he came to those inside – albeit plus a blue-wind which whistled in these limes. When – if seen suddenly in tracery – his neckerchief whips around in surfeit. It masters those shadows under a visage at once fervid, energised, dangerous and complete. (Nota bene: Thoomey incarnates a warrior’s principles – after the example of a Henry de Montherlant short-story). He stands with his back to our goal and looks on at a square/amber joist. A trellis structure masks it or mulcts its frequency (thereby). Our Pinkerton plots his entry calmly and with supreme forethought. Will it be an instant of revolutionary violence – yes or no? Yet – irrespective of any pathos – Harlequin’s blue serge limbers up underneath a sloping brown-hat. Could it recall Texas’ sacrifice at the Alamo to one’s mind?

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FORTY-FIVE: (145)
All abreast of such an instant six myrmidons gibber away before a damnation’s crack…. By virtue of the fact that 6 knife-wielding tormentors stagger backwards – themselves torn asunder by some pursuant knowledge. Each of them faces off against falling
snow… basically in a compendium of near-oblivion. Quite suddenly nemesis rises up to confound them; and it just leaves their eyes all aglow, resultant, afraid, commingled and without satisfaction. A pellet of doom has been released amongst them… thus causing their number to cavil and scatter: much of it occurring against blackened theatrics. In these instances a kaleidoscope of faces intermingle one with another: they mix Pond Granite, Egghead Morgan, Low Termagant and Rapacious Quicksilver together. Whereas two familiar masks – those of Old Man Smithers and Blackbird Leys Dingo – also elide. They swivel, twitch and burn. At first they measure their countenances against the dust… only to fall down amidships. They are subsequently left in a thousand pieces like Humpty-Dumpty in *Alice in Wonderland*. In such a situation – my friends – no mercy can be shown! Because these thieving selves are multiple, irregular, broken, adrift, castaway and incomplete. Moreover, every physiognomy masquerades as another one – primarily by smearing lard across its fellow. (Why don’t you think of Yul Brunner’s robot in *West-World* (?); at once de-faced and thrown amid chaos).

**ONE HUNDRED-AND-FORTY-SIX: (146)**

Meanwhile, a clown’s eye superintends all possible developments which can occur in a rival dimension. It stares at a wretched quadrangle and such a fright as this seems to be alleviated by perspicacity. Like in a surrealist film, possibly by Bunuel, a close-up on this marble intervenes now. It shuts the gate in relation to all those bloody troughs or the likelihood of them filtering around a golden iris. Simultaneously with the above (though) the other player in this checker-board’s deficit, Harlequin Thoomey, moves a blackman. Such a piece sidles across the squared surface. Irrespective of all this… a vaudeville *artiste* dwells on Sarah Lucas’ sculptural essays. They fail to live up to any advanced billing… since her license reveals a pornographic dummy that tends to adopt the codename *Bunny* after Hugh Hefner. It sprawls – occasioning phallic penetration –
on a tragi-comic seat. Whereas a sculpture like this insinuates octopi or robotic hose-pipes onto the *Daily Mirror’s* decadence. Similarly, its scatology risks imprecision or a closure in terms of vacant vulvas. No madam: William Gaunt’s *Victorian Olympus* plays to empty houses now; in that Andrea Dworkin’s ugliness meets Lucas’ dolls head-on. Could these toys be haunted by feminist obesity --- especially in reverse? After skimming a lone draught across the board… our Glock hums to himself:

*Lucas’ spawn isn’t warm*
*but torn and fawn:*
*let it rip*
+
*What’s the answer*
*when faced with a cancer?*
*I know:*
*total sexism.*

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FORTY-SEVEN: (147)
‘The End is nigh’ waxes a lyrical chorus or Toblerone Harpie’s private diary. For inside this wooden cabin – when besieged by a wolf-spirit from without – a dramatic turn of events has ensued. Within its plain or puritanical adornments, then, the young boy seems to suffer a spasm and hurls himself to its boards. He kicks a table over with him… thereby showering the shed’s interior with broken crockery. But, by moments such as these, no Julian Schnabel designs can alter this prologue. *No.* You see, epilepsy wasn’t fully diagnosed at Reconstruction’s juncture – even though John Hughlings Jackson characterised it as a nervous discharge, spasm or electrical brain-storm in 1873. Still, a superstitious individual like Old Man Smithers might view it distinctly. He was the first to react to such turmoil amongst his brood. “Might and main, begorrah!”, he enunciated. “This has to be a trap or snare, and by Peter Blatty’s leave-taking it involves diabolical possession. Surely it’s an exercise in Greek drama’s *Deux ex Machina*, but viewed from left about apex? An Indian
daemon or wolf-spirit floats outside... etherically so. An elemental, it feeds on the weakest link within: namely the boy. In accordance with Georges Bataille’s doctrine of waste or effulgence... such a *Death in Venice* precedes its coitus. A devil crepitates, you see; it strikes out at declining matter which is dehiscent to its intrigues. Why, I’ve known such spirits of the outer circle feed off raw potatoes, dwarves, spastics, cretins, runts, the mentally ill and such like ‘special needs’. Also, jism and faecal matter are rudimentary cholesterol levels for these spawn. Again, the Indian nimbus or Djinn is attacking us through her ‘son’. He’s the weakest link in this socio-biological chain. But if we move to kill him now --- fine and simply --- then we slay the shape-shifter or possessor as well.” With these words, however, Old Man Smithers fires a full carbine into the youngster who drops to the ground screaming. Wasn’t he a *Just William* character laid low by a flowering rifle? A mixture of orange and yellow light subsists withal... whereas the child’s corpse undergoes various convulsions before it seeks closure in a coagulating pool *a la* Jackson Pollack!

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FORTY-EIGHT: (148)
Harlequin Thoomey lifts up a gigantic white-fist as the snowflakes continue to deluge. Within it a large automatic pistol is clearly discernible. It fires repeatedly into the air in order to enforce a cascade inside frigidity. Clearly, Thoomey has chosen not to master Old Man’s warning concerning an avalanche. For one was quite clearly desired now – even if it swamped the prospects of everyone else out of sight. Why did this U.S. Federal marshal do it? Primarily, it occasioned a dialectical trick or conceit – all would then find themselves devastated; the enemy throng must not survive and in victory lay negation’s defeat! Turn and turn about, these spinning tops sped on before they keeled over. Isn’t there a possibility of Dadaism, heretofore? +

All around him, though, the snow continuously slanted down on a black backdrop. Like the Cornish flag – of white reversed out
on *noir* – it spotted a scintillation… only to reverse King Lear’s logic at a later date.

**ONE HUNDRED-AND-FORTY-NINE: (149)**

An antique clock tick-tocked away --- somewhat aberrantly --- in our collective unconscious. Did it signify time between certain moves – themselves pursuant or relative to one white disc as against its neighbour? Let’s see now: those two variants of Harlequin, the circus clown and one’s ultimate Thule, are still arguing about the Turner prize. A game of draughts remains unfinished on a table between them. To embolden a first instant, therefore, our Grimaldi gesticulates wildly and holds a revolver in the air. Might it really be a starting-pistol? Well! his pasty features look more animated than ever before… what with a puerile taper lighting up his grin. It grimaces, starts, reckons on and enforces closure… While Harlequin Thoomey and Toblerone Harpie, husband and wife, hover continuously in the background amid dry-ice. “Consider”, articulates the clown, “the miasma represented by Chris Ofili’s *The Holy Virgin Mary*… a clear example of artistic deliquescence or decay. Whereby a negroid sculpture on resin tails off badly; it incarnates a sort of Venus of Willendorf when crossed with a sex-doll. Inconsequentiality has to be its remit… especially in a scenario where a cloacal animism comes to the fore. Moreover, the entire assemblage was festooned with elephant dung; the latter stuck to this polyester using some map-pins. A former Arts minister and labourite, Chris Smith MP, purchased it for divers shekels… maybe it can help him live positively with HIV/AIDS?”

*Cripes(!)*
sprite
*take a bite:*
don’t be trite –
it’s DEGENERATE ART!
ONE HUNDRED-AND-FIFTY: (150)

At this precise moment the wooden door flew off its latch or crook, and, contrary to all expectations, Harlequin Thoomey appeared in the aperture. Surely he transposed an angel or Azrael’s vengeance (†); at least at a time when his frame came ladled with sapphire. “It’s the Pinkerton!”, ejaculated Old Man Smithers… almost in relief. During his embarkation the Smithers’ set had hatched in turquoise’s direction. Needless to say, they stood under an oil-lamp that refused to swing – irrespective of any other livery. “You criminal swine, Smithers! There was no need to slay the boy! It served a scant purpose… alrighty.” Whilst enunciating this Harlequin Thoomey sped on his heels avaunt such prey. He struck Rapacious Quicksilver and Axon Tree full in the face. They turned liverish, expired and began to steam: especially when his Colt. 45 passed a bullet through their skulls. Against a semblance of azure his Bowie knife passed up their cortex and missed some vertebrae… but left others of them inebriate. Do you detect it? Most definitely, a destructive scintilla rounded these snails’ heads or coins. Similarly, our hero held a blunderbuss athwart a 3-D head and Phrenology’s bust; or possibly a series of them. BLAM! BLAM! It blew up and thence ruptured this scale. Didn’t a burnt rose or some umber hue rise up on a screen rearwards? It happened to be speckled with blood and gore. In furtherance of which the Pinkerton’s weaponry blasted again – so that Pond Granite and Lift Spenser Wingate curled over in its fire! By such an effulgence their rib-cages smouldered in a molten glue. At a time when Egghead Morgan and Low Termagant – perchance – had their collective Heads bent back by a machine-pistol. It exploded into life all of a sudden and while their joint craniums spewed up… provisionally over a slog or its impress. A violent, blanched quality fell away from us here. It trafficked with various skulls on poles – only to market them at a later date. Don’t these myrmidons’ tops flick or spin off; thereby splattering cabin walls with brains? But mortal faggots take their leave now; it’s Old
Man Smithers whom Thoomey wants. Given the boy’s taking off… he’s the quarry now.

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FIFTY-ONE: (151)
A century further on a mountain of snow is about to fall on our main characters. It’s a melt-down where our villain’s canter – nor can they merit termination abreast of such meaninglessness. For all of them the notion of being carried hither has to be Death’s equivalent. Could it help to notate – rather vaguely – an authoritarian text known as Secession ’85? Regardless of this, each of the Smithers’ clan peels away in relation to an ice-warrior’s crumble. Surely now such balaclavas as these feed off a worm’s belly? (Although none sought out Bram Stoker’s ditty referred to as The Lair of the White Worm). Given this emergency: six pink-dots split from an atom’s stalk. They shift off hopefully under demise’s tonnage… but nothing can stay the avalanche which races from above. Truly, great pillars of basalt slacken in the cold without Samson removing their fence-posts. It spears downwards ever-ready to pummel, pulverise and leave aghast. Grand-father mountain had shifted his axis thereby, if only to touch a void’s absence. (Didn’t the traditionalist philosopher Julius Evola pen a work called Speculation on the Peaks?) It portends gravitationally towards one lustre or other – like an icy temple cracking. Yet now these crack houses are multi-planar, trigonometrical and entropic in feel. Looking up, however, Harlequin Thoomey spies some brazen boulders which cascade down like billiards and wax hostile to life. He laughs uncontrollably. Somewhat strangely, the guffaw catches him from without. Precipice-like – he recalls a similitude or correspondence… namely, this was Doctor William Pierce’s last slogan: the one that declared white revolution is the only solution.

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FIFTY-TWO: (152)
A deep saturnalia, nocturne or ‘Nix’ travels abroad; and it subsumes a dark travelogue or its fatality. In it we wonder at the
clown’s approach to Old Man Smithers; a character who had formerly scrambled under tables. His face came dimly scarred or divided into two halves. They were equidistant from each other – one in white crepe; the other in black satin. Might he be construed as an in-betweener? In any event, a golden balloon which was touched up with tinsel attached itself to his head. Our Grimaldi or his route-master Glock started to make threatening gestures, albeit in a Boris Karloff mime. (Don’t you realise that mimesis is crucial to Horror’s vintage? It traverses the Gothic through play, you see. No-one should be surprised, then, whether Christopher Lee, Karloff himself, Bela Lugosi, Lon Chaney father and son, Peter Lorre, Vincent Price and Donald Pleasance were all schooled in LeCoq). After a few seconds he held a gun to Smithers’ temple. Happy days; howdy-doodie! What’s he been mouthing, my ring-master? “Oscar Wilde never said – under absinthe’s influence – that a man’s thoughts could be cleared by placing a blunderbuss so. But he ought to have punted it farther out or preferably on a vicar’s croquet lawn. Anyway, the Turner prize declares its weakness on Adorno’s swinging gibbet. In his *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno hoped to find ultra-modernism subverting culture’s industry. Whereas radically abstract art – even the codex of B.S. Johnson’s sentences or aleatory music – just becomes so much wall-paper. Surely it can’t claim to be more than capitalist decoration?”

+ *After Auschwitz, no more poesy; ring a’ring a’Roses: all fall down.*

**ONE HUNDRED-AND-FIFTY-THREE: (153)**

Back in the nineteenth century, though, Harlequin Thoomey utters a threat through gritted teeth. At this instant in time he’s every inch the Pinkerton. For – looked at aslant or under his mighty brim – a motley of light blue and white distills abundant masculinity. Aren’t his eyes hooded or cupped . . . after an eagle’s format? “Goddamn, you’ll pay for such a malevolent slaughter, Smithers! There was no need to silence the boy. It smacks ireal
or oneiric in its substantive fact: save that the child won’t rise again.” But in reply --- somewhat strangely --- Old Man Smithers happens to be in deadly earnest. Hatless, and with his gun discarded, he almost pleads for contact or intimacy avec Thoomey… against what? Presumably a wolf-spirit which lurks beyond. In this particular Smithers waxes beady-eyed, inconstant, galvanic and plangent all at once. “You don’t understand, bounty hunter! The chickadee proved to be a conduit for a Red Man’s demon… yeah. I finished him before he devoured all of us. Yet you’ve got to help me across the remaining negative kami, huh? It’s your duty to assist us.”

Perhaps only now Pinkerton Thoomey fully comprehends what has happened.

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FIFTY-FOUR: (154)
In the twentieth century, however, our eight-pack waits for an avalanche to hit or overwhelm them. It subsists all afore it in relation to a North Eiger’s southwards tilt. Altogether now the compacted snow rolls down; and it exists in accordance with barbed strontium or some slashing planes of alabaster. These funnel up into the air… at least in terms of frigid methane clouds: and this was whether they happen to be light or dark blue spectres. Amidst such chaff as this our malcontents’ bodies are hurled up in a purple livery. In the foreground – though – Harlequin Thoomey places a masculine glove over his wife’s head. It is a loving or protective gesture… regardless of a darkling fog which surrounds them all. What does fate have in store for his clan? They fare badly – one and all. To whit: an enormous ice-block knocks out Axon Tree’s eyes and this occurs before a boulder dislodges the brain. Whereas Pond Granite sees a shaft of ice pass via a man’s spine or cord, and it resultanty transfixes his heart. Just occasionally – or in the merry-go round of existence – two corses become knit: after Lift Spenser Wingate’s and Low Termagant’s fashion. Each of these became spliced inside an icy cube prior to asphyxiation… and they
resembled siamese twins or freaks. Do they take a time to perish – rather like prehistoric fish in warmer waters? Whereupon Rapacious Quicksilver mushrooms a mask over ‘its’ face; it’s almost as if he grows a second hide or carapace! Nonetheless, he happens to be dwarfed and runtish in aspect; and it also flaps around an Elephant Man’s porcupine. Finally he expires – especially given the battering both skulls receive. Perhaps Egghead Morgan – as befits his pointy-head or name – gets further up this negative beach. But he (too) faces a crumpled forehead which elongates his oblong. Percussively, it adopts a square-shape afore liquid cortex pours from either ear. What of Old Man Smithers and Blackbird Leys Dingo, though? For – denying all partiality – this avalanche purges them as well. (You see: they face embarkation when laid out upon a board… or is it really desolation?) Dingo then loses both of his feet to a gigantic stone… until hurling around in this maelstrom he comes to rest on his father’s blade. It severs a key artery and butchers the wind-pipe thereby… whilst Blackbird’s orbs ‘n’ joy collapse into a red tank. By this stage – somewhat inevitably – Old Man Smithers feels a formaldehyde breath upon his back. Might a von Hagens’ plastinate reach out from Gray’s abstraction now? Certainly, a snow zombie seems to momentarily clutch at Old Man’s neck. He senses the cold nails biting into his corded muscles. Suddenly this Kelvin volcano wrenches off his cranium and causes it to fly eastwards. Like in Dogma films, for example, the pearly eyes and bleary lips slaver under gravity until the impress of Smithers’ screaming-skull fades out. Finally it’s all over.

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FIFTY-FIVE: (155)
Our clown happens to be in full spate now… as befits a negative circus’ tributary. Have you rescinded examples as diverse as Archaos, the Circus of Horrors, Vermin from the Sewers, Doc Madness and so on? Probably not: but a notional freak show must pass afore Celine’s Guignol’s Band here. Remember… Harlequin’s alter ego has placed a luger next to Old Man’s
covered head. If we squint through a glass darkly then much gibbering and capering takes place as a consequence. Or – on a point of principle – the game of draughts between our protagonists seems forgotten at this point. Although – across a parallax view – you can make out a checker game in the background… somewhat dimly. Instantaneously, and after one of our Glock’s movements, the other clown grimaces with a fanatic avidity. Surely he re-interprets an asphalt Lear or Canute (?); both of them effectively burning on their respective heaths or beaches. All of a sudden he lets off the mallet or pistol. It discharges an explosive dose; the latter filtering under a thousand lights (etherically). During this sonic moment various shards or lit-up bursts punctuate our scene. Can any disagree with it? Because Old Man’s demise is hardly real or kosher; and it waxes --- in fact --- more like an artist’s jointed-model collapsing inwards. For – in a scene reminiscent of Dr. Caligari’s cabinet – Smithers slumps over a balsa stool. Yet isn’t it just an exercise in Punch and Judy… albeit rendered more adult in its game-time? (Maybe Geoff Felix proved to be our invisible Professor?)

Harken now! Our clown’s pontificating has commenced: “I do declare that – under any aesthetic license – Stewart Home’s proletarian materialism proves to be redundant. It falls sheer. Or contrariwise, it manifested itself as anti-Art – let alone art strikes or redundant boycotts, et cetera… In his agit-prop or screed, The Assault on Culture: From Lettrism to Class War, Home urges a new wave or neoism. But original forms necessitate some talent, whether pre-or-post, and this involves elitism or top-down inequality. Consequently, we find a sub-text to his flirtation with Flux-Europa, Richard Lawson and neo-fascism.”

Home/Gnome
Cone/Foam...
Let it alone!
Harlequin Thoomey recoils from nearly everything else inside our nineteenth century chalet. Almost to circumnavigate this moment effectively… a shadow or penumbra casts its shape over his upper face. Could it be the impact of his sombrero’s rim or cusp, and might it be more? Yet he has to recognise fear’s percussive rhythm or its dip-stick. Didn’t Ezra Pound declare the latter property to be formalism when cut into space? Truly though, he’d summoned up a non-existent wolf-spirit so as to cast tears at imaginary moons. Furthermore, Little Red Riding-Hood tip-toed across the loam in order to prevent toad-stools staring up at her --- as wolf-heads. “I’ve no time for you, Smithers, old man. A child murderer merits no respect whatsoever. The only question which remains is this: do I finish it here? Or perchance, should I recall you to Eugene, Oregon… and maybe even further afield? Then and there you can be made to kick and dance on the gibbet. Yes sir! We’ve got to hang ‘em high or loose, and always remembering that recusants die in calf-leather boots.” With this Parthian shot Pinkerton Thoomey violently hacked through Old Man Smithers’ neck. Soon it was severed completely, and it bobbed up and down like in an al-Qa’eda video.

In finality or closure, then, Harlequin Thoomey ripped off Old Man Smithers’ carapace or physiognomy. He then sent it aggressively leeward; thereby shooting out some interconnected clots of blood. These constellated like black soot and amber, or those blobs which cluster in Rauschenberg’s graphics. Whereas Smithers’ mask limbered up eyeless, rimless, lidless, bright scarlet and elongated. Thoomey held it aloft successfully and he shook it repeatedly on a gigantic hack-saw. In its ultimate ex cathedra moments, then, Smithers’ rip-jaw represented a shaman’s mumbo-jumbo. May it lift the veil off a Blackfoot’s or an Apache’s war recipe? Assuredly, this copper and cadmium disfigurement hinted at lycanthropy. In death’s darkness didn’t lightening flashes, war-paint and woad transfix its surface?
Hasn’t Old Man Smithers exchanged places with a war-wolf? You see, FEAR must be its own reward…

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FIFTY-SEVEN: (157)
A century distant a primitive helicopter or an autogyro traverses great banks of snow. This black-beetle – plus its twirling blades – hovers over a form which is lying amidst tons of slush. It looks forlorn under a tepid sky; the latter a rhapsody in one prism’s violet hue. But the atmosphere now that the avalanche has passed seems to be lighter and less oppressive than before. See(!), it’s a woman these state Rangers have discovered, even though one of them keenly recalls a younger Harlequin Thoomey from the nineteenth century. He winches her to safety and the wind swirling around la femme – or underneath the ‘copter – revives T.H.. It was only then that she came to realise why her husband’s left his coat behind. She shook her orange tresses rather coquettishly.
+
For Toblerone Harpie has survived.

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FIFTY-EIGHT: (158)
A clowning Harlequin steps back from Old Man’s cadaver in one redolent dream-burst. Is it really occurring within these mists of spontaneity? For – against damnation’s Faust – this clown wishes to prove Edward Lear’s accuracy. Definitely so… because Smithers’ bloodied tonsure reclines on a chair. It streams to the purpose of some wood, but is it any good? Regardless of this oneiric bias… one’s clown measures infinity against itself. He spreads his arms wide in order to dish the Turner prize once and for all. “Jean Gimpel’s contribution might prove even more trenchant now. Beginning with The Cult of Art: Against Art and Artists, Gimpel sought out a revolutionary philistinism. Yet this proved to be a cul-de-sac. What he really wished to achieve was a collective art – after the manner of The Cathedral Builders. Herein lay a traditional artistry… one which would reduce modernism to its rightful place: namely to research and
development. If post-modernism happens to be art’s R&D; what purpose conceptual art (?)… that is: a notion about having one!”

This Chipperfield’s wastrel – at once reminiscent of Conan Doyle’s story *The Shrouded Lodger* – toyed with his revolver. Do you require a snatch of song? Still and all… it comes out as:

*Classical rascals

*bring them back

*hew and rack

‘The Oath of the Horatii’

--- reverse Rome’s sack

*Serota’s pap!*

ONE HUNDRED-AND-FIFTY-NINE: (159)

During this interval, a bereaved mother is understandably in tears or discomfort. Whereas – in colour scheme – an ultra-violet fixative betrays her innermost thoughts. “We moved out here to keep a distance”, she mumbled… by way of an explanation. “His disease led other folks to betray their false hopes. In contravention to epilepsy being a brain-storm… why, few others use their minds to reckon on goodness’ sake or fall-out. This clime proved accommodating before a bullet crossed his path from one side to another. Could it have been a dum-dum or possibly a perforated tag? In exceptional circumstances, then, we stayed on our farm after the railroad’s purchase or buy-out… It was probably bound to be forlorn… our attempt to give him a life beyond such galactic fears.” Within an environment of shaven or planed wood, a solitary oil-lamp illumined this bare cabin. Harlequin Thoomey’s younger self is speaking now. He also wore a bandage around his scalp. “Mister Pinkerton agent, sir, we can’t offer proper gratitude for deliverance from sin. Isn’t the capital of Rhode Island called Providence?” “Thanks indeed, friend”, nodded Harlequin Thoomey in reply. But like Icarus’ model wings before the sun… this rescue proved to be insufficient.
Even though – at a squint or one remove – the younger Thoomey harks back to his master… in that he stood apart, metaphorically speaking. He smouldered with a giant’s torso and reincarnated Josef Thorak’s *Atlas* outside Chicago’s central railway station. Whereupon, and at dream-time’s other end, Old Man Smithers’ face was seen to dally on a pike. Did it scream in agony or fall from its nail like one of Ensor’s masks? For their part, his features were painted in fluorescent yellow and they recalled a day-glow extra… but not on diamantine. For – like Marlon Brando’s tribally-painted head in *Apocalypse Now* – it pulsed slowly. You see, in a screeching fit only a luminescent skull may win the Turner prize!

ONE HUNDRED-AND-SIXTY: (160)

Speaking of which, my friends, a great flurry of snow-flakes churns up underneath the autogyro. Isn’t this an illustration of impressionism… no matter how inevitably miscued? Nonetheless, Toblerone Harpie arches under the chopper in her skin-tight leggings or lycra… as it rises from the tundra. A youthful Oregon ranger then hauls her aboard – a factor that’s already been mentioned. During this transfer, however, her orange tresses stream behind the waif’s back… while Harlequin’s coat circles her upper body and moves sheer on a windy diagonal. It billows out on this lissom slip-stream whether suggestively or semi-erotically… and this is irrespective of how frigid it might be. Certainly, Toblerone had been loaned the coat for a purpose. What was it? Why, it definitely helped to conceal Old Man Smithers’ stripped face from another dimension. For – deep inside this cover-all – it chafed against her left breast. Maybe Dumas’ slip found itself contained inside an ebon box with convex sides? “Whatever happened to Smithers’ ‘family’?”*, queried our ranger over the rotor blades. (They basically roared, whipped, whelped and crashed in a cacophonous vein. Didn’t these rotations inveigh upon concrete music or serial composition betimes? It all illustrated Elisabeth Lutyens’ work… you know,
the architect’s daughter? She wrote her variant on twelve-tone serialism as well and one of its key examples proved to be a Hammer horror film, *The Skull*, based on the Marquis de Sade). “Smithers’ or Old Man’s extended family are under the drifts”, rejoined their former captive. “Their corpses happened to be piled on top of all else. Each one of them distributes some lost diesel fuel rather like in a car-crush. Perhaps they reach out to David Carradine’s *Alien X*, *inter alia*, or even a compacted sculpture by Cesar? Every one of Smithers’ ilk is then found to be red, grey, mouldy, sweaty, broken and ethically naked. In a rival continuum, though, dead molars still slaver over living flesh… I’m pleased to say.” Yet the autogyro’s composition drives out her final words.

ONE HUNDRED-AND-SIXTY-ONE: (161)

His job completed now we note that Britain’s Grimaldi turns away. He also wafts a hand over his forehead in a mock-theatrical gesture. Might it turn out to be an example worthy of Sir Henry Irving himself? Our Glock then appears to be saying the following in soliloquy: “Oh! What a waste of mortal skin or sausage, by deuce!” Even though as he vents one ditty… a steaming luger continues to lie in a leftist palm. Mayhap a discerning viewer can see an abandoned draughts-board behind-hand or in one’s visual foreplay? On it a tournament of cylindrical checkers mounts a charge. Look at this: several white discs surround a forlorn black one and it becomes enfiladed thereby. May the piece soon be jettisoned or abandoned – in accordance with Willie Ryan or apartheid’s glory? Yet again, the real point here is dissolution… because all of these denizens are apt to fade away. They consist of Toblerone Harpie, Harlequin Thoomey, Old Man Smithers, Blackbird Leys Dingo, Lift Spenser Wingate, Pond Granite and Low Termagant *et al.* Slowly, oh so slowly… they allocate themselves to a multidimensional charge – wherein each spirit reconnects with a former husk. In point of fact a naked hand was spent after a claw’s entreaty… whereas out of its ossuary swirls some abstract
expressionist dream-time. Surmounting all of this two etheric figures thence mushroom against the astral’s blackness. One of them suggests a homily or a Conan Doyle-like nudity; that is, a sort of bath-chair affidavit after ‘what the butler saw’. It wore a handle-bar moustache like Colonel Blimp. The other effigy, though, distills a Pitt-Rivers museum piece: and it delineates a horned god; at once carved, over-shooting, tubular or Gaudier-Brzeska like.

EPILOGUE:

<<<Back in the nineteenth century we find Pinkerton Thoomey taking a boy out of this lodge in order to essay the stars. The youngster’s name was Dingo – despite a clown-mask having fallen from him so as to reveal much spittle and gore. Both man and child came to be limned in a light-blue; at least when set against a hut’s internal radiance. Two house-props then betoken a Tree of Life on either side of our concluding characters – somewhat evidently. What has Harlequin really learnt from our adventure? There were essentially two double helixes to be considered: the first realises that these innocents must suffer and die. It is a law of life. The second relates to Joseph Smith’s theology in The Book of Mormon. For don’t these latterday saints postulate as to whether a superior man turns into a God after death and rules over a solar system?

Whereas – over in the twentieth century – an autogyro turns away and makes a circuit across some snowy vales. Marshal Thoomey looked up at the vehicle – he knew that he’d be rejoining his wife in Eugene soon enough. A radio-car, swivelling on its caterpillars, would be rendezvousing with him on a ridge a mile or two distant. His heavy boots then cut Odin’s tears into some retreating glaciers or ice-fountains. What did he feel throughout this? Many things, but chiefly relief over whether Old Man Smithers’ face lay inside his pocket. It took up quite a lot of space within a pocket-book. Also, one of Harlequin’s incarnations has winched Toblerone to safety moments before.
Yet – at this meaning’s summit – a trench-coat and a felt-hat came to tip the balance. They engulfed a cool orange disc or a white sun, and Harlequin Thoomey – on his own behalf – strode resultantly towards a receding vista. For, if bereft of a magic mountain, Nietzsche has prophesied the superman’s birth… a fact which doesn’t connect with Jerry Siegel’s or Joe Shuster’s character. Isn’t he already here?>>>

THE END
A BALLET OF WASPS

an other gothic stories

An introduction

This volume consists of four short stories and a play. The first effort, *A Ballet of Wasps*, deals with a woodsman who offends a vampire with tales of derring-do. Our second story, *Golgotha’s Centurion*, focuses on the chiaroscuro and ochre tints in Giotto and Cimabue. It also makes use of the same template as Mel Gibson in his *Passion of the Christ*, but this time to illustrate *Lex talionis* or the right of retribution. The third piece, *Wilderness’ Ape*, delves into the world of zombies or the living dead. Our fourth javelin, *Sixty Foot Dolls*, considers the vexed topics of ‘ageism’, eugenesis, regression theory and evolution. The last romance, *Stinging Beetles*, is a theatrical exercise in daemonic possession which brings together flash backs, dream sequences and other filmic techniques. Its finale again enforces the point of the whole book – namely, that heroic values and aristocratic mores need to take over once again.
A BALLET OF WASPS
*a short story*

ONE
Have you ever perused Sir James Frazer’s *The Golden Bough*? Well, this is a tale which escaped from its twelve compendious volumes and extensive foot-notes...

TWO
A Woodsman bragged before a coterie of his drinking companions in eighteenth century White Russia. A large oaken table – with cross beams – lay in front of his gnarled hand. He grasped it using main force; while the other mitten contained within it a tankard of steaming ale. Who is not to say that it had been brewed from rare berries, or cast into a vat with variously exotic fruits like pomegranates? Do you hear? The Woodsman himself was stocky, oafish, slightly ill-kempt, and he happened to be wearing a fur-lined jacket made of boar skin. It glistened under the available lights... all of which kept up a subterranean glow from niches and corners. Each lamp, moreover, had tassels around it – and came attached to basalt pillars that dotted a cavernous inn. Perhaps it resembled the atmosphere of a converted barn; or alternatively, one of those pseudo-Transylvanian films which litter a Hammer House of Horror. Anyway, a rare trellis-work – appearing to be Tudor in origin – festooned the inner walls of this structure, rising up in its multiplicity from the ground. Ever more complicated Arabesques were then noticed, each one lifting up, tier on tier, so that they filled the inner canvas of these walls with straight black lines. In their complexity and allure, they seemed to notify one of Wyndham Lewis’ military compositions from prior to the Great War. They virtually called out to you – in the manner of a board like *Planners (Happy Day)*, dating from 1913. In it, a Front moves in a labile construction towards an unknown goal – each one blocked out by arrows. The picture transfigures its own Essence, if only by dint of oblivion... or necessarily, in a way
which configures the Vienna Group painting of Ernst Fuchs. Might it encode a military architecture *a la* von Clausewitz, or more properly the demography of a new oblivion? Perhaps, in such a tracery, we can detect the dissident cartography of Guy Debord… or not?

THREE
Regardless of any of this, such biceps – that maximise a new skeleton’s limbs – pass up the wall with the tracery of multiple spiders’ webs. They denote the inner workings or tendons of the spine – after a fashion which accords with anatomical fissures. Possibly the cadavers of Professor Gunter von Hagens, as delineated in psychic paint, come into the frame here. Do you sense this eventuality, pathologically speaking? Although another option may become available – one that has to do with the architectonics of the hive, seeking succour, thereby, from Count Maurice de Maeterlinck’s *The Life of Bees*… In a situation where insect colonisation is seen afresh, pursuant to those amazing cities which such creatures build in crevices or under the ground. Aren’t all of these illustrations of Mega-city One achieved through entomology’s ferment? Furthermore, at the heart of any *Drosophila*’s drama or *Lepidoptera*’s coldspring, we can acknowledge an occult art: even the Albigensian idealism that fired le Corbusier’s modernism. Would it be useful to consult Ernst Junger’s *The Glass Bees* now? May such caracoles bring forth a wasps’ ballet?

FOUR
All the time our Woodsman’s been hectoring his audience – another entity listened with growing impatience. Truly, no-one could put up with an indifferent shrug of the shoulders roundabouts! Especially since this night’s wraith happened to be a Vampire. Such a Slavic type, racially speaking, sat hunched over in the corner of our travellers’ rest. A relatively icy penumbra surrounded him, but more of the spirit than aught else. His eyes were dark and glowed in the face like coals; while ‘its’
hair came thick, straight and black upon the scalp. He continued to trespass a look of hunger all the way down to his pointy beard: after the fashion of a saturnine George V! Similarly, his skin-tone, chameleon like, waxed now yellow and then white under the lights… Whereupon, in dress’ terms, he had about him a heavy grey mackintosh; a vessel or instrument of wrath, (this), which swept down to his knees. He denied the facility of a cape, but somehow came to seamlessly embody it. Yes, that’s right: and at his throat our example of Anne Rice’s Undead wore a cravat. Bright red or scarlet it was: with more than a hint about it of unobliging haemoglobin. His name didn’t really suffice anymore. Some dared to whisper about the nomenclature of Lord Weirdorf (or Temple Bickerstaff) behind the webbing of each glove… Yet nothing came of it. For these purposes a tale like this – drawn from Russian folklore – doesn’t have to provide nemesis with a name.

FIVE
To one side of our braggart sat a range of hearty spectators. They deliberated pipe in hand or open-mouthed, especially when confronted with tales of derring-do. Boisterous announcements of valour poured from the Woodsman’s lips… While – in front of his rather helpless admirers – a litany of bottles, vodka glasses, fake liqueurs and malts littered a wooden bench. Immediately adjacent to and behind his hearers, however, a spear with a fluted end – plus a halberd or axe – found themselves attached to a wall bracket. The vampire listened on with greater peevishness… and became more & more aggrieved.

SIX
Eventually, the Woodsman staggered from the tavern, thence passing out into desolate conditions of ice and snow. He almost slipped on a treacherous strip of Jack Frost’s bounty or loss… and this was before the Vampire pounced on him. His talons and teeth were exposed, and the two of them crashed down into barren wastes. It would be wrong to say that the forester put up
no resistance, but the Undead’s sinews stretched in an iron-hard way. No mortal man could hold out against such odds, at least in terms of the force with which the Woodsman was hurled to the glacier. Both his hands came up in order to ward off Bela Lugosi’s charge… yet our man-bat proved too resourceful, sinister, approximate and empowered to provide contemporary resistance to. Once our gombeen man, convicted of his braggadocio, lay prone on the tundra… the Vampire leant across him with a daemonic mien. He seemed to lie aslant the other’s body, licking his lips, and immediately he ripped out his heart and ate it! There occurred sudden convulsions in the Woodsman, even though these soon passed only to be substituted by stillness. Our Dracula’s Guest then went even farther. Because, with a sharp or taloned finger, he opened up the belly of a passing rabbit. This he magically introduced into a cavity in the Woodsman’s chest – before sealing it up again. Is one aware of the fact that an Undead’s touch, witnessed at certain hours, might lead to defeat or a withdrawal of circumstances? With a clap of his hands the blood, gore, rents in one’s clothing and so forth, all cleared away under a spectral or gibbous moon. *Avaunt thee*, it wasn’t long after that all trace of a bat-hominid vanished, leaving our Woodsman prone on hardened slush. He came to surrounded by arctic conditions roundabout.

**SEVEN**

Afterwards, and to the surprise of many, our Woodsman made a miraculous recovery. Yet, in one respect, he was subtly and ineradicably changed. This must have to do with his capacity for courage. Since now, when late at night (and under an opalescent moon) he heard a wolf-hound howl, our man quaked with fear. Moreover, he often cringed anew, rolled himself into a ball and shrunk from the slightest sound, even foot-steps in the snow. Surely, the steppes answer to Sheridan le Fanu has inflicted a crushing blow or reverse? For the Woodsman’s prize asset, his valour, had been taken from him. Might we draw a lesson from Aesop’s fables here? Perhaps this story’s moral is as follows:
bravery remains our highest virtue, but be careful where thou speakest of it!

FINIS
PART THE FIRST
A hot day of Sicilian sunshine has ended; or fallen in balmy
eventide over the town. Initially, the solar orb had been brutal in
its heat, but now the hamlet’s white-wash glowed with a
refulgent cooling. Yes, the swash of sky behind seems to be
streaked avec orange, green and turquoise. While those buildings
which characterised a Sicilian hamlet – other than the ones made
out of lava – appeared to be higgledy-piggledy or ramshackle in
a golden haze. A few peasants were abroad – either walking
about, mopping their brows, or knocking out the contents of clay
pipes on various outposts. Most assuredly, since in the
background and under a sky of brilliant azure, there lay a domed
church with its spire scratching the surface of the heavens. Didn’t
it resemble one of those delicately classical or early Renaissance
piles that contains the odd fresco, and which doubles pink or
yellow in the light? Occasionally, a slight tincture of blue sweeps
across a given department of wall. In the distance – and with a
dramatic mountain rearing as a backdrop – a solitary figure hoves
to. He is a man alone. He walks towards his village with a
sureness of tread.

PART THE SECOND
The man concerned came of middle-size – with slacks on his legs
and a faint velvet waistcoat flung across his torso. A
hidden/panther-like power or suppression was observable in the
limbs. He walked with a casual gait, but there had to be an
undertone of menace to his stalk. His name, you ask? Frederico
Borghese Gaati… remember it.

“It is him, HIM…” , the old crone almost screeched in her
husband’s ear. In remarking this, Simone, an octogenarian
dressed all in black recalled to mind a sibyl’s presence… but not
the one articulated by Michelangelo. “You see, eh? EH? He has
returned, the brother of the whore... the scarlet woman, the one
whom men mount in an ecstasy of forgiveness.” As she lisped
these words, perchance, could one detect a certain nostalgia or
disappointment in her voice? “Hush woman, mask those
entreaties with silence”, commanded her husband. He was an old
man, possibly five or six years younger than his spouse, whose
face abbreviated some dimpled suet. This elderly member of the
chorus stood erect, clay pipe in hand, and looked vaguely like a
sentinel or a watchman... as Gaati slouched past. He – for his
part – refused to give the couple a second glance. Behind them
were a few individuals, apparently in middle life, who were busy
shovelling some ripe oranges into a sack. One of them wore a
traditional hat, fluted like a stack, and of southern Italian design.
All of these denizens – regardless of their occupation – slightly
froze when the man who bore the family name of Borghese
passed. Weren’t they vaguely supposed to be aristocrats from up
north? Surely a fascist magazine had once been called _Borghese_?
Didn’t a war-time photo exist of the count in naval uniform and
sat next to an SS driver in a sleek limo? An image which could
only have been taken during the Salo republic. It also proved to
be reminiscent of Italian neo-realist cinema.

PART THE THIRD
With a setting sun behind his aspect, then, Gaati strode on with a
jacket slung casually across his shoulder. To one side of him a
peasant crowd has already gathered; well they knew his famed
temper of old! A house on two storeys – albeit with rickety
windows and a slate roof – loomed up at right-angles or in a
hidden vertice. But Borghese looked straight ahead... as if
nothing could faze him. Do you hear? His hair has been whitened
by mainland imprisonment or care, and yet the features remain
noticeably unchanged. For one thing the face is square,
masculine, massive, slow, Cimmerian or Hyperborean – and
incredibly violent. It betokens a combination of two sculptural
types: perhaps these were the smoothness of Dobson’s intimation
concerning Osbert Sitwell... when spliced with a Paolozzi head.
An object – in the latter’s case – which re-interpreted *Cyclops* (1957); or some similar spasm of the imagination. Might it bring back – no matter how severally – a painting by Graham Sutherland like *Head III* in 1953? Wherein the formulation of two eagles comes together in paint, and not necessarily after Russia’s imperial house. Yet it’s more to do with an alleviation of space in a situation where images coalesce – somewhat anthropomorphically – in light. Has one ever seen the transforming photos of Edward Muybridge?

PART THE FOURTH
The man walks on and his pace slightly slows the nearer he gets to the town’s centre. Could a limp really be discernible now? No not quite… For he trudges on with a sense of inevitability or keenness after dark, but with his honour undislodged. Indeed, prison comes as a scant or even a necessary disgrace in this society. The buildings were old scale – at once lacking in grandeur and without any lofty ambition. Certainly, they couldn’t be described as Romanesque or tending towards the grand, let alone the Imperial. Let’s see: they seem to be typical for this part of the Mediterranean. All of them were white-washed and customarily blanched – with the odd cat lying sideways in the dust. At last, though, Frederico Borghese Gaati stood before the old family abode on a central thoroughfare. Its walls are constructed of solid stone – whether robust or ancient – and yet a tracery of cracks covers its surface. Might they represent (in one’s personal mythology) the mummified features of a face dismally untombed? Perhaps – by way of a parepraxis – it recalls one of those sarcophagi in the British Museum, or a Bacon portrait which betokens dismemberment? Regardless of all this, the immemorial head of a crone comes silhouetted in a nearby square. May it be an example of topping-and-tailing; or at least cropping in terms of a photographic image? Because the hag’s head appears to be in profile within the space; it looks out on the street timelessly, gesturally and without let or hindrance. Has she been on this corner, *ceteris paribus*, for a year, ten years,
possibly a century or even a millennium? It matters not... since her face sags towards immemorial sadness, blankness, resignation, even embitterment... but without any check on a residual passion. She sits there waiting --- somewhat necessarily --- for some sort of an end... that is: a culmination, finish or checkmate. No mating can be expected from her lineage, to be sure! Moreover – and directly to one side of her on the left – looms a crucifix. It is large and Italianate; after the fashion of Cimabue’s early experiments in this line. Don’t you remember that these southern sacrificial marks were fleshy or toothsome... even vaguely sado-masochistic? Because they hint at the thraldom of Mel Gibson’s Passion of the Christ (perchance); or a late Dali seen in reverse perspective where the crucifixion is viewed from above. Needless to say, the old crone’s jaw sagged with a lively turkey-cock of abundant flesh... together with an ineffable weariness about the eyes. Yet these two – when set back in wrinkled dewlaps of flesh – also twinkled with happy malice! Her all-over dress was black, with her white hair tied back in a bun and a small crucifix adorning her neck. The house in which she sits and looks out from happens to be the home of his youth... somewhat after Pasolini’s description of tearaways in the street. Furthermore, there was an immobility about the woman... a timelessness. She waits for aught – quite clearly – and maybe it’s for this silver-haired stripling to stop beneath her window. What goes around comes around, as they used to say in the ‘sixties. It must be karma, fate, destiny or the prescription of the Norns. Didn’t the ancient Greeks settle here too? For tragedy waxes as old as this world. She reconciles herself to reverie --- to a beginning that’s an end, to stillness... Here comes Gaati; an eagle circling its prey --- all of it taking place in one of Hades’ fire-pits.

The sun’s gone in; he stops in front of her.
PART THE FIFTH
“Bon journo, Signora…”, he said with curt respect and just on the edge of insolence. “Does my beloved sister reside here now… or should I say still?” “No, Frederico… the bird has flown its coop, so to say. Any road up, her domicile had been elsewhere for many years… itself long subsequent to your departure.” A slight gap intruded before the last word here. Might it be a hint of nervousness on the crone’s part (?) or maybe a cough? Most definitely, her interlocutor bristled slightly. “But you remain doubtlessly unawares, Frederico. She scarcely rises before even-tide or the moon’s rays, and then the girl goes abroad in search of men. Every demi-monde happens to be addicted to her men friends, don’t you agree?” At this the Sicilian stepped slightly closer to a stone window ledge. Moreover, his massive fists found themselves to be clenched in a furious transport. Weren’t they knuckle-dusters without metal (?) or otherwise redolent of great hams hanging down? To be certain of our ground, then, they betokened a haunch of venison --- itself a contemporary venue for post-modern art. Whereas, in this particular moment, Gati’s mood took off in a futurist direction – rather like Boccioni’s sculpture of an Object Moving in Space (1913). Wasn’t it sleek, untransparent, fluid like magnesium or indicative of Aries’ fire? It encoded Greek Flame or a touch of the mediaeval tar-brush; albeit shifting slightly towards a four-dimensional livery. Frederico remained unaware of such metropolitan developments, however. He just claimed an ex-convict’s status, after all. Yet Boccioni’s 3-D vertigo – in its transparent gyroscope of flux – radiated a savagery which leant it a classic poise… hence its authoritarian nimbus. Furthermore, the elixir of right-wing art remains fourfold: it must preach the heroic, transcend, be hierarchic and evince beauty as power. Brutality is the finesse of a new statement, in other words…

PART THE SIXTH
Under his gaze’s assertion --- my readers --- the old witch shifted back in her seat (somewhat uneasily). Yet, in her heart of hearts,
she smiled secretly to herself. For truthfully, Belladonna wept tears of unrepentant joy; even though they came wrapped up via a mildly blocked aorta… insolently enough. Do you see(?), and you don’t have to be her doctor to recognise it. Since what else can there be to do in a clime like this, other than engage in malicious gossip… especially if you’re a wizened Erda. Similarly, Frederico’s fists had tightened into balls, with blood pounding in his inner temples and maybe bereft of a forehead. He stood foursquare, a jacket flung loosely over his shoulder and one hook-like mitten opening & closing. Could it be considered a sadeian formula or make-belief; rather like a dissident version of Peter Pan? Or alternatively, Captain Hook has sprung alive from J.M. Barrie’s pages! Nonetheless, a church candle – of the thickest imaginable yellow-wax – burned merrily away next to our whickered step mother. It tapered off before a semblance of bliss; even when stuck in a sturdy brandy bottle. While its smoke became convoluted, twisting and turning in the light as it moved in fortitude’s arabesques. Belladonna waxes pleased though. She had struck home… All the time, as the ex-convict approached her portal, she had dreamt of being the one who told him. Behind Frederico the street moved away in a haze of smoke and bluish light; thereby illustrating the candelabra of its magnificence. Whereby the entire scenario – morally speaking – reinvigorated Rouault’s painting Aunt Sallies; a canvas in which bride and penitent coalesce in paint as thick as Gilman’s. May it delineate a semiotic of painterly abstraction; itself riven by religious judgements?

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Here and now, the old trout almost backed off in the face of Frederico Borghese Gaati’s ire. Steam issued from his mouth and nostrils, veritably so. Because the elderly female’s face seems to be creased, distended and long-filleted… rather like a fish opened up from the side. Her triple chins quivered; primarily by bobbling up and down like obscene sands or obsidian clays. Strange it is how mortals at the end – when facing death – approach childhood yet again. Perhaps they crawl towards the
cervix or innermost entrance; while abreast of a logic that pertains to Samuel Beckett’s *Comment C’est*? “Don’t look at me in a Cyclopean mien, Frederico”, gibbered the oldster… “No, hee, hee… It’s quite obvious: the entire town, replete with its white-washed stone structures, knows what your sister’s been doing. She’s a harlot, a whore; Frederico: a hussy who, after the fashion of Alberto Moravia’s *Women of Rome*, goes with a multitude of men astride of a variety of positions.” Was there aught wistful in our crone’s vernacular; almost as if she is disappointed with her truth? Now that it stood unadorned in the dwindling sunlight. Maybe one can detect envy or procrastination (herein) --- even misstatement? Had the oubliettes of Krafft-Ebing penetrated beneath these geriatric lips and lines… only to find Stygia’s spiders thereafter? Especially when a Sicilian evening portended (betimes) and lust expected naught from a vampiric twilight.

PART THE SEVENTH
But what of Frederico? On hearing the woman’s words he’d almost passed into another dimension. Truly, the experience took him like a gust of laughter from without. Can it really have been a momentary possession? Possibly… yet a vortex of colour and lines briefly took charge of him – even in its leave taking. In this it incarnated one of Arno Breker’s principles… despite having become subtly altered. For inside Frederico’s mind a brazen torso reared up (instantaneously so). It rather revisited Praxiteles when crossed with a tensile steel-frame outside a restaurant called *Briganzi’s*, in Soho, during the ‘eighties. This was a monumental cavity or a Grecian body which knelt before Josef Thorak… presumably when crossed with Frank Frazetta’s water-colours. Regardless of which – these gleaming examples of Leni Riefenstahl’s *Olympia* found themselves self-reflected (rather reflexively). Wherein each image rebounded back on its neighbour in a combination or stasis; albeit after a parody of Rene Magritte’s stopped reproduction. After all, each variant delineated a response from Arnold Schwarzenegger’s ‘Mister
Universe’ adverts in the ‘seventies… Yet underneath them came a swirl of black; whereas this major-league Apollo found its head encased in a blue cube. (The latter proves to be a square – at once sapphire rendered – that had been tendered from above).

“Tell me, Belladonna”, enunciated Frederico in a much calmer voice, “where are these men to be found? You know, the ones who have occasion to visit my sister.” “Or whom she pays attention to – when roistering in an abundance of peacock feathers”, tittered the old woman. Maliciously, she found that she enjoyed her Cassandra role. “Look no further than the local taverna, Frederico”, she enjoined. “There you will find ample evidence of their presence. The Gambasta brothers and their cousin Silo are always carousing in the afternoons. They waste many hours in those booths from noon till well into the evening, afore they venture out to visit your sister. Each needs to stoke up some dutch courage, you see.”

PART THE EIGHTH
Her gnarled finger points percipiently into the distance… almost like a reptile’s tongue which suddenly dashes from its slashed mouth. Ha! Ha! Are even her eyes closed and cold, like those characteristics accorded to the serpent folk? Yet who can tell? Because Frederico’s slow, gestural mind has already begun to contemplate future business. Yessss… He will pay the Gambasta brothers – plus their itinerant cousin – an unannounced visit at the very heart of their carouse. Most appreciably… his jaw hardens into a granite-like repose. Also, the man’s thick, slab-sided Sicilian face affected a certain wisdom… at least when seen in profile. Didn’t it encompass a nineteenth century silhouette (?), although in thinking on’t… such an ebon pitch lay beyond Michael Ayrton’s Minotaur. Frederico has turned his head now in order to look outwards in the direction of a pinkish effulgence: the former limned before a light-blue stingray. You see, throughout his audience with the crone she had been resting in a rickety, balsa chair. Whereas he was at head height beneath
her looking on. Moreover, a sudden flash comes into our imagination: it was John Piper’s painting of a classical row in Bath, Somerset Place, which has been smashed to pieces by bombs. It took place in 1942 and yet it indicated a post-situational folly: or the culture of the ruins; the ruins of culture. Yet Stewart Home wouldn’t be able to ‘smile’ over this discourse, since Belladonna’s stone-swept room has about it the antecedents of a transcendence. (Note: a while back, in Margaret Thatcher’s nineteen eighties, Home ran a communist and nihilist magazine called Smile. It advocated an art strike; a notion that totally backfired. He also sought to promote radical materialism, Dada stunts, conceptualism and proletarian praxis as the way forward in art. His failure was total. It’s best to think of him as a more inverted variant of Andy Warhol who seeks fifteen minutes of fame minus Solanis’ bullet in the gut! Bravo!)

Inside Belladonna’s room – if looking aslant at it – one can see a bare stone-wall which sweeps up to the open window. On this a spartan table had been placed in order to accommodate her modest fayre. It consists of a bottle of red wine, a flat Sicilian loaf and a large cheese. Perhaps it might have been flavoured with aromatic herbs? But, in any event, a triangular segment has already been removed from it and devoured. An ornate or circular painting in a frame – vaguely reminiscent of Caravaggio – adorns a darkened wall. While sombrelly (and in the foreground) one detects the iconography of a saint, looking vaguely like Father Christmas with a long white-beard & holding a crucifix before him. It subsists in a peculiarly shaped booth that holds it upright… thence adding a sepulchral essence to this scene in dwindling light. In the farthest corner, however, a slightly modernist sculpture intrudes --- somewhat incongruously. It incarnates a heroic car fender or a colophon when cast in the format of two Futurist wings. They seem to beat the air with the havoc of an abridged cry!
PART THE NINTH
Frederico Gaati has left black-garbed Belladonna behind him. He strides onwards with a merciless purpose and thinks only of a coming vengeance. The excitement mounts to fever pitch and yet he remains superficially calm. Abreast of his head what’s left of a darkling sky has been peeling down – albeit in such a manner that just leaves a residue of French blue. When looked at formally the hilly structure of Sicily’s terrain becomes observable. Whereby ribbons of white-washed walls curve away over hill-sides… each one of them adjacent to the next in segmented squares. Moreover, the natural cascade of this terrain causes these various divisions in the land to coalesce as far as the eye can see (somewhat artificially). Varied steps – often made out of massive stone-slabs – provide walkways or ecological stepping-stones up and down. How little this atmosphere had changed, when one comes to consider it, from the island scenery described by Giuseppe di Lampedusa in his novel, *The Leopard*. Granted: Frederico Gaati remained oblivious to much of his surroundings, concentrating, as he was, on an inner vision. Again, one factor became noticeable amongst others, and this has to do with the modulated stone roofs of Sicilian dwellings. Each one faced off against t’other within a preponderance of sun, given the likelihood of these white-washed forms to melt into light. Since one factor stood out above all others: and this is a sun-beam’s quality or its unreality. It became simultaneously effulgent, pellucid, etheric, self-reflective and transcendental in its forgotten glow. Does anyone reminisce about that painting by Hieronymous Bosch; whereby angels, recumbent to a cone, float off into Light? One also has before us an example drawn from le Corbusier’s architecture… rather necessarily. Given the fact over whether this ultra-modernist, who designed several churches or chapels, sought to three-dimensionally convert various Cathar and Albigensian edicts. (Especially when one recognises the SS intellectual Otto Rahn’s exegeisis in this particular area). These involved an obsessive search for Purity; at least in terms of a pure solar glare which led to a desire to transcend matter by
making it into lit-up motets. A doubly perplexing feat (this) when one remembers le Corbusier’s love of pure concrete: itself spiritualised through an upward striving and while adorned in white paint. Might Chinese white from a tube sublimate brutalism?

PART THE TENTH

Still, Frederico Gaati strode on with a merciless architecture apparent in his spine. Whereupon he passed by these white-washed dwellings which were glimmering in the sun or filing out in a seawards direction. Occasionally a small stone window – albeit tiny in terms of the wall’s dimensions – poked out from an otherwise granite sweep. All of it occurs under some louvered roofs – themselves often orange or misspent, and sloping down in undulating folds. Small tufts – of irregular grass and shrubs – lingered roundabout. Gaati does a blitzkrieg like Guderain or Liddel-Hart’s tank theory. All of it comes to illustrate a late Dali – such as The Hallucinogenic Toreador of 1969-1970 – where a half-naked Venus morphs into red and green. Are these not the colours of Eros, at once transparently forgotten? Surely the buds of a new enclosure, a la winged flies, just crept out of this dream’s portal? Even though such a filter of insects insisted on coming through a cone of sand, against which a numinous head finds itself reflected. Stone pillars also play a part... they reconnoitre the periphery of Lacan’s habitation; only seeming to broach a renewed psychiatry (thereby). Since a toreador smites with golden meat by basically flailing in sunlight and at a time of these fruit-flies’ decapitation. No mercy will be shown such Drosophilae, you see: as they turn --- in comparison --- to silver. During a moment where a mathematical correspondence merely conceives of future decay by means of numbers – particularly when it’s adjudged in dots. May it residually betray Op art’s burgeoning tendencies?
PART THE ELEVENTH

In profile, however, Borghese Gaati has altered little from a *Soprano’s* adolescence… albeit in a traditional Sicilian vein. Yet if we look closer at this then deeper grooves can be discerned. These marked the temerity of his features; a situation wherein a distorted truculence came to be observed. His etching was craggy or untroubled – after the unflustered magnificence of some rock. May it really be described as a force of nature; the likelihood of which reared up from its own resource after a Hyperborean keepsake? Similarly, a token of this landslide waxed chthonian: almost as if they had come up out of the ground. Can you grasp it? Since Gaati’s lumber-jack essence or withheld intrigue seems peasant-like, super-masculine, ferocious and dour. It certainly exhibited a lugubrious mien – directly after the sword-and-sorcery images of Frank Frazetta, and delivered in water colour. The hair – in turn – has long ago filtered into grey, so as to articulate a semblance of its dying. No Grecian 2000 had been used here! But still, the eye-brows were bushy, thick and black. Already though… his flaming blue-eyes were looking back in time, as if they were addicted to a cornelian passage between dimensions. For, unbeknown to all, Frederico Borghese Gaati’s mind dwelt on previous or past instances… where a slight to honour could only be punished by death. Abundantly, he remembered his slaying of Umberto Eco – not a semiotician but a fisherman – who’d allegedly ravished his sister. Wearing a pair of loose-fitting sandals, Gaati’s younger version had stabbed his moustachioed victim through the chest, while wielding a clasp knife at the time. Large it was and double-sided: when Eco’s blood spurted in a lively fashion over Gaati’s hand. Whereupon his traditional Sicilian hat spun off into the evening’s light like a revolving cartwheel. Furthermore, at such a decisive instant, Eco’s orbs gave up the ghost by becoming two pins… both of them concentrating on the near-distance.

Did it illustrate that climax to von Stroheim’s *Greed*, in a screenplay where McTeague and his assailant, Marcus Schouler,
finally come to blows? All of this bursts out amid the suffocating heat of California’s Death Valley!

PART THE TWELFTH
Our attention now shifts to Gaati’s trial for the above offence. The southern Italian district judge is summing up. May this entire imbroglio have taken place during the reign of a certain Iron Prefect? Anyway, this official looked at our ‘man’ from behind reinforced spectacles. A chain of prefecture or administrative discipline lay around his neck. Might it have dazzled what Nietzsche once called, in Thus Spake Zarathustra, the pale criminal? Yes assuredly, but perhaps our attention becomes transfixed on the policeman to his right. He stands there gnomically and after the fashion of a forgotten sculpture; with a double-chin resting on a blue compartment or space. Necessarily so, for behind our Judge’s receding hair-line, when slicked back with the sheen of a felt-tip pen, we observe stain-glass windows. Like in a domed architectural design they are, with many individual pieces of mock-frieze making up a plaster. Each sector of resin reflects a multi-dimensionality; avec every shard then becoming overwrought in comparison to a spectral imprint. Doesn’t a ray refract from such dexterity rather prismically (?); and in relation to the cosmetic beauty of Newton’s experiments? All of which came to be characterised in H.T. Flint’s Geometrical Optics, when this professor was serving in the physics department of King’s College, London. Most availably… Whereupon the judge, Bernadotte, announced in full pomp: “Frederico Borghese Gaati, do you have aught to say afore my Court pronounces sentence upon you?” To which the accused answers in a baritone voice. “Yes, your Honour, I must stain the silence with a flame’s effulgence! Certain matters of family honour can only be settled with a sacrifice of blood. Haemoglobin – in such circumstances as these – remains the kaleidoscope of our forgotten years. Biomorphic excuses, pertaining to Lombroso or the social causation of liberal utilitarianism… neither of these are enough. I must answer with
the crimson that flows from a poniard unseen. Isn’t it reclusively obvious? My word, the pig Eco befouled my sister with his tongue and pizzle; his life, therefore, most high Judge, was forfeit by virtue of a family’s pride! No humility shall be canvassed in order to still the necessary outrage of one’s blood. When I murdered him I slew not a man... but merely a slobbering carcass. In the human abattoir, I had just to hack off a porcine head and place it on a sharpened pole during those hours of darkness in a barn. Torches, when held aloft in concealed niches, then flickered all around and sent boiling fire out into crevices. Do you profit from the quiet recesses of those damned?"

PART THE THIRTEENTH
During this performance, Gaati stood perfectly still and he was dressed in a dark open-necked shirt. Yet the face waxed slab-sided in its openness; at once resplendent with a prognathous jaw, dark black-hair and a steely impediment in terms of an eye. Indeed, this orb flickered in its socket like a marble... although it proved to be subdued of all light. It dwelt upon the scene engagingly, raspingly, totally, as well as minus any moral conscience or doubt. It evinced – most convincingly – the serpent folk’s cruelty! Does one link it with a glassy lustre so as to see?

By way of contrast, Judge Bernadotte appeared unperturbed. Truly, the heavy solemnity of Plato’s *Laws* lay fully upon him… albeit foursquare and abreast of a day. Can this be in order?

"Frederico Borghese Gaati, I hereby pronounce sentence", he rasped. “This has to be a society of Laws, Frederico, if we are to raise ourselves above the conduct of beasts. Can’t you grasp this salience, eh? If your beloved sister was harmed by the fisherman, Umberto Eco, as you attest, we possess laws to deal with his kind. It isn’t for you to take on the arbiter of judgeship. Are we to have a situation where – after the collapse of Hoxha’s Stalinism in Albania – criminals took over a lordship’s apparel, robes and
ermine? All such rabble, like a revolting tribunal, sought to impose vengeance upon their fellows. It cannot be permitted, do you hear? Otherwise a condition of anarchy shall prevail, and it will fail to be the Utopian vision of Bakunin, I can tell you that flat out. Now Frederico Gaati, no suspension of disbelief may be tolerated, whereby mountebanks were suspended upside-down by meat hooks. A series of events which occurs in abattoirs or yards, especially when mobsters take up justice’s remit. Does one recall the antics of the Richardsons… a conspiracy in south London? In truth, jurisprudence betokens the mulled wine of sages. In this instance, private revenge cannot be allowed by our island or its government, even if it claims tradition’s precedent. Pertaining to your case, the people’s voice isn’t divine… MINE IS! No law of silence protects you from the fact’s brutality! Therefore, this court sentences you to ten years in prison… the expiration of your term must be served on the mainland.”

PART THE FOURTEENTH
During his outburst, the Law-giver took on a nimbus of inhuman gravitas, almost like a character in one of Aeschylus’ tragedies. Yes sir. For his jowls were open and aghast, or they merely quivered before a bulldog’s advent. Also, the chain around his neck came into more pronounced notice… when interlinked with red. Behind him a swathe of black eddied around – possibly after an artist’s indentation or involving the brouhaha of William Nicholson. Never mind: since the Judge’s face turned upright in a garish transport; together with an adventure in grease smearing the whole. His eyes squared down coolly, officiously, and with a temperature of indifference. Could they be seen to envelop a saturnine venom behind those ‘fifties National Health Service spectacles, and by virtue of damnation’s utterance? An orange tie led off from the neck; at once cut off aslant its leash and exhibiting a future gibbet… presumably out of tune. Without doubt… Because at the moment when Frederico Borghese Gaati was ‘sent down’ a flourish of Edgar Varese’s music came into court. It inundated the whole with Arcana's spectrum (so to say);
thereby leading to ultrasound’s reverberation along some metallic sheets. Further to this, two burly policemen led the convict from the dock, while beneath his feet various ancient flagstones kept the participants from the court’s well. A crowd has gathered there. Nearly all of them were anonymous, whether male or female, with upturned faces of apportioned glee. Some affected disinterest; whilst other persons, nursing unknown wounds, gazed on in discrete satisfaction. Suddenly a commotion occurred in the outer precincts of the court. A disturbance had broken out that was pronounced enough for officers to call it to a halt. Yes… divers blue-and-grey uniforms gestured across a bay at the public end of the court’s gallery. Wherein a slatternly dressed sixteen year old girl has chosen to stand. This must be Frederico’s young sister, Suzy Travolta-Imray Gaati, about whom all of this trouble had gathered. She lay across a public balustrade with her arms outstretched and tears rolling down her youthful face. Might she have something about her of the coquette, perchance? Any innocence came knowingly and even with a definite price-tag attached. Her blouse or slip rose up around her; momentarily tightening over all the right places. Whereas an exceedingly short skirt skinned or slanted astride her rump; thence revealing the proportioned legs beneath. At the farthest side of the court-house lay a bench, the length and plenitude of which seemed to mark it out as a specimen from the ancient world. May it have been Etruscan in its lineage? Anyway, Suzy called out plaintively: “No, no, never… it’s against nature or natural right. They can’t punish you in this way, Frederico!” To which he replied, with the policemen dragging him thither to start his sentence: “Refuse all tears, little sister. I regret nothing, having done it for the family honour. You’ll have to encompass feminine bravery. I intend to return, most definitely, in a decade’s motoring.”

PART THE FIFTEENTH
Ten long years have passed in silence. One can only think of it as a very pronounced disturbance or continuum, especially in an
otherwise sleepy Sicilian hamlet. After all, the ministry of health way back in Rome configures an average male’s life expectancy to be fifty. That’s right: a man who reaches maturity here counts himself lucky to notch up over half a century. How then, in such shortened circumstances, can Frederico let bygones twist in a southerly wind? He marches sternly down a side-street with jutting perpendicular walls rearing up on either side. Doesn’t he stride between them with the demeanour of a warrior, possibly an aforementioned centurion? Could he be compared to Longinius, the one at the mound of death who comforted the slain with a spear…? Its outermost tracery had been dipped in vinegar, primarily so as to quench thirst’s necessity. But no – when one comes to think on’t – the event’s converse cannot really be Golgotha: due to Frederico’s kinship with one of the two thieves. Rather… the death’s-head which chooses to subsist here (sic) refers to one underneath the skin in an Elisabethan way. Certainly though, Gaati betokened more of a soldier than the majority of male specimens roundabout.

Speaking of which, two men amble out of a taverna or a neighbouring ristorante. One of them is an ordinary working-man who wears denim trousers and a sheep-skin jacket. He has over his upper lip what can only be described as a ‘seventies moustache. A small ‘proletarian’ cap sits jerkily on his shaven pate. He greets the traveller with cheery gusto… “Eh Frederico, long time no see, huh? All I can say is welcome home.” This elicits no response whatsoever, whether of endorsement or hostility. Whereas another individual also hoves into view. He must be considerably older than the other two; thereby evincing a desperation that can be seen in his drunken and shambolic gait. This bag-man lurches towards Frederico – when seen from the back – and he wears some sort of jacket which is distilled from fading green plaid. One arm comes thrust forward ahead of the other and this was almost to make a point in terms of a plundered windmill… all of it occasionally observed in bright light. “Frederico”, the stranger announces in a loud voice… virtually as
though he’s welcoming a long-lost brother back to the fold. “Don’t you have a few precious liras to spare, young one? I’m a bit short myself at this time, like. Do you choose to remember my weather-beaten face; at least when held up to the elements like a parched manuscript or map? I chanced to be a good friend to your father once, even though many moons have passed since his journey. Only a few coins, I ---”. “Out of my way, you indelicate swine!”, roared Frederico Gaati… virtually thrusting the oldster from him with his vehemence.

Now alone, he chanced to visit the taverna. Its vast wooden doors swung open and led to a saw-dust strewn interior. Whereas the stone trellis-work of these massive blocks leant a heavy and solemn lustre to the atmosphere. There was no futurist lightness of touch after Marinetti’s quixotic alertness; merely the lugubrious ochre of Giotto’s pictures. Recomprising Levi’s diction, Christ may have stopped at Eboli… but he had certainly not come here in the dwindling light. This had to be altogether reminiscent of Chacha’s contemporary silences, labyrinths and conspiracies. Wherein walls meet walls, all of which lead to dead-ends or faded out perimeters. Everywhere a Mafia lurks unexplained. Frederico Borghese Gaati then enters the bar with a slight jauntiness in his step. *Lex talionis*… for Gabrielle D’Annunzio’s lore of erotic violence lies heavily over this particular scene.

**PART THE SIXTEENTH**

The returning convict sits down heavily at one abandoned table. Doesn’t his giant fist lie upon the table-cloth incongruously, rather after the fashion of a great joint of meat lying astray? Wasn’t there – in turn – a late biographical work by Stanley Spencer: namely, the one with a ham before each other’s flesh? It could be described as an example of John Martin *avaunt* a French butchery dealing in horses. Under this glow, Frederico Gaati stared moodily into the nether distance… a cosmic radiance gleaming in each eye. Throughout this performance Frederico’s face was set in a saturnine whisper, with the lower lip
curled or pursed in morbidity. While the jacket which he had carried with him from the quayside, once slung over his shoulder, now found itself propping up a chair’s back. At the furthest end of the bar an oil-lamp gleamed in its silent space; thereby casting a pale effulgence or glimmer. It worked out the mosaic of ornate brick-work further up the bistro, and vaguely hanging over to the right. Lifting up the bar – when viewed from diverse angles – a crowd of drink-sodden men stand at right-angles to one another. Didn’t their nethermost bodies or torsos recalibrate rectilinear lines drawn from a Vorticist composition… say, one by William Roberts, for example? Take – by way of recollection – a work like *The Arrival* by Nevinson which hangs in the recesses of the Tate Gallery. Or why don’t you choose to compare it to a composition (of percussive depth) by William Roberts known as *The Diners*? In it, a constellation of guests in some London eaterie are observed or find themselves otherwise shot from the air. These oblongs or rectangular shapes embody a new incarnation: somewhat after the encryption or secret code of Wyndham Lewis’ *The Wild Body*. Might these le Corbusier blocks reconnoitre a new prospect or fade out into pure light; at least when resolved to avoid skin and bone? Occasionally, one of these men lets out a sigh, a burp or a belch. They often embrace or tug at each other with their claw-like hands… even though a glass is raised aloft, now and again in the bar’s twilight, to some imaginary victory or conquest as yet uncertain. These are the Gambasta brothers (most probably) when accompanied by their cousin, Silo. Mayhap various other hangers on, who are drawn from the town’s byways, help to make up the numbers. Do they represent a ravening wolf-pack or a baying switch of hounds, save only in the helplessness with which they go abroad? All of a sudden Frederico becomes aware of the place’s odour; that is, its combination of sawdust, sour wine, mouldy bread and worm-eaten meat. It adds a tincture of disgrace to the abiding discomfiture… Whilst, moment by moment, our anti-hero’s gorge is rising. You see, he has come to realise that the rage within --- the furnace inside --- may only be stilled by vengeance.
Isn’t this Vendetta’s land, perchance, with a capital V working its way up to a disconcerting silence? No John Cage will live here amid these twinkling clinks or green glasses, since only the sound of a belly laugh can be shattered with a knife. Meanwhile, a young girl with jet-black hair has approached our main man.

PART THE SEVENTEENTH
It is completely obvious – from the most casual perusal – that she doubles as a waitress by way of a prostitute. Her name was Cazana and she nears this mastodon’s table without trepidation. She vaults up with an improvement’s nymphomania as to dress, plus a high-lighted bodice which keeps up those cups. A light flimsy top comes spread across her front; at once aerial to the confounded breasts within or otherwise provocative to those ripe melons that lurk aslant. Amidships, a tight black-skirt covers her extremities; themselves teeming away towards vice with the deportment of those legs. Whereas the skin betrays the olive complexion of a new beginning; it’s abundantly inside a grave and adjacent to Sarah Young’s pornography. Can one see? Anyway, on either wrist subsists various bangles; each one of them Gypsy-like or vaguely disreputable in their ormolu. A rolled-gold character this happens to be; the likelihood of which jangles on any available pole. While her sylph-like arm pretends to stroke the underside of one of Frederico’s limbs; the latter contained within a stainless white-shirt (as it was). Well! This gesture has about it an insincere cast that’s possibly enlivened by a scintilla of Eros; the nimbus of which exists underground or abreast of a subterranean fire-light. Frederico Borghese Gaati had never beheld Alban Berg’s opera Lulu which is based on Wedekind’s play. (You’re not able to tune to Radio 3 in an Italian prison camp.) Nevertheless, he’d have grasped the plot; even the dithyrambs of Messalina in Albert Jarry’s non-pornographic deliberation concerning this story. May it forever rest in peace with the surrealist movement!

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Cazana spoke to him in a high tone rather like a serpent, but slightly tremulously and with a lisp’s undercurrent. “Dear one, how far you have travelled by way of evening and out of all night-times. May one detect the outcome of this Stygian offering? Or – if impossible to witness – does your heart roil upon the dust like the shiny complexity of a thousand scales: all of them amber to a golden nectar? Do they instaure the vision of a million whores who float freely or abreast of a gigantic moon (?)? rather like the earth-mothers of Albert Louden’s pictures. Yessss… they are sibilant after a serpent, you see? Nonetheless, many an eel will shed its skin in this Garden of Eden, no matter how prelapsarian. Because a harlot’s basilisk-eye finds itself painted around the mouth; or, Mary Quant-like, it delves into an eldritch liner. Whereupon a thick cobra thrashes around behind a screen… thereby delivering up a quandary of red and green (variously). While – atop this vista or auric sensuality – a beautiful Grecian mask appears. Might it specify a Goddess’ lustre out Aphrodite’s way (?); a mask which strikes one as perfect in its inhumanity.”

Our lantern-jawed Sicilian gives his answer without looking up: “No Assyrian raptures will imprison me within an iron maiden’s draught. No sir. Since the superhuman – when masked and without pity’s raiment – steals the show behind an emerald valve. Does one detect on its front the heavy mosaic or scarlet arabesque of an Eastern extraction? No matter how toxic this perfumed air may prove to be… Regardless of which – our golden mask reinvigorates a thespian enclosure that’s given over to Eros’ silent violence. Masturbation is only the improvidence of dwarves! Especially when we realise that this beauteous mask grows out of a snake or a lithe copperhead’s nectar: the undulating spasms of which thrash and thwack beneath one’s shield. All of a sudden the lower jaw of the helmet falls down; primarily so as to give up a new ghost’s dispensation… in terms of projecting a dark square. Yes indeed! Then it says one single word in an unknown *argot* or Esperanto: “Come!” Out of all due
vehemence of which – I grab hold of a broadsword and swing it in an arc in order to decapitate the asp. When my blade severs its head a great torrent of black and red blood spurts out. Do you see? Gobbets of its ichor – the Gods’ sap of yesteryear – gush forth like an Icelandic geyser. It inundates the whole and yet I am unperturbed. For, like Norman O. Brown in his psychoanalytical treatise *Life Against Death*, I have sided with the flames against the flesh. Mark me: Abelard was unrelated in his vision and retained a castrate’s wisdom to the end. Because you are determined to whore --- whilst I wish to resist in accordance with masculine fury. Isn’t it so? Furthermore, the snake’s snout – when bedevilled by its Grecian mask in gold resin – flies off only to leave the barrier smashed to pieces… given the convulsions of this constrictor. Surely, you are aware that in Indo-Aryan civilisation or ancient India one of the God Vishnu’s incarnations is a five-headed python? I’ve cut off this phallic monstrance…”

Cazana: “Do you require food, wine or possibly aught else?

Frederico Borghese Gaati: “No; nought more than bottled Chianti… and then some privacy, sow.”

PART THE EIGHTEENTH

Yes indeed, the afternoon drags on and it translates into a diurnal rhythm against the embers of a light outside. Does one choose to detect it now? Truly, the Elisabethan imagination chose to call it the skull beneath the skin due to a delicacy in its use of poetry…

*Shades of dreaming*

*imprisoned in flesh*

*seemed to walk across this room…*

*without a steadfast interval.*

For doesn’t the door to tragedy lie open (?); primarily through impermanence’s lustre or an abattoir’s sluice. Surely the Belgian surrealist Felix Labisse, a member of a faction misaligned with
Andre Breton, went to paint in slaughter houses? It added a sadistic allure to distemper’s after-effects – whether they were mindful of pain or not. Possibly – and in another dimension – Cazana glides across the polished floor… she is a testament to the fact that radiation can turn sand glassy, (inter alia). Also, she stepped gingerly along… particularly when dressed in white’s virginal waspishness and with a zodiac laid out beneath her. No matter how tremulously this Pope Joan couldn’t escape from Dennis Wheatley’s influence, albeit on a floor of ebon marble. Behind her, or in imagination, there reared up a dais of the fondest blue under a sacrificial canopy… plus various candelabra poking up here and there. While ahead of her blank dress – whether ethereal or diaphanous – a polar bear-skin lay upon the floor. Its head was attached and it looked grizzly, gnarled, toothsome or bloated (all at once). On she laboured across the architecture of these floods… with the primal lurking beneath the surface of an innocence abroad. It had more to do with Gabrielle D’Annunzio than Robinson Jeffers (admittedly); but a link remains intact regardless.

The afternoon wore on and it became later and later – by the by. As it proceeds, the panes on a flat window which is opposite wax darksome. It possesses the word Cinzano the other way round and impregnated in the glass; at least when seen reverse-ways-in or reviewed from the restaurant’s inside. Eventually, the brickwork of the bay becomes lost in sombre tones – itself a mural that’s suffused in a sulphuric hue. At the bar various derelicts prop it up… each one plastering a toast to Venus’ lips. Several half-consumed bottles of wine lie open on the table and sundry glasses surround them. Each one of these looks to be stained, greenish, red-tinted or reflects an amber translucence in its dwindling light. The occasional wine-stain is observed on residual boards; themselves smoking heavy-wood and lying laterally across such drinkers. All are lost in their abundant carouse or binge; and they pay no heed to the smouldering presence in the corner. A scarcely touched loaf lies before the
Gambastas… possibly a cob, it’s hardly had a knife or butter through it. The clan concerned were blood-brothers or kin; themselves being leery, boastful, lush, fervid and distastefully libidinous. Some wear small or pork-pie hats; while others are clean-shaven: with the sole exception of short moustaches over their lips. A few have rolled cigarettes in their mouths’ corners; whilst they manifest a variant on dress’ disrespect or self-neglect. A shambolic mien heralds their advent or dharma; yet none of them can have any foretaste of the coming shambles.

PART THE NINETEENTH
During these darkling hours, our brethren become more and more drunk… while the atmosphere liberates a bilious urge. Peevish and inebriate chortles are heard throughout; particularly amid the guzzling of wine down these collective throats. A heavy, lugubrious drizzle dampens the air… if only in our imagination and as wine fumes cloud one’s senses. Could it revisit a scene from a von Stroheim film before cutting (?) where in *Queen Kelly*, a degenerate marriage takes place in German East Africa. (This later became the British protectorate of Tanganyika after the Great War, 1914-18). Whereupon the wedding occurs in a brothel or a bordello, and it is superintended by a guardian’s dying body. The ceremony was performed by an African priest who – in reality – proved to be a white man blacked up… a visage which possibly recalled the leather solemnity of a mask! Anyway, it has Al Jolson associations as well as indications of inferiority, the ‘Bell Curve’ and deliquescence. Haven’t moderns ever read Count Arthur Gobineau’s *Essay on Racial Inequality*?
To sum up (though): the intended spouse in this decadent union was to be played by Tully Marshall… a past master at von Stroheim’s vaudeville. While farther in we notice that low-keyed lighting, hanging drapery in niches, under-lit booths and religious icons all contrive to create an atmosphere of *Grand Guignol*. Prostitutes – who are done up lasciviously and lick their lips continually – also attend this anti-nuptial. When we consider that their eyes were painted basilisk-like, their lips wax ruby-red, and...
their extended finger-nails happen to be long and tapering. A later novel – published only in French and called *Poto-Poto* – distended this theme in order to involve the presence of siamese twins. It all exemplifies a loveless marriage; at least when seen through the degeneration theory of Max Nordau.

Soon after, the Gambasta brothers – together with their nocturnal cousin Silo – start to boast about the group’s ‘romantic’ exploits with Frederico’s sister: Suzy Travolta-Imray Gaati. Such voices gather up a thick lament; at once coming on strongly in their glottal-stop immediacy. Each raises a glass to the absent other -- only to see it capture the light of a deluded sun. Never mind: since Frederico notices every last scintilla… as sundry impediments slouch across the former’s arm or with a bar between them. His eye revolves and swivels like a chameleon which catches at the dawn of a new leaf – but it misses nothing via a rotating retina. One Gambasta merges into another; primarily by dint of appearing square on whilst toasting an absent *demi-monde*. Whereas Silo stood ramrod straight against the rampart of a linear saloon. Drinks – or frothing wine bowls – were then handed around betwixt these votaries at an obscene rite. Yet during such moments – and unbeknown to them all – Frederico Borghese Gaati noted down whom he had to kill. His knife came whetted on the far side of an indifferent culling, you see.

**PART THE TWENTIETH**

The time for a muted cavil has ended now. Whereupon action, in circumstances like these, came to the fore as morality’s unction… but the Gambasta brothers (plus Silo) were well away and they thought nothing of boasting too much. “A toast, my belly-ache or ilk”, leered one of their eldermost sots. “Let’s give voice to a gesture of tongues – particularly when we bear in mind that Suzy is the *femme fatale* we all desire. Isn’t she the caprice of a rutting antelope who falls foul of those Roman ruins to the town’s north – and under a boldly red moon?” Again – in a
twinned dimension – a vision enters into their deluded minds… it might well concern Sally O’Hara in von Stroheim’s *The Merry Widow*; a girl who artificially raises her skirt in order to attract attention to a stocking’s rent. All of the male eyes are drawn to this leg’s length; at once lithe, tensile, black-garbed and supported by a ‘Manhattan Follies’ packing case. Likewise, what is one to make of a reclining Greta Garbo in a version of Pirandello’s *As You Desire Me*? Where von Stroheim, whose presence in the cast Garbo insisted on, looks down upon her as the novelist Carl Salter… In a tableau in which her voluptuousness or cheese-cake situates itself beneath his head and stick. Could there be a recurrent motif of a penis in a vagina less precise than this?

+ “Listen to me”, insists one of the Gambasta boys, “do you remember the orgy scene with Prince Mirko in von Stroheim’s *Merry Widow*? Here various naked nymphs lie about – basically by sporting eighteenth century wigs and black masks. These were eye-piercing gestures around the head; albeit after the fashion of Baroness Orczy’s scarlet pimpernel. It all hints at a counter-enlightenment where – after the service of the poet Robert Lowell – de Sade’s *One Hundred and Twenty Days* becomes a negative encyclopaedia. Do you berate this gesture, somewhat suggestively? Remember the following, comrades… Suzy Travolta-Imray Gaati leads a man forwards against an orange background; and she’s black-haired to a jet or ray. She wears a jerkin of blue cloth or serge; together with lycra around her loins and boots at either end of those extremities. Don’t you detect the sun shining on their glistening surfaces?”

PART THE TWENTY-FIRST
Now Frederico decides to make his move… in a gesture of tumult whereby his eyes glisten with a saturnine lustre. Didn’t the female wolf suckle those who were destined to found Rome? To which mental extremity Borghese Gaati gives voice: “Those who have sinned will be blasted to their souls’ depths! Do you
recognise the entrapment of a wolverine’s cry? Because any outrage to family honour – like the atonality of Varese – calls out to one in a manner reminiscent of blood streaming from Abel’s body. Yet Durer’s engraving comes reversed out on our graph. For – herein – a pile of heads arranged in symmetrical pyramids isn’t necessarily the way to go. Since Cain’s mark upon the forehead (if placed there by Providence) will not deter us from the Chapman’s art… dealing, as it does, with Goya’s cryptic after-glown. One only cuts to the heart of a meaty residue; therein to discover an emptiness which delivers no peace. Certainly, you recall the last scene in von Stroheim’s *Greed*; a situation wherein, and at the epicentre of California’s Death Valley, one character catches up with his nemesis armed with a six-gun. But I require no such tool.” With this statement… Frederico Borghese Gaati lays about him. The clasp knife flashed forwards or to and fro in a hemicycle of sprinkling gore: the like of this spraying a trajectory of meat. May it represent some anti-art event or ‘happening’ in real time from the nineteen seventies? No: this all happens – whether staggered and at issue – in terms of a Circus of Horrors that we have a ring-side seat next to. First of all, we require a close-up on Frederico’s eyes: the character of which glistens with a recognition in those depths. None of this prevents the blade’s cascade, though. For doesn’t it recount a struggle between the spouse and an admirer in von Stroheim’s *Blind Husbands*? Wherein a scream or yelp offers up blood only to find its ‘teeth’: themselves betokening a loss… All of it then exists behind an abattoir’s front. It is more a question – resultantly – of what subsists adjacent to a red rather than *the* green door. Inescapably now, a gnashing of alms evidences even in its truculence… and each Gambasta screams while poniards enter their bodies. These are divine pass-keys or sigils, both in their rodomontade and delight. Frederico luxuriates in his violence… at once freed from norms and bourgeois conventions that take place even in prison. His combat-knife licks out simultaneously; thereby slicing through the Other’s carnival or fun-fair. It speeds a hot restiveness and unease; thence carousing with spleen or
nonchalance. Giblets continue to fall in their locution – thus splattering forth upon an unclean floor. While heavier men who are long out of condition in Sicily’s taverns blunder about a light-stage. Soon they were down and suppurring from a thousand wounds… many of them conceived in the imagination. Conceptually speaking, it relates to a splicing of Damien Hirst’s taxidermy with Albert Metzger’s auto-destructive art! Can the iconography of one particular piece – like a two ton bronze by Henry Moore – be stolen for scrap metal? Anyway, Frederico Borghese Gaati towers over them; and in a tableau of rheum he brings alive Lorca’s blood wedding. (This was long before the Ulsterman known as Ian Gibson set out to explicate it). Granted: each sliver of mutton articulates Ares – when covered in gore or undefeated by Homer’s drum-beats. [These were those very same ‘commando’ slides in a Doric language about which Blake had complained]. But such earnestness is behind our hands or swipes, since Scylla’s topography enters in. Could it enliven a circus that occurs possibly on Bristol’s downs or Birkhamstead’s common? Might an expanse of land – when covered with undulating craters and hollows which make up Peppard’s green – come in handy? It burst out from its portmanteau called the ‘Dog’; especially when we bear in mind that a pub of this name lit up such a village. Gaati remained oblivious to all these wrap-arounds, but still a vaudeville like this continued on regardless. It harried the facts from beyond one particular barrier. For a sun-wheel revolved in its oscilloscope amid mayhem; while repeatedly waiting to drown out nothing else. First and foremost, these big-dippers took no-one for a ride or adventure; whether over dunes or forgotten apple-cores. In one circle various figurines tumbled pursuant to Dante. They cavorted with besport and lustre. Our mountebanks walked up and down poles *avec* each one balancing on the other’s head (depending). Or alternatively, men climbed up ladders after a fashion which illustrated ships’ rigging. Perhaps one’s childish pursuits came emblazoned on it; when relative to a spinning top’s whiz? May one even summon up from memory the board game known as ‘snakes and ladders’?
Still, no mugwump concocted putty from such a cripple’s locution. Do you notice its vagaries? Further to any aplomb like this – these individuals dance the line of a renewed Apocalypse. Whereupon hominids who were dressed in the finery of Edwardian gentlemen rolled Bradley’s cigarettes whilst balancing on the trapeze. All in all, it waxed lyrical concerning a high-wire act. Could it be reminiscent of Angela Carter’s _Nights at the Circus_, perchance? But the aftermath of this anatomy lesson becomes clearer now… and it relates to absolution or silence. Because not even the tortured science fiction of Ray Bradbury or Heinrich Boll can save us here. No way… since each denizen must fall beneath an encrusted knife which pleaded about a forgotten intention. Certainly, they leap up and down circus ladders for support – each one acting up under the other’s prominence. Whereas a wide-sailed vessel makes its way across such longitudinal poles in between these bouts of popular jargon.

Do you see? Further – in another necessary incarnation – a Phileas Fogg character who sports a main-frame moustache vaults his cubicle or rises up behind a stone effigy. Similarly, various other contortionists perform on hobby-horses or nodding donkeys… the latter resting from their proper purposes. Each jumps on a gymnastic theme only to swivel atop its tubular or mechanistic fare; and all of them revolve on a catharine wheel armed with white candles. (Note: the major producer of such illuminations in England is Carolina from Lindal-in-Furness, Cumbria).

_Soon all of Frederico Borghese Gaati’s chosen assailants were dead or dying._

**PART THE TWENTY-SECOND**

Their several corpses, which were pickled in their own innards, lay in complex or interrelated heaps. One clutched at a table-top – when abreast of a mushroomed spore that quickly ran to its source. Like Dali’s oneiric method, it was all over in a minute and with Frederico side-stepping the challenge of his
magnificence… if only for a moment. Are you born to be dead before the liveliness of this fate? For his ‘Eyes’ found themselves plunged into a pitiable misstatement – wherein indifference’s locution presumed on a drunken spree: what with saliva and sweat ceasing to be at home. One man avec a tail-end of beard lay groping over an upturned table; while another curdled at a desk. Reddening table-cloths --- once of a brilliant white --- now lost their lustre to an oncoming suffocation of scarlet. Similarly, the flood-tide of this anti-balsam did nothing to relieve the show; especially when we recognise that every sound has been choked out save an occasional gurgle. A light-trellis or a grid subsumed Frederico in its glowing aftermath; whilst over in a corner quivered the harlot. Her entire world-view has basically rearranged itself forthwith; so as to consist of nought but petrifaction or due states of fear. Do you remember any concordance with James M. Cain’s *The Postman Always Rings Twice*? Or, even more appropriately, the expressionist film starring Peter Lorre and known as *Mad Love* comes to mind… whatever it may have to do with Andre Breton’s novel of a related title. In this filmography the past-master of Fritz Lang’s *M*, Lorre, pursues a beautiful starlet up a cylindrical staircase of expansive width. A Freudian locution --- or what? Also, as she screams and screams in terror or panic, her dress trips her up… only to have her grope step after step with high-heels defeating a climb. Meanwhile, Lorre decides to discard a black hat and coat – both of which have become an encumbrance to his pursuit like a ravening insect. Now, he proceeds to reveal himself in his full glory – and rather like Gloria Swanson at the end of *Sunset Boulevard* – he’s delivered up to the keep. Immediately, he snatches off his face, and it peels away like a mask in order to reveal a metallic trophy below. Is he more a machine than a man, albeit after Asimov’s machinations in *I Robot*? Likewise, all our pulchritudinous floozie can do is yell and yell in a high pitched tremolo! While – all the time – his touch gets closer and closer… when given the absence of an expectant curse. Whereas all of a sudden his very arms and hands fly off; the latter stretching out
to reveal prosthetic limbs so as to pat up the stairs on a limber’s distortions. Can’t you tell? It is characterised as the plasticity of a rubber man, but this instant those disembodied mittens caressed a bottom tightly held in a ‘forties skirt. Don’t you register the sound of Ruby Murray here? All these milliseconds, however, our babe continued to howl like a hyena who’s feasting on tissue paper.

PART THE TWENTY-THIRD
Simultaneously though, Frederico Borghese Gaati moved across the taverna in order to grasp this whore. Not for him the blandishments of an empty white-screen… wherein events are played out after a carnival’s patterning. No. His response to perceived reality was to beat it into a bloodied pulp. Against this – or in terms of its confirmation – a condottiere version of our circus ceased to level its pulp it. Whereupon various mountebank occasions tended to orate a passion in which a duchess swings from a hybrid frame. She was wearing a toga throughout. Or, by dint of grief, such tumblers trip over each other’s heels… even if they revolve around a King of the Fair. Most especially – when he wears a crown of maple leaves or crumpled paper, irrespective of those chairs or wicker samples he balances on. Alternately, a lone and spiralling indent – when naked save for a loin clout – spins on a tormenting wheel… the latter embedded in the floor with a heavy impress. To one side of his rotation (and espied in a Dantesque masque) stood a tormentor in a triangular hood. Might he have been a klansman or a Dominican who was withering to a rootedness of sparks? Meanwhile, two neo-classical sculptures embraced below and they were both partially disrobed. Each one could be considered to be part of the Elgin marbles – whether male or female – and characteristic of signalling either Anchises or Aphrodite.

PART THE TWENTY-FOURTH
By notification of the above, then, Frederico Borghese Gaati grabbed hold of Cazana and twirled her off her feet, or possibly
around about. In this, she represented a puppet character like Giselle in one of Eric Bramall’s marionette reels. Furthermore, the two of them spin around in a devastated continuum – at least when viewed from above by an aerial shot. To the north lay a man’s prone body and his non-designer shoes sport a hole… while, all about him in the gathering gloom, a red liquid saturates or wets these boards to a burnt-sienna costive. Accompanying this to the south, a white hand lies restlessly at bay – it refuses to move after the fashion of those horror films where a severed pinkie makes hay. Roundabout our dramaturgy vessels of mayhem quickly deluge one’s senses – what with broken bottles, glasses and chairs backing up a fountain that squirted nothing but blood… like in Iran. The flag-stones covet an irregular dignity; and each one kneels to the side when viewed mathematically from on high. Great pools of liquid lie stagnantly or in disaggregated combinations… some of it alcohol by way of an unholy ichor and deluging into sap. “Please, NNNNNOOOOO!”, screams Cazana. “I’ve done nothing disrespectful (now); or pertaining to not finding a straight target for one’s arrow. Might one narrow its witness, thereby? Don’t slay me, I beg you a thousand fold. You see, the character of a golden-coiled snake has to be Stygian or ebon, and it’s wrapped around itself in a pewter bowl. Doesn’t the outside of this dish betray the presence of axes and mallets? Necessarily so, since one can beat upon the surface without impinging on what lurks within. Terrible in anger, (it is); whilst dreaming lotus clouds of rapture or hidden within a reptilian haze. Could this constrictor or youth be dreaming of a muscular consort with green skin… plus long-flowing locks which contrast with red-specked eyes? Yes truly, it betokens a saurian correspondence: the double-agent of this sensing a new identity in its split-eye, somewhat reflexively. It’s a mirror…”

Yet throughout Cazana’s trebling or trembling Frederico keeps silent, (ominously so). Now he speaks out of clenched or gnashing teeth – like the dialogue in a Roman Polanski film. “No
pitchfork can pattern this pig for slaughter... because all attempts
to fatten it have fallen before one final hurdle. Rest assured, I
have pitched up most mightily against filth’s reservoir. Yes
indeed, now inform me, strumpet, what I’ve occasion to intend…
namely, where resides my sister, Suzy Travolta-Imray?” During
the course of our Beauty & the Beast’s encounter, (sic), the slab-
sided entourage of Frederico meets a Medusa full in the face. Has
one ever recorded the advent of Jean Cocteau’s faery tale in
1945? Similarly, the girl’s Skin 2 breathes nought but the air of
one of L.S. Lowry’s waifs; and she comes up close to Gaati
while feeding on Ann’s ubiquity. Are you free to loosen such a
moment’s shackles? Still and all, each visage closes on the
other’s absence – what with her black hair flecked behind them
or reminiscent of a snake’s threshing. Might it be a copper-
head’s example – albeit when necessarily taken outside of
Kenheth Robeson’s fables? Her dewy eyes gaze into his retinas…
while his granite protuberances --- jaw to chin --- resemble the
crenellations of Mount Rushmore in terms of many a U.S.
president. Both sets of lips are full, heavy, succulent and just
given over to a reprieve’s absence… They also happen to be very
Mediterranean in aspect. “Tell me what I want to know”,
exhorted Frederico. “Cease your inconstant babbling… woman. I
must ascertain the truth about my sister’s embraces or their ready
longing before the Gods. Do you remember that sketch from von
Stroheim’s The Wedding March – itself pursuant to an arranged
marriage where a butcher takes his ebon-tressed bride to an altar?
A dais of blood it proved to be – after a sequence which is drawn
from a Japanese Macbeth. Again – on such a template – we can
see a husband’s virtually psychopathic stare for the occasion; it
appears to come right out of a Colin Dexter mystery. Wherein a
bald man who exists in twilight searches desperately in the night-
time… could his tonsure be rendered next to Elgar’s music? It
happens to be Christmas eve – but any thought of an eleventh
hour has long been suppressed; since the minute hand’s strayed
past midnight. December the twenty-fifth had now emerged; and
yet this desperado continues to feverishly hunt for some object
dropped in the car. He carries a pencil torch in order to illuminate such a scene*. (*Editorial note: this realisation has been taken from life). Given all of this... instruct me over finality’s judgement and in relation to some modelled tints. Were they really delineated by von Stroheim (?); and do they look up into this camera’s priest?”

Suddenly, the Jezebel known as Cazana breaks cover, if only by way of speech. “His hair was slicked back... but the eyes stare maniacally above the moustache. They glisten like two ball-bearings; at once hardened to ultra-sound or teak: while his white dress-shirt, suit and tie hasten to nothingness. Furthermore, the audience behind him glares on... and they react like grotesques who are drawn from an Emily Dickinson poem. Each one looks on --- essentially being statuesque, hieratic, judgemental and even sequined.” “My sister, wench”, instructs Frederico Borghese by way of a bluish prism, “what of her?” The demi-monde responds thus: “Every night she waits or dotes on the ones you have slain. Although who takes the dominant or submissive part – when relating to an active or passive principle... who dares say? You comprehend my meaning, eh? Right enough, big boy, she yearns for those gentlemen and paws the ground like a wild beast up by those Roman ruins to the north of town. Irrespective of this, though, a scene from von Stroheim’s The Wedding March indents meat’s purpose – where a rape nearly occurs in a butcher’s yard. It’s a pictograph abreast of which a haunch of venison – like in Francis Bacon’s Painting ’46 – hangs down from a pink alcove... rather resultantly. It blunders on to a renewed lustre (thereby). Likewise, this playlet’s visceral nature transposes ‘it’ onto such a wedding... thence causing it to feast on an endless rapture. In Suzy Gaati’s chamber, then, she not only requires their presence or support, but stays with them until the morning’s light.”

“You LIE!”, snarls Frederico.
PART THE TWENTY-FIFTH
The Roman columns loomed up before him aplenty and in a forsaken glow. A latter tint suffused this edifice with magenta’s onslaught – while merely swivelling to gold or otherwise capering off with a full moon. Assuredly then, flakes of the sky seemed to circle in their orbit; thereby rescuing them above or planing down to various lines that subsisted in the heavens. An orange pall hung over the stone-work – albeit correspondingly blanched to its white conspectus and tapering away in terms of a mock-Circus Flavius. How, in all honesty, can it be compared to the gigantic construction over in Rome? I ask you! Don’t you conceive the curvature in its spine? Anyway, this Imperial power – which was redolent of the Caesars’ gifts – attracted down to it the Rock’s ambit. It hung in the sky like an asteroid aplenty and was almost full in a near-planetary sense: with the outer pits of its surface becoming obvious for all to see… Let us notify such a grave-time as this; in that its spheroid architecture became arbitrated upon via many a moon-flight way back in the ‘seventies (no matter how unwillingly). Aren’t there those who maintain in a *Fortean Times* way – and contrary to the given facts – that such moon-landings didn’t take place? Also, can one repair to or even remember those Moon globes with mortal names appended to every mound… as enacted after the lineage of Sir Patrick Moore? Furthermore, this disc – with its sovereignty over menstrual tides – always indicates feminine power in a manner that’s reminiscent of a tarot’s indulgence. Doesn’t it embody those heavy, stagnant waters of a scorpionic vengeance? Whereupon heavy water – as delineated in David Irving’s *The Mare’s Nest* – comes to mock at the transcendent and this was by way of dragging all thoughts back to matter. A toy-theatre (this) wherein they wax embroiled with earth or its tidal onrush; and let alone an emotional cataract of blood. *Frederico Borghese Gaati has never known it to congeal on his knife!*

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He dimly recalled the events in the taverna before he had occasion to vacate it. Didn’t the scarlet woman, Cazana, taunt him to his face – rather like the prostitute character in von Stroheim’s *Walking Down Broadway*? She was played by Minna Gombell in a project later reshot as *Hello Sister*. Regardless of any of this… Frederico pushed her to the stone flags below and she became convulsed by a fury reminiscent of a sound world like Vaughan Williams’ *Fourth Symphony*, for instance. Nonetheless, Cazana blurted out: “You fool! Haven’t you been away in gaol these long years… in order to adapt the terms of Jack Henry Abbott’s *In the Belly of the Beast*? Suzy Travolta Imray Gaati’s decadence is unparalleled. None can approach her *apropos* her orgies --- at least not myself. Do you remember the incidence of it in Guccione’s *Caligula*? When they contrived to reject Gore Vidal’s script; a document which certainly wasn’t based on Albert Camus’ play. To witness it:

She roiled like a tigress
naked before a marble throne
with ebon eyes flashing –
and in a saurian complexion –
after dusk.

While her long dark-hair came dishevelled halfway down her back. Don’t you hear the rustling of a serpentine access in the grass? It’s post-lapsarian, after all.” To which Frederico Borghese Gaati responded in full pomp: “Get away from me, transgressor! To me, Cazana, you are on a par with the Congoid beetle *Mecynorrhina Polyphemus* who pushes a lump of dung through ripe fronds in the savannah. It remains difficult to have any through-put, however, and this is why ‘you’ must roll it sideways via multiple revolutions. I have spotted your degenerate game. It levels you up – point for point – with an Anglican priest’s son known as Genesis P-Orridge who was once of the new wave band *Throbbing Gristle*. He is now destined to change places – transexually – with his own wife. Infamy, get thee
behind me… satana!” Frederico then pushes her violently to the floor. She stayed there panting and heaving for a while; *avec* her bosoms trembling as he stalked from the bar. A solitary bottle of Luxton’s Irish cream lay off in a corner – all by itself – during his exit.

PART THE TWENTY-SIXTH
Beneath Frederico’s boots a river flowed sweetly; its waters lapping in a lambent way around neighbouring rocks. Various bushes were lit up by fire-crackers and each one sprouted up from the earth – what with Rome’s ruins staring down at a watery islet. It was at this point – and spattered with gore from his murders – that Borghese Gaati came upon a recognition… namely, he must cleanse himself. One after the other his massive fists opened and closed. How may he receive his sister – sweet, innocent Suzy – when dressed with an executioner’s overlay? Truly, he must douse himself and allow such crystalline rivulets to flow across his musculature. Not being high school educated, he wouldn’t realise that one cannot embrace one’s martyr-sister when covered in entrails, or after the example of Arthur Honegger’s modern opera *Joan of Arc at the Stake*. These were surely the innards upon which Tiberius’ soothsayers had fed; especially when existing up on buildings like those ruins that towered above in a darkling grandeur. Let it be said: his cries and entreaties were premature; or of a prior moment. They echoed remotely or with resonance around those coping-stones – let alone such monoliths to excellence as these. What has he really ventured now? Why, it caterwauled with masculine indulgence… but not spleen. Culturally speaking, it reconnoitres the sounding-board of one of those Futurist machines which were superintended by Marinetti (in retrospect). Yet the voice had more to do with a deep bass than a soprano – never mind Mario Lanza or Enrico Caruso. “Suzy, Suzy Gaati”, he’d yelled… It was a call out of nowhere and by dint of twilight, or in pursuit of a candle-light’s filter upon a blade. “It’s me, Frederico, your
brother… I’ve come back in order to protect you, darling, like I uttered in court. Isn’t it so, eh? *Capice*…?”

Frederico Borghese Gaati then drove suddenly through a watery skin; thus penetrating the icy pericarp while tasting deeply its chill. Almost naked now he washed in mid-stream – albeit with his hands above his head and a torrent of water subsiding off one of Praxiteles’ frames. Around Thorak’s after-glow some rocks loomed up or became cloaked with geologic lore: and they ‘lusted’ to replace sandstone with granite… themselves being constructed from basalt. Again, by virtue of a summery expanse some green foliage limned the hydrogen oxide; thereby filtering the moon’s aspect or tilt… --- As this orb appeared in the sky; at once interplanetary-like or floating above, and possibly hardy and sulphurous… even stuck to the sky like a pitted disc. What was such a noise? At first he didn’t recognise this sibilant or dulcet sound, but finally he realised that his sister is calling to him from above.

**PART THE TWENTY-SEVENTH**

Instantaneously then, Frederico rises from the churning depths within which his form has been subsumed. He breaks the silvery surface so as to momentarily gain greater purchase on his sister’s words. Rising like a dolphin in the ghostly brightness of eventide, his head cascades under a shimmering water-fall with every last drop flitting to its accustomed place. Moreover, this liquid bout decants away over a curtain: with each passion or droplet of it striking out on its own *avec* adolescent lustre… mote by mote. Is it a deliquescence; or more precisely a pulsating rainbow of steel? It certainly exercises the pointillism of an unknown brand – particularly when looking above or savouring each spectrum of colour, wavelength by wavelength, in terms of Newton’s shards. Yes… This incandescent prospect has to be Blue in pigment: at once prussian, ultramarine, pthalo, cobalt, cerulean and brilliant. It also occurs by hindrance of some green and before such a panorama fades into turquoise. Yet Frederico’s
heavy, masculine, Cycladic head looks up askance or in awe at what transfigures its potentiality ahead. Whilst his outstretched paw – when cast by Michelangelo on a rainy day – strummed the lake’s surface in lieu of skimming coins.

+ A sweep of tundra or an ochre rockface divides Gaati from the sister he’s so avidly sought. Ought it to resemble a revelation drawn from Rider Haggard’s novel SHE? Never mind: for this clay then danced a saraband under a moon’s reflective glare. Suddenly he spotted her (!); when delicately etched or silhouetted against a Sicilian asteroid. Didn’t Professor Moriarty – presumably an Italian exile – make a name for himself with his thesis on The Mathematics of the Asteroid Belt? Who cares, already? After all, Frederico never bothered his grey jelly with Italianate academe: whether it be over Croce, Gentile, Eco, Morante, Evola, Praz, Vasari, Gramsci, Paglia, Lombroso, Pareto, Freda, Machiavelli, Pavese, Malatesta or whomsoever. No way… But what stood out for him was the shadow or the articulate nimbus a la Jung which flitted across our spheroid. It curved like the beak of a vulture in spate and it encoded a golden eagle in darkness shaking her wings (rather alternately). Does one recall the portrait of Henry VIII’s falconer – by Holbein – that was inspired by the habits of Renaissance or Italian princes? Is it a matter of Castiglione’s The Courtier, customarily? Frederico Gaati continually shook his head… Because – for a moment – he suspected his sister of having wings; else how could she have escaped his notice or arrived so unexpectedly just now. The night swept or limned blackly behind her shape.

+ Indeed, Mario Puzo’s The Godfather has nothing on this… Listen to the following, my brethren: Suzy Travolta-Imray Gaati loped naked across the turf. Wasn’t she divided into six (mayhap); and in accordance with a representational oil-painting by Bob Larkin? Wherein dark brunettes who were wearing nought but G-strings and tinkling breast-plates besport themselves across grey flags. Also, they cater to ankle guards
about their extremities as well as various amulets; together with bedizened necklaces and other adornments. Suzy could throw herself forward within the twinkling of an eye or dance herself into a frenzy… signifying Salome’s only twin! A consummate actress or performer, she might hurl her body to the ground in a transport of abandonment or lust. A compact entered into not just for male approval, but also as concerns her own pleasure. The eyes, meanwhile, betokened a basilisk stare: at once mascara’d, lined, over-painted and sporting a dalliance with gold. Each orb has lashes attached to it which were themselves dark… Yet, on occasion, where were those cat-like pupils? Did they manufacture an emptiness in the retina? Since, inter alia, these white eyes lacked all wondering or mirroring effects… Truly, Suzy Gaati came hither. She opened her mouth to speak; and out of it waxed a tinkling bell or the music of forgotten spheres. “My brother, Frederico”, she lisped. “You have journeyed far to come upon my ageless body here. Hearing of your hunt I would have zeroed in to your task, had I not been searching for my friends…” With this dolorous ambit, she turned her back on her brother and looked away across the island. Next to her left foot and nestling close to the ground a hedge-hog or a vole squirmed clear. It seemed to have fallen from her talons. This little creature made away at full speed… somewhat reprieved. Neither brother or sister paid it any attention whatsoever. She shook her black hair menacingly. Rather abashed – and holding his clothes before him – Frederico Borghese mounted the slope. The pre-eminent thing he noticed were her tresses. They extended from her scalp to her buttocks like an unending black lava from Catania or its flame. She evidently cast no shadow on the ground… or so it appeared. One long-nailed hand massaged a hip with a skewed leg; while another continued to flick back her hair like a disabused and growling tigress. But no noise declared itself save a low whistle. Frederico approached her drawn by a sylph-like kindred – as was vested in the lithe body before him. Her frame etched towards a silvery hue in this moonlight; the latter coruscating up and down her pulsating envelope. Borghese
increasingly became aware of the musk, frame and glowing perspiration – never mind blood – of the womanhood he’d defended. She spoke again rather more defiantly. “You betrayed us… me… the Gaatis when you killed my ‘boys’. Having learnt this I became very distressed, Frederico, do you hear?” “I had to”, squealed her sibling almost after a character in a Verdi opera. “They defiled you by their breath and presence. Massacring them turned lyrical (you see). It became one’s elixir of moral goodness. Their orgiastic boasting sealed their fate. Don’t you agree on our mother’s grave, eh? Fate offered me no choice but to grasp vengeance’s dagger.” Suzy Imray found herself sitting now and she was partly obscured by a shadow which fell across the classical façade. Next to her – Pompeii-like – rose a cut-off Doric column. Phallically, it half raised a sprout rather impotently towards the shore. Can one remember Bulwer Lytton’s novel known as *The Last Days of Pompeii*? Her relative – for his part – stood with a man’s legs open before her and his clothes came crumpled at the breast; as well as the fact that he wore only a loin clout in this silvern hue. A mosaic or the patterning of a frieze intervened between them in its solitary stone. Travolta-Imray’s fingers kneaded it convulsively and uneasily. She cut the atmosphere again with speech: “No, no, no… oh my brother, Freddy, you have it all wrong or turned base about apex (no matter how suggestively). You see, a transformation has been wrought in me these very years you’ve been away imprisoned on the mainland --- by Hecate! A sickness, an aberration or a malady afflicted the town… No-one knows for sure; but it could have been faulty blood transfusions or batches of diseased plasma from the United States, et cetera… Haemophiliacs of the world unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains! Didn’t the Refoundation Party of Marxist-Leninism once say it? HA! HA! HA! HA!” She laughs suddenly and it’s like the tolling of a monastery’s bell. It reinterprets a Berio oratorio which is possibly sinister to hear and that catches hold of her like a force from without. Frederico jumps slightly… the first time he’s shown apprehension on this day of all days. “No,
spawn of our mother’s womb like me, no-one may degrade us. None will ever successfully drag your sister into whoredom’s roils. For merely human standards leave me bereft – now that I AM A VAMPIRE!”

Presently, her face is seen against the moon’s solid entity and Borghese hadn’t noticed the canine incisors over ruby lips before. Suzy’s black hair cascaded behind her and the witch’s planet shone clean or sheer – while atop our vixen’s head she wore an Etruscan mask. Theatrically, it bore upon its cover the Agon of Greek theatre… a factor by no means unknown to Sicily given settlement from the Peloponnese. Each eye-slit has about it Clytemnestra’s cruelty in the Oresteia… at once fervidly delivered in those nets and adjacent to one’s bathing. It is then that she leapt and carried her brother’s body over the frieze. He hardly has time to scream… whilst Suzy Imray ripped out his throat with her vampiric teeth. Both of their bodies caromed together nakedly or breast-to-breast. They hurtled to the ground with her tapering nails pawing convulsively at his back. She suggestively wore an ormolu arm-bracelet around her upper limbs. It’s the sort of useless detail your mind registers at this hour! Her body – when leaping like a diver in Leni Riefenstahl’s Olympia – crashes into his. Over they went. Her hair embraced him akin to a crone’s all-enveloping shawl; itself darkly ebon. The last thing Frederico Borghese remembered – as a red and black sludge inundated his eyes – was the fact that he didn’t die alone. For another Gaati enjoyed revenge as much as he did. But surely a vampire’s victim returns as part of Polidori’s brood? “Now brother”, whispered Suzy Travolta with a mouth full of gore, “you shall share my lusts!”

THE END?
WILDERNESS’ APE
a vignette

I
Hadn’t Haiti been an island or a fierce dependency of one thousand drums? Assuredly then, its rivers or islets measured the green across its length; and each curving bay of this fumarole’s shore maximises one’s strength… Customarily and again, the whole came livid with a lush undergrowth – even at a time where the leaves’ wetness proffered many advantages or it hints at a hospitality to do with the jungle further in. Do you begin to protect this truth? Since – when viewed from the air – our republic’s trajectory lay like a dead seal on its side… at once covered in trees and with the odd promontory jutting out perpendicularly. Nothing comes of this repast – but the water lapping around its extremities swam clean or it flitted like a silver-back’s entrance… The semblance of Dr. Moreau’s island in H.G. Wells’ essay on vivisection, and known as The Island of Doctor Moreau, seems relevant here. (N.B.: This is never mind mentioning Brian Aldiss’ later rendition – by way of a sequel). Still – to one side of this phantasy – stood an African mask which has been carved out of bark. It rained on the perimeter of its frontier with ovals for the mouth and eyes… and by dint of a zero’s native signs. What does a Fool tell Lear, but not in Edward Bond’s travesty of the Bard? ‘Nuncle, thou art an O without a figure; a nothingness’… or suchlike words. Here one can ethnically spy its resolution in this aboriginal summa. Is it primal, nocturnal, secretive in its blatancy and otherwise hailing from Cameroon in West Africa? Let’s be sure in witnessing this that it doesn’t possess two faces; i.e., one in front and the other behind in order to ward off animist spectres which are all stalking one’s back-line.

II
Revilo P. Oliver’s book The Education of a Conservative has an essay on Haitian politics, but our tarot predicts an entirely
different ‘Papillon’. Nonetheless, our tale begins with a powerful voodoo priest or Houngan who had his eye on a foxy mulatto girl... that is: a twenty-one year old who was pale-skinned in her miscegenation. But – in truth – mightn’t her circumference turn out to be blue-toned; at once dark and sleek or with the affidavit of a female Pharaoh? Since the vixen’s body and breasts were perfectly proportioned, or otherwise modelled to a purple bodice that barely covered their globes. It glistened under artificial light; together with a yellow surplus coming in-between the magenta trellis of this underwear when worn outside the body. High gauntleted boots fetched up to a steel livery – or they reached in the direction of those thighs so as to provide a surplus indication over Krafft-Ebing’s art. Do you recognise the folly of what follows? Is it real? Certainly, a red-cloak fitted her hour-glass magnificence --- itself cast in synthetic sapphire. Even though it was in her hut that our shaman has come to pester. May his equivalent of ‘sexual harassment’ be at all congruent with Eckermann’s anthropology in his tome *Voodooism and the Negroid Religions*? Now none can register it other than in a turquoise architecture that rises cybernetically overhead. In this incarnation or alternate dimension our animist becomes violently changed. Furthermore – without being untoward about it – he’s best presented as a roebuck who had been vaguely humanised and with antlers sprouting from his skull. Truly, didn’t the lead singer in *Laibach* (which was the rock band of New Slovenian Art) wear a metal helmet across his cranium… the latter replete to a sprouting stag? To be better qualified over this, though: it projected from the head when adjacent to those slit-eyes and both of them appeared to be ochre in tint. Moreover, the creature’s heavy musculature seemed golden by way of its chest; and it was possibly glistening or even translucent. Whereupon a colt 45. – the most powerful hand-gun ever made – came slung from a holster and it ran from one shoulder to the earth’s trapeze. All of which occurred despite the fact that the twenty-one year old from Marbial on the island rejected all such advances. You see, she was betrothed to another man – buck or no buck! Wherein her
eyes glimmered; and weren’t they transient sockets without pupils or fit only for machinery? The lids are almost non-existent when one comes to it; whereas an eyebrow arches up spasmodically or like a curving steer. On the other hand, an orange disc revolved on her forehead’s panoply and it kindled towards an arranged jewel. Could it embody a Hindi mark which is just opening up to the pineal eye (?); a conception that enables everything to be laid out before it. Her skin, however, returned to cerulean and it lay shorn before respect’s artificiality thereby, or it found a contrast to those beautiful white teeth. This was not to mention such perfectly engineered red lips; themselves modelled on Kate Moss’ indulgence and which smiled without mirth. Again, the Houngan found his crude proposals repulsed by the girl; especially when this bint scratched him down both cheeks when armed with female talons. The voodoo priest – who had been humiliated in his pride – promised vengeance.

III
Exaggerating his loss – he then moved to enact a poison-pen letter and this was despite a debatable level of literacy. Alone, he enunciated a ceremony in its votaic fastness; and he thence sacrificed the black-and-white cock to a bowl of liquid flame. Its pitch let out an acrid smoke which star-dusted to sulphur. It billowed across this subdued chamber… while, at his back, there lay a white dais. Atop it symmetrical ivory candles burnt down towards their stumps rather like a cripple in a George Grosz cartoon(*); and they were also made from fine white-wax. (*One that could be said to illustrate John Gay’s eighteenth century romp, *The Beggar’s Opera*). To one side of this burning tar – and in lieu of a cauldron – rose a Benin sculpture made from wood. It combined features of timber and leather, you see, while it contrived to muster two faces: one came behind and the other ahead of its markings. All remains clear now, yes? His ‘nemesis’ proved to be a ritual sacrifice which is basically bathed in blood or gore, and with one dark mask over-sweeping. Its sockets rotated cylindrically or in terms of their absent perspective: plus
one line merged into another not after Ben Nicholson’s impediment… but more like Paul Klee. Does one remember, with some satisfaction, his painting devoted to infantile distortion called *The Possessed Girl*?

IV

Yet – having said all of this – the terrified waif or young girl found herself face to face with a mutant in another dimension. Might this embrace one of those miscreants or *residuum* who were plumbed by Cesare Lombroso in *Criminal Man*? Yesss… Assuredly, the mugwump’s face leered up above hers; thereby excoriating or sifting: and serving remembrance’s sieve when made out of gelatine. A colt. 45 was held menacingly against her temple and its barrel looked like a dull grey squint – while she dreaded any of its distant discharges. How this delinquent gibbered with glee! Truly, it depended on one’s interpretation of Beauty and the Beast – but not necessarily after Jean Cocteau’s roadshow in the nineteen forties. This much remains certain. Yet rescue may be at hand; especially given the mitten which this scarecrow covered her mouth with. Even now a dull ache developed across her face’s lower side at this remembrance. Could we detect, soundly and in front, a refutation of Peter Nichol’s disability play called *A Day in the Life of Joe Egg*? Never mind… since with one tremendous blow the armed mutant was hurled into a wall. It neighbours the summarised action. He then screamed and found himself upended from his feet – together with a black mouth which is open and casting rheum/plus various red eyes. They glowed like motorway cat’s-eyes in the upper casement of his skull… no matter how emaciated each one turned out to be. Whereas the creature that assaulted him had three arms all part made of metal… leastways down one side of ‘its’ body. Who was this rescuer? Can it be a positive feature of the Houngan’s lust, by virtue of defying all dualism? Because this vigilante bounced a rapist’s brain off brick – only to prevent genital exploitation – or an exposure of what our Girl Friday didn’t wish to see!
Having been cursed by the Houngan’s voodoo, our wench collapsed soon afterwards. Passing through some island bushes which were all verdant with emerald, she immediately felt a constriction or malady… only then to fall head-first on the loam. It was almost as though life’s breath had been forcibly expelled… as if by magic? Soon after her family’s women gathered around with tears in their eyes, in order to place a muslin sheet over her corpse. The material was light and diaphanous – if unaccustomed to any fleece. Eventually it covered the half-breed’s entire corse or dead body. Multi-dimensionally though, her three-armed saviour made some shift towards a lift door. It lay somewhere in a graffiti-bestrewn block and it hung on its hinges. (This walkway served as one of le Corbusier’s contributions to rats in mazes, albeit thanks to ‘sixties urban planning. Didn’t they call it renewal?) Moreover, isn’t spray-painted ‘art’ just the under-class’ psychic vomit – contrary to Dick Hebdige’s *mores*? In this respect, it institutionalises the psycho-art of Jean-Michel Basquiat: a Congoid, thief, juvenile delinquent, rent boy, sub-Genet hoodlum and AIDS wallah. The photographer Robert Maplethorpe later fixed him in aspic as an effeminate mattoid (primarily). It somehow revisits Eric Mottram’s post-modern study of William S. Burroughs which was known as *The Algebra of Need*.

Yet again, our three-armed mutant ran towards a closing lift; when this was itself illumined in half-light. Whilst at this door’s basis stands our Blue skin, who was essentially as beautiful as the day she was born. But – when one came to think of it – had she actually been conceived at all? Furthermore, the power source over the escalator exists elsewhere and it subsists deep within a trajectory of marble… or virtually at the earth’s core (nethermost-wise). This sapphire Nefertiti – with her breasts almost out – then stands with Three Arms on one side; together *avec* the roebuck who’s merely haltered in green. While two
rodent-like muties squeal and squawk during the lift’s descent… each of them proves to be delicately unobserved. Have they ever read James Herbert’s *The Rats*, perchance? Nonetheless, their eyes remain rubiate oysters in their shrunken heads. “EEEK-EEEK”, they twitter and thrush – as the elevator goes WWWWHHHOOOOSH! It descends vertiginously and with incredible violence towards Jules Verne’s radial.

VII

Now then, the ‘community’ became distressed by a death in their midst and all of her family subsequently visited the communal shack… primarily in order to inspect her cadaver which was freshly minted. Oh yes: each generation of a bygone tribe wept before this bier – as prescribed by Sir Francis Galton. Whilst overhead a flaming oil-lamp revealed a flickering scene… all of it in accord with our transposition or overlay, however, as a blue-skinned goddess, a roving buck and three-arms ran through a wrecked corridor. Surely it recalled – if only to our distant witness – the public housing development once spoken of? Certainly, our mutant (who possessed turquoise eyes aflame) now held a revolver to the mulatto’s head. But wait a moment… weren’t the bi-racial and our ultramarine-skin the same: or *alter egos* of like purport? Anyway, on a sordid staircase within this condominium the mutant and his victim huddled in the shadows. Next to them – and by way of Burroughs’ *Last Words* – came two rodent stalks who each grasped at a revolver, but with peeling skin around their shrunken skulls. In the face of such a sapphire’s sphinx (though) three-arms let rip… in other words, he fired his hand-gun without let or hindrance. (Doesn’t this remind us of John Milius’ group named ‘Armed and Literate’ – itself within the National Rifleman’s Association?) Irrespective of which – a double glass-plate in a neighbouring window shattered under a tear-gas canister’s impact. Despite the fact that a phthalo nymph – with her breasts half out over a golden bodice – leads this Comus Rout to safety abreast of a sudden cloud. Her scarlet cloak sways next to her in the breeze; while two mutants
support a wounded man-stag. Hadn’t he been shot earlier in our dreams?

VIII
Throughout all of this, however, the bereaved in-laws kept their dignity… even though extreme poverty meant that the casket ordered didn’t fit its intended target. This wooden entrapment came up too short in order to pass muster as a Procrustean bed (you see). Where did our Caribbean island’s deficit really originate from, then? Basically, it has to do with genetic insufficiency a la the creative nerve of Jensen’s and Eysenck’s researches – themselves primarily involving the latter’s Inequality of Man. Whereupon a foundation IQ of 70 rising to 85 after inter-breeding, ceteris paribus, just carries a preponderantly dysgenic vibe. All of this results in ‘Papa Doc’ Duvalier’s shanty towns not being able to reach a requisite level of civility – much after Lothrop Stoddard’s analysis in The Revolution in San Domingo. Further to which – any attempts by revolutionaries of the south, like C.L.R. James, to discount this through revisionism ends up becoming deflated by endogamy. Hence we are left with Haiti’s status as the poorest and least advanced isle in the West; i.e., a conflation of acute misery, cardboard dwellings, reverse evolution, AIDS and gang violence. Supervising it all, though, the Voodoo cult floats freely in a smoke-filled ether.

IX
The Girl Friday (in her death-in-life experiences) now dreamt a phantasm from the skull’s inside going outwards… somewhat radially. After all, what can it be like to number among one’s acquaintances a zombie… or one of Haiti’s living dead? Similarly, this waif conceived of a shadow-sylph who lay next to her sleeping sister… what with moonlight streaming in from an adjoining window. Do you perceive its square configurations rebounding mathematically from a lit wall (?); or otherwise cast in emerald. Dimly, she remembers confronting her mother at a time when she held a teddy-bear in one hand. Slowly, oh so
slowly… the adult woman rises from a prone position where, most significantly, the sylvan outline or inner sinuousness of her body recalls our blue Venus. An explosion is heard behind them and it just lights up an aperture with Greek Fire – a device used by siege merchants during the Middle Ages. (Ask any reader of Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe*, for example!) Don’t we observe a kind of bourgeois sentimentality here – which was best illustrated by Landseer’s animal portraits from the Victorian age? Yet, in a final miserable tableau, the large bay windows open and thus move outwards from within… in concord with a lateral motion. This inferno looms up majestically and aslant her retreating mother… albeit virtually after a silent cinema’s special usage of form. All that one glimpses is a final shot (semi-consciously); together with her Momma’s dark head lowering and plus incandescent sulphur, as well as an opened egress point and her outstretched paw. Childishly, it dramatically pleas with fate’s dealt hand!

X
Notwithstanding any of this, the family discovered that her body was too short for its casket. Now – when lifted by plenty of poverty in bereavement – they decided to tilt the girl’s head to the leftside… somewhat radically and aplenty. This enabled a prior fit to be obtained with the coffer – in order to prevent one of Professor Gunter von Hagens’ plastinates. Might it take root in terms of a grave’s absence; or like Jeremy Bentham’s auto-icon of yesteryear? Because, in a way reminiscent of third worlders all over, this clan supported a general ignorance; leastwise once their daughter had experienced the hot earth. For the buried cannot shake the land; especially given their interment beneath it!

XI
Still though – in our alternative reality – the blue skin stands provocatively on a roof-top or a neighbouring incline. Her boots are splayed or turned inwards; while her purple girdle curls instinctively this way and that over her scarcely concealed
vagina. Behind her a hardly noticeable male assistant seeks cover in the wind. He wears a violently red tie. About her sphinx-like head the clouds scuttle and this is before our naked android makes her way back into the building’s shelter – after Fritz Lang’s capers. It was not easy being an icon, you know (?)… always open to others’ expectations and thence becoming an instrument for their yearning. (Isn’t this the name of the Ba’thist secret police in various mid-east states?) Statuesquely then, she turns and walks towards an empty elevator… whilst the dear-man waits for her in his cubicle. He remains obedient to a higher purpose thereby. It must be difficult resembling a torch which flickers in darkness, so as to lead the masses or canaille into a lucid awakening. Most abrasively or in conclusion, A.R. Orage’s notion of the new age has become increasingly ancient by now.

XII
All of a sudden a darksome shape began to appear on moonlit nights or gloomy travails… It curved against our witches’ sister with her head held unnaturally – or cast down in a leftwards direction. Do you see? Certainly, those who beheld her within deep vegetation of a maximum greenness sought to run hollering to the Gods! Oh yes… For Voodoo had been suspected over the youngster’s demise – especially given the Houngan’s infatuation. Her form was now a twilight shambler and it linked up with George Romero’s spawn (thereby), or it betokened a zombie. This mulatto has now become one of Haiti’s itinerants or walking dead; with her blood-shot eyes averted… or themselves rheumy and virtually pupilless (most drear). Each orb then remained at the socket’s top or pinnacle; while staring vertically aslant or abreast of a Y-axis. Since wasn’t there an occasion where a stretched limo burst through a roadblock – multi-dimensionally speaking? It caromed into a doorway and shattered the wooden fastness therein. Whereupon our Venus-blue ducked down and ran for such an aperture. A humanoid stag stood over her all this time and fired at assailants who can’t be seen. (Note: surely these
dream sequences are a record of the girl’s status as a zombie… once the black magician’s spell has taken effect?)

XIII
Given these events, then, even Papa Doc’s delinquent authority acted in order to expel the Houngan from his territory. He went when surrounded by armed police and shackled to each officer by means of multiple bracelets. Everyone of this island’s myrmidons eyed him uneasily – and weren’t they really just examples of the Tonton Macoutes or the militia through which ‘Papa’ ruled? A self-confessed believer in Voodoo, Francois Duvalier had the mage banished --- but not prosecuted. He left spitting and cursing imprecations at all and sundry… only possibly to end up in the capital known as Port-au-Prince.

XIV
Meanwhile, a girl with a flash down her face woke up screaming or agog. She has been experiencing a recurrent nightmare, (you see); and this involves a phantasm which features her mother’s desertion over and over again. May the cell door to this compound have been left open in order for them to make their escape? On the way out a reduced version of Enid Blyton’s *troupe* – which consists of a fawn and her pet bear – look back. What do they notice? Why, it is little more than a cobalt matriarch who was stood in front of a computer-bank or a wall of television sets – while eyeing up her odds. In an instant a daughter and a Paddington toy are out of there. For whatever did Albert Camus say about freedom (?); namely, it happened to be a decreasing feeling of exhilaration a mere half-hour after release!

XV
The Houngan’s victim, however, never made a full recovery and she lived out her remaindered days within her own community. But – from dawn to dusk – she didn’t tell tales and linguistic inarticulateness loomed over all. Nor would her betrothed or engagement party wish to resurface. Who wants to marry a
zombie… in consequence? Whilst, from the first to the last day, her cranium was badly skewed throughout this ordeal; the latter being a testament to her time under a coffin’s lid. *Rest in Peace… for the dead wake angrily.*

THE END
SIXTY-FOOT DOLLS
a scientific romance

A switch, a moon and a wee ‘bonnie’ loon… och-aieee --- Old Scotch rime

ONE
A grill behind the bed served as an exit; or was it possibly a trellis-work beyond one’s brain? Adjacent to which a large pillow propped up an aged head; the former being a severance or a grey dome that lilted towards black-current in terms of its hair dye. An orange blanket lowered down its frame and it waxed complacent avaunt a balustrade. Is it made of metal at our bed’s end? Most definitely, a side-table existed in all its starkness and it stood next to this couch with a large pewter jug situated on its middle. A glass, at once holding a tooth-brush inside it, lay in close proximity. Further afield various rectangles intruded and they patched up to some light green… thence indicating a rhombus before folding back on themselves. Surely a yellow square of window subsisted outside or beyond our ken? Likewise, the proportions or perspectives of this agency indicated a picture. (Possibly one of William Nicholson’s spare landscapes comes to mind… and can’t he be remembered as slightly more than Ben’s father?)

A few nurses talked on in conclave and next to egress’ happenstance. Whilst – somewhat alternatively – an aged patient lay in his bed over the way. A dullish, off-grey lampshade coalesced next to his wizened head and it appeared to kindle a ‘fifties design.

In the room’s centre stood two doctors who were both dressed in their customary white coats. One indicated a younger age; while the other illustrated a stoic spore or Seneca’s likeness to Nero’s indulgence. Their names were Pickford and Carruthers-Smythe, and delicately placed black ties refused to distinguish them…
(Although one wore a crisp white offering; whilst his companion resounded to a pink gesture). Yes… Carruthers-Smythe demarcated the older man with Pickford tail-gunning for youth. (If we may speak of the two of them inhabiting an imaginary bi-plane – even one of a Great War vintage). A balding gloss oversmeared Smythe’s head – plus NHS spectacles to match. Whereas his younger colleague towed a black circumference… at once wrapped around the skull after some hair’s thrift. Both of them had stopped before one bed and it housed the oldest Chelsea pensioner in existence. His name was Adam.

TWO
Adam’s inner processes are confounded one from another – and yet they do occur. None can look into his brain’s recesses anymore… so aged is the individual who’s served up to our analysis at this time. But deep within the cerebral cortex various memories stir and neurone circuits are activated thereby. They whiz, pop, crackle and startle roundabouts… all of it leading to variously fresh projects. Or – in truth – does Adam reach back to visions so ancient that they come out fresh… no matter how indelicately? Anyway, within a memory-bank such as this the following mesmerisms subsist. It basically betokens a new grace’s fixture – only then to reveal a green sky lit by lightening flashes. A large fortress – consisting of dull brick – exists outside one particular time-zone. Oughtn’t this century really to be many years ahead or maybe on another world? Improvidently, such a structure existed on New Britain circa. 3421 and it rested on the western edge of Crowthorne, a town in Berkshire’s royal county. Once upon a time it had been called Broadmoor and it lay either obscured or whitened out on sundry ordinance survey maps. Mightn’t it have been a hospital for what Lombroso, Galton, Stekel, Krafft-Ebing and even Weininger called the criminally insane? Still, one has to recall Gaius Cibber’s statues to ‘Melancholy’ and ‘Raving Madness’ here… namely, these were the ones which manifested themselves on Bedlam’s walks. Weren’t they the reversal – morally speaking – of the Art Brut
that was housed in the Maudsley hospital, south London? Essentially though, currents of solid brick lay about such a tone… what with some plate windows very high up and made of lead. While earth tremors hampered this bivouac roundabout or adjacent to it, and each blast caused the ground’s vicinity to break up!

THREE
Doctor Pickford has invented a serum which not only reduces ageing but that reverses its effects… by the by. Wonder of wonders! Now then, he’s come to Magdalene’s Mercy Seat in order to test it out – if we are to steal a line from Samuel Beckett. Whereas Carruthers-Smythe, a lower order doctor in this food queue, is merely the chief orderly at such a hospice. Moreover, why don’t they throw all caution to the winds by using our dormitory’s oldest patient as a guinea pig? To be sure: Adam lies almost preternaturally withered in a bed or curled up with age. He is wrinkled, gnarled, escape-free and without any vacuous intent. Also, his burden lies before death --- somewhat exquisitely --- and in a manner that Heidegger would have approved of in terms of Dasein. The top-sheet virtually touches his chin or pout, with a texture which was creamy-to-white and remained somehow off-blue. Again, his skin flays a brillo pad’s palimpsest; whilst it stays haltered to grey and even fibrous in its drift. How – one asks – can a scarecrow like this be brought back onto life’s continent? Yet assuredly, Doctor Pickford illumines the way onto a terra incognita. For – like Merlin – he doesn’t doubt his countenance or ready abacus; at least in terms of Herman Hesse’s glass beads. Nor does he discount the vagaries of fate or a similar happenstance. After all, Adam has lain on a cot longer than most orderlies can recall. It was as if his trundle-bed imprisons him… whereupon days drift by in terms of hours, minutes or months. Let’s face it, then: these two medicine men overlook him and analyse success’ arch… particularly when limned in blue.
FOUR
On Adam’s cerebral cortex another drama unfolds its banner. Without doubt, it has no need for a bookish theatrical agency and embodies Nick Hern Books thereby. Especially when this deals with Peter Nichols’ ‘seventies diaries or Caryl Churchill’s demotic translation of Seneca’s *Thyestes* – itself raw from the Latin and by way of Atreus’ fall. Do your crystals register such a livery? For within these corridors of power a female android makes her rounds. A grey pall of steel sweeps away behind her visage and it’s merely registered over undelivery… as she carries a residue of drinks on a silver tray. It glistens in artificial light or splendour – while on its surface a pitcher of light-red liquid spills. Two tumblers remain adjacent to its absent pollution… or isn’t that some residual polish? Regardless of this: her name sports a twin with Andalusia and she’s about six-feet tall. Highly erotic whilst remaining antiseptic – she had magenta garters of a refined plastic which come up to her thighs… In a situation where her overall body waxes green; and thus spreads out with a lost translucence or sheen. Further, a coif of blonde hair that is basically modelled short curves delicately across her forehead. Wherein the perfectly proportioned body supports globular breasts which rest on a reclining wave… with various fixtures and fittings aft. Does one see now? It all relates to these cylindrical tendencies of *eros* that hone in on G-spots or erogenous zones… when each one can be traced by its extremities. They effectively take up a format of long-evolved ear-rings. May they betoken a reptilian state of consciousness in accord with three-brain theory: as explicated by Arthur Koestler in *Bricks to Babel*? Likewise, serpentine arm-cords pitch up near a right shoulder or its ambit; and these connect with wrist bracelets and shine with dulled gold… somewhat ambidextrously. Do they indicate an 18-carat Magnificat? To be sure: a golden bodice wraps around her torso and it just links to one movement; and it extends from a cupped mammary all the way round to her crotch… itself aswirl. Are we then left with geometrical eyes, lips and brows…? For this goddess’ mouth
glistens with plastic resin: whereas the nymph’s eye-brows arch after Marlene Dietrich. Could she be a green as against Pabst’s Blue Angel?

FIVE
The doctor’s face limbered up towards Adam’s profile in this geriatric ward. In these circumstances – then – both of them were virtually sat on a truckle bed’s edge. Doctor Pickford stared wide-eyed (you see); with one azure orb revolving in its socket aslant of a bristling brow. Also, a blue swathe cut about the doc’s tunic or surplice – when essentially risking ought else but a sallow indifference. This oldster who was named after the Old Testament’s original man held his ground… even though a crepuscular hand did play about his lips. Irrespective of which – Adam’s flesh-tone came out grey and it almost rusted to iron, so corrosive did these flakes of metal seem when hidden from his intent. None of Robert Aickman’s ghouls blustered anymore now! For Methuselah looked on and stared at Pickford square in the face. Truly, Dorian Gray’s portrait has freed itself from the flame; only to then be rather repositioned (hectoringly) in a mirror. Must we pursue an analysis herein (?); particularly given Rene Magritte’s painting concerning a ‘stopped reproduction’. Nonetheless, any real identikit relates to Edgar Allan Poe’s story The Tell-Tale Heart. Wherein a madman’s eye turns a corner in a distended fashion and thereby looks on – rather like Odin’s glass which became detached from its retina after a bout on the world’s tree. How can we take any proper bearings? Since Adam’s prism rediscovers a light-source: while it stares on like a marble whose sluice mechanism finds itself tilted sideways. Did it embody a Victorian doll in this regard? Any road up, Adam has most certainly received the Queen’s telegram… thence indicating a vintage due to age and prior to wine’s humiliation. Hadn’t either of them come across the allegory Mister Weston’s Good Wine by T. F. Powys? Yesss… To be certain of it, this centenarian’s mop doused some grey hemp or a curlicue of wool: the latter busily redeeming baldness.
“Don’t you want to be young again, Adam?”, enquired Doctor Pickford. He seemed to be genuinely in earnest – as if mounting an evangelical crusade or mission. Surely no-one in their right mind could reject such an elixir vitae? “Just a little injection”, posited our white jacket, “and you’ll be able to insure a lost life. Maybe you wish to walk abreast of our sun (?); or possibly find the full effulgence of its rays once more? Think man, you can step out of a body that’s raddled with disease and into the corpus of an Apollo… or even a Dionysus minus his cups. Wouldn’t you exchange a male crone for the life of Macbeth’s saviour…? Truly, a double-take may be yours at this juncture. Exchange Scrooge’s lineaments for Myron’s Discobolos, I beg you! Make the break… senilics of the world unite; you have nothing to lose but your colostomy bags!” “I reject youth”, hissed our elder berry. “‘T’is time’s fool; it will not endure --- please let’s praise its absence. Like Sir Oswald Mosley’s work The Alternative after the war, I prefer to dream along dissimilar lines. May one notice it aright? There are too many responsibilities in being young, you see. Each to his own… I am content with oblivion or even brain liquefaction. Do you remember the emperor Claudius (?); why yes… for the Praetorians insisted on making him imperator after Caligula’s assassination. But he may not have really required it… A quiet life is what furnishes sleep; albeit with no lisping there, nor epilepsy and a wish of ages. Who would have married Messalina had they enjoyed the truth (?); whether one reads either Robert Graves or Albert Jarry for a choice of partner. No – young divine – I refuse your bait and no hamsters are waiting here for life’s chop. My frame’s lived too great a time already and I can’t bear the spectrum all over again – not even counting up every sun-dial’s requiem. It is an endless return without any stay of execution. I refuse your wonder drug’s jab or MMR vaccine… do ya hear?” His voice trailed away like a mouse caught in its trap with a screech. There was no echo hereabout and no cheese to speak of.
SIX
Andalusia hummed to herself while walking along. (Even though these events took place in Adam’s recesses… and perhaps he wished to draw his bus pass in order to savour them more?) Instead of which she gambolled with fate’s stray partiality… nonetheless. For what looks like a weapon gathers pace behind her and it shines out of a deep patch of darkness – irrespective of any sheen. Our robot, though, bends down her beautiful head so as to arrange one’s drinks. They stir restively in their liquidity – particularly as she swirls them with a see-through glass pole. Her blonde coif hangs over abreast of a blue forehead; while the girl’s heavy ear-rings slant across towards a Bishop’s diagonal. Our green android’s lips are pursed; and this was despite her inner locution or timbre. An unseen presence – by the by – acknowledges her want of care. Truly, it begins now…

SEVEN
“Hey, slow down in your affidavit’s travesty”, burbled Doctor Pickford. “No-one wishes to force you down a lane you don’t want to travel on. No sir… please remember (also) that we dispute the theories of Jack Kevorkian and Peter Singer. We still imbibe the Hippocratic Oath in this practice, you know? When doctors like ourselves recognise the illicit nature of compulsion, if it’s used to entice you into a snake’s mouth. By the way, do you recognise Richard Westmacott the Elder’s monument to James Dutton in Sherborne, Gloucestershire circa. 1791. It transfigures a guardian angel standing above a sacrificial urn with its arms aloft and wings outstretched. Presumably, she’s releasing Dutton’s corse or skeleton so as to permit its ascent… at least in accord with Christian notions over bodily resurrection, physically speaking. Why man, I’m able to offer you a similar route without any deviousness! A pinch of my serum and the years will fall away like a snake’s shed skin. One final point, Adam, seeing your reluctance to speculate… how old are you?”
Old father time stopped to consider—somewhat ruminatively. “A consequence of these days misses my sun-dial thereafter. No topiary over such a bracken’s need can really stick in the flesh. For our pericarp happens to be a rind concerning Zeus’ ennui… after all. Don’t manufacture a moment of mayhem on my account, I beg you. Yet I do recall the odd jibe from way back in the past… To illustrate it better, what about a peeling of bells at the Boer War’s end around 1902?” As he remarks this the oldster’s skin limps towards a grey or taut aspect; and it’s almost like the wire in one of Angus Calder’s mobiles. Or—more accurately—it may it intone those thin, elongated structures of Giacometti (?); and this is never mind those images of Jean Genet et al. Weren’t they even more etiolated, whey-faced, desperate and anaemic than usual? Undoubtedly, it came to register John Tyndall’s strictures in The Eleventh Hour… especially when his analysis undermines a tension in today’s polity (anno humanae salutis). While he compared the body politic to an AIDS victim; i.e., a breeding ground which lacks immunity’s infection. During this period, though, Adam’s eyes glowed preternaturally like coals in their sockets… all of it amid some ashen surroundings. Needless to say, this proved to be no matter how cavernously he was taken off… and didn’t he embody a shrunken Jerzy Kosinski in milk?

EIGHT

As of this moment—however—Andalusia has yet to open her orbs. For a sparkle of light lit up the gun’s outer circle or cusp; and it refracted from its prism (thereby). It came out of blackness’ square quadrant or rectangle; and was at once limited to a camera’s dexterity. Seemingly then, our robot’s light blue and blonde head remained undisturbed. Moreover, we notice that her eyes are closed, tranquil and almost stoical without any residual faith. She continues to alter her drinks’ equilibrium throughout. What does this version of the robot woman in Fritz Lang’s Metropolis hum to herself? “Love”, she sings, “love remains --- only to be --- by celebrity --- a way to break free… or
a malady”. Certainly, mon amour, yet the numinous behind her generates a shadow or an opal’s power. It thinks resultanty within a spore’s contagion (in other words). Such synapses postulate the following: “no longer will I face ridicule by being marginalised over a pupil’s point – let alone when loosened within Calvin’s Institutio. No. The master must make certain of his gold before such an entrapment. This I swear --- by dint of any intrigue!” Such a girl-toy has a destiny to fulfill which proves to be irrespective of any other function. May she be reborn cybernetically (?); if only to rise like a phoenix within Dennis Wheatley’s The Satanist. You see, Spenser’s Faery Queen has nothing on this conundrum: it posits death – somewhat inescapably in a God’s ash-bowl – and circumnavigates a dish while wriggling after an asp. Don’t the serpent-folk indicate knowledge in the West’s pantheon?

NINE
Doctor Pickford has turned his back on a patient’s rudeness – yet he still speaks to himself. “Why, it’s incredible, Carruthers-Smythe, now I come to think of it. Yonder fellow believes he was here at Vereeniging’s peace (in 1902) when the Afrikaners sued for armistice with the British empire! That’s unbelievable, my assistant, and it means our oldster’s at least a century plus four years of age… Do you exemplify Weston’s monument to Jonathan and Elisabeth Ivie in St. Petrock’s church, Exeter, around 1717? An understanding of this is brought to my mind – whether severally or against one’s grain. At least, however, such a bass-relief signals a last judgement or paean, after a preliminary which shoots forwards towards William Blake. Whereupon two skulls look out and guard the flanks; in a scenario where both of them appear to be reclining on a severance of leaves… Isn’t Adam really a refutation of the body’s resurrection (to be sure)? Surely on his crust we note that cremation would make the better sense (?); i.e., merely by leaving such droplets to form a foot-guard on the curb”. “Forget him”, admonishes Carruthers-Smythe rather brusquely. “Our records are extensive and
somewhat over-indulged. For truly, we practice what we preach in a drama where Max Weber’s critique of bureaucracy holds sway. We definitely believe in the iron cage tout court. Come across the way, Doctor Pickford, and consult our filing cabinets in a rival bureau. This office, like Kafka’s insurance one dealing with Prague’s claims, rectifies all lies. Given the circumstances, no mendacity escapes from such a limited filo-fax. Let’s play it by numbers, Doctor Pickford, since Adam’s true age will stand revealed on his outermost envelope. Check it out, colleague, but I’m convinced that he’s ageless in death’s face!”

TEN
Now proved to be the moment where Andalusia noticed aught amiss… For she felt a presence behind her in the ether, somewhat inquisitively. The gun to one side of her is discernible now – it just points out from a tomb’s dark sanctum. It illuminates a black cube; thereby floating in its ebon void or geometry… and silencing all critics. In a subdued glow’s light – the robot’s skin passes a luminous sweetness or pelt; possibly indicating a latex’s shine in terms of its composition. Her eye remains closed; while the lightening flash above it almost intones a Mosleyite arrow… albeit when traversing a parallel beam. Does she continue to sing? Most definitely, in a troubadour’s vein she warbles: “Love waxes a sin --- chief of all Djinn --- and routed to win --- by dint of a limb, all credit to spin. Yesss…” Yet may such considerations be overmastered and unburdened, or even subsumed, by philosophy’s back-turn? Also, the rival mind beyond her continues in spate: “Our girl-toy silences insouciance’s bride, but I won’t take the indifference of this curtailment. No: since my master seeks to avoid such registered squares as these. In any event, this mosaic’s confection fails to alter its stroboscopic glow or tint. Nor can it be dismissed as Victor Pasmore’s patterning, as concerns the cover of J.P. Stern’s Nietzsche in Fontana’s modern patchwork. Do you see? What began life – aesthetically speaking – as a protest against bourgeois society has ended up as wall-paper. Because corporate
capitalism uses *The Painted Word* – to adopt Tom Wolfe’s satire – as an emptying of standard content or a spectacle of visual consumption. It all goes to delimit Ortega Y Gasset’s thesis, in his *The Dehumanisation of Art*, that modernism rejects humanism in apotheosis. Didn’t the central intelligence agency (CIA) back abstract expressionism in *Encounter* magazine during the ‘sixties?” But Andalusia has heard something; it cracks a floor-tile aslant her.

**ELEVEN**

Doctor Pickford stoops to examine each elevation in turn. In this instance, he stands amid a collection of metallic cases. They are wedged up against a wall in a dun-coloured office; the lino-cut of which is off-green. To begin with he’s slightly bored or dulled, and our doc thumbs through the attendance records casually. Nothing breaks his calm throughout this procedure. Yet suddenly, he becomes incredulous. “What about it, eh? This tabulation goes back further and further… albeit with every notice relying on improvidence. The dates fly past one: merely being a logarithm that skims in posterity’s face or breeds exponentially. (Albeit reverse-wise, for here in this time-tunnel the years proceed over a boundary’s horizon). First off, he’s recollected as being around in 1974 – i.e., in close proximity to Harold Wilson’s tired election. But behold: then comes 1950 – during a period where Labour’s landslide falls sheer. It was rather like a portrait of the dissident Irish writer Francis Stuart – when put on canvas by Jack Crabtree. You know, he’s the one who broadcast to Hibernia on Axis radio? The face looks rather wiry, sunken, melancholic and capable of renewed life… even if set deeply in repose. Certainly, it exemplifies the Gael’s skeletal embrace – essentially after an impasto or the thick paint of Jack B. Yeats. Doctor Pickford decides to delve further afield. He turns – with renewed gusto – to a rival filing cabinet.
TWELVE
Each twilight spelt out its foretold vampirism once more. For now the shape which menaces Andalusia took a physical form… even a three-dimensional eddy. Didn’t it realise, *en passant*, a misprisionment or a blob – the like of this standing with a pistol in its mouth? Or so she wished… Summarily, a bank of machinery became discernible behind her. It whistled towards grey or a pumice’s tone; primarily in terms of a lost tournament. During this the boom-tube’s red mouth leapt into prominence or exhibited itself. Our robot has fallen silent now and no ditties, worthy of Arne or Purcell, trip from her synthetic lips. Whilst her eye – surrounded by fibrous eye-lashes – had opened wide in the interval. Its most suggestive feature is a negative pupil; because within one’s socket no eye-ball manifests itself… there was merely the solace of an empty plexi-glass sliver. To be fair, a throaty if sibilant voice calls out: “Yo-ho, beauteous one! Oh, Andalusia?”

+ Whereupon the weapon’s safety catch clicks onto a FIRING POSITION.

THIRTEEN
Doctor Pickford’s head turns narrowly over its shoulder’s impress. A dull-looking filing cabinet – replete with papers – leads away from his gaze. He also holds a yellowing manuscript in his hand. “It can’t be borne, Carruthers-Smythe…”, yelps our investigator. “Since such a *pabulum* confirms that our ancient mariner has been here since the Anglo-Boer war’s end. Never mind Thomas Pakenham; let’s consider Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s ‘Official History’ of the conflict. Adam must have occupied yonder truckle-bed (or one like it) for a hundred-and-four years. Come on…” But his medical orderly remains stoical throughout this. “Our home’s records never resort to disorder, sir”, he purrs. “Why not consult these treatment papers lying roundabout? Truly, facts emerge from ancient newsprint; it reflects algebra’s needs. More than likely, though, it will prove to
be Marc Quinn’s blood mask in terms of its efficacy (presumably). Don’t you reminisce about his Turner Prize exhibit (?); namely, the one kept alive or pursuant to its Kelvin temperature. It betokens congealed Dasein and evidences the fragility of Keats’ death-mask… as taken by an Italian sculptor. My thumb folds over one discoloured sheet, but Quinn unmasks the self so as to foster cunning. What could be more natural, after all, than death’s wanton semblance? Does refrigeration keep it alive, alive-o?”

FOURTEEN
The blast from an atomic gun cast off to her veriest roots – thus causing Andalusia to ‘die’! Even though robots cannot really perish; they only await re-programming or replenishment at a later time. To be sure: the ray cut through her machinery almost erotically or viscerally, and in lieu of its penetration. The beauteous robot screamed aloud with her mouth an olive template – only to then rebound before a green sounding-board. Her limbs – at once gauntleted to a measure – were flung out and back, and the blonde head almost threw itself sideways. Maybe it was in transport or livid to coitus, even? Still, our manufactured grave saw her breasts ruptured or crepitating with false ardour; and they are bifurcated to a reed. Might it be considered a supermodel’s revenge on her robotic other? Seemingly, the thighs happen to be open and convulsed in this demarche… while their roundness waxed cylindrical after Raquel Welch’s fashion. Each leg bifurcates towards purple now – just tearing magenta down and by way of two pins’ proportioned curves.

FIFTEEN
Whereas Carruthers-Smythe – Doctor Pickford’s apologist – stared with growing disbelief at a sovran bit of paper. Yellow it was; whilst owning up to a previous existence… Surely it happened to be those commitment papers – merely tattered by awe and lore – which spoke of Adam’s entrance to the hospital many moons before? The date concerned (when read cautiously)
is Wednesday the twelfth 1902. Confound this conclusion... for in light of it Smythe’s mind knows both mugg and confusion. A mist or a delimited ether descends thereafter. Could it be nitrous oxide or laughing gas – if taken mistakenly? Carruthers rubbed his fingers over his nose’s bridge... a possible reflex (this) or the beginnings of an alienist’s case-study? Wide-eyed, he re-addressed himself to the sheet or its chlorine’s whiteness. He held its remnants betwixt thumb and forefinger. “Doctor, our institution’s records remain second to none. In truth, nothing can be dismissed as belonging to a pluperfect tense (no matter how arbitrarily). This screed merely states: “Adam Bartholomew Jefferson (sic) gained admission to this hospice in ---- . He has two conspicuous birthmarks picked out on his upper back. By the way, his twin or later names – Bartholomew and Jefferson – were our staff’s attributions. The individual was an aged tramp who went only by Adam’s suffix. Already – and at this early stage – he proved to be showing senility’s advanced creep.”

Also – while making these remarks – a sudden image came into Carruthers-Smythe’s lobes. It resembled a multi-faceted serpent which looks long and globular – with a sea of porous cells sapping away beneath it. Each waxed to a vaguely testicular curvature or promontory; itself amid a pendulous ooze of red and green DNA. Suffice it to say, then, they had about them something of the cancers that afflicted Professor R.A. Willis’ The Pathology of Tumours published by Butterworths in 1942. Out of which a worm ouroboros slowly emerged. Susceptibly, it might be the snake that devours its tail down many contours or intrigues, and while devouring each swish. No. For here it merely rose up when driven by light and pale turquoise in its fillet: whilst posturing to a grave. Various tentacles then salaamed in the nether distance and were now suffused with a tunnel’s azure... whilst crepitating in the dawn under a haloed planet. The creature’s eyes wept blankly or vacantly, and are seemingly suffused to a skin’s parchment (thereby). Whereupon its maw superintended over all... an orifice (this) which came up open,
raw, limpid, ‘Blimp’, comatose and even retching to oblivion! It was surrounded by canines around an orifice that gapes – rather like an early surrealist magazine called Minotaur. Much of this conjures up a screaming Pope – after Velasquez’s example – and by Francis Bacon. Here though, it betokened a meat-grinder instead of Freud’s castration complex… even if its teeth cheated T-Rex. While ‘it’ cleaved to a free continent; at once lost in gore and open to bile by implication. Didn’t this elemental’s dehiscence ramble forth like an ice worm?

No sooner had he conjured up this image than Carruthers-Smythe promptly forgot it.

SIXTEEN
Doctor Pickford returned swiftly to Adam’s bed-side. He looked down on him loftily and from higher up. How dare you(!), he thought apropos of nothing in particular. But he let it slide with some sort of contrivance. “Adam, tell me this”, he said – as he resorted to Samuel Richardson’s rhetoric. “How far back do you recall historical junctures, eh?” “I don’t know”, mumbled Adam in contrast, “leave me alone.” Yet Doc Pickford’s scientific curiosity was pricked now! Even though the bed-stead looked off-white as before… when sat next to a sickly green wall. A pigment --- this --- which betrayed all sense of optimism. Despite these features, though, Adam looked sprightly and completely in charge of his faculties… somewhat surprisingly. Where is our crematoria’s urn(?); and this is irrespective of the great age or sarcophagus mongering that burdened him.

SEVENTEEN
Speaking of mortality – however – the ‘form’ which wielded a gun became discernible now. Perhaps it was a split formulation (?)—being basically relevant to Adam but otherwise distinct. It may be Andalusia’s animus in Jung’s sliver; as misdirected or seen from without and thus “incarnate”. Anyway, Adam II was obese with a stretched jerkin down to his knees – rather like a
peon in *Ivanhoe*. His feet pop out on stubby legs from what appears to be a mediaeval smock (primarily). Likewise, can it address a calling that reverberates to Georg Baselitz’s name; albeit with his reverse paintings in mind? Upside-down they are; plus Baselitz’s paint is drip-fed into an unknowing tube. Does one really care? Also, some of the publications *avec* these on their covers include William S. Burroughs’ *Queer* and *Junky* – both of which are early works. Nonetheless, Adam II’s forearm and face are uncovered; and each waxes muscular to its defeat by being necessarily monstrous or otherwise inflated. It comes after a recognition of Lewis Caroll’s Humpty-Dumpty or egg; a character who, post-structurally, believed that words can be made to mean what you like. Adam II also has a succulent orb under an eye-lid; the latter merely hatched to a brilliant white. While the hair which exists atop one’s mask remains thatched, Brillo-like, Hecate inducing or liable to make over Macbeth’s three sisters… out of Fuseli’s example. These features rather memorably signify Fat: whether it be rolling, flabby, multi-dimensional, pummelled, hanging, dough-like or coruscated. His livery – irrespective of a ray-gun in its mitten – then notices both emerald, dice and ebon.

**EIGHTEEN**

Meanwhile, Doctor Pickford has acted on his curiosity. Had he fallen prey to what Moreau – the vivisector in H.G. Wells’ romance – once called the “colourlessness of pure research”? To be quick about it: our centenarian has been led naked into the examining room. May all of this quicken an Adamite pulse? Oh yes… since the fluoroscope’s eerie glow flickers into life resultantly. Both Carruthers-Smythe and Pickford study the oldster intently. They looked at his body – whether quickened to a spasm or not – and seen through a fluorescent screen. Likewise, this glass-box represents a fish-tank most rare – what with Adam’s grey mop bobbing up and down above its Rediffusion list. Pickford’s and Carruthers-Smythe’s faces or profiles then looked on at an amazing hinterland… all of it unknown to medical science. The younger white coat stares particularly in
disbelief. His head appears above and slightly to the side of its colleague. Moreover, their features are illumined in a ribena’s tint – all of it linked to a shifting ultramarine. It pulsates – stroboscopically – within a Roentgen ray’s glow; while kaleidoscope’s shimmer from one spectrum’s end to another inside a darkened room. Didn’t Newton experiment in Cambridge with refractions via prisms (?); and by way of holes bored in blinds. Every world turns full circle, you see? “It is impossible”, expostulated our Pickford. “A trick has been perpetrated on Gray’s Anatomy. Look here – some hoaxer must have become lost at his work bench. I refuse to countenance such stud poker. Not even a sculptor like Brancusi can carve a minimal head from the Cyclades like this… especially on its side. Do you hear?” His older assistant keeps shushed throughout… because there was an hysterical hint in Pickford’s voice.

NINETEEN
Against such grains – though – Andalusia’s robotic head is spied from one side. Seen in profile it may well be: with after-care’s necessary lost witness and despite any provenance such as this. For her lambent skin glows in the dark or gloom, and it possesses a limpid extraction of emerald in its undulating contrasts. Could it reconnoitre a stanley knife, thereby? Or, more truthfully, does it absolve any other transformation --- moving, as I say, from turquoise to pthalo by way of permanent green. All before it morphs into a lighter gesture still… isn’t it then really abreast of Hooker’s green? Whilst an abundance of sap and citrus – when out of chromium oxide and olive – threw itself onto photosynthesis’ screen. Still, the blanched sockets are without wit and her blonde coif remains active… albeit all around the scalp. Heavy ear-rings lay adjacent to her grassy calm; they were tabulated in ormolu. Whereas her mouth looked like a cherub’s orb and it resiled to a cry’s opening gesture… as it evinces or occasions a steamy evaporation. It recoils like a serpent in lieu of any taste – but no Stygian interlude can hide its eroticism. In this
instance, it records a gloss on Felicien Rops’ painting of a *danse macabre*. A smearing of liquid – at once boiling up to pearlescence – runs down her cheek’s side. “Absence of self-repair”, murmurs her internal or cybernetic system. Surely it happens to be in the process of shutting down?

Behind her, however, a wall of grey hides its oblivion. It sequesters into shapes or various squares… all of which are beholden to many colours. Furthermore, the tray of drinks and snacks – itself recalling astronaut’s food – slips across a parquet flooring out of bounds.

TWENTY

“Look”, said Doctor Pickford with asperity, “this man hasn’t got a heart. Observe, Carruthers-Smythe, do you make out where my finger-tip points?” To this end, his pink mitten gestured at a fluorescent screen beyond. It waxed on jasper or let out a refrain which bore upon some X-rays. Certainly – within this mock-television or cathode ray oscilloscope – a vertebrate’s longing stood out. It curved up like an insect’s mandible gesture; if only to elongate nature’s fractures. In this it realised nought else… since various grey dials were prominent next to one’s glass. Incidentally, a pelvis reared up and filleted a lower retinue, or was otherwise caged to its necessity. Although Professor Gunter von Hagens’ plastinates brooked no complaint here… because Vesalius’ tissue snorted at Gray’s efforts. Further – our troubadour listed to one side; and this is almost like a centipede or a millipede. Again, such a puppeteer has been flayed or faced the rhythm of a threshing instrument. But throughout this ordeal it is noticeable that Adam kept silent. No article of speech passed his lips. Carruthers-Smythe, the assistant, also mimed along to Pan’s pipe.

What could ‘Doc’ Pickford essay, though? Really, it went after such participles as these… since his mind became convulsed with a stray thought. During which interlude a serpentine worm
doubled back on its carcass. A blade had shorn the head from its body – thence leaving its trunk to writhe on the ground in controlled contortions. Still and all, these palpitations stroked a cellular tomb or they manifested a yellow claw that groped feverishly. One sallow head popped up with jaded gems for eyes or slits, and it was somewhat gloomily witnessed. Throughout this a naked damsel with snakes around each breast danced the tarantella. She did so in the background near a nethermost crypt. Our young Pickford only entertained this phantasm momentarily, however… thus dismissing it.

TWENTY-ONE
Andalusia’s body will have been carried away by her assailant now. The shape which has done so can be seen from behind (forsooth). It stands out against several rectangular barricades – all of them illustrating opal when awash with pumice. Let’s see: her mouth – entertaining Asimov’s vision of not *I Robot* – continues to smoke. Perhaps a brackish incense poured out that was unknown to Heaven’s redundance? Her purple bootlegs also swung obligingly --- when next to Adam’s right arm. Yet, intra-dimensionally, it is Adam who’s making off with some booty… itself merely replete to a capture. No murmur can be heard. All one recognises happens to be its bulk – as limned in a corridor or gesturally observed. Essentially though, Adam seems well pleased with his work… for hasn’t he imprisoned a female side or tic? After all – in pure Kabbalism – Lilith’s sin is necessary… because she falls from life’s tree only to redeem it, and in order to overcome dualism or provide ascent’s possibility. Can’t this unite duality’s primal form beyond the provenance of man and woman, male or female? Yes indeed… let us forget the pseudo-Kabbala of Madonna and concentrate on G.G. Scholem’s Jewish mysticism instead. Since Lilith can intrude even before Jehovah in legend. Wasn’t her necessary evil spirituality’s quanta; or the mechanics of a freedom to will? Or put another way – should assertive liberty betray its absence? Above all, as evidenced by *Genesis* Chapter Five; Verse Three, our night’s demoness came
to be Adam’s first wife. Yet truthfully, are all of Asmodeus' children worthy of their mother?

TWENTY-TWO
Doctor Pickford grasped his head’s back at this moment… almost in exasperation! Maybe it turned on a thyroid twitch (?); the likelihood of which led to an enervation – primarily of will. But no listlessness seized him. No – any prior atavism lay on another side altogether. He continued to stare in mystification at the fluoroscope. Adam lolled behind its wiles or loops – somewhat entranced. Moreover, his entire skeletal embrace – like the thirteenth tarot card signifying death – fell open before him. His rib-cage, salient bones, chattel and tooth-pick all stood revealed. Whilst across from this adventure (my friend) can’t you detect an olive filament… no matter how lit up? Adam – our first or last man – grinned inanely over Roentgen’s device… the nature of it delimited Galen. Hadn’t he declared – even after vivisection – that a dog entertained two hearts which were both on the left? Further, this character’s eyes are sunken or drifting, and thus indicate a by-law over such pits. Nor can we speak of blindness aslant these orbs, albeit in the manner of a pituitary cancer pressing on one’s optic nerves. (This condition ultimately did for authors like John Milton or Wyndham Lewis – at least when blinding both afore letters’ maturity). Didn’t Lewis once declare in the face of a journalist’s provocation that he had many books to write? Blindness stood as a plenitude to thraldom (therefore). “You insult me”, he roared at this hack. “I’m unseeing not dead. One’s lamp of aggressive voltage continues. I suffer from no want of power. The mind has many mansions.” After this he constructed a modernist hell which was only fit to be witnessed from purgatory. It came superintended over by Sammael, a baroque prince of darkness. His publisher called it Malign Fiesta.

Several disc-like lights existed above Pickford while he spoke betimes. Whereupon Adam’s lips – half above and below the
scanner – looked like blue scallops… and each one was rubbery to the touch. Surely fate had meant something distinctive by this turn of events? Because Doctor Pickford’s voice sounded uncertain throughout, rather than exasperated. “Will you examine those lungs, Carruthers-Smythe?” he asserted. “Entrance one’s devils, man! I’d swear to it that they are not mortal. How can a humanoid breathe with yonder apparatus intact? It’s almost as if they were constructed, *inter alia*, to inhale and exhale on another planet other than our earth.” “Don’t be absurd”, expostulated his colleague. But he did so without force or conviction, and merely as an after-thought. Both of them have been captured or captivated (somewhat exhaustively) by this analog screen. What can it mean?

TWENTY-THREE
In our fellow dimension, though, Adam’s *alter ego* surveys a dead nymph. Green she happens to be (perchance) and reminiscent of a *Playboy* centrefold in its ripe undulation! Her circumference is upended – albeit being reversed – and Andalusia lies head-first over a grey sledge. May it resemble a dais or an expectant moon’s custodian? With any certitude her breasts are almost out – at least when contrasted with a gold bikini connected to a frame. A sore cleavage also reveals love’s tunnel, basically insofar as this can be compared to the steam issuing roundabout. It susurrates a wound… while looking up forevermore. The green robot’s blonde mop hangs down – if only to sacrifice a sort of ashen crucifixion in terms of Athene and Hephaistos creating Pandora, even Anesidora. Will not Andalusia incarnate a thousand starlets herein? Whether they were Jordan, Trine Michelson, Sarah Young, Caprice, Raquel Welch, Bo Derek, Pamela Anderson or Sylvia Krystal *et al*. Truly, and by way of reflexion, when does an *artiste* become a scarlet woman or what Marlene Dietrich called a *soldier of love*? Well, it surely hardly suffices with a robot! For Andalusia’s mouth rests open in the form of a red opal plus some teeth, while next to this aperture a pale green rheum flowed freely. No-one
knew its lost extent… whereas liquid from her inner circuitry has splashed on her breasts and thighs in what Lord Lichfield would call a *wet look*. Yet might the misshapen form above her, Adam, actually intend benevolence rather than its converse? His form luxuriates in Quasimodo’s lustre (to be sure); yet who can say that he will be left alone with no-one to talk to after time’s fullness? Since his ultimate intention was to give this *femme* his conscience – jurisprudentially speaking. He wants to reassemble her in order to reverse the usual trajectory of Adam and Eve. Now instead of the betrothed who bites into knowledge’s apple at the behest of a serpent’s wiles… we have Adam distressing Eve’s purity through illumination. A second Lilith cannot emerge from such an egg, you see? In these circumstances, then, realism is the key to insight’s ferocity. Didn’t William S. Burroughs declare in a letter to Ginsberg that he was a factualist? He wished to return truth’s maxim at every available level. So be it. This recycles or turns around the intentionality of Adam’s self-regard. Suddenly he hears a BEEP-PEEP… the communication device! Master Pickford was obviously trying to contact him again. BEEP-PEEP.

TWENTY-FOUR
Our two physicians remain huddled before their fluoroscope – whereat everything in a circumambient mist turns green. Could it be some sort of portent? Moreover, the two of them became increasingly dumb-founded by today’s evidence or slide-show. Now each of them crouched before olive celluloid or its plasma screen; together with a glassy surface of resin passing out amidships. To look at our scientists from behind – Carruthers-Smythe stooped slightly to one’s left; while Doctor Pickford did spot-work from points right. A bank of cells, metallic note-pads, dials and rickety instruments collided with this reality… or lay to one side. Yes truly: thereupon it delivered a livery or a steel plate which recognised a ventriloquist’s silver. Above all though, one luminance stood out beyond other matters. It was Adam’s eyes. These gazed on like two lost orbs – both of them greenish and
with their pupils highly dilated. To say that they represented a
lost soul seems mawkish, even inconsiderate in its romanticism.
Yet something of this sort came to pass. “What goes on here?”,
trilled Carruthers-Smythe. “Do you follow my reasoning?
There’s no discernible heart, radically abnormal lungs and the
geriatric’s over a century-and-a-half old… how is it to be
explained?” For an instant his companion remained silent or
rock-like. Then he spoke up by return of post. “There’s only one
possible opinion, Carruthers. We’ve got to operate on the oldster.
By using my youth serum we’ll force him backwards through
reverse evolution and towards his mother’s cervix, relatively
speaking.” “But isn’t that unethical?”, replied his companion.
“Haven’t we both heard him say why he doesn’t wish to receive
it…? Our controlling medical board may not be happy at force
majeure – no matter one’s object or purport.” “Fiddle-sticks!
”, ejaculated Pickford with asperity. “Do you call yourself some
sort of weakling, old boy? Let us press on remorselessly in the
direction of pathology’s dexterity or rind, as well as the
innermost latitude of one’s hidden matter. No-one calls a halt to
it – just plunge in the knife abreast of a withering asp and its
sores! Don’t stay this blade’s execution – we must be frank about
it like a Robin Cook medical thriller. Didn’t John Keats – before
he became totally taken with his muse – always know that
surgery began with a butcher’s relief? Yessir. Append your name
to these release papers, I beg you. Indulge me. No, nooo… I
refuse to entreat, I demand it in science’s name! As Professor
Fred Hoyle remarks, we must make a principled stand on
’scientism’s’ behalf. Oh yes --- nought can brook progress’ hand.
We’ll say this first man’s given us full right of attorney – why,
he’s made a living will in death. HA! HA! Furthermore, Adam
has also agreed to leave his wormy cadaver to medicine – all of it
in accord with the Anatomy Act from the eighteen thirties.”
Momentarily, Doctor Pickford spies his assistant’s reluctance to
agree. “Sign the form!”, he demands aggressively. “We are joint
pioneers in flesh’s signature.” To the sound of which a biro
scraped across this parchment like a snail moving on sandstone.
“Excellent”, coos a younger man who’s exhilarated by his performance. “Pass over my medical bag, will you? I refute ‘ageism’… I come as the Lord’s scourge. In terms of time’s folly, my pouch contains an ichor or *elixir vitae*. It rolls back those years; it turns away the sun from its dials; it binds Nessus with Hercules’ shirt.”

Adam gazed on helplessly from one of them to the other. Like a lamb – he amassed nothing but slaughter’s tokens.

TWENTY-FIVE

“Master, I heard the blow to our chamber’s roof too. No, there’s nothing to worry about in this dimension, I concurr. Any tremors which grow bypass us from the outside… especially given those turbulent gestures that reverberate continuously. Truly, our compact with heaven measures divinity’s majesty thereafter. Isn’t it a case of Zeus’ living lightening?” Forthwith Adam’s hand – which holds the intercom – appears to be misshapen. It heightens the dislocation of three toes, but now they are on one’s mitten and beholden to a mollusc. Purple it happens to be – after the fashion of those tints on Greek sculpture, when, in their finery, they were buried beneath the Acropolis after Persian trespass. Aren’t all civilisations based on *strata* of prior power that intrude on destiny – rather like mortal geology? One recalls Newton’s jeremiad which came about as a consequence of scientific praise: “I saw further because I stood on giant’s shoulders”, he said. But Adam’s face looked calloused, monstrous and even oafish – albeit with an antediluvian aspect. What can we tell concerning a criminal taint *a la* Lombroso or even Maslow’s determinism? You are no doubt aware of the folk myth’s ability to disclose a malefactor – simply by pertaining to a glance. It is the face, (you understand); especially in terms of both eyes’ positioning. Our morphed Adam traded this trick again now; primarily by having a dewlap of skin covering over one eye. It fell down o’er a slip or a gibbet, and maybe it flapped in the wind as a portent? But whatever else did it signify? Did its
left-sidedness preclude the evil eye; or otherwise lead it to wax sinister in accordance with tradition? A portent of the same grew up, though... for Adam has positioned around his neck a power amulet. It glistened heavily with a comparison due to yellow and red. It occurred way out of Madam Blavatsky’s reach! Whereas Andalusia’s green hand lay in his paw during her decease. Yet truthfully, didn’t he intend to revive her to life (betimes); and even bequeath her his conscience en passant?

TWENTY-SIX
By a process of simulacrum our geriatric patient has almost passed out. Perhaps blessed sleep had come to him as a healing balm! Let’s indulge our fissure or imagination for a moment... now that Doctor Pickford and Carruthers-Smythe are warming to their tasks. Who can essay such a Medusean fray as this? For no Perseus seems to be on hand in order to resolve the issue. Simultaneously with the above, then, Dr. Pickford moves with assurance along eugenic lines... even though any rhapsody spoken of re-interprets Gyorgy Ligeti’s Dance of Death. More than ever so – because our Vincent Price has decided to inject our patient with his truth drug. It exists in a small syringe or pipette which thereby drains ‘it’ away into a fist; the latter gnarled in its rectitude or abundance. Carruthers-Smythe assists with the task – if only barely to the side – and by placing his hand firmly over the oldster’s arm. It acts either as a clamp or as uncertainty’s refuge (most probably). When behind this temple of conjoined flesh – or threeways to its necessary division – one detects a black screen. It comes down to head height like a private cinema... Nonetheless, a stray beaker, an ampoule or a tumbler lies behind such a project – all of which stands out nakedly against the sleek wooden surface of his bedside table (at once abridged to its rest). There was no need for our senilitic to move, however, since he’s half asleep already... both due to a narcotic agent in the filter or phial, but also as regards the last hour’s stress. Certainly, he hardly lets out a cry while the drug penetrates his stick-arm. Immediately in this operation’s vicinity,
however, Doctor Pickford’s medical case came to be observed. It proves to be a peculiar kit with orange padding around its perimeter or surround, top and bottom, as was found in the base as well as the roof of a folding cabinet. Various pipettes, longitudinal spasms, drug allotments, syringes, enema devices and other levers of power clutter up this bag. A vague moan then becomes observable from our experiment’s subject. Might he be Zenda’s prisoner; or some more steely-like creature? But oh yes (!), this wonder drug is beginning to have its impact… undoubtedly so.

TWENTY-SEVEN
At the instrument’s receiving end our thirty-first century Pickford signs off. Genetically speaking, he’s relatively unchanged… although a rolled-neck pullover (of the darkest hue) indicates a stylish shift. This receiver or auto-link, a tiny mobile ‘phone, remains in his hand. It embodies a rare air-trumpet – at least when turned around on a 78s logic and let loose. A grid – divided into segments or squares – then rises up in one’s decisive latitude. It depicts valleys, greenness, temperate spaces and much else. Occasionally this virtual reality screen shudders – as if its presence was febrile, miscast or unreal. All in all, it replicates a mild off-cut from one of William Gibson’s novels. Again, the doctor’s features grow familiarly: with each crustacean of bone representing a splicing where two skulls combine, neck to neck. They are Carruthers-Smythe and Pickford --- together as one. While the retinas, for their part, twinkle coldly over pale skin, jet-black hair and a Leonine moustache. He continues to look at the device just spoken into…

TWENTY-EIGHT
Now comes our change… since Adam has begun to alter his eternal nature. ‘It’ spins – occasionally on the rebound – only to cross new fastnesses or to betray the intentions of R.S. Thomas’ livery. The aged one’s skin becomes less pale and it swivels to pink; thence fastening on so many lines’ absence. Don’t you
detect its worthy notice? Especially in a scenario where the heads lolls back on the pillow; if only to reconnoitre bravery or find itself lost. Yes: the hair’s innate greyness recedes and each strand thins out via a youthful day’s approach. Similarly, the pillows behind his head look plumper or they seem to be more grey amid blue’s dexterity. Certainly, these wrinkles slowly alter like a crab moving sideways after Cancer’s sign which scuttles up the beach… and nearly always sideways-on. Observe this recurrent sentinel – for deep lines vanish with startling speed, while vitality flashes its stroboscope! Furthermore, a galvanic flush creeps over cheeks that were once ague’s plague. Mightn’t it all tie up – in terms of Edward de Bono’s jumps – with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s story *The Creeping Man*?

+ Whereas, in Pickford’s estimation, a mime *artiste* intrudes into his imagination. The vision continually comes in at this point… because a new configuration ensues within the pineal eye. It shows a clown or a mask-like face when covered all-over with white grease-paint. Also, this figurine sports some belt and braces; together with a T-shirt of black stripes which rest across one’s longitude. The face is capped by a red scallop and it’s of a sort that encloses it within a bowl; i.e., at once leering to the skin or by way of a painted mask. Like bats circling in the wilderness or under your eaves, he screams in order to see… Yes, even a cry can mushroom at this moment, but it’s still withering to know.

TWENTY-NINE

Our revelation continues, though, with Adam tilting forwards in his bed. Aren’t you aware of a corpse’s dalliance (?) whereupon a once prone cadaver rises up suddenly in order to release gasses within it. They were probably combustions or reactions inside one’s corse… all of which is after a manner that recalls Barbusse’s descriptions in *Hell* (most intrusively). Again, the cranium is free of its cushions now; in a situation where his red shirt appears more scarlet and the mop of grey hair less strained. Truly – like one of those speeded-up botanical photographs –
Pickford’s serum was causing Adam to shed his years. They fall from him like a Joker’s pack of cards! When repetitively, the mimer reappears and merely gestures with his thumbs up – all of it against a bright blue background. He holds up both his index fingers in gloved digits; at least when pursuant to LeCoq’s theory and practice… Let one see it relieved (thus): in that the simplicity of performance apes at relief’s index – particularly in a playlet where we are free to behold silence’s art. Can it be a reverse threnody within the enactment of one’s film?

During this endeavour small circular pulses or bubbles revolve around Adam’s opening eyes. They detract from mayhem’s affidavit; while, Stanley Spencer-like, our dotard continues to rise from his water-bed. --- Take up your bed and walk (!) … where have we heard such phrases before? Suddenly, a bright effulgence clears Adam’s head; and it haloes him in a golden glow as he begins to speak. “Doctor”, he starts by lisping via a croak, “I beg you to stop the serum prior to its biting too deeply. You don’t understand the implementation of such a care. It will only resile from death’s absence by opening the flood-gates (thereby). I entreat you to think before you liberate this course. It is not a game or a jeremiad you’re playing; albeit after the signature tune of a television drama like The Wild, Wild West (for example). No. Try and reverse it, stop it or momentarily alter its transformation. Nothing but dysgenics can result from this plunge or dive. You see, I adopted this old or shrivelled form which was waiting to die many years ago. It renovated the illustration of a Colin Dexter novel called The Riddle of the Third Mile in all its livery and purposes. Whereby an eviscerated corpse is delivered to various victims when cut into pieces… all of it pursuant to blackmail or past infractions. Surely you remember its motif (?); i.e., a medical head and shoulders that were barely marked with surgical lore – or they resembled Gray’s Anatomy when peeping out from straw. It came surrounded – in turn – by some rudimentary packing cases from “Bishop’s Removals” in Wokingham, if not bloodied hammers
betimes! Don’t upend this signal, Pickford! Why don’t you bear forth instead – when bleeding from life’s whole – Cassandra’s warning which concerns those furnished nets? Namely, these were the ones that caught Agamemnon within ichor’s steaming bath. Heed whatever tumbrrels disfigure you (thereby). I utilised old Adam’s body deliberately; primarily so as to conceal what lay beneath. His real name happened to be Adam Bartholomew Jefferson, did you know? But let it ride – if I become younger and younger, as you desire, my true self shall stand revealed or wax naked _avaunt_ this dawn. Assuredly, should I revert back my younger form will burst an amniotic surface and penetrate to such a level from below. Nor is that all. Since, in these circumstances, truth telling must go on to beget Armageddon after the fashion of a thousand flies. Those who wait outside can see me then. That’s the signal; the unholy margin of fate. Once my true partiality’s out – it provides a sign-post for the watchers. They shall observe and act. For when I morph into my true formula a starting pistol gets released. My metamorphosis bewitches any and all futures. Nor can it be dismissed – after Kafka’s example – with the idea of transubstantiation into a beetle or suchlike grubs. _Mecynorrhina Polyphemus_ can be dealt with! On the contrary, however, this idiolect may reform Babel’s Tower after Breughel’s observations. It has to be the end. _C’est Fini._ Prevent me from changing; it’s a clapper-board or a notifying firework _for them._”

With which clarion (then) Adam slumps back in his bed tired and exhausted. All of this was despite his growing youthfulness – whether page by page, hour by hour, minute by minute or hair-on-wrist by pulsating second!

**THIRTY**

Adam’s voice seemed to be hoarse and distant now. Regardless of which – he still continued to warn and cajole. Mightn’t this be the imprecations of one so damned? “I told you”, he repeated, “you have to prevent such a transformation. Resile from it – I
beseech you. It’s still never too late. No instantiation can ever really interfere… leastways not with an eagle circling above. We are at modernity’s final vista, doctors. Surely it resembles Boccioni’s sculpture entitled *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* from 1913? It trundles towards us with ‘seventies flares portending much movement and wrapped o’er with speed – even immediacy. Act now in order to prevent disaster’s unravelling…” During this outburst Pickford and Carruthers-Smythe remain strangely perplexed. One stood to the right of the other with a constellation of yellow or fluorescent lights above – when contrasted with a blue window out back. “I don’t like it, Pickford”, mouthed Carruthers in alarm. “Just listening to old Adam sounding off in this way; why, it gives me an attack of the screamers! It disables or causes alarm without any sanction. What does it mean?” The younger white coat of the two looked more sanguine. He merely shrugged his shoulders. “Don’t be perturbed, my good fellow. His reaction keeps to normacle’s fellowship under sanctioned medication. After all, he’s simply delirious. You don’t want to join the company of Christopher Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*, do you? Where – to quote from one of Washington Irving’s stories – bogles and spirits don a night-cap only to flit about.”

THIRTY-ONE
Again and again, Adam imprecates them in a sobbing whisper or spout, and it’s one that finally ceases with a gurgle. Why do two texts come into one’s mind; and these are Dalton Trumbo’s *Johnny got his Gun* and L.P. Hartley’s *Facial Justice*? Both dealresultantly with meat’s manipulation… primarily amidst a burst of soul engineering. Finally though, Doctor Pickford is seen to be wide-eyed or in profile, and he’s staring at Ovid’s chest of drawers. Adam’s ditty has trailed away now; it masquerades as an intruder in its dust. He hardly assaulted anyone with an empty boxing-glove, by the by. No. His last testament hissed the following: “Forget these fates. Yesss… I tried to warn you. No symposium can surrender to a bat’s warriorship (thereby). For, in
this very moment, I’m changing back through the glass of non-identity to what I once was. It cavils against my veriest doing or undoing. I liked your species, *homo sapiens*, not much – but enough to want to save you. A Latin tag… *fiat experimentum in corpore vili*. Now a land of falling towers awaits your evolved apehood. You see, this transformation bounds on apace and I revert to my true form. Correspondingly, no disguise will haunt my keen *anomie*. All alienations shall consequently end with this one. Have you ever consulted Emile Durkheim’s monumental study on suicide? It were better if you had done so; lest you face unarmed what is to follow one’s genesis. Too late… P..ickford; too late, doctor death. Those about to fulfil Eric von Daniken’s prognosis; why, they salute you! All too l-l-late…”

But Pickford luxuriates ecstatically and like a candle in the wind. “You observe, Carruthers-Smythe, that I was right to press ahead. For this change of life proves to be upon us… it happens to be like a cosmic menstruation or the tide’s alteration. I aspire to knock over your pig-headedness by way of daunt and dash. It works (I do declare); this serum labours and delivers, I tell you. Adam has recovered or rediscovered his long-lost youth. Eureka! A Nobel prize awaits me…”

**THIRTY-TWO**

Yet all must turn on occasions like this to ashes in the speaker’s mouth…. since Adam had indeed been rematerialised. Why so? Because our young creature has become a *little green man*. His eye-sockets were shrunken within a space’s expanse or delta, and both of them appear to be basins inside the skull. Do they have occasion to reinterpret a Frank Herbert monstrosity from *Dune*? No sir – even though these apertures are unseemly, rounded, gaping, tubular and unduly redolent of the word ‘hole’. Each of them takes up a cranium’s levelling; whereas – in contrast – the nostrils wax barely discernible on their apex. Nothing hints at a frieze’s articulation (thereby); at least in a situation where a brow coruscates over some staring, limpid eyes. Great flabby ears – of
a delicate emerald – stick out from the head… all of which occurs without any semblance or relief. Whereupon the alien’s mouth stands open, louche, toothsome and even preternaturally alert. Still – the lower jaw hangs slightly in its protuberance from the rest of this offering. One must also mention the neck (betimes); in that it happens to be folded over like a turkey cock’s. Against which Adam’s formerly red-shirt holds out – rather translucently – and amid the stillness of a jet-black screen. What colour of green do we infer from this; irrespective of any Hibernian extract? Well, we will have to take on board a sap tint; at once mulcting to citrus and by way of chromium oxide. Also – olive, ochre (green), permanent, phalo, turquoise (greenish), light, emerald, deep and Hooker’s tints come up --- all of these need to be taken into account.

THIRTY-THREE

For an instant both Doctor Pickford and Carruthers-Smythe look dismayed – or even distraught. Touché. They hadn’t reckoned on this drama turning into a Twilight Zone episode. Nor was Kingsley Amis’ history of science fiction at all relevant here – despite the reference to a hundred Richard Matheson stories. (This isn’t to mention Theodore Sturgeon’s affidavit in such a committee of one hundred). Might a Hollywood film like The Invasion of the Body Snatchers atone for such a loss? Or could the latter be seen as an anti-communist satire – never mind its Khazar theodicy?

Pickford and Carruthers-Smythe continue to stagger backwards throughout. They are quite clearly dumbfounded by this turn of events. A beam of translucent light which barely cascades to yellow’s pitch crosses over the room’s advent now. Remember – darkness has fallen in a ward otherwise entrusted to one’s task. By virtue of the fact that – in memory’s origination – Adam had dallied on a general circuit, but he was then directed to a separate cube. This combination served as an examining room. Yet also, and in order to avoid prying eyes, Doctor Pickford has opted to
use his serum on Adam’s husk in a private dice. It proved to be an oblong which came shaped to the building’s side; as well as being situated way up on a top floor. The mustard rectangles of this *bric-a-brac* crossed over, primarily so as to grant some squares and illumine those within. An interesting side-light of which meant that the medicos uniforms (hitherto white) turned black through the sun’s reverse effect. Carruthers, the senior’s assistant, is likewise backing away across this islet… while clutching at his neck and tie convulsively. Already his glasses – from the nineteen fifties and heavily reinforced – have slipped down nostril-wise. Perhaps also, if he started to grasp his head’s back in abandonment (sic) then he could be nursing a thyroid wound? Meanwhile, “Adam’s” bed remained dishevelled or unkempt, however, and a nearby chair found itself gripped by some green digits. They were decidedly sinuous in character. It was Pickford though – otherwise known as *doctor death* – who is the most spiritually troubled by these changes. He twisted and shook his crown; almost as if he’d been emboldened by some nightmare world! Maybe an unconscious cavern had opened up for him (?); whereby stoicism has fled full tilt into Labisse’s cosmos. Or – more pertinently – must a lifetime’s commitment to rationalism come full circle in a scenario where one’s only response to the bizarre can be lycanthropy? Anyway, Pickford was heard to scream: “It is impossible – do you hear, Carruthers? It traduces every ladle of admitted science. Credulously, Sir Isaac Newton scripted various books on occult lore… each one of them reminiscent of *The Temple and the Lodge* by Baigent & Leigh. Yet he lived in an era which combined Roger and Francis Bacon… or even magic’s template over experimental *doxa*. Have you ever consulted Professor Thorndike’s *History of Magic and Experimental Science* in eight volumes from Columbia university press? It traversed Pliny’s observations until at least the seventeenth century… For such illicit mixtures were implicit then. But NOOOOOO! (he looks again at the green’un). It’s got to be an hallucination or utter madness!”
THIRTY-FOUR
Suddenly the hospice’s top storey found itself illumined by a dazzling flash. It came from outside. Since – irrespective of a homily scene where low-rise buildings intersect in suburbia or are occasionally punctured by a passing Volkswagen – a weird craft jets into view now. It hovers teasingly above the building and is surrounded by others of its ilk. Such a ship betokens a classic flying saucer of yore – what with a cylindrical oscilloscope which was as flat as a pancake allows. While its discus arabesque recalls a Myron without hands and feet, or is pursuant to a million unidentified flying objects. Doesn’t it incarnate a billion UFOs (?) and this was never mind government research in order to track them down. It seems to be constructed from platinum or a lost semblance of steel, and it reminds us of Gerry Anderson’s television series UFO. Yessss… each vehicle casts off in a red frisbee’s direction; together with blue ‘windows’ and a sensory projectile that looms beneath this skimming coin. For all the world it looks like an ant-eater’s sprout – albeit one which has been constructed from metal. It appears to be searching out aught amiss… possibly given some signal or other. Whereupon it becomes obvious over whether these vessels are propelled by powerful launchers or boosters which were situated in their rears. Clearly they happen to be a thousandfold more advanced than contemporary or mortal science. All Carruthers-Smythe can do was to interrupt his colleague’s mental breakdown. He fidgets nervously by a window. “D-Doctor Pickford, look, out yonder on this tube and amid a darkling sky, we’re inundated by a Martian invasion. Isn’t this our very own war of the worlds?”

THIRTY-FIVE
Within the alien space craft, however, all remained calm. Because, ceteris paribus, little green men go about their business or duty, and their task is imperialism. It proved to be undoubtedly so… Note: in this particular scene four emerald mugwumps gather around a telescreen in order to observe. Two
of them have their backs to us. They are thirty-five milliseconds short of a universal excuse (in other words). Never mind: *quod* the dials around them whirl and click – when pursuant to so much grief. Interestingly, their shoulders were hunched over with almost Quasimodo’s glee… whilst twin ears stick out in green beige (somewhat figuratively). Furthermore, their heads round themselves off to a shiny point; at least when viewed from behind. Whereas the aliens’ dress consisted of a purple tunic or smock which was vaguely reminiscent of a Romanist priest. One of the creatures turns towards us now and he resembles our post-Adam. Might this have been a blasphemy against Levi-Strauss’s *The Savage Mind*? Or alternatively – could the grinning skull, green carapace, cavernous eye-sockets and loose lips not signify one of Ensor’s masks… albeit when abreast of an iron front? (This controlled sigil dates from 1888). Nonetheless, a species of dial or a whirling clock seems to counter-point our monstrous crew… Whereupon a planetary digit turns a nodule or spool, primarily so as to activate a scanner whose beam penetrates *all*. “Observe”, says the anti-Adamic in his own language, “after a century or more our agent contacts us. He lets out a shout that fills the Heavens with wonder! Isn’t it a clarion call *Against Nature*, if we are to make use of the mortals’ novelist Huysmans? Too true: our advanced guard has abandoned his earthly guise in order to reveal aught. After Ibsen’s *Enemy of the People* – truth frees destruction’s fangs (you see). It releases the Four Horsemen! Truly, it must be our tocsin or signal… globally speaking.”

THIRTY-SIX

“Listen to me”, registers the lead ship’s commander, “contact all our fleet. Communicate with every vessel. Instruct the entire flotilla or armada… and designate them thus: *procrastinate no longer*. Our terrestrial spy (hitherto disguised) has broken cover. Lead in all those armed discs that have been waiting for one hundred and fifty years. We know now – thanks to Adam’s cunning – that it is safe to land and CONQUER EARTH!”

579
“Grieving helps not the wretched” – Seneca’s chorus in *Hippolytus*

With this wave after wave of flying saucers descend upon the planet. They pour down from the blue clouds above and spray death from their nose-cones. Soon purple and brackish smoke begins to billow forth – all of it coming from flashes of flame which light up the ground. Greek fire illuminates everything (thereby); as human screams become admixed with a holocaust! (Wasn’t this just a word that meant destruction by pitch, if used amongst elder Hellenes?) Before long the green-and-blue orb was ablaze. Yet amidst such End Times as these, transfigured by haze, the following scene took place. For – superimposed on each UFO or looming amid its impact and the sky – stood a SIXTY-FOOT DOLL. It embodied Andalusia’s deportment.

**HER LIPS WERE RED>HER SOCKETS VACANT>HER SKIN GREEN>HER HAIR GOLDEN>HER LIMBS LITHE>HER EAR-RINGS & CHOKES AMBER>HER BIKINI ORMOLU>HER LEGS LONG>HER VAGINA BARELY COVERED>HER LOIN CLOUT PEARLESCENT>HER CLOAK FLAMINGO>HER HEELS HIGH>HER NAILS TAPERING>HER VOICE LIKE A BELL!**

Who might she be? Well, future anthropologists will call her a Goddess for little green men!

FINI
STINGING BEETLES
a dream

Cast of characters:

These are Mezzanine Spratt, a travelling salesman and adventurer, together with Tanith Carpentier, a heroine, plus two mages named Biff and Boff. Various emanations of these thespians also zero in (spiritually speaking). The text will make this clear throughout. Likewise, Lord Talbot deserves a special mention. He was Anton LaVey’s spiritual advisor on Roman Polanski’s Rosemary’s Baby – although a revisionist ouija board had disembarked Ira Levin early on.

(Author’s remarks: this is a story about diabolical possession).

I
Mezzanine Spratt, the main puppet in this particular roadshow, has been dreaming.

II
Tanith Carpentier began by thinking aloud: “The rain drops have stopped beating in their plenitude – albeit primarily on an empty screen. A wind-screen, I mean… Nonetheless, Mezzanine Spratt has definitely crumpled over with tiredness. His red convertible had almost left the road a while back. Was it either driver error or fatigue? Possibly both… but, in his imagination, something more distraint proved to be happening.

For he is sitting at a masquerading table which was basically lit up by multiple candelabra. These festooned the dining-room, and this appears to be despite the wind and water that lashed without. A rare dispersal of goods lay down on this special linen – some of these items in silver salvers or rare pewter jugs. Didn’t the candle-light glisten off them rather spectacularly? A bowl of fruit became discernible now; while various tureens of meat or fish
occasionally came forth. In the background there seemed to be a pump-room or some sort of wax-work museum. At least a fix-tide of industrial machinery – with large brick kilns in evidence – tidied up one’s gloom. At one end sat Tanith with a plunging bust, pearls and a pair of banqueting gloves. A cock-tail glass – at once stick-rolled – lolled between her gloved fingers. At the other end or projection nestled Mezzanine… irrespective of the fact that he looked strangely altered. He had become monstrously disfigured or otherwise discouraged (you see). His face comes across as mobile, waxen, labile and even viscid. Can you detect this transformation? Moreover, his visage kept bobbing up behind a vista of flaring candles. It always shimmered to a stare or hid aslant whitefish water. Yet Mezzanine Spratt’s Cycladic mask betokened the unmistakable (thereby). It certainly ripped off any semblance to nonesuch – even though he could have been suffering from hyperpituitarism or some similar malady (most assuredly). Yes? Since the man’s physiognomy comes contained in a bubble made of plexiglass – if only to then characterise the Halloween mask of his face. For surely it crepitated or ran in new pits of distortion (?); and it smiled like a crab-apple. Might it have the bends or be smeared by a blow-torch? Anyway, its acromegalic displacement fitted a new moral ugliness; the like of which was held aloft by an exo-skeleton (though it be). This suit’s binary colours were red and blue… they stood for hot and cold, you know?"

III

Mezzanine Spratt, his head lolling like a broomstick, ruminated the following: “I must have passed out for a brief travail betimes. After all, one bit of road resembles another one under these conditions. All remains indeterminate via a blank screen such as this. But still, don’t I recall a restaurant’s rendezvous with no butler or flunky available to gesture to? The candles flickered or pirouetted abreast of me in their holders as before. Also, my face bequeathed its hideous gesture just like a past entreaty. Didn’t it encode sundry luncheon meat – when vacuum-packed – and
somewhat rare in its prominence? I reached across only to unscrew the lid on a bottle of claret. Hmmm…, was that really the stew? To be certain of our ground, though: I swivelled the contents in an ice-bucket which unfolded unto this last. *Touché*, these flaring candles lay between my darling, Tanith, and myself. Most definitely, she looked ravishing tonight in her little black number with the plunging neck-line. The alcohol flowed into her glass thus disfiguring the Irish crystal – if only to renounce a pout. Do you know what I’m saying? Because she didn’t move from her chair during this entire performance. Let’s look at her more closely: in that her blonde hair cascaded down in reefs, her eyebrows were arched and the girl’s teeth are pearly in their whiteness. Surely it’s a *MacClean’s* sunrise all round, then? The eyes, however, wax azure, jet blue, orb-like and come to reinterpret marbles. Could they be false in their entreaty or otherwise legging it to paradise? Since Tanith – in this incarnation – was a waxen effigy or a manikin. Hadn’t I discovered her in a waxworks factory like Madame Tassaud’s? Ye-s-s-s-sss. I hissed aloud now… when altogether locked into a possessive glare. I leant over my beloved in a delicate fashion – with the candle-sticks still spitting and sending out stroboscopic ‘heat’. I adjusted the liquor and my brillo-pad head came to be burnished in the flame… as it passed over from one reality into another.”

IV

The mages have gathered in order to inspect their prey from above. “My shadow-brothers, all goes as we planned or surmised it. For Mezzanine lies slumped over in the pit or amphitheatre of his car. Let us look to the side… wherein rivulets of water criss-cross the screen beyond our ken. Each mote or scratch of H(2)O then blackens one’s transept before it passes aft. This was despite one special instance… namely, when the wipers stutter at the outermost circumference of their circle prior to passing back. But we can descend deeper or down alongside these heart-felt dreams – isn’t it so, my brothers?
Whereupon a hominid who was accustomed to a lit parade sat still for a moment. His measure may be found out by those candles; at least when each one is metered sequentially from the next. They lay along a table’s middle or rested thence in accordance with its brevity. Every one of them flickered within a kaleidoscopic burst… out of whose flames his disfigured head can be seen to bob and weave in a bubble. An incident of many years before now came up – albeit matured by his mind’s eye. In it he was seen to walk along with a beautiful babe who proved to be blonde of hue, and they were exiting from one night-spot or other. All too readily, though, various persons in their vicinity had begun to scatter or flee. What went on throughout this; or have they begun to study his face, perchance? Because – at a later date and under the fluffy bow-tie – it has started to melt. Is it deliquescing or discombobulating bit by bit? Whereat, and like the unmasked visage of Gaston Leroux’s *Phantom of the Opera*, one rip or tear reveals an unripe plum that vegetates behind a balaclava’s indifference. Does an objective observer know – however unsteadily – whether such an image relates to Lord Raglan’s Crimean campaign? Too true, old man… since one’s pericarp came blinded to a geyser like this or it’s liable to meld like clay – especially while pursuant to a forgotten regime. Did it possibly relate to hygiene at all? By virtue of which and beneath the girl’s outraged or stilleto'd feet, when glued to the pavement, Spratt’s flesh had cascaded down after some viscid rheum and when merely given over to kissing one’s ground. Slowly she swooned in an itemised cocoon now that her date has melted on the spot… thereby representing a Toblerone or a triangular chocolate if subjected to a naked flame.

Throughout all of this the moon reflected its abundant light; at once calm, gibbous, mesmeric, held-in, enraptured and cool.”
Mezzanine Spratt had folded himself over in order to sleep in his vehicle. “I am speeding on now beyond the temple of one’s dreams. Yes indeed, I lie semi-comatose in my car… even though these head-light beams of mine can barely cut through this darkness. All of which proves to be irrespective of any water that cascades and pings off metal! No sir… but the grip of dream-time or its somnolence is upon me. Can’t you grapple with its craggy outer limits, my friends? First up, my melting sickness seems to have led to hospitalisation – yet not in any expected capacity… For aren’t I outside the intern faculty or its wardship, and looking in? Assuredly so, I leap in a fleet of foot manner towards a casualty department which has been lit up from the outside-in. Certainly, no-one really wants to configure what I might have become or evolved into. To tell you the truth it all means nothing to me whatsoever, but I do remember the expectations of a vault or a scenario where, unlike the two public school-boys in *Arthur Seaton’s Aunt*, I leapt towards my fate!

+ Touché! Didn’t my hooves ricochet from a parked laundry vehicle by way of this darkness – while arching up towards nothing other than a black space? I catapulted myself upwards through some jagged shards which were themselves illumined by false balsam or an echoing yellow. Must one substantiate the matter further? Anyway, my feet ground upon the hospital’s carpet and crunched it underfoot – particularly now it was covered over with the window’s sward. Then again, I should possibly have wondered why this aperture is wide open before I’d arrived. Never mind… since I crouched down pursuant to any utterance and prior to leaving off. Ahead of me lay Biff with an enormous laser-ray in his armoured fist. Truthfully, he wore a dark-green cape around his frame; itself steel-clad and velvet-made like a mediaeval knight adorned with the latest gadgets. But these gewgaws aside and bestrewn around the place… something struck me with main force between the eyes! Inevitably, wasn’t there a connexion between this skull-head and
a past one which had grown all magisterial? _Quod_ haven’t I gone abroad rather masterfully and in blue vestments, but without Sir Henry Irving’s self-confidence? You know that he was the greatest Victorian actor, I presume…? Leastwise, Bram Stoker turned out to be an able amanuensis in his two-volume _Reminiscences of Henry Irving._

Nonetheless, a striking similarity grew up between Biff and me – at least in terms of my palsied existence under a glass-dome that had been wrapped around the head. Oh so mercifully now… don’t you summon up Brian Aldiss’ novel _Barefoot in the Head_ instead? To be certain of our time, O want of blood: Biff wore a helmet containing antlers like a pterodactyl’s ferment – especially when occasioned by matching bones. Perhaps it came to vent what Arthur Koestler called _The Act of Creation_ (?); or it wanted some dysgenic plastic thereby. It definitely appears that he wore about him some animal skin or pelt, and even luxuriated in an absent purchase from this vista. Necessarily so – since lying redundantly upon the floor or before his weapon lay Boff. Could it have been a residual emanation, though? Anyway, it happened to be a dwarf or one of the little people! Yet – within such a semblance of pain – weren’t Biff and Boff supposed to be allies? No matter: this daemon’s gun waxes jammed; and wasn’t it only a vaudeville blunderbuss to begin with?”

Biff, who momentarily speaks through a mouthful of fish, masks up slowly. “My fluted rifle has misfired! How can this be? What outermost purpose or drama – in one’s ethics of misplacement – gels with any metaphysics which go on here? Didn’t the Jew or the Son of Man whom the Romans crucified at the Pharisees’ behest want to declare that everything has a purport, even as it relates to two birds falling to the ground? You see, it must be the metaphysical objectivism of all metaphysical objectivisms… especially after the fashion or interregnum of Julius Evola. May one consult without compulsion his revolutionary codex which makes war on modernity in the name of tradition? _Radex_, you
infer… he wishes to return to the root or to one’s blood-in-the-bone abreast of its spectre.”

Boff has been reduced to a midget by dint of mixed breeding. For all miscegenation helps to illustrate a bounty of decay. His voice measures the following… “He must have fled from us, O my brothers… primarily after the failure of his sten gun to fire. Didn’t you notice it? Yet he speeds from us – merely expectant to his need – and in order to avoid fatality’s arrest. Let’s recognise the way he chooses to run when pursuant to nought save self-interest and hemmed in by aluminium. He moved laterally with his cape veering behind him or seen as an architectural slide. Might it embody a Pop Art vestibule by Rauchenberg or a still frame from von Stroheim?”

VI

Mezzanine Spratt ran slantwise in the rain and always in accord with one vehicle or t’other. He spoke solemnly to himself in mesmerism’s grip. “I leap abroad when attendant on deliverance, but not without pain. Or maybe it has to do with the end result or its prognosis (?) ; I forget which. Suddenly the dwarf’s outstretched boot seeks to trip me or to send me sprawling on the linoleum… otherwise constructed from lapis lazuli. Can’t it be construed as slippery in the extreme?”

Boff holds his gaiter up high in contemplation of the void. He declares. “Huuumussssshhh, miscreant… listen to me well! Your involvement in this case is unwanted, unheralded, sprightly and without either terms or offering – leastwise given such a spirit of sacrifice. Yonder intervention cannot be wished for, do you see? Any fight that you seek to delve into or relish doesn’t want your presence…”

Mezzanine Spratt replies in high dudgeon. “Wrong, my friend, the gander is up or all troubadour tunes have broken out of their fastness. Don’t I fling myself forward and somersault in mid-air
before landing laterally? I then run off in the direction of some competent store-rooms; if only to throw my body outwards like a commando. Certainly, a trapezoid of light fizzes across this emerald corridor and it showers down a mezzanine’s effulgence. Whereas each parallel bar of ‘sound’ infracts upon a grey door – the cast of it embodies a cell. All of an instant a truckle-bed hurtles across a corridor from a neighbouring one. It speeds this way and that *avaunt* I bring it to a close with my foot. The blanket on the pallet remains a pale ochre – while the pillow’s tint veers towards white by way of blue. Standard issue, I suppose… Anyway, the orderly looks suspiciously like Graham Sutherland, the Hollywood actor of yesteryear. ‘What’s vertical to this or pregnant in its depth-charge issue?’ I demanded aggressively… ‘Nought’, he answered pensively with a token of sullenness. ‘Yes’, he continues without paying much attention. ‘They’re mere offices, residues of business or habitations to storage. Does one comprehend it?’ In pursuance of which – I flaunt my vigilante status by hurling myself onwards without fear. Whereupon lines of force radiate around me after the details of a subdued battle or joust. Possibly though, it strives to inscribe death’s rainbow colour by colour?"

**VII**

Biff, who looks into a green mirror that is limned with dark mould, speaks as follows. “He still stares out into the future – somewhat morosely. Might he be caught up in the cell or construct of his car? Wherein this automobile stands under a casement to those surrounding sheets of rain. Or could these be described, *en passant*, as volcanic heave-toes of ash which cascade from above? In any event, our travelling salesman decides to reverse his vehicle into a lay-by in order to grab a sundial’s shut eye. A bank of deeply verdant trees surround his red convertible all a’drip. The dim sun has also descended on its sky-line…”
VIII
Mezzanine – when alive to an odyssey of humour – said the following. “Well, the store-front opened its offerings to me with a blank doorway marked ‘do not enter’ hiding some reddish light. May it be chloroform or ether in an objectless space? Various bottles lie in squared cubicles – when packed away from lino to ceiling and in subdued tones. Not a hint was heard from these surroundings… Now Biff looked down with a scarlet bulb transfixing one’s glow – almost as if he were part of a wall of sarcophagi whose faces were turned up. He wore antlers upon a handicap’s brow throughout this turn…
Biff: “Mezzanine doesn’t hear the prod of one’s silence behind one. Nor need he grapple with anything too complicated; especially when fear laces envy with respect. Possibly a large bottle of formaldehyde which was mixed with pure ethanol crashes near him. Moreover, the conundrum of its explosion happens to be louder when it is confronted by stillness. Poisonous fumes are released thereafter. They vaporise and all of them collocate or build upon the budding air. Each swirl of driftwood lists towards yellow and it finds fault resultantly, or it troubles a witness over science’s ready passion. In these Stygian vaults a thousand bottles can fall only to repeat a growing impediment to phantasy. Does one detect it? Since, in von Stroheim’s original nine-hour epic *Greed*, the murdered Marina haunts Trina’s dreams. (It all came from Frank Norris’ naturalist or socio-biological novel *McTeague*). Whereupon Maria grapples with a fence; at once lemur-like and clutching at straws so as to gain her revenge. Might she become a Joker in her own pack of Aces?"

Tanith Carpentier: “My looking down on this scene has the solemnity of a dream or a female orgasm. Doesn’t the latter have to do with a blueness, a serenity or an utter calm with one’s partner… even a blanking out in the brain. Regardless of this – a whole constellation of vials and casks plummet downwards (thereafter). An enormous roar results when this heavy glass –
minus its asphyxiation – finally hits pay-dirt. Biff grins on in the
darkness. He has become mean-spirited, quite probably rapt and
certainly blinded in one eye with inattention. Over his head he
wears some fossilised bone – much after the fashion of Erich von
Stroheim in *La Grande Illusion* by Jean Renoir. Nonetheless, a
hand can be seen flailing beneath this medicine… all of it having
been released from its captivity in myriad ways. Even though
Biff garners on amidships… He happens to be ‘eyeless in Gaza
only to see --- when blue-eyed --- what an exo-skeleton could
muster.’ Might it be the formulation of a Tryannosaurus Rex
between-times – i.e., a T without the rest, eh?”

Mezzanine Spratt’s *mea culpa* follows on shortly. “I am
surrounded by gold bars – due to the fact that an entire packing
case of lozenges has fallen on me. Or were they pushed from
above? A detective’s question – whether for Sherlock Holmes or
Sexton Blake – if ever there was one… Despite this, though, I am
determined to rise from this pit of haemoglobin which slides
around after the fraction of a microscope’s essay. Isn’t the
machine on full power in terms of its light source? Never mind:
since ordinary minds are neutered by any determined ascent.
Here I go again – for a lifted pillion must slake its thirst on this
tarmac. Anyway, my carrion will never rustle up such
undercooked meat. It has to rise – no good can come of
pretending otherwise. Still and all, one’s silhouette indicates an
indifference to pressure of this sort. It promulgates itself and
makes free-play of transcendence thereby. May one declare it
over? Truly, my fist penetrates the balsa *et viola* (!) with one
punch I’m free. Yet – to paraphrase Proudhon – liberty can never
be constrained by a license on circumstances. No. For my form
rears up when covered in liquid ether – the like of which runs off
in rivulets. Are they unstinting in their praise? I clench my teeth,
growl and gather about me a piece of wood in order to possibly
use it as a weapon. Who knows? Yet underneath my beetling
brows each eye had become a slit. Round about me a noxious
reek of gas seeks to rise up and away; at once filling the space feverishly with its insecticide.”

Biff stands fully adorned in a daemonic rig. “You have stood up, proud one, only to admit your defeat’s luxuriance. Nothing awaits your spirit now but a Tarot card… the one marked death and that often indicates transformation or renewal. Discard all other discourses or mend the magic of forgotten days! Too true, your vanquished sigil comes covered in rheum or green-spirited; and is measured by blood’s barometric pressure. Forget it not – because my pagan head bellows a kindred indifference towards our plight. Are you a stranger to a tabernacle of lost pain? Any road up, the very pterodactyl feel of my head-gear seeks the sun like Icarus in reverse. He flew too near one’s glistening solar panel in Greek myth (you know). Its orb proved to be too strong, singed his wings and sent him plummeting to the turf beneath. Lo, but look, helmet and all, I have become Lord Talbot! He incarnates a very devil, demon or lower thaumaturge. May his green-spiked dome come forwards in an undefeated manner! What did Madame Blavatsky say about Lucifer’s gift of fire to mankind in her *Secret Doctrine*? Might it wax promethean after Heraclitus’ blessing?”

IX
Tanith Carpentier continued to comment on events via a distant haze. “Yes, he remains conscious in his diligence throughout. Too far it seems… Given the implementation of the following agreement: in that his head slipped down beneath the seat. Orange it was and with shiny appurtenances. Above all, the top-‘n’-tailed trilby sunk down or delved towards a skull’s irretrievable nature. What can he be thinking about? Why, merely that nought ever really happens to him; *viz.*, no excitement, chastisement or adventure occurs within. Do you see? Since no wife or woman waited up for him in the one-room apartment he called home. No sir… it wasn’t a defeated architecture, but he did remain aware of the rain’s pitter-patter. Its onomatopoeia
enclosed sound’s displacement or clatter, and it led onto some bullets’ distribution!

Likewise, did he remember a scene of lost triumph? A scenario within which a waxen doll shone on as a blonde and under reflective lights – the latter occasioned by candles lit up to the nines. Further, her cupped ball-room gloves were enclosed so as to feast on a festival of fools… at least by dint of some lost wine. Whilst Mezzanine’s cranium had become deathly or a death’s-head (so to say). Now then, his living skull was spent and shrouded over to a brillo pad, or it existed under plexiglass. Its look became the leprosy of a new utterance – one that’s destined to festoon the desks of an imagined Tarot. Whereas he wore around his frame a power-pack dedicated to solitude; itself liable to reinvigorate some spinal tap. The armour seemed heavy or unballetic in its choreography. It even insisted upon the notification of a new crusade. Yes… the masonism of this effort had to construe a purpose – primarily by means of an implosion face-to-face. But what did this amount to? For those candles which lit up a diner’s scene… why, they have collapsed and cause naked flame to course along its linen. Within a matter of minutes the entire playlet is ablaze – as liquid pitch bursts out across this wax-work’s façade. A neo-classic facia it always happened to be, but now it’s incandescent with Greek Fire’s descant. Why do you choose to doubt it? Yet from the outside how can a blonde figurine possibly go any further, even if she remains fastened to her seat as my alter ego? Certainly, she must melt into fluidity after a brave-time’s bell, or when pursuant to crystal cracking. Won’t it recall one of Boccioni’s sculptures; if only fitfully unfurled before a wind-tunnel’s silence? Even farther out can’t Mezzanine snap his bonds and – like a robotic creature in the Capek brothers’ play RUR – will he then hurl himself into this inferno? All to rescue his love… also, before one’s explosive holocaust his face runs like liquid treacle within its mask or expectation (almost). ‘Tanith, my love’, he shrilled, ‘don’t despair… I’m coming for you!’
We then cut to the scene of an enormous explosion.”

X

Mezzanine Spratt: “I wander towards this devil-doll which is adjacent to my studio vista. Moreover, its claws are transparent – especially when seen through the thick etheric slaughter of one’s mists. Against such thinking an oversight of orange gauze floats up from below; it’s adrift of those shattered boards which came from the shelving roundabout. Before me stood Lord Talbot; at once grasping a stave before a savage iota of Halloween. Doesn’t it declare itself to be a candle that flares within a pumpkin (?); the mouth, nose and eyes of which have been cut out with a knife. All of it has been recorded by some reflective dye, you know? Similarly, the demon afore me hissed out of a reptilian bastinado (possibly). It reared up like a green’un or when percussive to an old dinosaur’s witness. On I surged as I sought to pummel it with my fists – but against its saurian armour no impact could I make. I blundered on in the half-darkness often keening at this rage or turret, and yet susceptible to change. Look at it now: my limbs felt heavy and over-burdened as I attacked. Could it embody the final conflict between Marcus and McTeague in von Stroheim’s *Greed?* (A hemicycle that was filmed in California’s death valley at the apogee of this particular sun). Unhesitatingly though, the pot-bellied significance of Biff came through regardless… Might it reallocate indistinctiveness’ obesity or the sin of gluttony (?); thence having occasion to spin over into the half-light. It also indicated an inner connexion between Talbot and Biff. Weren’t they the same daemonic entity (?); albeit masquerading behind a carnival’s obsession with one harlequin’s hanging. No matter: because the oval of such a belly helped to trap a variant on uncleanliness, even if only circulating to grey now. Everything found itself held up within this dilemma. But soon I was down or flattened to Camus’ *Fall* – primarily by one of those demonic blows. Talbot stood over me with ‘its’ nostrils twitching and snorting.”

593
XI
Biff and Boff were speaking in unison as siamese twins. “Let us examine a plenitude of freaks, my brothers. For wasn’t Caligula just an undivine child who’s otherwise wasteful to its source (?); or liable to make his favourite horse into a Consul? Couldn’t this be done by virtue of an alternative mission statement (?), even a grafted on treaty. Surely it would illustrate a reversal of Raoul Vaneigem’s *The Book of Pleasures*, a decadent volume which advocates paedophilia?

To be evident about it: Mezzanine Spratt’s head has slumped down into a trilby-laden seat. Indefinitely though, the pain or effulgence of this water almost cascaded through the glass… metaphorically speaking. Might it be an example of one pane favouring another before the gesture of these Norns (?) … all of it occurring ahead of a northern wind. Remember that in another incarnation Spratt proved himself to be a tragic figure; i.e., one who merely sacrificed himself for the love of a waxen doll. All of this took place in a manner reminiscent of German expressionist cinema or von Stroheim’s luridness. Out Hollywood way it was… wherein the gypsy-like Zerkow dreams (in *Greed*) of retrieving the ormolu dinner-service from a burial ground. His face during these shots found itself convulsed with a gross livery or beholden to an unholy love!

Mezzanine slowly revives. For a while he nearly rests his heavy chin on the steering-wheel. What to do next, however? Clearly, he can’t snuggle up like this when pursued by dampness’ residue. Since he primarily needs to quit this place or find solace in a boarding house nearby. A neighbouring hamlet could be a possibility… anyway, he slew the car around and heads off into these swirling undercurrents. May he now turn the vehicle’s key, engage its starter, and feed petrol into its engine only to see it lurch onto a glistening road? Let’s take this bishopric or diagonal movement in chess as far as it can progress.”
XII
Tanith Carpentier gestures from afar like Gloria Swanson in *Sunset Boulevard* by Billy Wilder. Isn’t she the Vamp’s vamp, thereby? “Truthfully, I knew his absence would impart some renewal to this circle. Don’t misunderstand me! Because do you see a *vampirella* in front of you – oppressed one of another existence? I constantly stride towards a basalt column which is just tempted over to sequin and idly lists forwards. Truly, a swirl shows up everything else. It occurs amid mist and many of my colleagues gather in a darkness well off to the west. Or shall it be a species of leftism, spiritually speaking? Needless to say, this *zeitgeist* has turned over on itself amidships. Didn’t Julius Evola, the author of *Revolt Against the Modern World*, speak of a ‘war of position’ like a vesuvian chess match? Yess-s-s, since his gargoyle lolls over your cranium’s side in a dragon’s get-up or rig, and it merely waits to still such distempers. Its refusal looked like a dinosaur (perchance), or even a brontosaurus and a pterodactyl. It waxed turquoise in its delusion and waited to foment ichor from a creature’s mouth.

+ Doesn’t Lord Talbot leer over him now… with Richard Wagner’s *Ring* cycle blaring away in the background? A dexterity that intimates nothing other than a claret sky – leastwise it carpets the space between them *avec* vermilion. No matter how brilliantly… since in a matter of moments Biff had become enormous. He dwarfed this tableau and wore a reptile’s helmet throughout, and Talbot’s covered over by intertwined bullet-belts. A cape masqueraded over one shoulder and it concerns a rampant dragon… the heraldic device or *imprimatur* of Talbot’s house. Moreover, his grin came blackly etched from one of indifference’s wounds or amid bleeding teeth. Slowly & surely Mezzanine’s body was dragged outside through a door downstairs and across a yard. An alley cat, dressed in black-and-white fur, looked on inquisitively as Biff passed with Spratt. He shifted him roughly across these stones’ keeping.”
Biff: “Too true – I move apace of death with an elaborate weapon slung over one shoulder. An ambulance or a similar vehicle awaits me across the forecourt. But what is this? I look out through the blinded compassion of one eye; and it comes stilled via fish-bone or an amphibian’s vertebrae. Can one comprehend it? Especially now that a hospital guard who is armed with a truncheon confronts me and asks about my business. Yet who can really analyse Talbot’s inner motivations properly? Assertively, I am prepared to depart. Surely this orderly was one of Mezzanine’s emanations (?); even though our impress waxes forgetful due to his wearing of a female mask. It comes to be characterised by gold (herein), or is painted red and green. One eyelet has tears beneath it. Maybe this androgynous touch bears upon it Tanith’s impress? I curse ‘it’ in consequence…”

XIII
Mezzanine Spratt looks on from a dream’s phantasm. “Here I am (per se) and my convertible has stopped abreast of a forest’s advent. Still the rain-drops fall from the heavens – plus a breaking up of so many of these footsteps amongst trees which are lit up by lightning. A sky-space pokes out of such woods thereafter. Now it becomes clear to me – particularly through the whistling blade of my wipers – that a fork in the road has emerged. A Zeus-flash cuts across such living melancholy, if only to reveal two wooden signs set up starkly in the mire. Both are heavily constructed from horse-chestnut… but where, my good friends, do the conkers come in? One signification reads Maeohild; a ruse which doubtless refers to a heroine in Anglo-Saxon literature who almost pines to death from love. The other…? Why, it denotes Bhagwan or the crone’s triple image who wears Kali’s face. It indicates a feminine cult of death or eventual rebirth. Given all potential inferences like these – what road should one take? Simply because, in this life, you can only travel in one direction when confronted by such divergences…”
Bearing in mind all of the above, then, Mezzanine swings the vehicle around and heads down towards Bhagwan underneath these trees. All of them are dripping in their disclosure or half-light.

XIV
In such a metamorphosis Lord Talbot looks up at this hybrid guardian. Couldn’t he/she be a misunderstood amazon? Yet finally, the transformation became complete and Tanith Carpentier stood aslant him. His stockinged legs were above his line of vision. They provided a momentary significance – especially given proceedings like these. Isn’t this either the thirteenth or the fourteenth act under our proscenium arch? Moreover, weren’t her legs tightly meshed or otherwise fish-netted with a pink residue? It betokened flesh (you see); and they faded into a turquoise awakening.

Lord Talbot/Biff: “You are here to gloat, then?”

Tanith Carpentier: “Gloating remains a victim’s sacrifice without any glory.”

Biff/Lord Talbot: “I wonder if you have the stomach to enable such a discharge.”

Tanith Carpentier: “Quiet, old one… for the rain ricochets around your skull in spasms. If you remain silent for a moment between times – you’ll hear it.”

Lord Talbot/Biff: “Wretch, no wonder man has never trusted woman since Eden’s garden. Indeed: nothing prelapsarian can rest easy until an adder makes its way up your leg.”

Tanith Carpentier: “Flattery cuts no ice with those who are accustomed to a skinhead’s autobiography. Do you remember the Golgotha which breaks up Holbein’s *The Ambassadors* – no
matter how elongated it might turn out to be? It comes replete with green velvet.”

Biff/Lord Talbot: “All I can recall to memory were Savonarola’s strictures on Renaissance painting (strictly speaking). Could he have been wise all along? For surely they came to be impregnated with a pagan lustre?”

Tanith Carpentier: “Your nonchalance intrigues me throughout. What force really lies behind ebon lines that are drawn on white vellum or in terms of runic inscriptions? Can a skilled mind read them with ease?”

Lord Talbot/Biff: “That is simple to essay – they belong to Bhagwan’s curtain.”

XV
Mezzanine Spratt: “The car stepped on the gas of a new provider, but never in terms of a misguided show. Still – between times – he steered through an abundant trap which existed down beneath these shimmering boughs. His hands continued to grasp an ungainly steering-wheel as it turned this way and that... while his thoughts fell pell-mell or all a’jumble! Whichever fork on life’s road should one decide on, if we bear in mind its course into a vampire’s heart? All of a sudden a dream-scape comes into his mind – it concerned Mezzanine Spratt plus a.n.other who was as yet undisclosed. Is it his imagination (?) or were they meeting in an office of bureaucratic fact? Can it have aught to do with patents or Crown copyright? Regardless of this – his alter ego lounged before him and he played poker using a brillo-pad face. Isn’t it really habituated to megalomaniac – albeit over a rubbery jowl and an armoured suit of red ‘n’ blue? ‘Good Lord!’ declared our bubble-head. ‘Where? Wheresoever can he be hiding, at least when pursuant to a new form of punctuation’, I uttered in response. ‘Oh, oooooooohhhhhhhhhhh, I see, it’s just a
phrase... a term of endearment. Good, good... let’s get ahead now.”

I led my red convertible down a narrow track during a time when this memory receded from my face. Might it re-interpret Dog Lane from my childhood in Peppard... plus a country wench at its end? All lay sodden or roundabout this due. Furthermore, massive aspens and oaks towered around – or faced off against one another on every side. May it reassemble an Algernon Blackwood story known as The Man Who Loved Trees? The water sheeted down full pelt on occasion... and yet a coruscation of lightening illumined one’s way. For – like Odin in a slouch hat – I wandered among my kindred. A wisp of smoke from a chimney – at once hidden behind these waving trees – struck out west. I drove in its direction.

XVI

Lord Talbot was wearing Biff’s face over an amputated trunk. Had any surgery actually been involved? “Avaunt thee! The old fool – more masculine now – confronted me about this hospital’s burden. We know the answer though! But we’re not going to tell it yet... because our tale hasn’t reached its desperate climax. Still, I have dragged my culprit across a white fastness only to leave his form stretched out. Hadn’t the orderly been told that he needed assistance, if only to die? He bent down so as to confront confusion; leastways before I slapped his neck and caused him to fall. Whereupon I dragged Mezzanine backwards into an ambulance afore taking off at great speed. The vehicle sped on leaving dwarfish Boff, the attendant and another of Spratt’s aspects in my wake. They recomposed themselves after having been covered with exhaust or carbon monoxide fumes. But Mezz(.) has regained his wind or valour now – primarily by kicking open the back door and plummeting out into space. Along his carrion flew above this noxious guff or floating in the draught. Turning aboutways, his simulacrum caught sight of a spectator: ‘Master Spratt’, he breathed.
XVII
Mezzanine Spratt kept driving onwards… while his gloved hands were fastened onto the wheel. What makes a man take one course of action rather than another? Sincerely, it had to do with the way the Norns arrange things for you. Some call it fate or karma. Whereas Mezzanine continued to speed on; and this was basically oblivious to all crime or hazard. In these circumstances, he manoeuvred the roadster under a thunder-cloud. A burst of lightening lit up your foreground; a factor which was attendant upon a neglected point of view. Never mind… he’d heard of hurricane Katrina plaguing New Orleans so; and yet Mezzanine also knew that all ‘progressive’ notions fall sheer before nature’s majesty. Since no-one can choose their race, ethnicity, eugenic capacity, disabled absence, non-semitism or Gentile status, class strand, sexuality, intellect, beauty or lack of such. You see, environmentalism or social causation proves to be catalepsy’s lozenge. For everything subsists within a biological filter. Man is born and not made, in other words. A scenario whereupon cultural studies only replaces natural lore with a furnished definition. Ceteris paribus, marxism stands refuted by a single example of Zeus’ thunder claps or bolts. Wasn’t this all-father a master of our living lightning, thereby?

By estrangement’s token, Mezzanine became aware of some lights on amid the trees. Surely a hamlet reared up amongst a sward otherwise washed clean by oblivion?

XVIII
She had seen him break free in order to seek succour from an oubliette. Alternatively, he sensed a one-eyed Cyclops emerging from the dark!

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Biff, who was shading into Lord Talbot, zig-zagged towards some more trouble. “Here we go… for Mezzanine’s figure lies recumbent in this gloom. Has it really left an ambulance’s portal (?); or can he have sped through mortal doors by way of
oblivion. He lay crumpled up in a heap. While another of his emanations – who happened to be dressed in an anorak – approached south-by-south-west. Touché! The fool, however, must be grasped in my collective lock and slammed into our vehicle’s side… or never effectively let free. He drifted off towards the ground in a somnolent manner. We (or I) grasped his master and hauled him back into the medical van’s recesses. Might it recall ‘Doc’ Holladay’s legendary carriage out in the wild, wild west of yesteryear? Moreover, didn’t the anarchist sloganeer Michael Bakunin once declare that he wanted to be we not I…? (A point which occurs in E.H. Carr’s hostile biography). Further to such a template, though, a paramedic’s omnibus roared off and it left a cloud of choking dust behind it.”

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Tanith Carpentier: “I facilitated your coming embrace betimes. Don’t I have a cottage door open beside me? My friend, future lover and husband… listen to me. You were my help-meet all along, in that the object of your abandoned eyes led on to me. This proved not to be an exercise in contingency, no, but the magnetism of Robert Graves’ White Goddess delivered you to me. Quickly, fasten yourself to the complexity of my dreams! Look at this poniard which is strapped next to my thigh by a thread of transparent gold. Do you detect its faintness now (?); especially when it’s akin to a bronzed leg pulsating underneath.”

Mezzanine Spratt: “Who are you?”

Tanith Carpentier: “May you stare at my breath-taking beauty, stranger! Let’s consider it to be an example of Cleopatra’s innocence – when taken together with a Grecian dome, at once amber to its nectar, plus some pale blue lips. They must be aflame with passion. Haven’t I used a golden or fluorescent eye-shadow… one that was just smeared on such basilisk reaches? Can you detect their lust? Doesn’t the hair-do – merely pleated in its peroxide magnificence – register Lulu… particularly as regards a certain White case of dreadlocks? You know of her
Stygian vaultedness or white ‘Rastafarianism’? She was the main character or nymphomaniac loadstar in Alban Berg’s opera. But, to reverse a spell, my armour bears about it Macha’s trace… that is: the female crone in Celtic mythology. All of this takes place at a time where all revere her next to a raven’s tracery.”

Mezzanine Spratt: “Where are we?”

Tanith Carpentier: “Do your dreams fail to instruct those frontal lobes in Gray’s *Anatomy*; at least according to which such co-ordinates are traced? Wayward man, you’ve been drawn towards a magnet that’s concealed under some chlorinated paper. Wherein Michael Farraday’s postulates were signed off in terms of ferrous filings and their electro-magnetism.

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Loving one, my game of snakes and ladders has led you to a sorcerer’s village. Here magic reigns supreme without any stint, brook or surcease. It comes to be regarded as untrammelled (you see). Perhaps it would do you good to think of yourself as a character trapped in Dennis Wheatley’s semiotic or in a novel like *The Satanist*… for example. How can one gain access to this hamlet, you ask? Why, it comes about on wild and stormy nights – if we might quote Bulwer Lytton. It is at such a moment that strangers or outsiders then find the gate to a forbidden cosmogony. Do you navigate around a green door’s metaphor (?); one which was made of wood and that conceals a garden behind its wall. (Whether one chooses to master it in diverse fictions… like those of Rosamund Lehmann or Arthur Machen, peremptorily). Remember now: you entered with free will or volition, and their Cerberus won’t permit an exit! Too late: they know you’re here. Like me, Mezzanine, my love, you entered accompanied by billowing even-song only never to leave.”

Mezzanine Spratt: “Who are they?”

Tanith Carpentier: “Why, the Magicians…”
XIX
Biff and Boff, who were dressed in purple cowls and vestments, appear behind them. Whilst a motley collection of ill-assorted mountebanks follows on or aft, and they represent a choked-off sea. All of these denizens wear close-fitting gear – somewhat after the fashion of puppets in *Commedia dell’arte*. Each one of them comes to be reminiscent of Ensor’s painting *Skeleton in a Mirror with Masks*. Basically then, this tableau relates to their peeling rind or magenta hoods.

Biff and Boff can scarcely conceal their sadism (thereafter). But where does Lord Talbot reside? “Harken, a delinquent has appeared amongst us. Are you aware – daughter of us all – that the circle’s been transgressed by one who’s known contamination… possibly via unhallowed meats? Could his hands and mouth have quaffed uncleanness or trotters; primarily by an example drawn from *The Road to Wigan Pier*? Might he be porcine; at least in those terms which are available within a novel labelled *The Pork Butcher*? Our matzos aren’t kosher (withal). No matter: you won’t speak to us… leastwise, when it comes to negotiating the zip we’ve fastened over your faces. HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! Let’s also adjust to the following channel…”

Lord Talbot has Biff and Boff smeared across his features. “Leaven this bread of ecstasy, my fellow sprites! For our ambulance had trundled off into a sense of transparent gloom. Now we realise the chance to seize upon unhallowed rites! Again, a beam split from its enclosure – even though the red light atop the ambulance didn’t flicker at all. It decomposed to a scarlet residue under the trees or next to a vehicle’s blue. Needless to say, Biff injected Mezzanine with a narcotic in order to keep him hopeless and docile. Do you visualise it? A gothic imprimatur captured this… while Biff’s face snarled in rapture; it milked its sapphire tint and came surrounded by a verdant cape. His teeth grinned on in a gorilla-like manner from inside those
incisors; especially when congruent to a reptile’s masking-up. A dull, Imperial purple reflected an absent glow thereafter. ‘Why take such measures?’, hissed Mezzanine Spratt. ‘It’s the avoidance of discord or the merry-go-round of an uncertain wake. A kitchen-sink drama by John Bratby (it may well be) which gives the lie to your position. It happens to be hopeless…’, hinted or chortled Boff. During all this period he failed to conceal a chuckle or a stentorian guffaw. Does it need to be conceded – given a sun-dial’s gloom?”

XX
Biff and Boff rise before us again… plus the briefest residue of a corn-dolly. It burns up abreast of you and reflects the naked light (thereby). Could it be stacked up or cantilevered in its maximum style? Surely its baroque magnificence hungered for such a flame?

+ “HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! Let’s imbibe the following mineral water… even if it’s negative to the taste. May it recall a tableau or a dividend where shaven-headed troopers stand muster? They continue to sit in serried rows, ranks or phalanxes. Do you comprehend it all? Whereupon a three-pronged utensil is manoeuvred about (somewhat busily) and it travels along a gruel’s cube if only to descend thereon. A crunch or a thud then occurs. Wasn’t there that scene in Anthony Burgess’ The Wanting Seed, a science fiction drama, where cannibalism takes place in cans marked ‘munch’? (Note: it happens to be a pun on the German word for Man). Likewise, these youths’ faces look serene or untroubled before a day’s ordeals. Certainly, these ephes betoken a squad of marines or commandos rather than bohemians. On closer inspection one of them delineates Mezzanine’s features or carapace – albeit in silhouette. Suddenly a voice cracks out: ‘Desist from consumption… don’t eat it, Spratt. Each cube has to be rancid beyond salience. It contains brain-drain chemicals which are destined to chill one’s factors.’ But who advances such a
warning? Why, it must be a middle-aged Biff who’s leavened to a corse and flying on an electric bath-chair. (A seating arrangement that’s accompanied with much gadgetry). He also appears invisible to those myrmidons roundabout. They carry on regardless of all help or assistance; and yet our phantom still speaks. ‘You’ll need every aspect of your faculties, my boy. Clear up and control the mind’s plenitude --- it belongs to you!’ A little further in we notice whether Biff’s face comes blue-covered or tinted, and a sort of spherical emblem was emblazoned across it. It covers half of the available skin. He then pointed at Mezzanine with an arching finger or digit, and a gauntlet enclosed its development. Didn’t his mother ever tell him it’s rude to point? To which Spratt responded by saying: “Shut up! By Ymir, silence is golden in its plenitude or terms.’ Even though – in response to his gesture – his immediate cohort sees nothing remiss. All remains invisible to them and they look about each other in perplexity. ‘There he goes again’, says one of their number. ‘Has he developed a fetish for ranting against the air? Does he discern one’s ether to be choc full of daemons – like in a Hieronymous Bosch painting?’ Mezzanine responded by refusing to answer any of them. He continued to stare onwards and outwards moodily. Perhaps, in a manner put forward by Colin Forbes in The Endless Game, he realises the precious nature of silence. Shall he even ask for John Cage’s endorsement at a later date…? But, even at a tender age, Spratt felt himself to be unburdened by a gadfly voice.”

XXI
Tanith Carpentier finds herself beholden to a siren inside her suitor’s mind. “Hold on now, lover. They may come for you aslant of Breughel’s wasteland, but there’s no need to fear. Since courage fastens to its own regard… especially across such a barren acreage. Do you remember a dream’s forbidden values? Wherein a recruit is led towards a punishment squad that’s situated on a sandy plain (now). It proves to be adjacent to a modernist structure; itself reminiscent of one of Mies van der
Rohe’s. Can’t you recapture Ayn Rand’s *The Fountainhead*; at least when seen through a grisaille or its angularity? No matter, my eye-candy. For this dimension depicts a phalanx in serried rows or about to administer some discipline. It involves ‘running the gauntlet’ after a Rugby custom like quad-flogging, for instance. Yet these young troopers array themselves around a miscreant or varmint (here), and they’re eager to strike. Each one drew on a reflex’s baton in order to run through a comrade readily; (i.e., one of their number who hadn’t made the grade). ‘We’ll tighten you up, my weakling’, suggests a smirking thugee. Another remarks thus: ‘let’s rifle him with a halbert, or even a combined spear and battle-axe.’ ‘Enough talk’, wheedles a third, ‘I’m anxious to beat upon savoury meats.’ To which a younger Mezzanine Spratt responds: ‘you boneless larvae… I despise you all. Go on and take your kicks – you wretches and their spawn.’ ‘AAAAGGHHH!’, they all cry in unison. ‘Prevail upon him not to pass – certainly in terms of an oblivion’s posting. Yes sir…’ ‘Make away, my fellow knaves, and remove your shoulders from those bladed bones. I want to crack open those legs so as to execute the marrow within. Aha(!), just look at this ventriloquist’s orbs and their necessary spiralling. Have I fixed him to the workbench by placing a pin through a beetle, thereby?’”

Simultaneously though, doesn’t such a thunder flash resemble an early Punch & Judy? A scenario wherein Punch emerges from behind a purple cloak. May Sir Harrison Birtwhistle’s atonality accord with this swazzle or its psychic attributes? After all – only Mezzanine stood outside a booth on the shingle or its sound. For there weren’t any children to respond to our *Grand Guignol’s* ‘blood and thunder’. Truly, the child within us requires violent emotions or spleen – particularly when set off against an absolute moral code. Yet metaphysical objectivism can’t really compete with a wall of dolls when they’re laid out by Waldo Lanchester, photographically speaking. Do we respond to their grins, revolving eyes, sinister mien and *papier mache* heads? Also, let’s
never mind a bestiary’s pomegranates… for these were lost around its ovoid touch and hachures. Nor do they look like Marion Manson!

XXII
Yet these turquoise-clad mages command elemental tones or lays, such as flickering flames or an Indian rope-trick. “Up lasso”, they proclaim to various inanimate objects… “Go to the outsider and bind him fast, or hand and foot.”

Mezzanine Spratt: “What is this?”

Biff and Boff: “It remains our rendition of a full metal-jacket, stranger. Have you recognised the labyrinthine quality of so many dreams? A drama within which you savour a miasma – always delivered headless and redolent of Punch’s gibbet (plus a cranium in a box). Doesn’t such a headsman indicate sensory panic? Necessarily so, since water and fire are both symbols of a ‘heretic’ world in Alchemy! Furthermore, any adventures like these take note of your light-heartedness… given that Tanith Carpentier walks away from Mezzanine, who’s held captive in a bath with various hippogriffs on every corner. Certainly she stalked on velvet green avec the latter twisting and turning on piles, each one Gothic to this last… They rose up out of a tessellated floor; together with the exhibition of many victims who were lassoed above. Might these cadavers embody a ‘plastinate’ by Professor Gunter von Hagens, the anatomist? Still, a pink embrasure filled the screen a la von Stroheim’s flickerings… or their monstrous and composite body. Again, this was not to mention those blue friezes which were perfectly symmetrical and gave a mesmerism to one’s floor-sheen. In its arithmetic, then, this parquet recalled a mosaic or alternatively a lapis drawn from Islamic art. Behind her hyacinth a dioxazine purple swept away which showed Biff in silhouette. While those reptilian fancies – themselves born of mystification – began to shower Mezzanine with sulphur. He lay (for his part) chained to
the inside of this vessel within which such toads vomited their fancy!

Do they at once essay creatures in Hieronymous Bosch’s *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*? For here, they besport themselves within alabaster or a new roof. Yet – on occasion – a snout-faced creature who is dressed in black, porcine or sallow, and with a mandolin or lute… why, ‘he’ crosses a threshold between life and death. Isn’t that the case? *L’homme propose et Dieu dispose*… Moreover, what about the owl which perches on his scalp? Because all polycephalous spectres come to a point where they recommend this. Again, each figurine was maimed in its quietude and it lay adjacent to a machine that looks on indifferently, or alters its trajectory. May sepulchral gloom play a part herein? Further, why does a virgin over-straddle the saint by proffering a dish of Holy Water? In comparison to which, various owls make hay with arrested purity before an oneric defeat. Yes… these mediums sought to lift a veil on the next life; if only to cast a chiaroscuro upon twilight or its semblance. Do you detect any sundry import? Since this perverseness renders itself aloof with distant shadows or halves; themselves shrunk or betokening dwarves. All in all, they mushroom out as Grotesques – thence occurring on the margins of manuscripts or bewildering us in their illumination. Are they basically a bygone age’s incunabula?”

**XXIII**

Mezzanine Spratt: “My form has concocted a rope or its step-ladder; the levitation of which surrounds me from every side. It holds me bitterly in such an entreaty. Furthermore, these mages think that they’ve bound me hand and foot… but Tanith stands beside me now. She leans against my blue-garbed body… so the weight of her hand might conceal something. It (whatever its nature) writhes adjacent to her scarlet dress.”
Meanwhile, the purple-clad magicians gather in a hemicycle around their ‘victims’. A strange hum comes up from their serried mouths (betimes). For a brief moment it embodies a Greek chorus which is nearly always pursuant to tragedy. Doesn’t such an assemblage consist of old men in masks from two-and-a-half millennia ago? Moreover, each and every one of them fails to put forward a different view, collectively speaking. *Lex talionis*… can a law of retribution suffice?

Biff and Boff refer to their stuffed arm-pits (anonymously): “Look onwards from this, the two of you! Since to one side of Saint Anthony’s demon – when accustomed to its left – a rival figure emerges. It was a cripple – otherwise locked into self-trespassing – and carrying on servitude’s burden. He shuffles outwards and onwards – albeit with one make-belief before a game and almost as if he can play a musical instrument. Could it be a harp or perhaps an Iberian guitar in the hands of one skilled to use it – like John Williams? Never mind – because these anthropomorphic types know their own kindred. Yet, irrespective of this, such wraiths maximise their circumference or leave nought to chance. Here flits half an owl… at least when filleted to smoke and glowering across an engagement’s tempera. It rescues its plinth in a manner which mocks a game of skill. This proceeds on a neighbouring table that’s circular in form. Various biomorphic tents whisk about – some are part vegetal in aspect; while others track a beetle to its lair. Don’t we register it in the dream which this narrative has been plagued with?

Again, a head whirled around Mezzanine and Tanith with an elongated snout. It came to be blinded by its ice or snow, and this death-mask laughed maniacally across some lace net-curtains. Do you recall whether Tanith is a moon goddess from Carthage? But – in reality – it just intimated Bedlam or Hans Prinzhorn’s *The Art of the Insane*; at least after Gaius Cibber’s statues reaching out for one afore. These gigantic jaws sprawled over in

Still and all, her skull has been picked up and it spat fire from woefully green irises. In point of fact, her orb floats up via depths of red and brown… but what did she have wedged between her lips other than a scarab? An insect that’s crawled there primarily in one’s imagination. For haven’t you heard whether every beetle draws a sting, or not? Of what else abounds, perchance (?); why, it’s merely an unconscious revelation…

Because once the girl known as Tanith wanders abroad with those magicians… they cut off her head with a mock-guillotine! This device was originally concealed behind a hillock which proves russet in its hue. Whilst our homunculus or invunche drains the gore from her severed neck into a porcelain bowl. Mightn’t it have been made from spode china (?); or a reflex on one’s distaff side? Even so: she remains alive --- in spite of all.”

XXIV
Tanith speaks now and her irises were brightly lit up – so as to fill the available sockets. No astigmatism fails to communicate a story like this (you see).

Tanith Carpentier: “One’s head-chicken’s sprout is off and you’re even free to make a wish. Where has all of this blood come from (?); and it’s reminiscent of the first stages of an infant’s birth. Ugh! Yonder pot contains those innards which belaboured one’s insides – certainly prior to any relief. What purpose do one’s intestines have when confronted with the knife? A poniard too far, one feels… yes, my spirituality makes free to float like a bird that’s unburdening its aura. But truly, any impermanence must mark time… for my sureness finds its sacrifice aslant a miracle or forlorn of all tissue. My head was off – you see – and it bounces after a ball with its green-eyes distended. A scene where the colour of a scalp remains
pearlescent or it rides its luck, and it comes to be surrounded by rose’s penumbra. All I can manage by way of a shout is: ‘UGGHH…glug-glug-glug!’ Never mind, since one’s rootedness in the ground has to be an absence of legs… no matter how prior. Perhaps now, my rind can be picked up by Biff – especially when next to a stalk or its root of the brightest yellow?”

Mezzanine, if still pursuant to a Punchman’s swazzle: “You mustn’t forget the reproach of ‘Saint Anthony’s temptation’! A painting wherein the saint wears a cowl next to his grace and irrespective of any loucheness. Do you realise the solace that’s afoot? For one larceny exists within a sow’s recognition or in terms of a grey eminence which lists blackly. He approaches Saint Anthony sideways-on; and yet remains undefeated by silence. Don’t you recognise its similarity to a copperhead (?); namely, the most poisonous snake on the north american mainland. Or alternatively, this summoned up a pulp fiction character who’s been unlicensed by Kenneth Robeson. May it comprehend a magic camera, thereby? Because this sloth or gut-wrench looms up from the side; whereas his movements were ungainly and resembled a hippy’s over-drive… or a beatnik’s gait. Could this possibly deliver up Kerouac’s desolation angels (?); never mind the call of Pynchon’s ‘Lot 49’ or Acker’s Algiers, sapphically speaking. Again, it slid into position with a banjo to hand, and do we detect a pistol in its belt or buttress? Let’s see: this pig-man zig-zagged towards our church father who had black satin accompanying his *Facial Justice*. Wasn’t the latter an anti-socialist novel by L.P. Hartley (?); and didn’t such a troubadour make an unlikely exorcist?”

XXV

Our black magicians – when garbed in a grey lotus – stood around their fire-storm. Certainly, Tanith’s head was off and her golden eyes glinted in the dust. Wasn’t this a distillation coming up for air amid a watery grave? Still, these liquids have a brown streak shot through their centre. Might it encode an ochre tint (?); particularly when captured by its loss or swirling within opaque
depths. Anyway – in comparison to the above – Tanith’s severance found itself supported; while those orbs let loose a stream by way of a rivulet or its spasm… and in terms of salty tears. By the way, didn’t Iris Murdoch write a novel called *A Severed Head*?

Carpentier’s skull then comes to embody a brush-stroke; albeit plus an earthy sediment. Were her orbs open to a silent or silver screen, and in comparison to her lush hair? Does one sense its unforgiveness, now? A scenario where her arms loom up in a stupor – so as to master the adamantine quality of those glass-eyes! Much of which means that an M.R. James story comes into play; itself a variant on Sir Harrison Birtwistle’s opera *Punch and Judy*. (A work which has a libretto or vocal score by Stephen Pruslin). Nonetheless, the sluice-gates behind these dolls’ eyes open up… primarily in order to carom a blue-green marble down into each socket. Irrespective of this, a beetle’s antennae emerges from her mouth or cavern, and after an opal’s impress. May such an insect mount its own tattoo (?); basically so as to summon up some woad. Look at it this way: a *Coleoptera* whose upper-wings have been converted to sunlight… why, it exits from her lips. It certainly pertains to one’s mouth or tongue. Also, it seems to be a redundant gesture before the flying creature’s mandibles. Every beetle draws a sting, don’t you know?

XXVI

Tanith Carpentier: “I have a knife to hand which is hidden within my cloak’s folds… and it’s next to your sapphire mack. (She happened to be addressing Mezzanine Spratt in a low whisper at the time). For, like a Church-maiden who comforts Saint Anthony, I lean across a salvo and I’m undaunted over its closure. My dress – in circumstances such as these – trammels a delicate pink; particularly when taken together with a white shawl around my head. Don’t I offer sweet-meats or a watery compendium (?); at least in terms of a God in the Bowl.”
Biff and Boff exist some way off. They are surrounded by lesser Grand Masters and look like members of British Israel. “Surprisingly, we are ahead of you or at our thinking’s discretion, my dear. Because daemonic presences are merely an entreaty’s tad-pole. Given this, one crippled lutanist approaches a reddened hearth (thereby). Mightn’t he be playing his stick forlornly (?); or otherwise proving oblivious to all else? He came accompanied by a carnival’s dog; the former a mutt who wears a wine-coloured hood about his cheeks. Do you retain a regard for these facts? When we consider that those reptiles which do so, Tanith, move eastwards from the west to the accompaniment of a chestnut hue. It settles, this latter dispensation, upon chocolate: i.e., a chiaroscuro shot through with fire and akin to red egg-tempera. But still these hog-heads or heresiarchs move closer… and all the while they are composing that lute music which spoke of an alchemist’s ‘bridal chamber’. Yess-ss-ss.”

(Note: British Israel is a Gentilist and supremacist cult).

Tanith Carpentier: “Tell me, coven of warlocks, what befell my head in another dimension or space, and after it had been severed from its trunk?”

Those male witches who are gathered in conclave can only sneer in reply: “Why don’t you use your imagination, girl?”

For what fate opens up – when pursuant to a Death’s-head – can only be this volute… in which, *mutatis mutandis*, the knife, spear, arrow, sword and axe all make their appearance. They happen to be assorted emblems of Alchemical fire and each helps to feed its furnace. Do us a favour – why don’t you? By virtue of the fact that this head swivels free from its corse; if only to manoeuvre beyond a night-time’s borders. Are you brave enough to see it? Further, this plastinate found itself linked to such a balustrade, contained, as it was, within some plexiglass. Can one remember a character known as Doctor Sun from a graphic novel of yesteryear? Never mind: since her cranium whips around quickly, and it caroms like a billiard or snooker ball with a sigil
on its tongue. It indicates a beetle’s impress… resultantly. At the same time as this, my friend, any attempt to grasp her dome causes it to rear up like a fun-fair’s device. Doesn’t it career about? She can even travel across the floor without aid – especially if it happens to be shiny or translucent, and rather like sand after a dose of nuclear fusion. Yes indeed, this is radioactively speaking… even though such a truckle-bed recalls one of those cripples who were drawn by Grosz, the expressionist, and made use of by Brecht. (It also relates to the Boer War from 1899-1902, in light of an updated Beggars’ Opera). Finally, Tanith’s decapitation veers off with much élan; if only for its cage to become clamped to a rocket. It soars into outer space and follows a projectile’s ellipse/eclipse. Thereafter, and rather like one of NASA’s shuttles, it was blown to smithereens in the Milky Way.

XXVII
Tanith Carpentier: “Quick, your hands are free, thanks to my knife’s insistence. Let’s run for your car which exists at the heart of a square in this hamlet… it is just like Port Meirion in Patrick McGoohan’s The Prisoner. Nothing will stop us – irrespective of those magicians who stand guard next to your convertible. Move – my trampoline – make haste… get out; we must cross the threshold from one reality into another one.”

Mezzanine Spratt: “Now that I’ve found you, I’m not going without you.”

Tanith Carpentier: “Darling, help grant me a courage comparable to your own. With you beside me, all last vestiges of fear become stripped from me!”

The mages Biff and Boff are possibly screeching this for the last time. “STOP… don’t pass towards such a tunnel of flame! We command you to desist!” <<<This occurs slightly afore her rush to the car; a feat which is aided and abetted by Mezzanine.>>>
OPERATION RE-WIND: *if we were to begin again…*

I
Which road should one take through life; at once immature to its particular stillness? For Mezzanine Spratt lay slumped in his convertible’s seat, red in colour, with heavy rain beating on his windscreen above the wipers. But one’s mind lay elsewhere; irrespective of those gloved hands that gripped the wheel. He should have taken a previous turn; itself locked in the implementation of its wood… and way back there in an inky diaspora.

Mezzanine Spratt: “A parepraxis wanders abroad in terms of a free-flowing bio-cast. Can one credit it? Since one fork in this road doesn’t prepare me for an exclusion, given the toucan which is mirrored in turquoise and who rests on a tropical branch. Various figures gather below in vegetation’s clearing; they are roundabout, spectral and seen in microscopic size. Let them waste themselves in illusion or by wrestling a breach; a factor which leaves them unprepared for a biological misfit. He looms up later. It stands head-to-toe in these leaves; the latter being sore in its study of such violence. Any head-dress so worn derives from the sward; it exists as a deluge of humus hanging down. It also configures its own wake --- at least in terms of like carrion. Do you interpret this matter differently? Each one of us addresses a configuration on the sly; a distribution of identity that occasionally slips over into phantasm. Our contribution also comes minus a semblance of living bark; the former enlivened to a pitch or sliver. Now isn’t this altogether necessary? For a bat flits away from us in Bram Stoker’s chronicle; it was held inside a dark tumbrel and relished the closing out of one enemy too far. Such a tunnel proved to be very deep; it even came to be separated from such a funnel by one’s entreaty. Its abundant roots found themselves inflected with herbs. Such a string-fellow
bellyaches against one’s sky; in a way that’s lost on this particular occasion. Or – alternatively speaking – these fronds curl over a skeleton which is accompanied by so many weeds. Didn’t the Bible call them tares? He raced on or became tied fast to a new oblivion, and he lived only for the Green. Down into this mud one’s spectrum remained enclosed; or it breathed out through pores in the earth – no matter how sovran. A snake moves silently; it just slithers now over the ground without shedding any skin. (This was irrespective of how luckless it could otherwise be!) Yet a bilious caution fills these vagaries – somewhat emptily. Wasn’t there a post-situationist magazine in the ‘eighties called Vague? Regardless of this: a magenta inundation speckles the sky; it essentially rises towards one’s gait – together with a gathering of crows who thrust their momentum outwards. Sure enough, the blinding of this sun is caused by beating wings – each one of which was given as a token to its saviour. Throughout the gathering or purple gloom, however, only a total sense of blackness can retrieve its grandeur. It does not circle merely, but sweeps up apace in order to close out the storm.

A sequence of abandonment closes down the dial. It moves inwards (as a consequence) in order to catapult a sunny measure towards its rim. One, two, three, four and five minutes elapse; while a dot or its attendant speck mounts towards a chaotic and confused state. It continues to run on and thereby fills the darkness with its pink globule. May it be a sloth creature or taxidermic relic – like one of Doctor Moreau’s vivisections? Who knows? Yet it dances upon a pin-head which is occasioned by swathes of emerald (rather bluntly), but he or ‘it’ runs backwards with a hand behind its bank. Is this head reversed or Bishop-like in its diagonal movement… while agonising over such a source? Still, on it galloped forsooth… albeit with a yellow loin-clout surrounding its bravery or otherwise costumed to a fight. Out its hands reached and spittle daubed its past; at a time when craniums were twinned base-about-apex (no matter
how redundantly). Does this resemble the scene – when kindled to diabolical possession – in Peter Blatty’s *The Exorcist*? Never mind: since one cranium can only manufacture a semblance within identity, even when scared over this origin or momentarily magisterial… possibly so. It runs into me screaming ‘AAAAGGGHHHH!’; *avec* a litany of sputum running from his teeth. It happens to be Boff. Do we see the bravery of this adult babe (thereafter)? No way… For a hand reaches out to crush my vertebrae or spine, and it basically grabbed me about the face… as it squeezes itself unto death (sufficiently so). I am abreast of such an essence; at least being riven or graven to a kaleidoscope of liquid orange. Are my features screeching over into each other (most effectively); and do they deliver their sound by way of an abstract expressionist medley? Can each of us detect another’s advent? Hardly… because this squashed remnant catapults its compass into red, primarily by dint of anger or its copper-bottom – never mind such silent screeds. Has the tone-poem of this crust cried out (?); or become abreast of a motor… and is it really adjusted to haemoglobin? I cry out so as to afford some necessary relief. My mind then kneads in the direction of a silvery haze; at once bathed in *lapus lazuli* and growing darker… It falls between one’s pages (rather necessarily); as it proves to be lifted out beyond the self. Ever so powerfully (then)… Oughtn’t I to have fallen asleep in this way (?); thereby slumping across a car’s steering-wheel. Surely a way out of this nightmare lies in witnessing sleep’s absence…?”

II
Tanith Carpentier: “He dozes – while I dream… the latter occasioned by those yearnings for love inside me. Am I his phantom play-thing (?); or *vice versa*? No matter: are we to work the prey of our desires, even if we fall out of consciousness? Behind me this mental thicket waxes dark green – despite a misunderstanding which occurs with some grey. But perhaps it’s best to wait (?), or to sense the skull beneath the skin in an Elisabethan’s words? Decidedly so – my teeth happen to be the
most arresting feature: all of them running out of account and even staring with orb-like eyes... or just defending each nakedness in its verdure. Don’t you know that a new Medusa must be an expert in topiary? Assuredly, I race into such greenery with my arms flailing – the one assertively bitten to the bone; while the other casts specks of starlight around me. Each particle pulsates like a flexing atom – even though it finds itself griddled to the paw: in a situation where it barely substitutes for these available eyes. Soon little was left of it all, at least in its afforded silhouette, save a rising filter twice over: and each and every one of them pondered on this device. Yet soon one is connected to the antechamber of a dark room, a space which sounds very quiet and was filled by a rectangular echo. May it be pretensions of John Cage’s music to fill up a sombre zone like this? Since minimalism retreats from its serried articulation (thereby)? Furthermore, will anyone feel free enough to assess the planes of Shaker furniture?”

Biff and Boff choose to persevere as our magicians. (Have they opened up the back of Spratt’s head; if only to look in through a glass panel, metaphorically? Yes, our answer comes to us in golden tones; especially in terms of those hanging apples). “This figure floats within a membrane of emerald; it circles down with each limb separate from one another... and bursting from its quartered bounds. He dives within an amniotic fluid; the former being blue to one’s taste or wild... While various masses of plant-life seem to be growing up within it, a few of them might be sentient or trading blow for blow. A large foetal off-break sits with an imbalance in its silence; it belabours the point and comes to be held in pink. But still he spirals down within an eddy or its fall; and ‘he’ occasionally draws up towards him the raptures of our deep. Whereas great cells grow out of each other betimes; they are abundantly cancerous, mock-red or swelling before each doom. Every one contains within it the crystalline folly of a new abstraction; a factor that’s basically deviant to this last – but which grows apace by hyperbole. It cascades ever onwards, do
you notice it? Since such spheroid skulls as these mount agape; nor do they merely witness one’s Tyburn tree or siphon it off into a play-station (thereafter). Above us these tides turn in a maelstrom or its immensity; and they beckon beyond us towards the grave… Yet they remain alone; if somewhat isolated. ‘Can I hurl myself forwards?’, he asks… at a time when he’s just joined to this rupture, but not by any steadfast indent. Hold on! For blue bubbles move around his cortex and brain, if only to festoon an eye-ball: itself brought up sharp and centring on the iris. It looms out against a possibly misshapen scarlet or swells to a fitting cure – primarily so as to reveal a black dot at the heart of this couplet. Let’s sneak up close to the rim of such a cornea… the latter festooned at an eye-ball’s heart. Don’t we really discern a blinding light here (?); one which looks expectant in its glow (essentially). Further, it contrives to fill up one’s mental screen or dish – like in Michael Powell’s film *Peeping Tom*. Wherein the rich go forward to die or bake out such a prospect; and they see the whole zodiac in an instant while listing to a negative colour. Never trust these results, my friend, because a refulgent burst fills one’s screen (albeit momentarily).

III
Mezzanine Spratt: “Again we find a spectrum in this darkness – one that’s sent listening to any sound and without a blunt beacon further off… Even though such a glow-worm flickers *avec* the alacrity of one of Derby’s lights. (This is Wright of Derby, the painter of the industrial revolution – do you recall?) To be sure: a blue sweep-stake grows up behind us; whereas its penumbra illuminates the whole… As two figures amble forward with each of them withering to a torch in its light – plus the reverse archaeology of caves growing all around them. May it be an opposite chasm of non-identity (?); one which feasts on this rapture underground, and that signals off at various levels *avec* some light green oxide… together with prism violet and Prussian blue. Does she embody – at this moment in the proceedings – a western punk *per se* (?); or the innermost matrix of Siouxsie
Sioux and the Slits? Was Ambrose Bierce right in his reckoning; primarily in terms of her Mohican shawl or its withering haze? But what of Tanith’s eyes, though? They were azure or deepening to purple, even if maddened and looking in… no doubt. Yet again – each of them swayed to its course like a marble: with either orb sovereign in its hate or otherwise caught out… It also proved to be capable of a sly interlude, an a poria in being; one which can be interpreted later on through mirrors. Sideways-on or refracted they are – whilst being urgently mystified over a source; and they’re often unkind… despite penetrating these leathery shadows under a tousle of flickering flame. Isn’t it true that punks lit up their hair – when all aglow – like human cockatoos? Whereas one fact escaped their attention and this was – amid American and Australian slang – that the word means hustler, mountebank, beseecher, even moral whore… Wherein a black execution or nihilism closes in around them; if only to reveal this truth.”

IV

Biff and Boff dwell on a triumphant accomplice, if only in their dreams. “Let’s look at a resounding distaff, my friends. For an eye rears out of a quadrant of self. It has blood specked around its circumference – the former being rheum red and travelling to its source, or finding itself delivered within the refraction of a camera’s instant. Yes… are these configurations falling away in a curving arc thereby? Most assuredly… quod Mezzanine Spratt has arrived. He lies within a circle of ochre or finds himself reflected in its vice, and it’s fairly cracked over the impermanence of concrete… nor need it be adult in its way-station. Various geographical features become pronounced… since horror’s charm is the sweetest and most moral of traps. Again now, Spratt finds himself chained to a lathersome instant; primarily by way of a wall, altogether silted over, and ignoring both fate and fortune. It stares up at a carriage of cerulean blue… if only to be surrounded by demons. They were modelled after a mediaeval Book of Hours (or some other bestiary). Similarly,
these creatures loll around a basin’s incline – whether they choose to be hippogriffs, Aztecs or hyper-tensioned extras. Nor can we move towards such a gap in our fortunes; at least without measuring the cost. They squat upon Gothic facades or stones; each within a luxuriant purview… and across this balustrade lies an insect’s shadow. It – the beetle – stains the shape or format of a gigantic tattoo. Do you justify it thus? It may be in woad or code, but nothing really matters save its name. It happens to be a Mecynorrhina Polyphemus from Congo Zaire – especially when labelled to its source (however appropriately). Doesn’t it prove to be multiple across its hump-backed course? Can it make any difference to those gathered roundabouts? May it cross various planes of identity? Most particularly… when a beetle’s hint draws down the sting of its conscience – albeit in reverse!”

V

Mezzanine Spratt is basically able to narrate his prologue because of an absence of verses. “Oh yes, Spratt lies within a circular distemper; it’s overly finished but otherwise rich in phosphorous… Given their provender, one was able to locate chains behind his hands. While the sand aslant his back waxes yellow, possibly mysterious, or akin to an earthquake’s aftermath. Still, the reptilian entities around him gibber – all of them about to take part in the most unholy of rites! Might one notice its abundance or fissures? Above him the figure of Biff glowers down upon his shadow… it’s again compacted to a rage of non-identity. His essential characteristics were as follows: (one) an enormous staff made of black teak; (two) the amplitude of a mortal’s arm at its end. It also recalls a mild distemper in its claret; at least via small skulls and faces attached to its livery… But yet, the blood-sodden eyes of those who are to perish face defeat; an intent that’s fused together with their entrails. Avaunt thee! Next to him stands Boff with his head on backwards; it exists inside the trunk; i.e., as a mask fixed to its aspidistra. It certainly flows away towards an onset of gold. This face also dances abreast of a lustrous grin; it subsists amid a vista of
deranged pink. Truly, this has to remember Boff’s nemesis – what with the cranium reversed out or put on back to front, by way of completion. It spreads out – likewise – across too wide a field of hate, at least in terms of extending or balanced margarine. You see? In any event, our picture must be finished by virtue of a savoury run… in relation to this, Biff wears an orange robe up to a hooded top. It makes leave to support a head-dress; and does he sport a beard as well?

Anyway, this undoubted inclination or resolve had to spend itself – if it doesn’t reconnoitre an observance outside time. Nonetheless, such a tapestry of wills may summon up a painting by Max Beckmann. Surely it was known as Perseus (?); a picture that followed a right-hand wing or triptych. A visualisation of blondeness is kept apparent – in which both main characters inhabit a cage. A devastation of lines and stirrups lies about, even though the territory indicates a passion for green and orange. But what of this bird (?) – one that’s located to the east, (betimes), or sporting a human head over a vermillion torso. Might it be pecking at the entrails of its own soul? By any reckoning, such a vulture looks sour or lugubrious, even other-worldly and avuncular… if incomplete without palsy. Old Father Time (Biff) rests thereupon – with his claws reckoning to scratch a crook or its bark. Yet what will he be thinking or absorbing (?) under those thick brows of reverse piety…”

VI

The voice of Tanith Carpentier is held in suspended animation – despite the fact that she may not be there. “A green sward swirls before these eyes’ temptation – themselves circling in a hybrid density. It can well reach the onset of these open graves. Has she approached the edge; or an extremity of its redemptive pain? Anyway, the master mage known as Biff gazes down on his captive or prey. Observe this, my fellows… for both eyes are red and spectral in their import – especially when occasioning a run down a face’s scorbutic texture. It merely meets up in a brief
pointillism of beard. Is it clear? Yes, Biff’s crown clothes itself \textit{avec} a filament of rags; each one wound around the cranium like a winding-sheet... and near to a salutary death. Yet ossuaries are unforgiving; they look to the future through an analysis of past selves! Each one of them is not necessarily codified in glory. A ring in the left nostril makes play with Ionescu, in that it gestures to its own gallery’s accomplishment. Let’s just listen to a pattern of demons under their hooves... May we give him utterance – primarily in a voice which enjoins water dripping off a stalactite in a cave? Be it (netherwise) so deeply underground…”

Biff – plus an acorn growing out of his aphrodisiac... Shall it ever retrieve the will of a lion? “Mezzanine... Mezzanine... Mezzanine... Welcome to a hearth of outright slaughter! You are amongst enemies now. We shall show you no mercy – irrespective of those lizards climbing up the stalks in front of one. These configurations have limned themselves across yon face; at once congealed though it be. See here... are you aware of an expanse of temperature running away from you... out towards those purple constellations within the mind? --- Take this down or notate it freely, will you? Mezzanine Spratt, you find yourself trapped within concentric circles or spirals... each one addressing a new compartment. Abreast of this temple an egg exists; it’s hale and hearty over an inheritance (accordingly). Yes... even such cliffs or trees succumb to abandoned shapes; now that one’s passed beyond them. Any road up, I can sense a subtle careering in your dreams, as it hurls itself over – screaming all the while. \textit{Touche}! Can each mask reckon to a salutary bloodbath over form? Wherein Ensor’s transliterations think laterally or in a curve... particularly when pregnant and caterwauling.

Suddenly her stockinged legs were above him, thence providing a momentary significance to these proceedings. Weren’t they mesh tights or otherwise fish-net (?), with a pink residue of flesh fading into a turquoise awakening.”

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VII
Mezzanine Spratt: “You’re here to gloat, then?”

Tanith Carpentier: “Gloating remains the sacrifice of a victim which doesn’t know its glory.”

Mezzanine Spratt: “I wonder if you’ve the stomach for an enabling discharge.”

Tanith Carpentier: “Quiet… the rain is coming down on the inside of your skull. If you remain silent for a moment, you’ll hear it.”

Mezzanine Spratt: “Wretch, no wonder man can never trust woman since the Garden of Eden! Nothing prelapsarian may rest enough for an adder to make its way up your leg (effectively).”

Tanith Carpentier: “Flattery cuts no ice with those who are accustomed to seeing a skull in one’s picture. It’s autobiographical, you see. Do you remember the elongated Golgotha which breaks up the flow of Holbein’s *The Ambassadors*, replete with a velvet green betwixt?”

Mezzanine Spratt: “All I can recall to memory was that Savonarola’s strictures about Renaissance painting were right. For Botticelli’s canvases are impregnated with a pagan lustre.”

Tanith Carpentier: “Your nonchalance intrigues me. What force lies behind ebon lines drawn upon white, in terms of runic inscriptions which a skilled mind might read?”

Mezzanine Spratt: “That’s easy… he’s called Satan!”

VIII
He had driven off the road and almost into a ditch… yet still the rain thundered down relentlessly on his wind-shield. Wasn’t this so? Anyway, his head-light beams could hardly cut a swathe
through the darkness beyond. Whereupon little black specks enlivened themselves on the glass pane across from his wheel, as gloved fingers grasped the steering instrument in front of him. While the water came down in sheets, nay torrents, which inundated the sides of his scarlet car and then passed away… down its available slip-stream. Furthermore, his head (primarily dressed in a trilby) almost dipped down so low that it came to press against the darkened pane. Slowly he decided to discontinue his journey onto the next city – where he dimly remembered his status as a travelling salesman. ‘I can’t go on’, he thought, ‘I’ll have to stop here and take some rest when I can.’ He then reversed the vehicle up, parking it next to a sodden bank of trees. Like a sluice-gate opening in reverse, he manoeuvred the car round so’s he could park it effectively. Then, lowering the trilby’s brow over his eyes, he settled down to forty winks. Soon Mezzanine Spratt, in his earthly incarnation, was fast asleep… but what a strange tableaux of dreams he has lately enjoyed!

*Have those nightmares started up instead?*

**IX**

Biff and Boff are together again at last: “A man can be as strong as he will allow himself to be… this is the first rule of magic. One does not even have to apprise oneself of Richard Cavendish’s *The Black Arts* in order to know it. What congratulations we can offer each other, my brother-in-arms! Look, in this dimension, she stands above him with a coloured streamer in her hair… it cascades from such a promontory. May it swirl down from an accustomed baldness; itself riven by a knife’s expectation? ‘A poniard, my brother most drear?’ ‘You have assessed it correctly, sibling.’ For the amplitude of a bare blade has to cover over the look of one hooliganism or another. It happens to be tonsured. Yes, the diffidence of such a fate must glance down – so as to cover a model’s fortune. Grant this damage to the ascent of Man… since she stoops to retrieve a bag from the side-lines – when set against a sweeping backdrop of
designer blue – and within which many a gargoyle squats. Do they represent the tale-end of an eighteenth century draughtsman’s contract? Steady now… because Tanith holds up a brown canvas sack in front of her. It comes to our attention in a tatty manner, bursting at the seams, and it remains corded at the top by a length of tarred rope. What could it possibly be? Well… Mezzanine stares up at her with a ready snarl upon his lips. One of his eyes has been closed by the impact of violence, and the man’s aspen hair looks assaulted by wind or rain. Necessarily so, quod a funeral march of blood and gore ran laterally across Spratt’s face – merely traversing its sloping field like a bishop in chess. Could this prove emblematic of an Anglo-Saxon rune? A proem in which a gaming-piece indicates a merry joust… all of it occurring amidst folk. Nonetheless, Spratt’s teeth curdle over a realistic clench – while one eye gazes uppermost. It happens to be grey in its spectrum of colour; at least beyond the travesty of death. He investigates his feminine host’s macabre intentions, thereby. Distantly, a pale inundation or daybreak passes over his jaw-line, even its lower partiality… And this is despite any residual cover in ultramarine.

What can be in this accursed bag? Well, she holds it delicately within ribbed fingers… in a manner that renders its bulk deceptive. May it really be about a basket-ball’s sight and size? Moreover, it definitely concerns some carrion which can be jettisoned – out of all available stencils – and by way of one contrary limit. Assuredly, its cargo plummets down against a backdrop that was violently chromium oxide in its greenery. Further, the crepitation of its assault carries a fatalism with it… way out beyond these swards. A sickening thump occasions a rising or THWACK(!) – until one realises its existence as a human head… one which has been severed at the wrist.”

Mezzanine Spratt: “whose skull might it be – primarily in terms of an estimation beyond the grave? Necessarily, it relates to my
casing; albeit clothed in flesh and staring up at me with vacant orbs. Do you disinter such a prospect? Anyway, Tanith Carpentier left it lying there – essentially bagless – while she turned on her heel and strutted back towards the enclosure. Really? Might this vehicle for Gray’s *Anatomy* have come off… multi-dimensionally? An illustration (sic) where my head-piece just withers back, if delicately stitched, and in relation to a despondent body. Here again, the genuflexion of a muse is found wanting. Nor can we actually penetrate through the fog until we’ve perceived a head-in-a-box… On it floats – basically without entrails – and yet listening to a post. It swivels within a plexi-glass cage now; as it careers in one direction or another… whilst finding favour with none. Surely though, a needle in a hay-stack may find some refuge in fire… thence giving up the prospect of a Head’s separate quest? Given all of this: it is quite clear that a Jack-in-the-Box shall roll out many possibilities – as ‘it’ makes its way towards you on bitten linoleum. For the balance of probability remains pregnant with need, since our crown moves forward on a truckle-bed or tray. It consists of one of those boards with four wheels at every corner – just after a momentary passage or amplitude. Wasn’t it like a conveyance which cripples used to wear, preferably round their necks? Yet – on consideration – it revives one of those harsh memories or drafts by Grosz; the latter configuring maimed men in the Boer War (1899-1902). Didn’t it hint at Brecht’s use of Gay’s *Beggar’s Opera*? Still, the impact of these lines saw our headstone speed onward – when renewed to a source of bliss – and definitely lost in sullen-eyed expectancy. Because its facial clefts are keenly etched – even blanked, balding or graven to an eldritch touch. His language also seems to trail off behind a bald pate, by virtue of a balloon and cast out of a Plexiglass dome… A token that finds itself scored with a dark silhouette – abreast of so much triviality.”
XI
Yet how goes it back on planet earth, with Mezzanine Spratt as a ready witness-statement? Firstly, he had begun to fall asleep in the car’s front leather-seat. Again, rain continues to lash down on a glass above the dash-board. Shall there be, if you pardon its scintilla, an element of hail mixed in within it? To be sure: Spratt’s trilby became more and more slumped down – as his head reclined with a greater lowness… particularly when set against the vanquished leather-cushions beneath. They bore about them an orange livery… during a period where the man’s hat stooped towards a plastic steering-wheel. Dun-coated it was, yet Mezzanine seems to dwell on his life’s presumed loneliness, without either a wife or a partner to help things along. Zzzzzzzzzzz… He went on sleeping – with just those ricocheting pellets of water for company. Suddenly his scalp bobbed up; it’s occasionally pursuant to a stray sheet of lightning that lit up the night-sky. Must he persevere with stoicism via legerdemain? He has to promulgate the possibility of some discharge or other. What is the line from Goethe’s Faust which so fascinated Sir Oswald Mosley that he had to introduce it? Right at the beginning, there was an action --- not a word. Note: that’s the Christian gospel!
+
So Mezzanine Spratt decides on a course of definite enquiry. He guns the car’s engine, presses his foot down on the accelerator, feeds it petrol and causes his vehicle to lurch forward in the rain. SLOSH! Wouldn’t it be better to drive on and find a comfortable bed & breakfast? There’ll be no dreaming on those pillows, then…

XII
Tanith Carpentier: “Do you see me – oppressed one of another existence? For I constantly stride towards a column of naked basalt; itself tempted over to a semblance of sequin. But still, it otherwise lists forwards and in every which way. Truly, a sap-swirl shows up aught amid a mist’s declension, and many of my
colleagues gather now somewhere in the darkness, well off to the west. Or might it amount to a leftist species, politically speaking? Anyway, the circumstances of this Zeitgeist have turned over on themselves. Didn’t Julius Evola – the author of Revolt Against the Modern World – speak of a ‘war of position’ like in a Vesuvian chess match? Yess-s-s, since this gargoyle lolls over the side of your cranium in a dragon’s get-up… it is waiting to still its distemper. Its refusal looks like a dinosaur, a brontosaurus or a pterodactyl, who waxes turquoise in its colour or delusion, and it waits to foment some ichor from its mouth. No matter how divine… while various magicians, dressed in orange loin-clouts, conjure up clouds on a large dais. They billow like a fortuitous haze or fug. Still, up above these rafters we detect elongated skeletons; each one of them carved in order to facilitate a goal. Whilst simultaneously – or at the behest of fountain-heads and pits – a shoal of dreams rips into prominence!

+ Certainly, a mystagogic presence lasts for a moment… and, like a moth liberated from its chrysalis, it lives for one day only. Surely, you know what’s coming up from underground (?); well, it actually originates from the ether. It circles around – firing on all cylinders – with its teeth chuntering amid flaring gas or forgotten days. Great molars, whether curved or stretched, reach out to bite you: and they are part of a kaleidoscope or its revolving masks. Each one of them is aflame. In terms of nought to sixty seconds, though, these orbs gaze on distractedly or with a crystalline issue. Let’s face it: they break out of flesh beyond its bone; they also harbour some essentially German art! These can be either Gothic or expressionist, as interpreted by Marcel Brion. Yet sincerely, these cripples rip forwards around a dwarf’s head; if only to stretch around some vertebrae or its structures. All of it came to be submitted to a task, my lords, or it’s rolled up into one nightmare. Assuredly – their hands reach out to you, themselves hooked onto nameless claws, and burning into one’s skin (roundabouts). Do you notice it? Since each vessel of kaos was all aglow; at once ripping into dexterity’s daybreak. Or –
rather alternatively – does it refuse to break free? Were such creatures – when gathered around the typewriter – an example of Nietzsche’s *dawn*? Might they be salient and reduced unicorns, sabre-toothed monsters, demon spore, mugwumps, enlarged insects, fresh-faced louts and so much more? They can be described as a Comus Rout – one that pertains to John Milton’s masque, for example. It (superintending all of this) is set to music by Henry Lawes. +

Again, a great head whirled around Mezzanine or Tanith with an elongated snout. It proves to be basically blinded by ice or snow, and it laughed maniacally through lace-net curtains. Don’t you remember Tanith’s status as a Carthaginian moon goddess? But, in our pursuit’s reality, it apes an intimation of Bedlam which reaches out for one. Furthermore, this gigantic jaw sprawls over in a lop-sided manner. ‘HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!’, it roared.”

XIII

Meanwhile, we note with approval that Mezzanine Spratt has started his car moving again. Didn’t it find a location beyond the grave? (Even we don’t take notice of its absence, you see). Nonetheless, his red convertible veers onto the road and it belted off at a steady pace. Mezzanine drove on through the night with rain falling around his vehicle --- these happened to be great “swooshes” of water. Yes… a fine forest, almost like a wooded glade in Algernon Blackwood’s work, lay around his head-lights in the night-time. Still, he pressed on into silence’s envelope or outermost coin. Was there a mountain-side yonder (?) of which came limned in a pearlescent haze. It marvelled at its own blue – such proved to be the case. When suddenly Mezzanine Spratt surmounts a cross-roads… it has two signs, equidistant from each other, and on either side of a track within a forest. Does this vision come up before you now? Further to our point, two sigils stood in a masterful or heavy way. They existed adjacent to one another (*per se*) or within a hemicycle of the damned. Both
seemed to be out of place; being vaguely magical, totemic, colophon gesturing, talismanic or whatever else. One road’s direction is Bhagwan; the other indicates Maeohild. Truly, it notates a fork in the road, but whichever path down this tarot should one take? Mezzanine considers for a moment – now mentally alert – and he slowly moves his car down the duct marked Bhagwan. How was he to know whether one partiality spoke of Kali; the thug’s great goddess: while the other signalled an anglo-saxon heroine who virtually died of love? Aren’t all novels really romances in disguise? For we’re speaking of Bhowani, Bhadwan, Chamunda and Kali; or a thousand other evils. All of these betoken a recession in one’s spirits…

XVI
Biff and Boff: “We know the answer, brethren! But we’re not to tell it yet… because our tale hasn’t reached its despoliation or climax. Still and all – within a tabernacle or its phantasy – one of Mezzanine Spratt’s incarnations stood next to a roughly hewn sculpture. On closer inspection, then, it recalls one of those efforts by a modern master like Rodin. It stands on a plinth or minus a lugubrious mien; and it seems to be craggy, ill-absorbed, stratified, even archaic in its primitivism. Isn’t ‘it’ splendid? Such an effort denies abstraction, but it looks to ‘free’ up this figure with a labile intensity. Won’t you look at our offering? Since it reconnects avec Tanith’s head only in passing… even to the extent where the mouth occasionally drops open: primarily so as to reveal a currency or its nethermost exchange. The sound when the mouth droops down is ‘BBBOOOIING!’ (…) despite the fact that no coin’s left in this orifice per se. Behind Mezzanine – who curses at this prospect – comes the mute and silent figure of Biff. He wears an orange cowl. Whereas Spratt --- who’s been caught in the head-lights like a rabbit --- sports Edwardian pyjamas.
Nor can one lose sight of Tanith Carpentier’s severed head. Might it have been decapitated by Boff (?); when using one of those devices Doctor Guillotine made famous during the French Revolution. Besides all this, her skull’s been picked up by one side; at once executed in purple or in such a way that can spit fire from green irises. In point of fact, her skinned orb floats up through swirling depths of red and brown… the like of which may be disturbed by advent’s bell. But what did she have wedged between her teeth (my votary) other than a scarab beetle? An insect that’d crawled there in one’s imagination; primarily in order to lance the boil of its mischance. For haven’t you heard of every beetle drawing its sting? Of what, perchance (?); why, it’s merely the unconscious…”

XV
Mezzanine kept on driving with his gloved hands fastened heavily to the wheel. What makes a man take one course of action rather than another? Sincerely, it has to do with the way the Norns have arranged things for you. Some call it karma or Fate. Whereas Mezzanine proceeded to drive on and he seems oblivious to crime or hazard, as he manoeuvred the round car under a thunder-storm. A burst of lightning lit up one’s foreground – it proves to be attendant on a neglected view. And basically, it revolves around a disc of awe. Nor can we alleviate such a task! Great gaunt trees – of a sort which grew in this vicinity – sprouted out and upwards... All of them swayed diffidently on violent stalks! Never mind: the serrated edge of this rain swept all before it, and it keened or teamed to some prospect, but it was also leavened by a purchase on Odin’s fury. He had never heard of Hurricane Katrina which plagued New Orleans so… Yet Mezzanine knew (somewhat dimly) that all ‘progressive’ notions fall sheer before Nature’s majesty. No-one can choose their race, ethnicity, eugenic capacity, disabled absence, non-semitism, class strand, sexuality, intellect, beauty or lack of such. In these circumstances, environmentalism or social causation is catalepsy’s lozenge. It subsists within a
biological filter, quite evidently. For ‘cultural studies’ only replaces natural law with a new definition of the same. Whereupon marxism, in the form of Lenin’s *Materialism and Empirico-criticism* or E.P. Thompson’s *The New Reasoner*, stands refuted by a single example of one of Zeus’ fiery bolts. Wasn’t the Grecian all-father a master of our living lightning? +

By some token of estrangement, therefore, Mezzanine became aware of lights among the trees. Surely a hamlet reared up amid this sward; itself nearly washed clean by oblivion’s enemy? He decided to drive towards it.

XVI

She had seen him break free from the car or its screen, and this was primarily in order to seek shelter at an oubliette’s portal. Might its outermost limit prove unfitted; primarily recalling that the vehicle which conveyed him was burnt sienna (even haemoglobin) in colour? On he ran across this shower and its spume. Yet, even as these diagonal sheets of wet speared him, he wondered about this village’s deadness… that is: its parched, dry or brittle quality. Were any persons about? A brackish incense or smoke lurched from a neighbouring chimney… For, in the silence of *Saturn’s Children*, there lies an implicit acceptance of chaos. Truly, he felt alone.

+ At the forefront of his mind – or in Spratt’s conscious recollection – one gobbet fills the in-tray. In its tell-tale wonder, though, it has to do with asking directions to a filling station; at least prior to locating one highway in particular… All of which occurs due to a process of reverse mesmerism. But truthfully, another filter in his cranium leads this chariot forwards. She sensed it also; especially when pursuant to a gathering in her cave: one that’s superintended by a one-eyed Cyclops.

Tanith Carpentier stands with a cottage door open beside her. “I facilitate the coming embrace of your uncertainty!”, she declared.
“Friend, future lover and husband… listen to me. You were once my slave – in that the listless object of your abandoned eyes led you to me. Not a sense of contingency, no, but a beguiling magnetism from Robert Graves’ *The White Goddess* brought you here. Quickly – at once fix the complexity of these dreams to my poniard; a dagger that’s strapped next to my naked thigh by a thread of gold. It happens to be transparent in its lucidity. Do you detect its faintness – now – when akin to the bronzed leg pulsating ‘neath it?”

Mezzanine Spratt: “Who are you?”

Tanith Carpentier: “May well you stare – stranger – at my breath-taking beauty. Let’s consider it to be an example of Cleopatra’s knowing innocence… Most especially, when it takes place with an Egyptian ‘dome’ of hair; the latter amber to its lit nectar… plus blue-lips which were aflame with passion, and fluorescent eye-shadow smeared around Basilisk reaches. Can you detect their Ophidian lusts? Doesn’t the White Rastafarian hair-do – when pleated in its peroxide magnificence – recall *Lulu*? You remember her Stygian vaultedness? For she was the main character (or a nymphomaniac lodestar) in Alban Berg’s opera. But – to reverse a spell or some feminine fatigue – my armour bears upon it a trace of Macha; i.e., the female crone in Celtic mythology. And all of this occurs at a time when she’s revered next to a raven’s tracery!”

Mezzanine Spratt: “Where are we?”

Tanith Carpentier: “Do these dreams fail to instruct those frontal lobes in Gray’s *Anatomy* (?) – according to which your physical co-ordinates are traced. Wayward man, you have been drawn towards a concealed magnet under chlorinated paper, in relation to that ‘O’ level experiment in physics. Wherein Farraday’s postulates were signed off for, as regards ferrous filings and their electro-magnetism.
Loving one, my game of snakes and ladders has led you to a sorcerer’s village. Here magic reigns without any brook, stint or surcease. It comes to be altogether untrammelled. Perhaps it would do you good to think of yourself as a character trapped inside Dennis Wheatley’s semiotic, or in a novel like The Satanist… for example. How can one of Pirandello’s six gain egress to this hamlet, you ask? Why, it may often come about on wild and stormy nights – to quote Bulwer Lytton out of context. It’s only then that strangers or outsiders will find the portal to a forbidden cosmogony. Do you navigate around the metaphor of a green door made of wood (?), an entrance whose substance conceals a magic garden behind a wall. It encloses it completely. (Whether one masters ‘it’ in fictions as diverse as those of Rosamund Lehmann or Arthur Machen, depending…) Remember: once you’ve gained entry by dint of free will, our multiple version of a three-headed Cerberus won’t let you out! Too late; they have detected your presence. Like me, Mezzanine love, you entered on a billowing even-song --- only to never be allowed out by them.”

Mezzanine Spratt: “Who are they?”

Tanith Carpentier: “The Magicians…”

Biff and Boff, dressed in purple vestments, appear behind them. A motley collection of ill-assorted mountebanks follow on – rather like a choked-off sea. All of these wear close-fitting masks about their features, reminiscent of the painter Ensor, and under their magenta hoods.

Biff and Boff are scarcely able to conceal a sadistic munificence. “Hark, a delinquent aberration has appeared amongst us from without. Are you aware – daughter of us all – that the circle had been transgressed by one whose hands and mouth have known
contamination by unhallowed meats? Might he prove to be porcine; in terms readily available concerning a novel known as *The Pork Butcher*? No matter: you may not speak… at least with the leaden zipper we have placed over your lips. *Avaunt thee* – false Beelzebub – your lineaments manifest themselves through wrath’s aptitude. Listen (turning to their male captive) you have nowhere to go but down adjacent to this loam.

+ HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! Let us reminisce about the following imbroglio… Mightn’t it reconnect with a scene where shaven-headed troopers stand muster? They all sit in serried rows, ranks or phalanxes. Do you comprehend it? Whereupon they manoeuvre a three-pronged utensil about their person. It busily travels above a cube of gruel; if only to descend on it with a thud or crunch. Likewise, the look on these youths’ faces remains serene or placid, and they’re possibly untroubled before the day’s ordeals. Certainly, these ephebes recall a squad of marines or commandos rather than a bohemian dispensation… redolent of so many *jeunesse doree*. On closer inspection, though, one of them delineates Mezzanine Spratt’s features – albeit in silhouette. They are gaunt, yet discernibly adolescent. Suddenly a voice cracks forth: ‘Desist from such consumption… Don’t eat it, Spratt! Each cuboid is rancid beyond any prospect of salience. It contains some brain-drain chemical; the latter destined to chill those factors within.’ But who advances towards such a fulsome warning? Why, it happens to be a middle-aged version of Biff; a creature who’s merely leavened to its course and flying abroad on a sort of electronic bath-chair. A seating arrangement which seems to be accompanied with much gadgetry. He also appears invisible to those youthful myrmidons gathered roundabouts. They carry on munching regardless, even though our phantom still continues to speak. ‘You’ll need all of your faculties, my boy. Remember: you must clear up the mind and control it… it belongs to you.’ On closer inspection, however, it becomes noticeable that half of Biff’s face is covered in blue… with some sort of spherical
emblem emblazoned across it. He points at Mezzanine with a long arching finger. Moreover, a gauntlet encloses its outermost development (betimes). Didn’t his mother ever tell him it’s rude to point? To which Spratt responds by shouting: ‘Shut up! By Ymir, silence is golden in terms of its plenitude.’ Even though – in response to this – his erstwhile cohort sees nothing at all. Everything remains invisible to them (as a consequence) and they look about their number in perplexity. ‘There he goes again’, says one. ‘Hasn’t he developed a fetish for ranting against empty air? Doesn’t he discern whether one’s ether comes chock full with demons – like in a Hieronymous Bosch painting?’ Mezzanine responds without really answering. He stares onwards rather moodily. Perhaps, in a manner put forward by Colin Forbes in *The Endless Game*, he realises that quietness waxes infinitely precious. Ask for John Cage’s endorsement here… But, even at a tender age, Spratt felt himself to be unburdened by a gadfly voice.”

XVIII

Tanith Carpentier <<<with a voice echoing inside her suitor’s mind>>>: “Hold on now, lover. They are coming for you across Breugel’s morose wasteland, but there is no need to fear. Since courage will fasten to its regard abreast of a barren acreage of values. Moreover, do you remember the activism of a dream? Wherein one particular recruit was led towards a punishment squad, itself situated to the side of a sandy plain, and adjacent to various modernist structures reminiscent of Mies van der Rohe. Do you bring back Ayn Rand’s *The Fountainhead* to memory, as seen through a grisaille’s angularity? No matter, my eye-candy of choice… For such xylography depicts a phalanx of shaven-headed youths – all of them in serried rows and about to administer discipline. It could involve ‘running the gauntlet’ at a public school; after the fashion of an antique custom at Rugby like quad flogging, for example. Yet here, the young troopers array themselves around a miscreant whom they’re eager to strike. Each one of them draws back a reflex’s baton – albeit
when ready to run through one of their number who hasn’t made the grade. ‘We’ll tighten you up, weakling’, suggests one of them with a snide smirk. Another remarks: ‘let’s rifle him out with a halbert… or a combined spear and its battle-axe.’ ‘Enough talk’, wheedles another, ‘I’m anxious to beat upon such meat.’ In response to this remark or tasking, a younger version of Mezzanine utters the following words: ‘You boneless larvae, I despise you all! Go on, take your kicks, you wretches or spawn. Do your worst…’ ‘AAAAAGGGHHHH’, they cry in unison. ‘Prevail upon him not to pass out of your mission, at least in relation to a posting next to oblivion. Yes sir…’ ‘Make way, remove your shoulder from the bladed bone. I want to crack those legs, primarily so as to execute the marrow within. Aha! Let’s look at such a ventriloquist’s spiralling orb. Have I fixed him to the work bench by placing a pin via a rare beetle, thereby?”

Simultaneously though, doesn’t this intone an earlier performance of Punch and Judy? A scenario or playlet (it is) where Punch’s figurine emerges from behind a purple cloak. May Sir Harrison Birtwhistle’s atonality accord with our swazzler’s psychic attributes? Only Mezzanine stands continuously on this shingle or outside the booth – never mind its sound. For there were no other children to respond to the ‘blood and thunder’ of such a Grand Guignol. Truly, the child within us often requires violent emotions… nearly all of them set off against a moral code of absolutes. Yet not even metaphysical objectivism can compete with a wall of dolls; each one of these laid out photographically by Waldo Lanchester. Do we really fail to respond to their grinning teeth, revolving eyes, sinister mien and papier-mâché heads? This is never mind the pomegranates of such a bestiary which were lost behind an ovoid touch – necessarily, of so many hachures.”
Yet these turquoise-clad mages have elemental tones at their command, such as a flickering flame or an Indian rope-trick. “Up lasso”, they proclaim to an inanimate object… “Go to the outsider, bind him hand and foot – or fast and loose!”

Mezzanine Spratt: “What is this?”

Biff and Boff: “It remains nought but our rendition of a full metal jacket. Have you yet to recognise the labyrinthine quality of your dreams? Within which you might savour a miasma’s displacement; at once delivered headless or redolent of Punch’s gibbet – plus a cranium in a box. Doesn’t such a Headman indicate a sense of panic? Necessarily, since water and fire are both alchemical symbols of a ‘heretic’ world! Furthermore, any adventure must take note of your relative light-headedness… Given that Tanith Carpentier walked away from Mezzanine, who was held captive in a bath, with various hippogriffs appointed on every corner. She stalked on amidst a velvet green (most definitely), *avec* the latter twisting and turning adjacent to illumined piles… all of them Gothic to this last. They rose up out of a tessellated floor; together with the ghoulish exhibition of many victims lassoed above. Might these cadavers codify one of those ‘plastinates’ by the anatomist, Professor Gunter von Hagens? Still, a pink embrasure filled this scene’s monstrous or composite body… given those blue tiles, in a perfect symmetry, that provide a mesmerism over one’s floor-sheen. In its arithmetic – then – this parquet harks back to a mosaic or (alternatively) a *lapis* drawn from Islamic art. Also, behind her hyacinth a dioxazine purple swept away; the former showing Biff or myself in silhouette. While those reptilian fancies – when borne aloft by their mystification – began to shower Mezzanine with a sulphuric indent. He lay, for his part, chained to the inside of a cylindrical vessel… within which such toads are free to vomit their fancy!
Do they reinterpret those creatures in Hieronymus Bosch’s painting, *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*? For here, they besport themselves within the alabaster of a new roof or its tiles. Yet – on occasion – a snout-faced imp who’s dressed in black, while being porcine, and with a mandolin or flute… why, he has occasion to cross a threshold between life and death. Isn’t that the case? *L’homme propose et Dieu dispose*… now what about the owl which happens to be perched on his scalp? Because all such polycephalous spectres must come to a point where they resemble this. Again, each figure is maimed or becalmed in its quietude – when possibly adjacent to a machine that looks on with indifference or alters its trajectory of sepulchral gloom. Finally, why does a virginal figurine o’erstraddle the saint (?) while proffering a dish of Holy Water. In comparison to which – various owls make hay with an arrested purity (sic) and this occurs before some scales of oneiric defeat. Yes… these mediums have sought to lift a veil on the next life; if only to cast a semblance upon a twilight; a chiaroscuro. Do you detect its import? Since this tenuity of the perverse renders itself aloof in different manikins; themselves shrunken or denoting dwarves. All in all, they mushroom out as the Grotesques of illuminated manuscripts… the like of it merely bewildering a margin. Are these jottings really the incunabula of a bygone age?”

XX

Mezzanine Spratt: “My body or physiog(.) has been concocted by a rope – the levitation of which surrounds my curlew. It holds me bitterly to its entreaty’s shaft (betimes). Are we reminded of one of John Cowper Powys’ early fictions? These mages think that they’ve bound me hand and foot… but Tanith stands beside me. She leans against my blue-garbed body, so that the weight of her hand conceals something. It writhes adjacent to her scarlet dress.”

Meanwhile, the purple-clad magicians gather in a hemicycle around their two ‘victims’. A strange hum seems to come up
from their serried mouths. For a brief moment it brings to mind a Greek chorus – whether in terms of its strophe or antistrophe, and always pursuant to a tragedy. (Whether Peter Jones teaches us the language or not). Doesn’t such an assemblage – when gathered together from two and a half millennia ago – consist of old men in masks? Moreover, each and every one of them fails to put forward a different view… given that *Lex talionis* indicates a law of retribution.

Biff and Boff are referring to their stuffed arm-pits: “Look forwards to this, the two of you! Since to one side of the demon which haunts Saint Anthony, and that seems accustomed to a leftwards drift, a rival figurine or Old Father Time emerges. It is a cripple who’s locked into self-trespass, but otherwise carries a burden of servitude. He shuffles onwards with one make-belief before his game – almost as if he can play a musical instrument. Could it be a harp or an Iberian guitar in the hands of one skilled to use it – like John Williams, perchance? Never mind: *quod* the aspect adopted by these anthropomorphic forms must know their own minds. Yet, irrespective of such a dint, our tapered wraiths maximise their circumference or leave nought to chance. Here flits half an owl – when nearly filleted to some smoke – and glowering before the tempera of a new engagement. It also rescues its plinth; in a manner which makes a mockery of a game of chance proceeding on a table that’s circular in its hewn gambit. Various biomorphic tents whisk about --- some part vegetal --- while others track a beetle’s thorax to its lair. Don’t we register this (?); even in the dream with which this narrative has been plagued hitherto. Because once the girl, Tanith, wanders off with her accompanying magicians… they can cut off her head using a mock-guillotine! It was originally concealed behind a hillock that’s essentially russet in hue. Whilst a homunculus or *invunche* drained out the gore from her severed neck into a porcelain bowl. Mightn’t it have been manufactured from spode china; the latter at once rare over its reflexes on the distaff side? Even so: she remains alive --- in spite of all.”
Tanith speaks herself now; and her irises are brightly lit up so as to fill the available sockets. No astigmatism really fails to communicate a story here (therefore).

Tanith Carpentier: “One’s head-chicken sprouts off or aft, and you’re even free to make a wish. For where has all of this blue-blood come from – like in the first stages of an infant’s birth? Ugh! You see, yonder pot contains those daemonic innards which belaboured one’s insides… at least before relief. What purpose do one’s intestines have when confronted by the gutting knife, eh? It’s definitely a poniard too far, one feels. Yes, my spirituality makes free to float like a bird who’s unburdened by the spirit. But truly, any writhing impermanence must mark its time… for my aspic certainty (when forlorn of issue) finds its wonder sacrificed before such a miracle. My head was off, you know, and bouncing like a ball with its green eyes distended. Most particularly – when the basic colour of a scalp remains pearlescent and nacreous, and it rode its luck if surrounded by a rose penumbra. All I could manage by way of a shout remained: ‘UGGHH…glug-glug-glug!’ Not to worry, though: since one’s rootedness to the ground has to involve an absence of legs. Perhaps now, my decapitated rind can be picked up by Biff who moves next to a stalk – or a root – of the brightest yellow.”

Mezzanine Spratt finds himself pursuant to an internal swazzle. “You must never forget the advanced reproach of ‘Saint Anthony’s temptation’, however! A scenario wherein the saint wears a grey cowl next to his affected grace; irrespective of any surrounding loucheness. Do you realise the solace or redemption now afoot? For one permitted larceny remains within a sow’s recognition or ken, and at least in terms of a grey eminence that occasionally lists towards black. He or ‘it’ approaches Saint Anthony sideways-on; and yet such a will-o’-the-wisp comes to be undefeated by silence. Do you recall its similarity to a copper-head… that is: the most poisonous snake on the north american mainland? Or alternatively, this summons up from the depths a
pulp-fiction character who was unlicensed by any metallic conduction. May it comprehend a magic camera’s momentum, thereafter? Because this sloth creature – or necessary gut-wrench – loomed up mercurially from the side. Whereas his movements were ungainly and stiff; at once re-interpreting a hippy on over-drive or the shambling gait of a beatnik. Could this possibly register the mincing pass of one of Jack Kerouac’s desolation angels? None of which ever chooses to mind the empty call of Thomas Pynchon’s ‘Lot 49’ or Kathy Acker’s Algiers – the latter Sapphically smeared. Again, it slid into position with a toxic banjo to hand, and do we detect an old-fashioned pistol in its belt or buttress? Let’s see now: the pig-man zig-zagged on towards our Church Father or his Church of the Creator; with black satin then accompanying any impediment to Facial Justice. Wasn’t that an anti-socialist novel by L.P. Hartley, and didn’t such a troubadour make way for an unlikely exorcism?” (Note: the Church of the Creator is a supremacist sect founded by Ben Klassen).

XXI

Our black magicians – when garbed in a grey lotus’ diet – stood around the fire-storm of their own manufacture. Tanith’s head was off or distracted now, and her golden eyes glinted dully in the dust. Isn’t this a roseate distillation coming up for fresh air (?); and always existing amid a watery grave-time. Still, the liquids of such an impermanence have a brown streak shot through their hybrid essence. Might it embody an ochre tincture – while captured to its available loss – and swirling with opaque depths mushrooming at its centre? Anyway, in comparison to this, Tanith’s bifurcated globule found itself supported in these shadows… Whilst her eyes let loose a delicate stream by way of a rivulet; at least in terms of some ready salted tears. In passing an eldritch compass, then, didn’t Iris Murdoch write an early fable called A Severed Head?
Carpentier’s skull embodies a delicate brushstroke at this point, with an earthy sediment roundabout it. Were these orbs close to such a feasting; at least in comparison to the tousled lushness of her hair. Does one detect its unforgiving quality? Whereupon her arms hook up blankly in a stupor, so as to master the adamantine quality of those glass-eyes. Much of which means that an M.R. James story comes into play: (i.e., a variant on Harrison Birtwhistle’s chamber opera *Punch and Judy*, with a libretto and vocal score by Stephen Pruslin). Nonetheless, the sluice-gates behind those doll’s-eyes make ready for action, primarily so as to carom a blue-green marble into each socket. Irrespective of this—a beetle’s antennae are seen to emerge out of her mouth; the former after a black opal’s impress. May such an insect’s shadow mount a tattoo on the tongue, basically so as to summon up woad’s constancy? Look at this: a *Coleoptera* whose upper wings have been converted into cases … why, it emerges from her laughing-stick’s taste. It seems redundant before the flying creature’s mandibles. For every beetle draws a sting – don’t you know? (In any event, a BBC repeat like this harks back to Nietzsche’s ‘The Endless Return’).

XXII
Tanith Carpentier: “I have a knife to hand which is hidden within the folds of my cloak… It happens to be next to your sapphire-coloured mack. (She was addressing Mezzanine Spratt at the time and in a low whisper). For, like a maiden of the church who comforts Saint Anthony, I leant across a silent salvo that’s undaunted over its own closure (primarily). My dress, in such circumstances, trammels the list of a delicate pink – especially when it’s taken together with the brilliantly white shawl around my head. Don’t I offer sweet-meats – or even a compendium of water – in terms of a God in the Bowl?”

Biff and Boff were surrounded by lesser grand masters at this time. “Unsurprisingly, we are ahead of you, my dear, and at the discretion of our thinking. Because the presence of the daemonic
is little more than a tad-pole to our entreaty! Given this, one crippled lutanist approaches a red hearth amidst twilight. Mightn’t he be playing his forlorn stick oblivious of all else (?), and when accompanied by a carnival dog: a mutt which wears a wine-hood about its cheeks. Do you retain a necessary regard for these facts? Most particularly – when we consider that those reptiles which do so, Tanith, move eastwards from the west to the accompaniment of ochre. It settles, this latter gradient, upon a chocolate dispensation --- that is, a chiaroscuro which was shot through with dissembling fire that’s akin to reddish egg tempera. But still, these hog-heads or heresiarchs move closer to Saint Anthony – all the time composing that lute music which spoke of an alchemical ‘bridal chamber’. Yess-ss-ss.”

Tanith Carpentier: “Tell me, my coven of warlocks, what befell my head in another dimension – particularly when it had been severed from its trunk?”

Those male witches who are gathered in conclave merely sneer in reply: “Why don’t you use your imagination, girl?”

For what fate opens up – while pursuant to this Death’s-head – can only be the following volute… in which, *mutatis mutandis*, the knife, spear, arrow, sword and axe all make an appearance. They are assorted emblems of alchemical fire and each helps to feed its furnace’s mysteries. Do us a favour, will you? This occurs by virtue of the fact that your head has swivelled free from its corse, if only to manoeuvre out beyond any night-time borders. Are you really brave enough to see? Further: your plastinate’s face found itself linked to a steel balustrade – one which is contained, as it was, within a plexiglass cage. Can an observer possibly remember the alternative character of scientific romance known as Doctor Sun? Never mind: her pate or scalp whips around in a whirligig; and it caroms like a billiard or snooker ball with a sigil upon its tongue that indicates a beetle’s impress. At the same time, though, any attempt to grasp her
head-tennis causes it to rear up like a careering fun-fair device. She can even travel across the floor – especially if it happens to be shiny and translucent in texture. Isn’t it reminiscent of sand after it has undergone nuclear fission? Yes indeed, if we wish to speak radioactively... (Even though this mute truckle-bed can embody one of those Boer War cripples, drawn by Grosz and L.S. Lowry, and made use of by Brecht). Finally, Tanith’s decapitation veers off with a sudden élan; if only for its cage to become clamped to a rocket’s boosters. It then soars into outer space and follows the elliptical passage of such a projectile. Thereafter, and rather like one of NASA’s shuttles, it is blown to smithereens in the outermost ether.”

XXIII
Tanith Carpentier: “Quickly beloved, your hands are free thanks to the temporary insistence of my knife. Let us run for your car which exists at the heart of the square in this hamlet... a factor that’s just like the village of Port Meirion in Patrick McGoohan’s *The Prisoner*. Nothing will be able to stop us now; irrespective of those two ghoulish magicians who stand guard next to your convertible. Move my trampoline and make haste – we’ve got to get out of this place (to use an old Blue Oyster cult song); and we must cross the threshold from one reality into another one.”

Mezzanine Spratt: “Now that I’ve found you, I’m not going without you.”

Tanith Carpentier: “Darling, you help to grant me a courage comparable to your own. With you beside me, all last vestiges of fear are stripped from me!”

The mages Biff and Boff were now possibly screaming for the last time: “STOP... don’t pass forward towards this tunnel of flame. We command you!” <<<A momentum which subsists slightly afore her rush to the automobile; an escape that’s aided and abetted by Mezzanine.>>>
OPERATION FAST-FORWARD: *if we were to use the future perfect...*

Biff and Boff: “Move away from his circumference, Tanith, lest you wish to undergo exquisite pain – such as a salutary beheading! Don’t doubt over whether it will be artistically accomplished, sweetie. For by any other commando issue, though, Up Flame… go to them and summon their obedience to our power. If we might invert Aleister Crowley’s diction, hate shall be the whole of the law! Again Waves – prevent the completion of their egress and lock them out (then) within the dancing juniper of your tidal spume.”

Irrespective of any of this, however, our two outlaws have reached the car; if only to see it submerged by a cascading wavelet. Still, do they manage to make it out of the village – albeit with water lapping around their stagecoach on every side? The vehicle’s engine roars into life and they create some necessary tracks as a consequence.

**XXIV=XXVII**

Mezzanine woke up a while later in his cabin. He had had the temerity to fall asleep in his work’s craft throughout. A liquid wetness has entered the cab from somewhere – yet he remains alone and somewhat bereft. Let’s consider the following analogy: might this be an example of English heroic legend or folk-tale, as narrated by Kathleen Herbert? Anyway, may this entire imbroglio have been a dream (?); or some sort of phantasm of waking consciousness? Mezzanine Spratt rubbed his chin for a moment – he couldn’t make his mind up between the two alternatives. But Tanith, beloved Tanith, with the red skin, blonde hair, large bust and blue-and-white bikini… surely she was real? Maybe, he mused aloud to himself. Yet if she were chimerical – why did she leave such a definite impression? He
wound the window down for an instant in order to access some fresh air. Reluctantly he was forced to gun the engine, bank the roadster up and career off. After a wee while he came to a crossroads which loomed up around a curve or bend, and with two signs facing in opposite directions. It’s all happening as before, he thought… Dimly, he remembered that one side gave out the clarion known as Bhagwan; while the other one called after a lost maiden named Maeohild. It rather absently flitted across his mind whether their respective designs embody a cool painting – with the affectation of collage – by Juan Gris. Moreover, the rain continues to pour down in straight sheets around his automobile (betimes). Whilst his windscreen wipers roared and slapped on nine to the dozen. What to do now? Bizarrely, his sub-conscious had told him whatever the wooden balustrades would say before he spied them… Most fantastical – and rather like Hieronymous Bosch’s celebration of St. Anthony’s ordeal, he conspired to think. Wasn’t he serenaded by a sense of creeping or postlapsarian life, even in death? Possibly… he also registered that the whole caboodle seemed to be a psychotic fancy – yet the girl’s presence still appealed to him. Couldn’t she be a moral species of erotica (?), or even the exact opposite to Rouault’s delineation of fury in paint? Certainly, my man… Maybe it all took place and the sorcerers made him relive it – rather filmically – as a form of post-structural doxa? After which intervention (though) it would be time enough to take the tamer route down Maeohild way… yes, the case happens to be closed at this juncture. THEN IT SUDDENLY HITS HIM WITH THE FORCE OF A REVELATION. ‘Tanith’s in Bhagwan. She’s reliant on me. I have to rescue her. Darling, I won’t fail you!’ He knew it all at a definite point. For one’s colours – within the vestibule of a cab – were basically red and black now. Mezzanine Spratt’s life has been forever altered (you see), and, in masculine terms, courage had become the only possible morality.

FINIS