

# GRIMMOIRE 2



SPECIAL

**A SONG IN THE AIR**

ISSUE

**\$2**

## Elite Madmen/Introduction:

Hello, and welcome to GRIMOIRE, our travelling exhibit of art and literature. We hope you find our selection of cultural artifacts pleasing to your sensitive and discriminating taste. We've tried ever so hard to strike the proper balance between the sardonic and the sacred, the bitter and the sweet, the cruel and the beautiful--all for your vicarious pleasure. Thomas Ligotti, for example, writes of murder, death, and a fate after--and worse than--death in a manner meant to imply, for the more squeamish reader, a most laudable and reassuring detachment from such grim possibilities. G. Sutton Breiding relates some dream-like accounts of ex-

plorations in the sometimes-dangerous, always-beautiful inner terrain which are sure to please the adventurous. Our regular comics page (we trust this is not too offensive to the literati among you; so plebeian..) is provided for us this time by Tim Caldwell, who mixes cartoon icons from several eras into a delightfully ambiguous saga of mayhem and laughs. Tim also did our wondrous cover, a vision of celestial fulfillment, surely. Speaking of things celestial, Lyn Lifshin shares her visions of madonnas with us, each vision a sterling instant of colorful illumination.

Benton McAdams illuminates us further with a version of our own (dare we say it?) rather TV-channel existence. Bruce Boston's prose poems present lives quite similar to our own, yet distressingly dissimilar as well. Andrew Joron writes of "A Beautiful Disease" many would like to catch, while our interview this issue is with exiled surrealist Louis Miguel Ríaz, who certain governmental agencies would also like to catch. History buffs will no doubt appreciate Kevin Knapp's poem, set in a turn-of-the-century French town where the local industry was both bloody and blessed. Lovers will find a friend in Charles G. Finney, but get a



cold shoulder from Billy Wolfenbarger. Nihilists with a taste for graphic design will flock to the work of Gerald Jupiter-Larsen. Those with a sense of wonder will find Denis Tiani's collages to their liking. And for our drinking friends, may we suggest Laurence C. Bush's "A Draught of Bile"? Perhaps after a nip or two you can best appreciate, perhaps even find it difficult to avoid seeing, the visions of Michael Roden, John Thompson, and Tina Said. And of course, G. Sutton Breiding and Millea Kenin provide illustrations of our exhibit's theme: "A Song in the Air". (Can you hear it? Just behind you, that low guttural hum...)

PRICE NOTE: A subscription to GRIMOIRE now costs \$8.00/year. Single copies are \$2.50 ppd. by mail, \$2.00 on the newsstand. Selective trades with other magazines are possible.

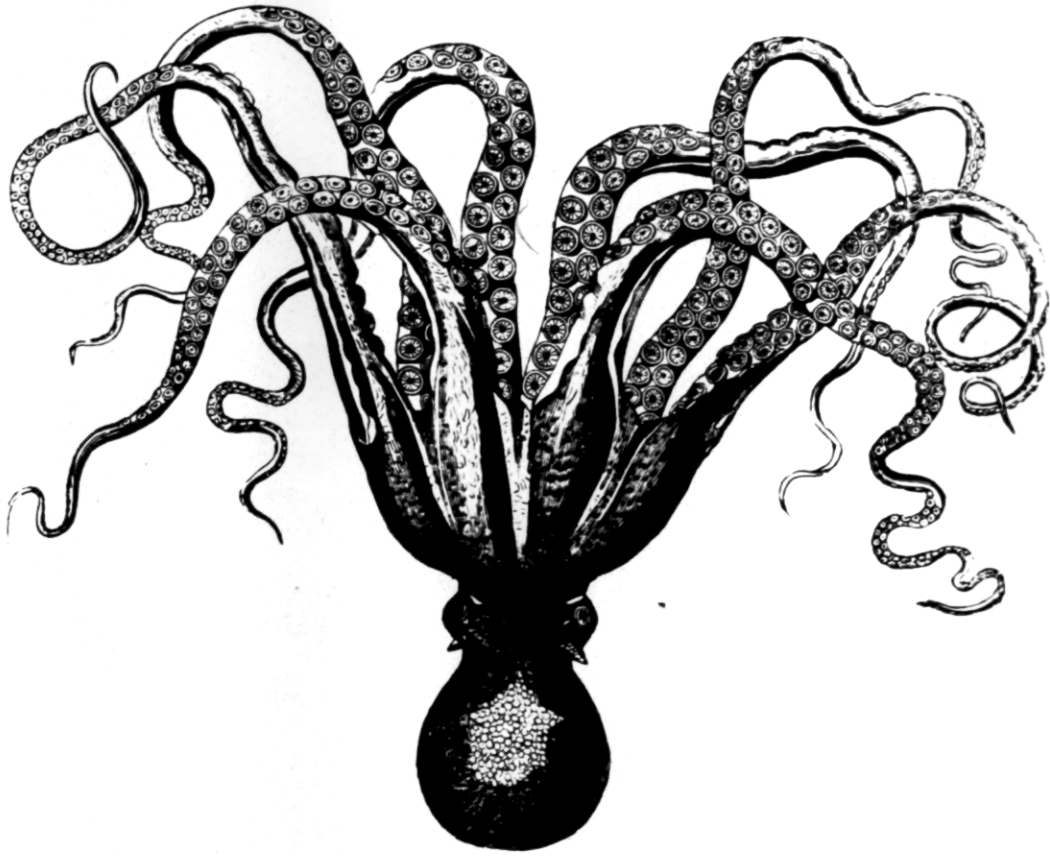
DEADLINE NOTE: The deadline for GRIMOIRE #3 is November 1st, #4 is February 1st, #5 is May 1st. With SASE or trashed. Collages, short fiction, prose poems, and poetry are welcome. Surreal/macabre/occult/fantastic bias.

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to contributors on publication. Published quarterly by: Thomas Wiloch, 6501 Yale Rd., Apt. 807, Westland, Michigan 48185. Contributing editor: Thomas Ligotti. GRIMOIRE is soliciting books, magazines, and unclassifiable materials for review. Also seeking appropriate public domain items containing strange engravings, occult articles, unexpected occurrences, macabre stories, old scientific theories, masonic secrets, conspiracy exposes, mythical creatures, Fortean fun, unusual characters, the unnatural, the unrecorded, the unbelievable, all manner of things fabulous, and assorted anti-logical materials. Those with such materials available for donation, please write.

# GRIMMOIRE 2

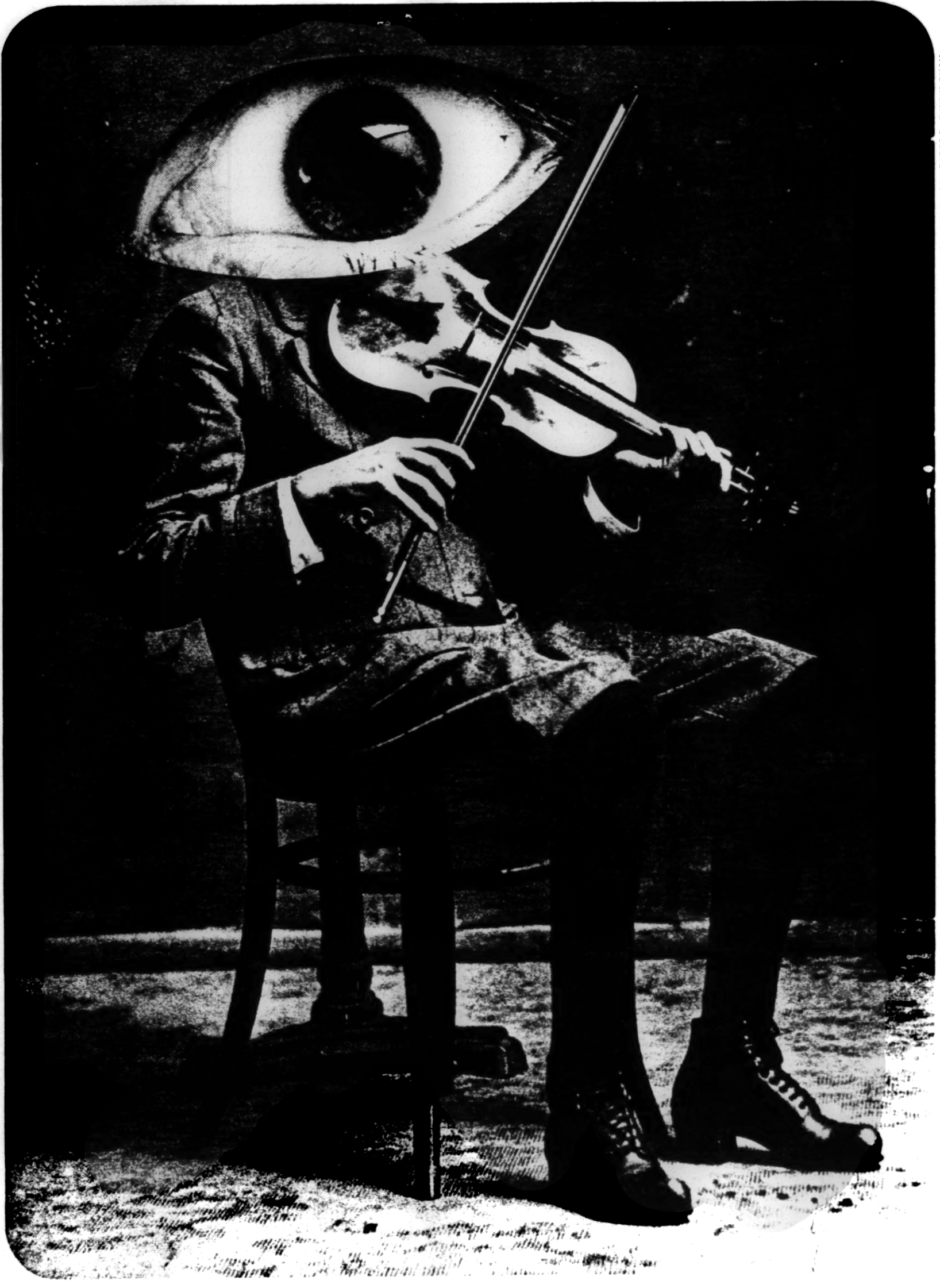
All Art is Magick--All Magic is Art



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COLLECTION OF ROBERT E. CUNNINGHAM

COMBS OF LIGHT

Your red honey in the dawn  
Your many legs  
Your copper cumulus of hair  
Your tongue straining at its roots  
Your nails digging into my skull  
From your fantastic lips  
I suck out oracles  
I drink molten roses  
From iridescent marshes  
I hear the music of white violets  
Blue shadows between ivory and silk  
Your eyes are light years away  
The legend of your thighs  
The folk-lore of your back  
Galaxies whisper of your shoulders  
Winter forests steam with your name  
Paintings of your breath  
Haunt the ghosts of afternoon museums  
In prehistoric cities  
The full moon multiplies your breasts  
Offered to the werewolves  
That inhabit my mouth  
And when I think I am gluttoned  
My skin splits  
My body roars in slow motion  
Each of my heads dips again  
Into the pink oceans of your flesh  
Sucking at the boiling honey  
Of your sexes  
As planets collide and grind into pulp  
And I hear the furious buzzing  
Of huge, delirious bees  
In their caves of dripping meat.

--G. Sutton Breiding

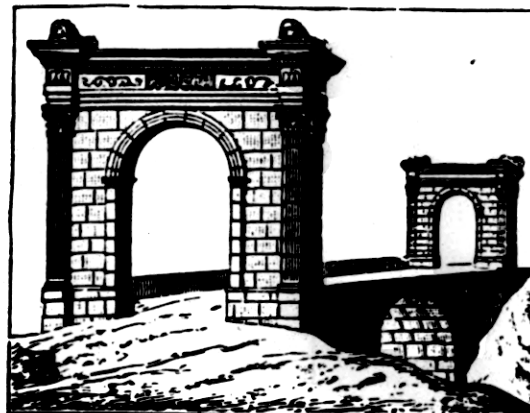


In the House of Sleep, it is the lot of the shiny beetles to guard the mysteries of rumpled blankets, bodies submerged in the black lakes of other planets, metal curtains nailed to the windows, and the unending, many-sized doors of thick wood leading into the cellars where the deepest sleepers lie on their ancient beds, dissolved in cool, rich reservoirs of every shade of blue, under sagging canopies of oracle, erotically entwined with their musty covers that are sheened in sweat, gleaming like sheets of mica, each layer a stratum of metaphor leading into cave within cave within cave, like a ball of dark yarn unravelling forever into chasms of unseen golden light, into the heart of a luminous abyss where sad corpses hold tapers, lanterns and bulbs of incandescent yearning. These insects see that the sleepers are not awakened by the foul mouth of morning, they meticulously clean off any images of grime, noise or specks of the day that stick accidentally to the recessed faces, shining them, if necessary, to their preternatural night-hue, so that these slumbering pupae, these willing slaves of Hypnos, may wander ever more deeply into the narcoleptic gardens growing voluptuously in their brains, drunk on the white perfumes and the slow, heavy beat of drums under water, far from the hideous exertions of the superconscious, the deadly artificial structures and substructures of the day, in which nothing is truly real, choosing instead the encrustations of nocturnal desire, their pearly lids closed forever in order to inhabit this house on the long journey of pure dream, pure sleep, pure life.

--G. Sutton Breiding



## MYTHS OF THE KITCHEN

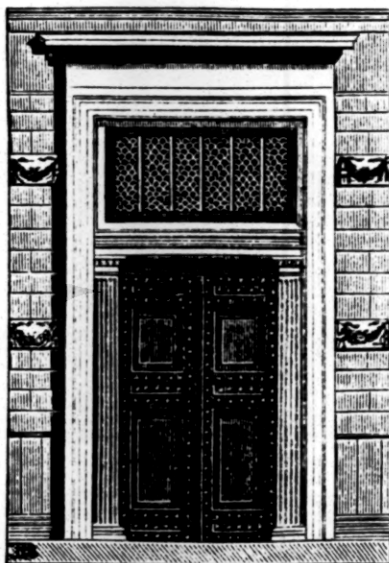


I remember an April, years ago, a bud-pink mouth, tiny white flowers shivering with ecstasy in the sunlight; the streets shimmering, not with their usual sepulchral grey, but silver: unending avenues of scintillating light, down which rolled magnificent, stately cars, not fast, not rude, but with slow pleasure. Spring in the city: can it be beautiful, or have I only made it legendary through time; can it compare to the soft pools of golden gingko leaves on an autumn evening?

If only I could remember more easily the cities I once inhabited--the clean cities, so vivid they seemed an hallucination--blue marble, dusky stone, cool palaces, green bridges carved in the air, long boulevards of soft white pavement lined with tall, ancient trees that made lakes of shade where moments were spent in contemplation of the infinite, the towers of sunlight, noons of copper and iron, bronze evenings deepening on wide porches of oak overlooking the summer lilac seas or the translucent mermaids pouting on the first foamy waves of a midnight in May.

Winters; white fur, blue windows, lips of frost, layer upon layer of unblemished snow, trackless but for the ritual paths.... Cities of memory, fever, cities of hunger and drunkenness, cities of insomniac dawns, cities where courtesans of ineffable beauty greet the weary traveller at the gates; cities awash in sepia, cities ink-purple, amber and red, petrified in the nerves, fossilized in the heart, standing still forever in my reveries, cubes, domes, rectangles, streets where a wanderer could wander forever at whim into the misty distances....

My ghost drifts through deserts of pulverized glass and concrete, powdered granite and marble, seas of sand and bone where once I kissed a nameless girl in the bluest of midnights...the skulls of gryphons, were-panthers, slender nymphs, the black gargoyles, the spectral birds that haunted the unfolding hours....A lost April, a long time ago, contemplating the melting pink and white buds, the echoing silences of a late afternoon, lazy smoke uncurling with the velvet languor of the sun painting the dozens of small panes, a still life with books in a room off the old kitchen where I spent a hundred days and nights alone, in the voluptuous light, listening.



--G. Sutton Breiding

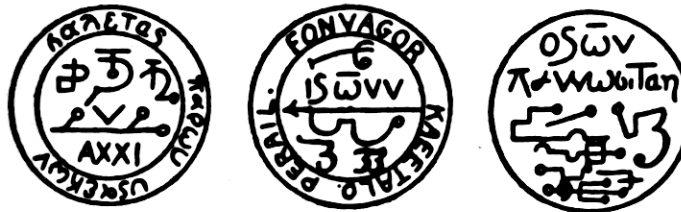
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"FOR A MAIDEN IN PARTICULAR"

ALTERNATING CURRENTS

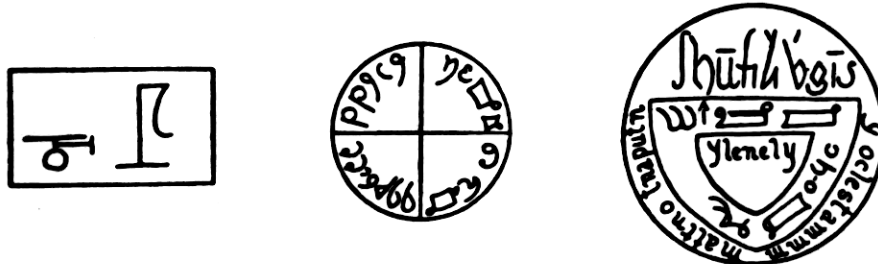
He called her "darkness" and "of the night," taking her in the worst hotels, filling the city with energy of his eyes, eyes of a mad artist, seeking sustenance from the mouths of children, from potent elixirs, from other madmen before him--Blake, Van Gogh, Nijinsky--still mostly from the apertures of her dark body, there drawing sustenance to fan the coals of his genius...germinating...well-fed...seeking its own apertures until the sweat would run from his back as he worked in those sunlit days.

Now he watches the park and pulls the blinds at twenty stories. Whereas she has been transformed into a naked Madonna lightbulb. The men form lines as they approach her. Wide-eyed, she fills them with electricity.



HIS WINTER YEARS

Kalino watched her in the street, that wandering eye of hers passing over stevedores, brakemen, the muscled forearms of Jake the butcher still red from the cutting of the meat. When Kalino would paint her, instead of focusing on the sinews of his aged neck, that eye would wander to the window or trace the lines of its own brown body in naked mirror reflection. And even abed, as his passion rose slowly above her young flesh and she waited for him to finish, her eye would knowingly follow the crooked cracks of the ceiling. So one night he pulled that eye from its socket red--"ARTISTS AND MADMEN TAKE CERTAIN LIBERTIES!"--and there was particular hell to pay. Yet when he returned from the institution, certified sane by Dr. Spoleri, she was his one-eyed woman...granting him three faithless daughters to plague and wander the streets of his winter years.

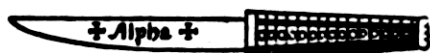


LOOKING FOR THE OTHER SIDE

David needed a vacation from reality. He decided to dive into the unconscious. With watches and hat pins, with a paper hatchet and a pocketful of squid, with all the necessary accoutrements assembled and aligned in rows... now where was that hole? With all this baggage tying him up he couldn't even think straight.

David stripped naked and sat upon his mattress.

He could see it now. Three feet above the baseboard and to the right of the dresser. An oblong hole, somewhat irregular. From the depths of its blackness a blur of colors raced, drawing him on. He could see it, but he wasn't sure if he could fit. And already the sheets were on fire. His fingernails were growing together.



--Bruce Boston

## A NIGHT WITH THE BOYS

In this hall of expectation, polished wood reflects the light of panes both stained and leaded. The clock displays each second. By the bar a woman in a cloth hat sits with knees pressed together, face averted to one-quarter profile.

Richter came in.

We knew he was always good for an hour or two so we called him over. Pass the time, we told him, tell us a story. At first the words had to be pulled from him like the last dabs of meat from a bone. So we ordered another round, another, until his words began to flow and fill the room.

He spoke of rushing rivers, diamond sutras, spinning tops with goat's eyes in their crowns...he told us of naiads and mermen, of forgotten cities of the ocean floor and how the hero Gilgamesh descended to the deeps, met the Submariner, slew an ancient monster of forty coils, and all this before Ali Baba could find the thieves...so we ordered another round and he told us of mountains, once living beasts when the land was molten, and how they settled to sleep and never woke, veins of ore now remnants of their massive bones...and he said that to this day each man has a mountain in his belly and a mountaintop meadow in his chest and all you have to do is turn the key on infinity, touch a lover's thigh, get a little drunk and wild flowers can blossom all through your cerebrum...and with another round it was the devouring womb and earthworms who build houses unsafe in any season...that's the way it rolls, he said, you come up in blood and you'll most likely go down in it too, what happens twixt the cord and the shovel is up to you...he laughed from the back of his throat...and then he was losing it...ranting on about shepherds and keychains and pencil lights... about '53 Plymouths and chainsaw licorice you could only buy in Idaho...until we had to douse him with "the mead" as he called it to get him to be silent... and before we knew it we were all dousing one another.

We sat in the silence, wet and dripping. The light fell through the leaded panes. The seconds fell. Above the calendar the woman in the cloth hat waited. Naked. Glossy and paper thin. Faceless as a pack of thieves.

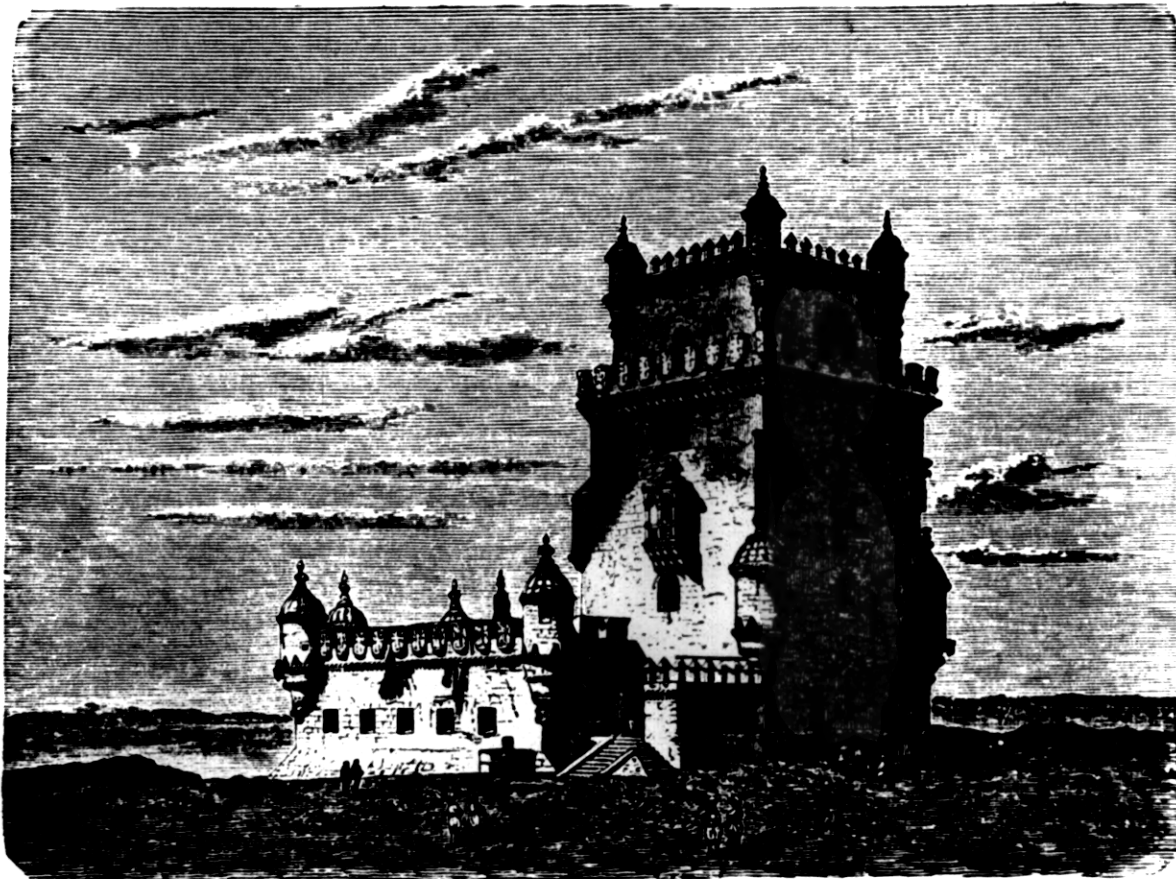
--Bruce Boston



## A DRAUGHT OF BILE

The candlelight in the grotto of one of hell's forgotten saints revealed an old lecher. In his prime, he was a conjurer of lust, an epicure of opiates and herbal tea, at home among his volumes of decadent verse that decorated the shelves of his garret. Now he is the viceroy of skins, watching the sheaths stroll by, the scent of their leather and fur making him relive his exploits with the absinthe of memory, that he might again hinge his wax-stiffened legs. He used to make love as if it were a surgical procedure that lifted each neural thread from his subject's flesh in search of new epinephrins, and she would twitch her drug-soaked hair and moan while he reclined languidly to gaze at her, anesthetized by love, her legs silhouetted against the setting sun, rib cage barely rising, unravelled neurons in tatters. Reviving her with a needle and a breath, he banished her back to the street, a mephitic venus in animal hides. Melancholia overtook him as his absinthe turned into bile. The day came when the gears of the planets compelled him to eject his patient intact and seek refuge underground. The demons lined the cathedral rooves, their rubbery wings rustling in the wind, to watch him descend into the grotto. He fell prostrate before the altar of Satanachia, the commander of women's souls, scarcely aware of the wax dripping from the upper vaults. As it fell it formed a pool of wax like a puddle of white mucus, clotting the wormholes of his senses.

--Laurence C. Bush





### THE NIGHT KEY

Finally, he began to discover things he never knew about before, but this only after many months, and not realizing he had been waiting. Always it had been difficult for him to sleep, and he would lie down, close his tired eyes, and count all the little, irrelevant dreams flittering in and out of his life, night life or day life--all the same--and the dreams would tumble over themselves as though they were at play, and finally he found he could sleep. This night, though, he stayed awake, drinking coffee, listening to various parts of the great city settle down into dreams. He found he could pick up on the images. It wasn't even much of a strain. This offered him strength--not power. He looked out his little window at the city, and here and there lights would nod out, gone, and darkness would cover these spots like some vast and overwhelming veil.

He lived on the fifth and final storey of a boarding house built by slave labor refugees around 1970; marijuana still lingered in the walls. Tonight the whole house was silent, except for all those dizzy, numberless wooden stairs which complained, irritated by his passing. Fully dressed in shoes and jeans and shirt, he opened the door at the landing and entered into the darkness around him provided by vacant lots. The air held that coolness which the evenings of summer dim, and he felt deeply within him the strength of being alive.

It was empty out here. And vast, like the space between the stars or the undiscovered spaces between thoughts. He entered the vagueness of one of the vacant lots, breathing the night in, letting it out again. And his whole life was vague, had always been so; though now, feeling so very much alive, all else was vague, wispy, nearly unreal like ghosts haunted by their own imaginations.

Advancing, street lights grew, became brighter, taller. He selected a street at random, but there was little if anything to see. He persisted. He felt like a Twentieth Century Columbus, charting the night in a new world.

He crossed to another street, then another; it occurred to him dimly he

might be getting lost. And then he came upon them secretly, for he paused and peered, hiding behind darkness. Youths in T-shirts and slick hair, and the elderly in limp clothing and fallen white hair, women and men, yellow and white, black and red, anchored themselves to the farthest edge of the street light near a corner, restless as though unborn. One of them drank slowly from a bottle of wine; he appeared the eldest of the group, for his December-white beard reached his shapeless waist.

Who were these orphans of the night? Fifteen, sixteen of them lingered under the curved arc of the light, some with twitching lips, others with sagging skin. He saw a tall, beautiful Negress tug a burlap bag under the light, spilling open its contents. Bones clattered out musically, jawbones and knee-joints and such, clearly all human, though he could spy no skulls. These bones formed a quilt-like pattern, and all these people of the night studied them intently, slowly sagging off their clothing, tossing them into the dark street. Pairing off, these grotesque couples copulated among the scattered bones.

He watched until they were done. And as they slowly stood up stickily, they gathered the obscene bones into a central pile, and the beautiful Negress with enormous breasts began tossing them inside the bag as all others retrieved their clothing. They wandered away, soon lost in the darkness.

One bone had been forgotten. He picked it up. It held the strange shape of a key, very similar to a skeleton key, and it held a good balance in his hand. He didn't see the face of the Negress return, watching with smiling eyes.

--Billy Wolfenbarger



## LIFESTYLE



Huxley peered through the window. He reached for the matchlock. Hooves struck sparks as the horsemen thundered up the cobblestone street. Yes, the fat one must be Bulba.

"Ned! What are you doing?" Jennie stood in the middle of the room, her arms akimbo, her eyes afire.

"Uh--" He shrugged. She wouldn't understand. Huxley put down the matchlock, which had somehow transformed itself into a weedeater.

"Grow up," said Jennie.

"You used to like my imagination," said Huxley.

"I didn't know how truly immature you were," said Jennie. "Did you write to Ocala about the time share?"

Huxley shook his head. "The Cossacks interrupted."

"Enough!" Jennie spun on her heel and stalked away.

Huxley watched her go, his eyes caressing her Calvin Kleined hips. He loved those hips. And Jennie loved him. She was Heloise, he Abelard.

"Damned irresistible charm," muttered Huxley. He told himself it would be all right.

But it wasn't. Nothing was right; nothing had been right since he first laid eyes on Jennie. Of course, he'd laid Abelard's eyes on her.

Before that, the delusions (if delusions they were) hadn't bothered Huxley much. To the contrary: He enjoyed them. They were much better than the world of split levels, backyard barbecues, and promising careers. But Jennie, who originally thought him eccentric, had pressured him as time went on to grow up and accept zoysia grass.

"Damned Lutherans," said Huxley, who had a habit of blaming either Martin Luther or John Wesley for everything. Huxley strolled through the foundry, ignoring the smoke and fire and heat.

"I should leave her." But he wouldn't--Abelard could not leave Heloise. So he was stuck in her world, feeling guilty about his dreams. Which were not dreams at all. Not to him.

"Boss!"

Huxley interrupted his analysis. A furnace had stopped running, and his engineering expertise (at least his profession pleased Jennie) was needed.

Huxley opened the control board and exposed the maze of wiring. He pretended to study it, while scrutinizing the furnace operator. Was the man a collaborator? Unlikely. Who liked the Boches?

Reaching into the wires, Huxley adjusted them, ostensibly correcting the short. He gave the thumbs-up sign to the operator. "Ca va," he said. "Liberte."  
The man stared baldly.

"What?" Jennie stopped brushing her long, long hair.

"I got fired," repeated Huxley.

"Why?"

"The furnace operator was a collaborator."

"Damn you." Jennie's upper lip quivered.

"I'm lucky," said Huxley. "They could have turned me over to the Gestapo."

"You're insane." Jennie's eyes went wide, as if the idea had never occurred to her. Eccentricity enhanced her lifestyle; insanity was a great sin.

"No more tanks for the Nazis," said Huxley.

"You believe all this, don't you?" asked Jennie. She, at least, was growing



up enough to recognize reality.

"Yes," said Huxley. He didn't want to tell her; she'd believed it was all imagination, and he'd never told her differently. But, now, she asked, and Abelard could not deny Heloise. He told her everything and explained that he didn't like it (which was an utter lie--he loved it), but had learned to live with it.

And, at the end, rather than face insanity, Jennie smiled and they made love. Huxley told himself it would be all right.

"Mistake," said Huxley, looking through the bushes at the area where the mastodon had last been seen.

Jennie had not understood and was convinced, despite her lovemaking, that Huxley was a loon, fit only for incarceration. Too late, Huxley realized the wisdom of keeping his delusions a secret.

Still, he loved Heloise, or Jennie, or whoever, so he tried to stop the visions, to please her. He couldn't. He found it easier to block out Jennie with dreams of goldmining in the Yukon. And each day, Jennie's fear and anger increased.

"Mistake," said Huxley. A mistake to admit he lived his dreams, and also a mistake to wait around for the mastodon. It would not return and there would be no meat tonight. Huxley's mate would complain and he'd have to slap her to sleep.

A cloud of dust grew in the living room. Great metallic clanks, guttural engine roars. A line of wraiths appeared out of the moonlit desert. The behemoths rolled past, treads spewing sand, goggled ghosts riding atop the machines. Huxley directed the Afrika Korps.

"That's it!"

Huxley dropped his arm, and moaned. He'd been trying so hard not to let Jennie catch him.

"Sorry," he said lamely.

"Not good enough. Not any more." Jennie's eyes glared.

"I don't like it any better than you do."

"That won't wash," said Jennie. "You know you're nuts. The neighbors know, too. Ever since you sacrificed that sheep on the patio."

"Aha!" Huxley leapt and Jennie stepped back, gasping. "If I'm deluded, how do you know it was a sheep?"

"God knows where you got it," said Jennie, "but the sheep was real."

"So was the rest of it," said Huxley the Druid.

"What am I going to do?" Jennie shook her head.

"Cuisinart a cucumber," said Huxley, shrugging.

"No. I'm leaving you, that's what. I've had it."

"Not that." Huxley leapt again, grabbing Jennie by the arms. "I love you, Hel-- Jennie. I love you."

"Then see a doctor. No more excuses."

Huxley's head dropped. He'd been fearing this. Jennie had had enough; he must submit or lose Heloise. The room shimmered. It was scarcely real at all anymore, nor was Jennie. Panzers were real; the Congo was real. Still, for the love of Heloise...

"O.K." said Huxley.



"Mon Empereur," gasped Huxley. He bowed deeply.  
 "Who are you?" asked Dr. McNaughton.  
 "Je suis votre marechal; Je suis Huxley."  
 "High school French does not impress me. Sit down, Mr. Huxley, and we'll talk about it."

"Napoleon never had a Marshal named Huxley," said Dr. McNaughton.  
 "Je suis un marechal."

"There's nothing wrong with fantasy," said Dr. McNaughton. "But there's nothing wrong with reality, either. That is, after all, where we must live."

"I have no fantasies," said Huxley. He wiped a grain of North African sand from his eye. Damned windstorms.

"We have only one world, Mr. Huxley. Believe it. And you've got things in this world: Wealth, comfort, a wife..."

"I've got things I don't understand. What possible good is a doorbell that plays Beethoven?" Huxley made a mental note to tell Ludwig about that particular abomination.

"I don't know," said McNaughton. "What good is pretending you're a Mameluke?"

"I don't pretend."

"All right," said Dr. McNaughton, after a moment of exasperated silence. "Whether you pretend or not isn't important. What's important is the cause of your...whatever."

"What's important, Korchnoi," said Huxley, leaning over the desk, "is that you're checkmated, you godless commie bastard."

The sessions continued. Things actually improved a little. Or seemed to. But Huxley still couldn't quite accept Jennie's world, McNaughton's world. He tried, though. Right up to the night of the Property Owners Association Annual Picnic.

That was the night he leapt up on a table and announced that he didn't want to, but unless surrender was total and immediate, he'd be compelled to build a hill of everyone's skulls.

It was also the night Jennie left him.

"Heloise is gone," said Huxley, sinking into the chair. He'd expected it, actually--divorce fit her lifestyle.

"Good. I was afraid you'd castrate yourself."

Huxley raised his eyebrows.

"That's what happened to the real Abelard. His bishop sliced off his goodies."

"Well, I'm not Abelard."

"Good, Mr. Huxley. This is real progress."

"It was good she left," said Huxley. "It's made me realize certain things."

"Sometimes it takes a shock," said McNaughton.

"It's time to grow up. Just because I'm uncomfortable, because I don't fit--that's no reason to live in a dream world."

"Good, Mr. Huxley."

"Hear that?" asked Huxley, pointing to the window.

"No."

"Drums. He returns, and he needs me."

"Who?"

"Never mind," said Huxley. The drums came closer; there was the faint sound of crowds cheering. "I know the delusions, now, doctor. And, unfortunately, you're one of them."

"Ah, Mr. Huxley. I had hoped--all right. What's real?"

"This!" Huxley scrambled over the desk and grasped McNaughton's throat. "This is real, you Royalist pig!" He squeezed until McNaughton stopped kicking and choking. Huxley didn't know if the man was dead and didn't care.

He went to the window and looked out. The drop to the street wasn't far. Huxley held his sword out of the way and jumped, coming to his feet and searching for his horse. There was much to do. Tomorrow, for instance, he had to assist Ramses in driving the invaders out of Egypt. And later, try to vacuum the sand out of the carpet.

But first: His Emperor. Paris was empty; the citizens flocked to greet the returning monarch. Huxley, too, would greet him. Most of the Marshalate was gone--dead, sick, traitorous. But Huxley remained, and Huxley would serve.

He mounted, drew his sword, and shouted to the empty streets: "For God, the Empire, and Cuisinart!"

He stopped. What was "Cuisinart"? A stupid dream; a child's dream. Huxley spurred his horse and galloped for the sound of the drums. He had grown up at last.

Someone had told him once to grow up. Who? No matter. Marshal Huxley hurried to greet his Emperor.

--Benton McAdams



**BEHIND THE MASK**

## THE SILENT MAGI

we eat in silence:  
you sip the red wine from a crystal goblet  
i chew the browned meat slowly  
figures pass the window dimly through the fog

occasionally our eyes meet:  
i see green hills edged with bloody lace  
you see hot geysers spraying orange dust  
a man pauses at the window and peers in,  
nose against the glass

we finish our meal:  
you slip into a black shawl of raven feathers  
i straighten my necktie and adjust my cuffs  
we hold hands and drift through the window like clear water

other diners take our seats:  
he pours the champagne in a swirl of sparks  
she nibbles the cheese and crackers  
and beyond the window,  
we are the half-seen movements in the fog



## THE REPORTEE OF DREAM

- A. Black ashes skipping in the wind.
- B. A hot tongue searching my ear.
  
- A. A blunt finger pointing at a want ad.
- B. Tiptapping footsteps on the linoleum.
  
- A. A bloodstained sliver of glass.
- B. A marble statue's cool face.
  
- A. Radio static in a dimly-lit room.
- B.

--Thomas Wiloch



**We praise you. We bless you. We worship you. We  
glorify you. •  
We give you thanks for your great glory. •  
+ And the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## GHOST STORIES FOR THE DEAD

That faint light in each of us which dates back to before our birth, to before all births, is what must be protected if we want to rejoin that remote glory from which we shall never know why we were separated.

--E. M. Cioran

### The New Blackness

It isn't like that of an incessant night, the kind poked into only now and then by a few abandoned lights on a lonely street; nor is it like that of the drab trousers and matching jacket filled out by a stranger met on such a night. It isn't even what remains after a tricky wind snuffs the tiny hysteria of a matchflame which, on request, is offered by this stranger. Not like the shadows creased into the stranger's face grinning in the flamelight; not like the sudden emptiness his weapon-weighted hand inflicts. The double negative night-within-night of the stranger's car trunk is not remotely like it.

It is absolutely, when all is considered, not anything like the dimness of the basement where the stranger detains his first victim, nor like the blindness with which he slowly and with regrettable invention afflicts this victim. Not like it too is the gloom of an attic where a second victim, starving for days, feasts upon decomposing birds, which the stranger stealthily traps and laboriously defeathers before the eyes of his famished victim. Bound to a chair within the shuttered shed behind ruined apartments, a third victim ultimately discovers that twelve dense nights of radical, though very amateur, surgery does not even come close to it. And other victims, far too numerous to mention, experience various shades and types of lightlessness that are equally unlike the new blackness of their future.

For the new blackness keeps no secrets, and the new blackness touches without pain. In it there is nothing to know or remember about who you once might have been. Which of the stranger's victims were you? Fortunately such troubling issues cannot raise themselves when there is no one left to care one way or another. Perhaps you were even that shabby madman himself, who saved his worst and most reliable torments to propel his own life into the mercies of the new blackness.

Is he there with you? You with him?

I am glad I cannot see your faces.

### The New Silence

There is no preparation for it. Even the absence of an expected, a painfully desired, sound is an absence of infinitely grosser dimensions. The telephone--keeping stern vows, its coiled throat in knots--this supremely indifferent device and the sound it doesn't make could merely hint at that higher absence. Of course such hints are restricted to certain peak phases of desolation suffered by certain imaginations, ones without prayer of defense. Remember those rooms so stale, so dim that the dust seems to glitter with a final crackling luminescence precedent to ultimate gloom. Why doesn't that filthy thing ring! What lunatics

people sometimes choose for their first serious fall into human affection. Ring, you infernal machine, unspeaking heart of hell!

Then it does. Remember its message: tonight in the park, by the far wall (yeah, the one with the stone heads on it that look like a dragon), and make it late. So the tones of the tormentor finally get through, with only minor interference from a temperamental receiver. But tonight no spooks within the wires would interfere with their messages. However, the meeting begins strangely. Having apparently arrived first, he huddles in the ample shadows of the wall with the heads of stone. Only his voice seems to have kept the appointment, saying: closer, come closer. He will not comply with even the politest request to move out into the moonlight, no matter how frightened someone is, no matter how much someone needs to be reassured that it's really him crouching there. For by now anyone could tell that the voice is a fantastic imitation, and when the imposter does finally shake off the shadows and steps forth, someone is sorry for ever wanting her poorest secret wish granted. And now every sound seems the maddening drip of oceans of evil, blasphemy cooed near the ear of a blood sacrifice, a roaring sweat that ultimately evaporates into the sweet nothing of the new silence.

For in the new silence no voice deceives you, and in the new silence you cannot hear yourself weep. All voices are one in the new silence. You must know now what it was he did to you and later to himself. You must now speak to each other in the language of the new silence.

So who was he? And who now are you?

I am glad I cannot hear your answer.

#### The Old Nonsense and the New

How serious was the old nonsense? How terrible was it? How sad? These seem ridiculous questions now, but at the time never are. For at just the right moment they can seize the brain and squeeze it like something gone soft in the sun. And even when the sun is at its height, night may fall; even when golden light leans all over a nice clean city. Indeed, from the lofty vantage of a forty-third floor everything looks especially polished--sterling streets, dazzling semiprecious sidewalks, windows locked diamond-wise into the other big buildings spreading out there for miles. What a promising place this is! Here everything is possible and nothing otherwise. No likelihood not leading to success, no unlikelihood linked to catastrophe, even for the newest comer loitering two score and three stories above Terra Incognitaville.

And though this hallway is long and quiet and empty, there is still no loneliness. There, look behind, a door is opening, the one leading to that supply room or whatever it is. Turn around, the man sneaking out of that room doesn't appear as if he has any business being up here. Then again, maybe he too is simply intent on staring out the window and dreaming about the future. But he walks right past the window and, in passing, sends someone crashing through it with just one good shove of the shoulder. Forty three floors is a long ways to fall. And in those last screaming moments someone wonders how anyone could be duped by all this ludicrous glitter, how anyone could bear confronting the face of a world that writhes in darkness without even for a moment relaxing its blinding and inexcusable smile. How easily the old nonsense leads us on and, with neither warnings nor answers, delivers us into the nonsense of the new.

For the new nonsense promises no punchlines or apologies, and the new nonsense peals itself back to reveal nothing within. No one is even left to know that nothing is there. How did you manage to take leave of that twinkling city without going anyplace? After you finished falling, where did you land?

Where are you now? Where did you go?

I am glad your responses do not make sense in those dreams I have of you.

### Tales of the New Dream

In the new dream the dead may not rest very long. Sometimes their rightful blackness is revoked, deserved silenced foreclosed, their blissful sense of nothing cut off at closing time. And now these faithful patrons of annihilation, loyal customers of the abyss, these quiet tenants of paradise are thrown out on their ear like lowlife riffraff booted from a respectable establishment. Back down to earth, you wretches! Having no place else to spend eternity, they try to make the best, in other words the worst of it.

Even now Mr. Benedict Griggs, founding member of the Congenial Gents, holds the attention of his fellow clubmen, including the Rev. Penny, with a hair-raising anecdote from his visit to America: how he wandered, quite without intention, into that slatternly district of a large New England city where the notorious 'sad scientist' murders had occurred; and how this drunkard, a somewhat lengthy knife in hand, weaved up to him to ask assistance and a few helpful directions home. Home, home. Help me home! was all the wobbling souse said. And upon noticing that this weaver and wobbler had, in fact, no eyes in his head, Mr. Griggs credited the spectre with thereupon vanishing before his own. The entire episode merely "put quite a scare" into the rather fortunate Griggs. For others, depend on it, will have much more put into them!

Others may not be able to tell their friends, as just have Jamie Lempkovitch and his girl Lisa Ann Neff, that they were only grabbed by a pair of foul maniacs, one male and one female, who emerged from the sod in New Burnstow Park as if from the gentle surface of a pond. Other may have to leave behind more than their shoes and an old blanket when they make a getaway from these ravenous revenants, assuming anyone at all gets away next time the hideous couple appear. Others may not be as lucky!

And parallel to the small-town fame of the New Burnstow Park haunting are those metropolitan legends currently circulating anent an urban apparition that "flies into its victim's face," though only on the darkest downtown nights. And if this sky-diving shade finds a face it likes, in other words hates, it just may decide NOT TO FLY OUT AGAIN.

For in the new dream such beings--wrenched from eternity and returned to earth--are capable of anything from indiscretion to atrocity. Those who have suffered most know how to inflict it best--it's a law of the universe. The suicides, the murdered...the unfulfilled, the broken-hearted: veterans of extraordinary suffering and mercenaries of its perpetuation.

These are my mind's eyes, I who have no eyes. These are my mind's ear and voice, I who have no ear, no voice. These are my mind's mind, I who am not mind. I am bereft of traits, bankrupt of qualities. The riches of the dead are extravagant next to my destitute estate. I have nothing but my immortality; and now, desiring or not, they will have it too.

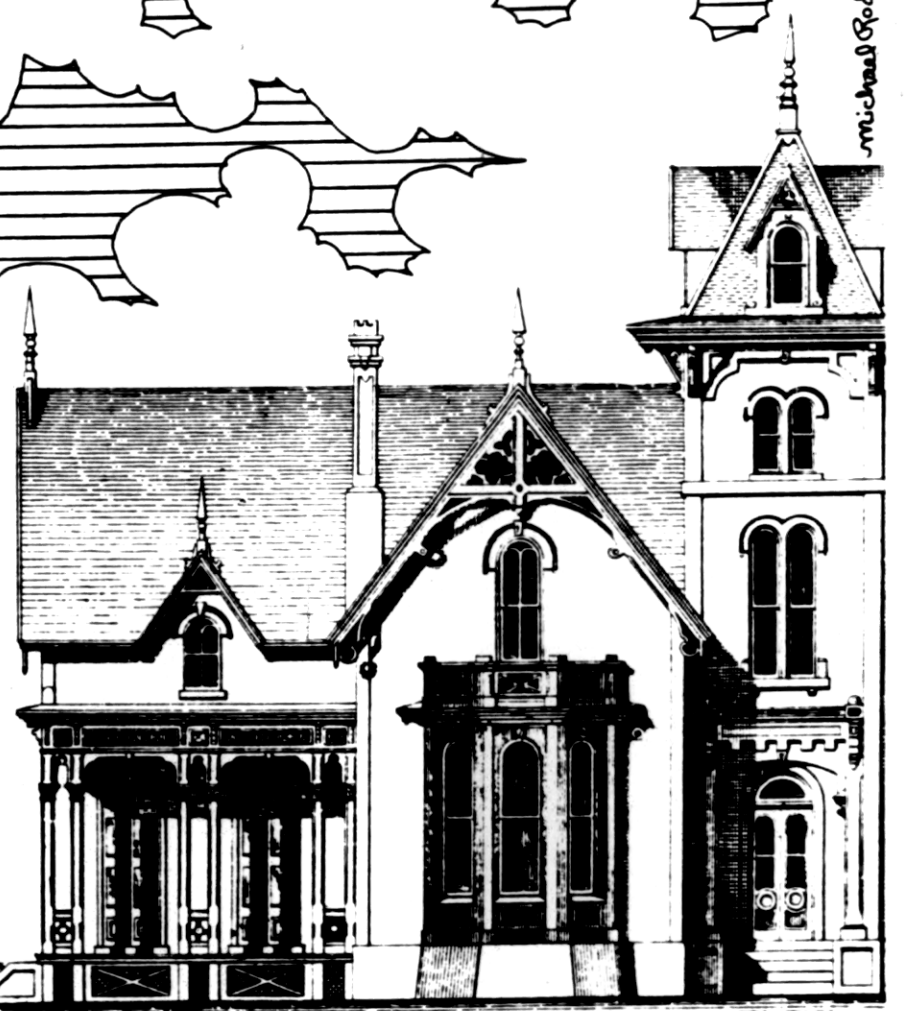
And I am glad I cannot know them.

But I am even gladder they cannot know me.

--Thomas Ligotti



# "BUILDINGS"



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The  
End  
M. Godan

BOSWELL:

I looked aghast  
Upon my past  
And took a vow  
That as of now  
I would be chaste.  
Alack, alas  
A lass did pass  
I made a pass.  
How now, fond vow?

(To fully grasp  
all the allusions  
in the above lyric  
it is probably  
mandatory to  
read the intimate  
journals of the  
great biographer.)

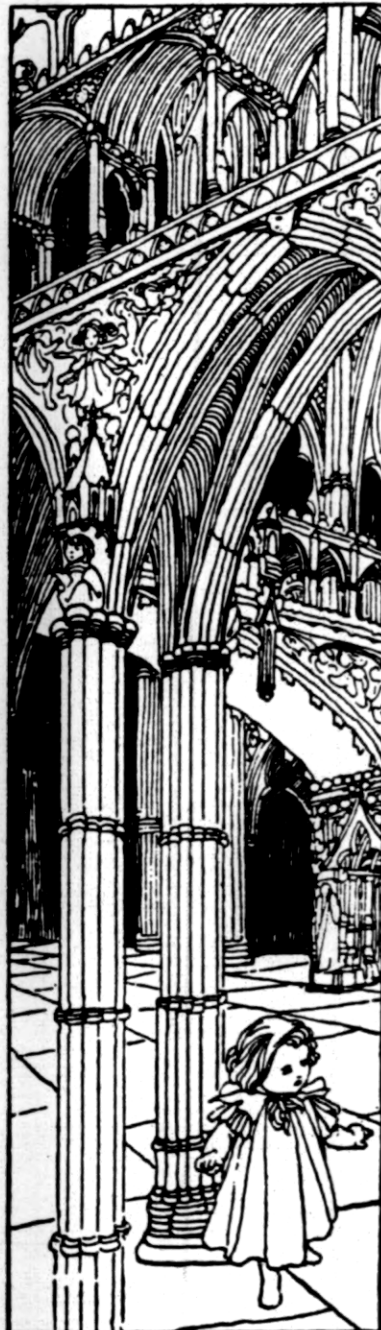
--Charles G. Finney



LIMOGES 1880

At the statue of the  
Virgin, lay down.  
Enjoin and embrace these  
two walled cities  
before you  
and let the  
butchers walk by.  
Let them pass into  
the red city;  
follow behind them on  
coagulated streets where  
the signs all bear  
their names.  
Enter, if you will,  
backlander,  
the realm of these,  
the princes of blood,  
who have seen you coming  
and have slaughtered a calf  
for this occasion.  
They bid you welcome.  
Walk now,  
beneath a royal garland  
of pig entrails  
as blueing cow-heads swing  
from hooks,  
nodding in supplication.  
See, there, among the  
meat and flies,  
the candles burn  
hidden in holy alcoves.  
Ave, c'est Marie,  
porcelain mistress  
who watches,  
forgiving,  
as cleavers fall.

--Kevin Knapp



CATERPILLARS

first its contained  
something quivering  
inside a web you  
think you could  
burn or cut off

they coil together  
like intestines  
squirming blind  
no one wants to

touch them nights  
you dream they go  
dissolve but  
when you walk you

feel them near  
you they ooze  
under your bare  
toes and in the

dark their webs  
break against  
your lips and nose  
suffocating  
as fear

--Lyn Lifshin

MADONNA OF THE DARK

with her house  
all darkwood  
ceilings of  
ebony no light  
bounces off of  
dark ruby glass  
that stains the  
moon dark plums  
glow under a  
black quilt Tues  
day turns mid  
night at noon  
a bruise that  
stains who  
ever touches  
her spreads  
like cracks in  
porcelain as  
if punched  
with night,  
blue black roses



ICE WITCH MADONNA

one look at her  
and the roses glass  
over spearmint  
leaves in your mouth  
turn glass cutting  
as they slide  
down overnight  
what could grow is  
trapped like flesh  
and fruit with  
Midas only  
colder. Iced children  
slide from icy swings  
and shatter like  
glass. She's more  
like plastic,  
she won't melt.

MADONNA WHO IS LETTING THE  
SUN EAT HER

burn where he  
was away like  
the white band  
on a finger the  
first time you  
go out with  
out a ring pale  
white circle  
a sign locking  
what sun never  
touches away,  
a brand. belt  
there's no way  
out of tight  
as skin in the  
dark light  
doesn't get to

NOT QUITE ON TOP OF THINGS MADONNA

like a body sprawled  
across a man  
size wheel that  
makes a half turn

she is the camper  
sleeping too close  
to Mt. St. Helen  
82 year old man  
with his house  
of cats

the men in her life  
hot lava  
she's a tree the  
leaves are stripped  
from as she's

buried like a  
table set for tea  
in a ship  
going under

--Lyn Lifshin

## A BEAUTIFUL DISEASE

Charred bones of children  
Killed by Neurochemick  
Basilisks  
A broken alembic  
Tenebrous bits of Maidenhair

Transmissions lost  
Central to the inflamed eye...fallout  
A viral snowflake

...lovingly, as they strapped the gas mask  
On him: a snake hiss  
Of escaping air--null skies  
Over--the gates of metropolis  
Cold, & faintly shining...open valves

A street of roofless  
Empty houses  
Where he saw their Contaminated  
Ships set sail  
& women, undressed of their flesh  
Fly away  
In the dreams of wild animals

To save him--feet & hands  
Were bound in wires; he was fed  
A Martian fungus  
While drums beat  
& the gospel of the Night God  
Was shouted in his ear

After he lay in a soft room/diffuse with ices  
That was called the Cube of Day  
& looked at clouds that passed  
His window--an upside down  
Accelerated landscape  
...a mirror for the collapse  
Of mountains

& then Daylight too was doppler'd  
Away: the blue dismembered into blackness  
With a changing of the channel

In Kepler's head  
The outer planets played  
Disquieting harmonies of the dead

Other, video-engendered  
Friends would whisper to him, read & decay  
In spiral-calculations



THE END OF DR. SPIDER.

But half a man is tired of these voices  
That drip lost numbers  
Beneath a drone of fishpipes; or leak  
An ocean's Moon-drawn  
Phrase--dense as vital juices run  
From severed objects around his bedside

Nature morte

One votive jar of poison bees  
A steel etching  
Nerve-portrait of his future body

Stained instruments, that force  
Food & water upward  
To the surface of this amniotic sphere

Out of the wall/there grew  
Long sensitive tongues, pale as worms  
Forever silenced...gray newsreels  
Of the recent past, that show/invading armies

& pinned to the door,  
The red wings of vivisected birds

--Andrew Joron



"FATHER CRICKET WAS DYING" (p. 9).

# WONDERFUL THINGS

WHATEVER IS MARVELLOUS AND RARE, CURIOUS,  
ECCENTRIC AND EXTRAORDINARY

## EARTHQUAKE PANIC.

A panic terror of the end of the world seized the good people of Leeds and its neighbourhood in the year 1806. It arose from the following circumstances. A hen, in a village close by, laid eggs, on which were inscribed the words, "Christ is coming." Great numbers visited the spot, and examined these wondrous eggs, convinced that the day of judgment was near at hand. Like sailors in a storm, expecting every instant to go to the bottom, the believers suddenly became religious, prayed violently, and flattered themselves that they repented them of their evil courses. But a plain tale soon put them down, and quenched their religion entirely. Some gentlemen, hearing of the matter, went one fine morning and caught the poor hen in the act of laying one of her miraculous eggs. They soon ascertained beyond doubt that the egg had been inscribed with some corrosive ink, and cruelly forced up again into the bird's body. At this explanation, those who had prayed, now laughed, and the world wagged as merrily as of yore.

## A GREAT MARVEL SEEN IN SCOTLAND.

The following strange and almost incredible account is given by Lindsay, of Pitscottie:—"About this time (the beginning of the sixteenth century) there was a great marvel seen in Scotland. A bairn was born, reckoned to be a man-child, but from the waist up was two fair persons, with all members pertaining to two bodies; to wit, two heads, well-eyed, well-cared, and well-handed. The two bodies, the one's back was fast to the other's, but from the waist down they were but one personage; and it could not be known by the ingene of men from which of the bodies the legs, &c., proceeded. Notwithstanding the King's Majesty caused great care and diligence on the up-bringing of both bodies; caused nourish them, and learn them to sing and play on instruments of music. Who within short time became very ingenious and cunning in the art of music, whereby they could play and sing two parts, the one the treble, and the other the tenor, which was very dulce and melodious to hear; the common people (who treated them also) wondered that they could speak diverse and sundry languages, that is to say, Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, English, and Irish. Their two bodies long continued to the age of twenty-eight years, and the one continued long before the other, which was dolorous and heavy to the other; for which, when many required of the other to be merry, he answered, "How can I be merry which have my true marrow as a dead carrion about my back, which was wont to sing and play with me: when I was sad he would give me comfort, and I would do the like to him. But now I have nothing but dolour of the having so heavy a burthen, dead, cold, and unsavoury, on my back, which taketh all earthly pleasure from me in this present life; therefore I pray to God Almighty to deliver me out of this present life, that we may be laid and dissolved in the earth, wherfrom we came, &c."

Buchanan, who relates the same strange tale, avers that he received it from "many honest and credible persons, who saw the prodigy with their own eyes." He adds that the two bodies discovered different tastes and appetites; that they would frequently disagree and quarrel, and sometimes would consult each other, and concert measures for the good of both; that when any hurt was done to the lower parts, each upper body felt pain; but that when the injury was above the junction, then one body only was affected. This monster, he writes, lived twenty-eight years, but died wretchedly; one part expiring some days before the other, which, half-putrified, pined away by degrees.

## THE MAGPIE STONING A TOAD.

There is a story told of a tame magpie, which was seen busily employed in a garden, gathering pebbles, and with much solemnity, and a studied air, dropping them in a hole, about eighteen inches deep, made to receive post. After dropping each stone, it cried, Currack! triumphantly, and set off for another. On examining the spot a poor toad was found in the hole, which the magpie was stoning for his amusement.

## SOMNAMBULISM.

Some years ago a Hampshire Baronet was nearly driven to distraction by the fact that, every night, he went to bed in a shirt, and every morning awoke naked, without the smallest trace of the missing garment being discovered.

Hundreds of shirts disappeared in this manner; and as there was no fire in his room, it was impossible to account for the mystery. The servants believed their master to be mad; and even he began to fancy himself bewitched. In this conjuncture, he implored an intimate friend to sleep in the room with him; and ascertain by what manner of mysterious midnight visitant his garment was so strangely removed. The friend, accordingly, took up his station in the haunted chamber; and lo! as the clock struck one, the unfortunate Baronet, who had previously given audible intimation of being fast asleep, rose from his bed, rekindled with a match the candle which had been extinguished, deliberately opened the door, and quitted the room. His astonished friend followed; saw him open in succession a variety of doors, pass along several passages, traverse an open court, and eventually reach the stable-yard; where he divested himself of his shirt, and disposed of it in an old dung-heap, into which he thrust it by means of a pitch-fork. Having finished this extraordinary operation, without taking the smallest heed of his friend who stood looking on, and plainly saw that he was walking in his sleep, he returned to the house, carefully reclosed the doors, re-extinguished the light, and returned to bed; where the following morning he awoke as usual, stripped of his shirt!

The astonished eye-witness of this extraordinary scene, instead of apprising the sleep-walker of what had occurred, insisted that the following night, a companion should sit up with him; choosing to have additional testimony to the truth of the statement he was about to make; and the same singular events were renewed, without the slightest change or deviation. The two witnesses, accordingly, divulged all they had seen to the Baronet; who, though at first incredulous, became of course convinced, when, on proceeding to the stable-yard, several dozens of shirts were discovered; though it was surmised that as many more had been previously removed by one of the helpers, who probably looked upon the hoard as stolen goods concealed by some thief.

## A TRANCE.

Mrs. Godfrey, sister to the Duke of Marlborough, had nearly been buried alive; the physicians all declaring that the breath of life was irrecoverably gone. Her husband, Colonel Godfrey, had, however, the pleasure to see her revive, seven days after (that day week, and same hour), and what is more, she never knew till the day of her death the length of her trance, or sleep.



D. T.



D. T.

#### PRESERVATION OF DEAD BODIES.

About a mile distant from Palermo in Sicily, is a celebrated Monastery of Capuchins, in which there is a vault made use of as a receptacle for the dead. It consists of four wide passages, each forty feet in length, into which the light is admitted by windows, placed at the ends. Along the sides of these subterraneous galleries are niches, in which the bodies are placed upright, and clothed in a coarse dress, with their heads, arms, and feet bare. They are prepared for this situation by broiling them six or seven months upon a gridiron, over a slow fire, till all the fat and moisture are consumed. The skin which looks like pale-coloured leather, remains entire, and the character of the countenance is, in some degree preserved.

#### A SEA ABOVE THE SKY.

This belief is curiously illustrated by two legendary stories preserved by Gervase of Tilbury. "One Sunday," he says, "the people of a village in England were coming out of church on a thick cloudy day, when they saw the anchor of a ship hooked to one of the tombstones; the cable, which was tightly stretched, hanging down from the air. The people were astonished, and while they were consulting about it, suddenly they saw the rope move as though some one laboured to pull up the anchor. The anchor, however, still held fast by the stone, and a great noise was suddenly heard in the air, like the shouting of sailors. Presently a sailor was seen sliding down the cable for the purpose of unfixing the anchor; and when he had just loosened it, the villagers seized hold of him, and while in their hands he quickly died, just as though he had been drowned. About an hour after, the sailors above, hearing no more of their comrade, cut the cable and sailed away. In memory of this extraordinary event, the people of the village made the hinges of the church doors out of the iron of the anchor, and 'there they are still to be seen.'—At another time, a merchant of Bristol set sail with his cargo for Ireland. Some time after this, while his family were at supper, a knife suddenly fell in through the window on the table. When the husband returned, he saw the knife, declared it to be his own, and said that on such a day, at such an hour, while sailing in an unknown part of the sea, he dropped the knife overboard, and the day and hour were known to be exactly the time when it fell through the window. These accidents, Gervase thinks, are a clear proof of there being a sea above hanging over us."—*St. Patrick's Purgatory. By Thos. Wright. 1844.*

#### ORACLES OF APOLLO IN FRANCE.

Towards the frontiers of Auvergne and Velay, upon the high rock of Polignac, there was formerly a temple of Apollo, famous for its oracles. The time of its foundation ascends to the first years of the Christian era since, in the year 47, the Emperor Claudius came hither in great pomp to acknowledge the power of the god; and he left proofs of his piety and munificence. The debris and mysterious issues that are found even now upon the rock, in the heart of its environs, reveal the secret means employed by the priests to make their divinities speak, and to impose upon the people. At the bottom of the rock was an *adricula*: it was on this spot that the pilgrims took up their first station, and deposited their offerings and made their vows. A subterranean passage communicated from this *adricula* to the bottom of a great excavation, pierced, in the form of a tunnel, from the base to the summit of the rock. It was by this enormous opening that the vows, the prayers and questions, pronounced in the very lowest voice by the pilgrims, reached instantly the top of the rock, and were there heard and collected by the college of priests; the answers were then prepared, while the believers, by a sinuous and long path, slowly arrived at the end of their pilgrimage. The answers being ready, the priests commissioned to transmit them repaired to profound and deep apartments, contiguous to a well, the orifice of which terminated in the temple. This well, crowned by an altar, being enclosed by a little hemispherical roof, supported in its external parts the colossal figure of Apollo; the mouth of this statue being half open, in the middle of a large and majestic beard, appeared always ready to pronounce the supreme decrees. It was also through this opening, by the means of a long speaking-trumpet, that the priests at the bottom of this den of mystery and superstition made known those famous oracles so imposing and so powerful in their effects upon the human soul as to impede for centuries the substitution of the more pure and holy precepts of the gospel.

#### DECAPITATION BY THE GUILLOTINE.

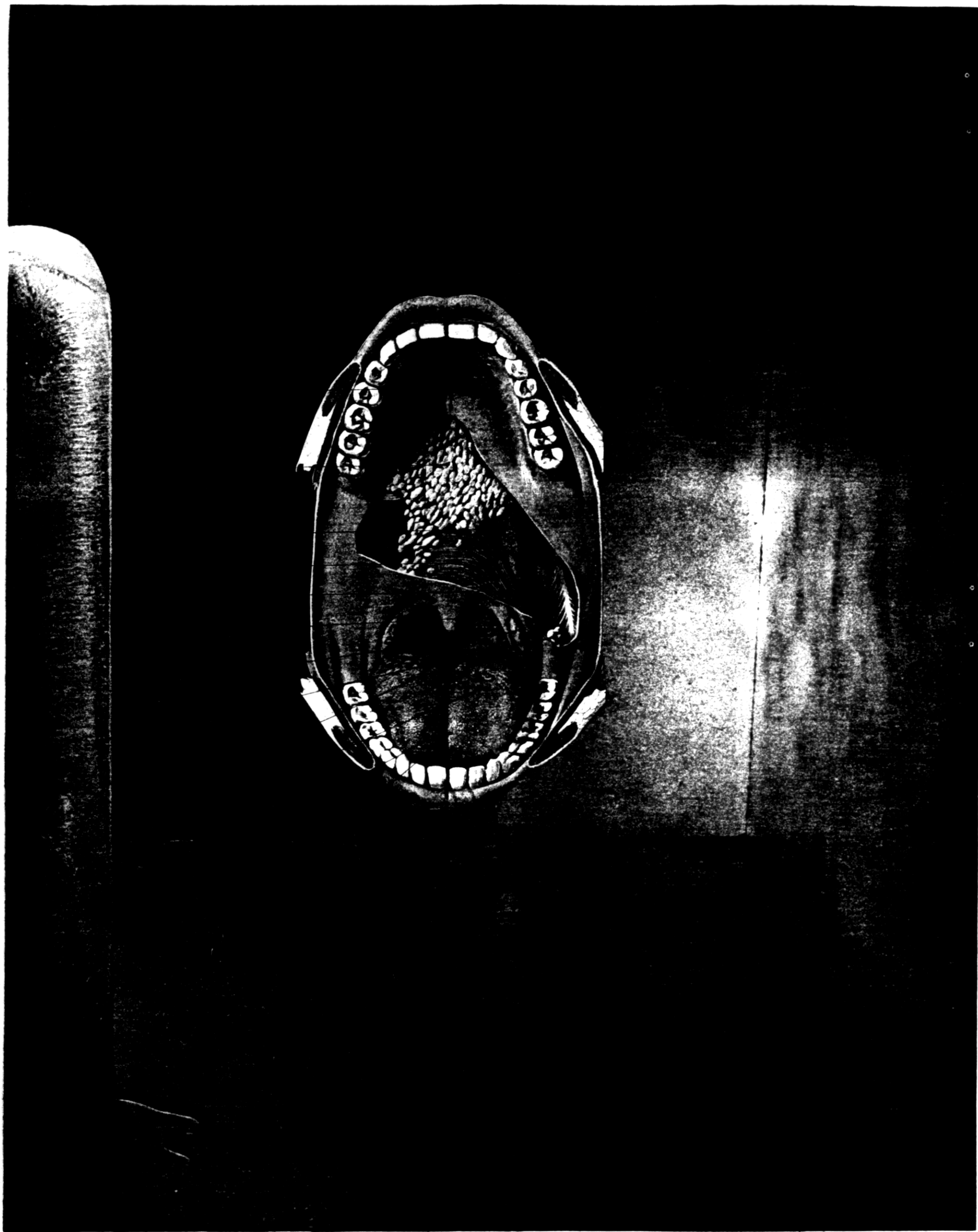
A gentleman of intelligence and literary attainments, makes, in an account of his travels on the continent, the following most singular remarks on an execution he witnessed, in which the culprit was beheaded by the guillotine:—"It appears," says he, "to be the best of all possible modes of inflicting the punishment of death; combining the greatest impression on the spectator, with the least possible suffering to the victim. It is so rapid, that I should doubt whether there were any suffering; but from the expression of the countenance, when the executioner held up the head, I am inclined to believe that sense and consciousness may remain for a few seconds after the head is off. The eyes seemed to retain speculation for a moment or two, and there was a look in the ghastly stare with which they stared upon the crowd, which implied that the head was aware of its ignominious situation."

#### MONKEYS DEMANDING THEIR DEAD.

Mr. Forbes tells a story of a female monkey (the *Semnopithecus Entellus*) who was shot by a friend of his, and carried to his tent. Forty or fifty of her tribe advanced with menacing gestures, but stood still when the gentleman presented his gun at them. One, however, who appeared to be the chief of the tribe, came forward, chattering and threatening in a furious manner. Nothing short of firing at him seemed likely to drive him away; but at length he approached the tent door with every sign of grief and supplication, as if he were begging for the body. It was given to him, he took it in his arms, carried it away, with actions expressive of affection, to his companions, and with them disappeared. It was not to be wondered at that the sportsman vowed never to shoot another monkey.

#### CURIOUS DISPUTE AND APPROPRIATE DECISION.

Fuller, in his 'Holy State,' p. 170, gives a very *apposite* story; a poor man in Paris, being very hungry, went into a cook shop, and staid there so long, (for the master was dishing-up meat,) that his appetite being lessened by the steam, he proposed to go without his meal; the cook insisted upon payment all the same. At length, the altercation was agreed to be referred to the first person that passed the door; that person happened to be a notorious idiot. Having heard the complaint, he decreed that the poor man's money should be placed between two empty dishes, and that the cook should be recompensed with the jingling of his cash, as the other was with the fumes of the meat; and this little anecdote is literally matter of fact.



# WITCH VISIONS

VARIOUS ointments or unguents were made and employed by witches, which were supposed to enable them to fly in the air, to see spirits, and produce other mysterious effects, and there is no doubt that some of these were highly active preparations.

The secret of the composition of these ointments was jealously guarded, but we have been able to gather from various manuscripts several recipes said to have been used in the sixteenth century.

Baptista Porta gives a recipe for an unguent used by the witches in Italy in the sixteenth century. It is composed of aconite, boiled with the leaves of the poplar, then mixed with soot and made into an ointment with *human fat*.

In this, the aconite, or monk's-hood, a common plant in the country, is the active ingredient. It is a powerful poison and contains several alkaloidal principles, the chief of which is aconitine, a minute quantity of which will cause death. Applied externally, aconite produces a tingling sensation, which is succeeded by numbness of the part. The soot was used simply as a colouring agent, and the fat as a vehicle for making the unguent. Another formula, of the same period, consists of *Acorus vulgare*, *Versperillionis sanguinem* and *Solanum somniferum* boiled together in oil. To this, Indian hemp and stramonium were sometimes added, and the whole made into an ointment with the blood and fat of night-birds.

In this recipe there are three highly toxic substances. Belladonna is a strong poison and given internally will produce delirium. Its active



WITCHES MAKING THEIR  
MAGIC UNGUENT  
(From a woodcut of the XV century.  
Ulric Molitor.)

principle, atropine, has a powerful effect on the eyes. Indian hemp, taken internally, produces a kind of intoxication, attended by exhilaration of spirits and hallucinations, followed by narcotic effects, sleep and stupor. Stramonium, or thorn-apple, yields a principle called daturine, which, like atropine, dilates the pupils of the eyes and will cause delirium. The "blood and fat of nightbirds" were of course innocuous, and were doubtless introduced as elements of mystery.

Another ointment was prepared by mixing "aconite, belladonna, water parsley, cinquefoil and baby's fat."

The water parsley was probably cowbane or water hemlock, a herb of a highly poisonous nature.

Hemlock, given internally, may produce delirium and contains a powerful alkaloid called conine, which causes paralysis of the voluntary muscles.

There is little doubt that both the magician and the

witch knew the properties and effects of many of these plants, from experience gained in their use in the fumigations employed at all their ceremonies.

Besides the drugs mentioned, they also employed hellebore, which contains a powerful principle called veratrine, that has a strong irritating action on the skin; henbane, a narcotic which contains among other poisonous alkaloids hyoscyamin, which dilates the pupils of the eyes; and mandrake, which, owing to its active principle mandragorine, has powerful narcotic properties and was used by the Greeks in ancient times as an anæsthetic, owing to its action in producing deep sleep and stupor. From the poppy they got the soporific effects of opium.

Other formulæ are also found which are quite innocuous, as the following, said to have been used by witches for working magic and seeing visions:

"An ointment to see spirits.

"Take the gall of a bull, ants eggs and ye fat of a white hen all mixed together and anoynt your eyes to see spirits."

"Anoynt your face with ye fat of a lap-wing, or ye blood of a lap-wing, and of a bat or a goat and make an ointment."

Bull's gall, diluted with water, was used as an application to the eyes by the Anglo-Saxons. It was reputed to have the property of "clearing" and improving the sight, and was a well-known domestic remedy for affections of the eyes.

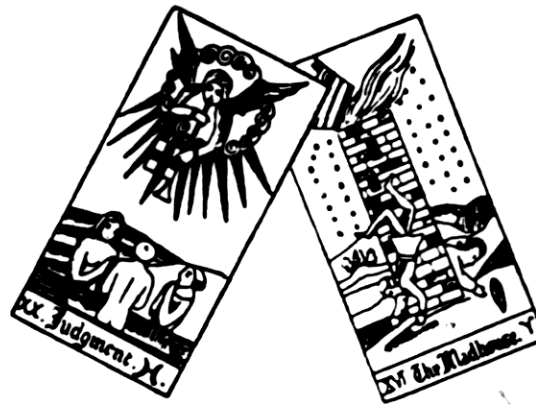
Another magical eye ointment used by witches to "see visions" is given in a sixteenth-century MS. and is directed to be prepared as follows:

"Take 8 pint Sallet oyle and put it into a real glasse and at first wash it with rose water and marygold flower water the flowers being gathered towards the east. Wash it until the oyle come white then put it into the glasse and then put thereto the buds of holyhocke the flowers of marygold, the flowers or tops of wild thyme and the buds of young hazel. The thyme must be gathered near the side of a hill where the fayries use to be oft and the grasse of a fayre throne there. All these put into the oyle in the glasse and get it to dissolve 3 days in the Sunne and then keep it for thy use. Ut Supra.

"Anoynt under the eyelids and upon them morning and evening but especially when you call or finde your sight not perfect."

EYE ENJOY DESTROYING EVERYTHING.  
because eye enjoy leaving nothing undestroyed.  
JUPITTER-LARSEN

AN INTERVIEW WITH LOUIS MIGUEL RÍAZ



GRIMOIRE: Could you please explain the term "automatic horror" and how this process works.

RÍAZ: I can easily explain the term itself, which simply denotes the consequences of "automatic writing" when applied to the utmost limit. If a writer allows the deepest stratum of his consciousness to do the talking, the transcript of oratory will always be one that is appalling, in varying ways and degrees, to the upper levels.

GRIMOIRE: But how automatic is automatic horror? Yours seem every bit as structured as, if you'll pardon the expression, manual narratives. Consciously controlled, that is.

RÍAZ: You're assuming there's no structure to be found in the abyss of the individual mind and perhaps not even in the fundament of being itself. That the universe is founded upon an indifferent chaos has traditionally been a soothing conception. The infinite armies of atoms are blameless because they care not what they do. They're not responsible for their own nightmare by virtue of the universal disarray. But so does a bed of crystals seem to be a disarray, until you observe the rigid inner design. And in automatic horror the design observed can be a very dismaying one, at least to those sensitive enough to catch on. Of course not all instances of automatic writing yield such horrific treasures, meaning that the practitioner's brain did not touch absolute bottom. Then again, there may be more involved than merely searching the depths of an individual consciousness. Automatic horror could be a breaking through to some supra-zone linked to all matter and sensation. But this intrudes upon the totally unknown and its establishable validity, in my opinion, is ultimate-zero. Theoretically, of course, this concept is crawling with possibilities.



GRIMOIRE: Perhaps you could elaborate on some of them for us.

RÍAZ: I really don't think I should have to. The idea that if a brain with a penchant for literary composition can penetrate to the fount of its own awareness, it will inevitably produce horror texts is certainly not new with my writing. Others have already repeatedly exploited this principle in their own works, that ultimate knowledge is ultimate horror, that to understand all is to dread all, etcetera.

GRIMOIRE: Are you saying that automatic horror is just another backdrop to literary creation?

RÍAZ: From a certain viewpoint--not my own--yes, that's all I'm saying. My own viewpoint claims much more. You have to understand that for years I've lived and breathed what you've termed a "backdrop to literary creation." If my outlook is a somewhat dogmatic one, it has not been arrived at hastily or without laborious examination. All the mocking services of my skepticism have been placed at my imagination's disposal.



At grave personal risk, I might add.

GRIMOIRE: Your experiments in automatic horror.

RÍAZ: Yes. There is, of course, much more involved than sitting at a desk where a blank sheet of paper and a steaming cup of coffee have been placed in convenient proximity. In fact, this is hardly ever the case. More often I'm undergoing or have just emerged from some critical turbulence of the psyche, not to say it doesn't reach beyond this handy psychological focus. And this, I'd like to point out, is only superficially related to those simulated states of mental turmoil used by the surrealists of old for their production line automatic writings. I've never simulated anything.

GRIMOIRE: Is it true that you deliberately incited a group of roughnecks in a bar to threaten your life in order to write "Thou Strike Me Dead"?

RÍAZ: Of course it isn't true. I religiously avoid instigating conflicts both within and outside myself. I equally avoid avoiding them. If some instance of internal or external derangement arises, I merely do my best to let it take its course and lead me where it will. But the difficult, the impossible thing is to follow it all the way without at some point having your involuntary protective mechanisms force you to turn back. Even the most minor crisis cannot be allowed full flow, because even the least trickle of chaos will lead you back to that infinite ocean of horrors which is the source of all being. For instance, a moment of panic deriving from some precarious episode on the highway, if you could only keep from blocking out its implications, would pulverize your every atom right down to the dead cells of your toenails.

GRIMOIRE: And if you could withstand such an onslaught of information and then express it in language...

RÍAZ: Yes, you could write the words that would drive the reader mad, the truly forbidden book. This is only a mythical beast of horror fiction, though. No writer could ever approach this achievement, except perhaps by sheer accident, that is automatically. This cataclysmic act would have to be unthinking in the extreme, like jumping off a high building, just to see what it felt like, and only remembering on the way down that you would die and never have the leisure to contemplate your experience. It would be self-assassination of the most thorough kind. You would literally destroy whatever cohesive stuff it is that enables you to sustain whatever illusions your existence is based upon. The worst always happens, or seems to, automatically, by accident. Who would ever desire such a



thing?

GRIMOIRE: It's been said that you did in your narrative about the New Orleans bordello which by force of voodoo managed to impress an old-fashioned angel into the services of the house. The concluding passage where the protagonist imagines he's eating the angelified flesh...

RÍAZ: Are there many other questions? I'm rather tired.

GRIMOIRE: Just a few more, if you would be so kind. It might seem like a lot to ask, but could you give a brief definition of horror.

RÍAZ: I don't think a definition is so much needed as a history, an excavation into horror's origins. This is a monumental undertaking and right now I could only sketch out the first few pages of such a chronicle. Should I bother?

GRIMOIRE: Please do, by all means.

RÍAZ: All right, then. First, horror did not always exist and is probably not universal among all the varieties of sentient life. Though the horror experienced by certain types of vegetable and animal life under certain conditions may be an unending source of speculation, I can only speak with authority for my own kind. We can imagine that the first experience of horror was bestowed upon a humanal prototype just below the line of Australopithecus. This creature might have been swimming across a narrow width of river to reach his primitive social unit, vaguely musing on the meal and mate waiting for him on the other side. But suddenly the fulfillment of his diffuse but intense longings is threatened, as they have been countless times in the past. This time the threat takes the form of a fishy predator with a man-sized mouth which is wide open and heading straight for our hungry/lonely pre-human. But this time a new dimension of feeling emerges from the crisis of physical survival. Og, or whatever his name may be, swims as fast as he can toward safety, but as he thrashes through the murky water it becomes clear to him, in a way it never has before, just what is happening, and for the first time he is consciously, brilliantly aware of what may happen if he doesn't reach shore before The Beast reaches his hysterically paddling feet. He will be reduced to a morsel, the kind he unthinkingly shoves into his own mouth every day of his life.



Post-morselization, he will never see others of his kind again, and they will never see him. But the formula for true horror is not complete until Og asks himself that utterly unnecessary and unanswerable question: How could a thing like this happen? Even when Og is safely on the river bank and panting from his ordeal, this question continues to haunt him. Afterward the whole world looks different, very strange. And The Beast, which previously was confined to the world of water, now lives everywhere-- in flowers, in shadows, even in dead things. It lives in the moon and sweeps down every night to invade Og's dreams. It lives in the very air Og breathes. At first no one else understands what Og's problem is. But it is only a matter of time before everyone begins seeing The Beast, whether it's really there or not, and Horror has been delivered into the world. Do you get the general idea?

GRIMOIRE: Yes, it seems clear enough. One last question. Are you still writing horror and will you continue to do so?

RÍAZ: Briefly, yes I am. But whether or not I will continue to produce horror texts is not really up to me. I will as long as my inspiration is going strong. Frankly, though, I look forward to the day when it peters out, when I've exhausted every horrific theme latent within my brain. Let someone else write the work that drives everyone mad. I'll just sit and stare out the window and watch the seasons pass. After all, perhaps the only true happiness, the only true glory, lies midway between absolute horror and absolute boredom: dreaming at your ease, waiting for a coffee and dessert to be served to you in a pleasant restaurant with a good view of the twilight...

GRIMOIRE: Thank you, Mr. Ríaz.

RÍAZ: My pleasure.



## SARDONIC MUNDANE

The marvelous...is an imposition, concluded the gentleman seated over by the window, his head buried in a newspaper. Imagine the night sky turning out to be the skin of a cobra all along, only with its usual evenly distributed glistening concentrated into an infinite number of discrete and widely-spaced points. Who cares! What really affects a person are things like that loud-mouthed infant disturbing the atmosphere of an otherwise tolerable restaurant. Not exceptional, just tolerable, he concluded. His second conclusion that day, but it was still only lunchtime.

"I'm sorry, sir," the waiter replied to the gentleman's order. "All we have left today is two-head soup. But it's our specialty."

"A baby crying so noisily that I can hardly read my newspaper, and I've waited all this time simply for the pleasure of being told that all I can eat in this place is thin soup. You'll have to do better than that. I could go across the street, you know."

The waiter bowed graciously and removed himself, returning a few moments later.

"Sir, I'm pleased to inform you that today we have an excellent three-head soup."

"So! I sit here reading the same paragraph over and over without understanding a word of it because some little whelp is yammering in the background, and now my sole consolation is to consume a sickeningly thick soup which would probably give me a blood condition, if I didn't already have one."

The waiter bowed even more graciously than the first time and, once again, removed himself. The gentleman reburied his head in his newspaper, looking up only when the expressionless waiter returned with a tray bearing a big steaming bowl. (A few packages of crackers were already on the table.)

"Well, at least that brat has shut himself up," said the gentleman, heartily picking up a large spoon from the table. "I suppose I'll just have to take my chances with the soup. Can't have everything in this life; I know that."

"Especially prepared for you, sir," said the waiter as he set down the bowl before the gentleman's eyes: "Two and a half-head soup."

"Oh, my God!" gasped the would-be gourmet (his words not so much spoken as exhaled) when he looked down into the bowl, his hand growing white around that enormous spoon. And everyone in the restaurant was now gazing at the seated paralytic, an intense but in no way ostentatious hatred in their eyes. Finally the waiter inclined his face toward the gentleman's.

"You ordered it, you eat it," he whispered through a perfect set of teeth.

--Louis Miguel Ríaz



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excerpt from DREAMS OF THE ZODIAC

Another party, this time very remote: a sprawling old house at woods edge, moon-stabbing pines in the background. Everyone was very ill-looking, the worst I've seen, but elegant somehow. The wax-faced women wore long gowns with long sleeves ending in satin gloves; dark stockings covered what little I could see of their legs; and what hair they had left was used to veil, with pathetic sparseness, the yellow tallowy margins of forehead and cheekbone, occasionally hiding a jaw or even chin. Elaborate eye make-up helped them enormously. The men resorted to dark glasses and large hats with ample and somewhat limp brims. At least most of the men so equipped themselves (this time!), and the ones who didn't I deeply wish had. All were holding champagne glasses with delicate crystal stems and galaxies of bubbles in their bowls,



but of course even such dainty glassware seemed to burden, with many times its true weight, those thin and hard-to-control hands. Frequent spills were to be expected, though as always they did their best to keep this to a minimum. I witnessed two such mishaps which soaked the front of their poor victims' expensive evening clothes, and I'm sure there were many more. Fortunately the champagne was a colorless liquid (the doctor showing great considerateness in this detail), and only left a wet patch which dried up soon afterwards.

I decided to wear dark glasses for once, but my full head of well-groomed hair still made me stand out in the crowd. The doctor spotted me almost immediately and guided us into a quiet corner.

"You could have also worn a hat, you know," he scolded.

"You never wear either hat or glasses," I replied. "And I've always meant to ask why you keep that thick beard of yours. It must be a source of despair for every man in this room, myself excepted."

"I'm their doctor. Though they may unconsciously despise me for it, in their hearts they're glad I'm not as they are. How do you like this party?"

For some reason I didn't bother with the usual lies and consolations. "You can't really expect me to be enthusiastic," I said, but the doctor pretended not to hear. Odd as it may seem, I think he actually has a host's pride in his handling of these sad affairs. While my own composure can only be attributed to a morose need of the



good doctor's money, he himself appears to be genuinely at ease with the horrible.

"You're a little early tonight, aren't you?" he asked, glancing at his watch.

"You want me to leave?"

"No, not at all. It's just that, well, you can see how nervous they're getting now that you're here. I think they thought there would be more time. You could show a little feeling anyway."

"And what if I did," I said in a tense whisper. "Do you really believe that would help matters?"

He knew it wouldn't and said nothing in reply.

"You want me to get lost for a little while?" I said, my hand discreetly hooding the words. The doctor nodded gravely. "I think I'll just wander around the upstairs of this nice big house. Call up to me or something when you want me to start."

He scratched his beard audibly, which I took as my signal to take my leave.

Upstairs much longer than ever before. Lights didn't work. Sat in a trapezoid of moonlight for many silent moments. Began to get worried and came downstairs before getting the doctor's go-ahead.

It was quiet downstairs, much too. The doctor squatted on the landing, his face buried in his hands.

"What happened?" I asked. "Where is everybody?"

"Wrong, wrong. I don't know. They all ran out the back door," he said, pointing. "They must be down by the lake now."

"No problem," I said consolingly. "I'll just finish things there."

He stared at me straight in the face, and I didn't like the look in his old surgeon's eyes.

"You don't understand."

"What do you mean?" I asked without having to.

"They still have much of their brains left," he answered, also without having to. But I did expect him to add: "And mouths, too. Mouths that can speak to you."

There was, of course, every reason for my not hesitating another second, for not thinking about it at all. I proceeded quickly, though not wildly, toward the door at the back of the house; but by the time it slammed itself behind me, I was running as fast as I could down to the lake in the pines. The moon overhead was full and bright and beautiful.

I followed the voices which mingled with the sounds of the wind. When I reached the lake, I saw them all scrambling along the shore. But some of them had already begun that kind of dancing which is so dreadful to watch: none of them was larger than a dinner plate and their multiply radiating legs (with pincers by now) made them look like unholy pinwheels spinning in the moonlight. Very dreadful. And the doctor was right, they still had much of their brains left. Too much...they knew what was happening to them. Not like the other times. And they did have their mouths, yes indeed, right in the middle of their brittle pink bodies. When my presence became generally known, they began scuttling around at my feet.

"Kill us, kill us," they chanted in their many tiny voices. "Kill us before we change more. Some of us are dancing ones. Some of us have gone into the lake forever. Kill us, please, kill us."

"That's what I'm here for," I said, but only to myself.

I picked up a few heavy rocks and went to work. I think I got most of them, too. Later, when I returned to the house, I told the doctor I had got them all. He didn't challenge me on it. Needed to believe me, poor man. Also, he promised to take precautions insuring that this kind of thing would never happen again. Gave me a bonus that seemed to make it all worthwhile.

--Louis Miguel Ríaz

# Other men's lives



Primal Intentions/Contributors:

Bruce Boston's latest story collection is SHE COMES WHEN YOU'RE LEAVING from the Berkeley Poets' Workshop and Press...G. Sutton Breiding publishes THE SURREALIST EXCHANGE and THE CLERK'S JOURNAL in San Francisco...Laurence C. Bush is a California writer interested in fantasy and surrealism...Tim Caldwell of Wyandotte, Michigan has done artwork for many magazines...Charles G. Finney is the author of THE CIRCUS OF DR. LAO, a classic fantasy novel...Andrew Joron edits the surreal VELOCITIES, while Gerald Jupiter-Larsen edits the nasty K-S MAGAZINE...Kevin Knapp is a Livonia, Michigan poet...Lyn Lifshin has written many books of poetry, all of them terrific...Millea Kenin edits OWLFLIGHT, a magazine of alternative SF and fantasy...horror writer Thomas Ligotti is GRIMOIRE'S new contributing editor, an esteemed position to be sure...Benton McAdams, who has a story in SPACE AND TIME, claims he likes Rockford, Illinois... Louis Miguel Ríaz, currently living in exile, is the author of DREAMS OF THE ZODIAC and other books...Michael Roden publishes neat little books of comix and collage...wising up, Tina Said has just moved to Michigan...John Thompson is the author of ETERNAL COMIX, SPHINX COMIX, and other undergrounds...Denis Tiani is a Michigan artist who has done work for Arkham House...Billy Wolfenbarger's poems are found in the small press fantasy magazines...and all of these people can be reached c/o GRIMOIRE although, quite frankly, they probably wouldn't give a damn what you had to say...





