

EVIL MEN

by

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A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

A collection of short stories interested in the nature of evil as it relates to the formulation of masculine identity. As means of this exploration, the collection engages a multitude of forms and narrative styles, as well as endeavors to build a broad cultural framework for storytelling.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foremost thanks to my parents for being incredibly supportive of me through all my ventures, providing me with so many of the tools I have as a writer and a person, and helping me lead such a fascinating and varied life. Thanks to my friends for their support, inspiration, and camaraderie.

Thanks to Michael Martone for his direction and encouragement on the project, in particular those (many) stories I developed while in his workshop, often as a direct result of his wisdom and kindness. Thanks to Joel Brouwer and Kate Bernheimer for serving on my committee and being helpful not only with this book but my entire tenure at Alabama.

Stories in the collection have appeared in *Pank*, *Fawlt*, *The Baltimore Review*, and *Pindeldyboz*.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,
good evening. Or morning. Or late
into the night. Whatever the case may be.

Hello. It is my privilege standing before you today to introduce *Evil Men*. *Evil Men* is, quite simply, a book of just that. Or just them. It is a hyperactive mix of our lesser angels cavorting in rarefied air. It is soiled Eden. But, before you assume some correspondence with reality television, *America's Most Wanted* and the like, I tell you it's not just a sordid collection of the depraved and lowbrow. No, it is that and even more. In each story the author explores a different manifestation of evil and attempts, I believe, to get at the root of the condition. It is nature, nurture, and nasty. It is a collection of stories for our times. But I will allow you to make that declaration for yourselves; I am confident you will.

Without further ado... *Evil Men*.







whatevs douchebag



Gilbert Glavel

Gilbert Glavel was a deviant homosexual pornographer. He was a playboy poet fop. Like Jesus Christ, he committed suicide at the age of 33. In time, it came to be considered a “metaphysical work.” The portrait of Gilbert Glavel, painted by a Futurist master, hangs in the Künstlerhaus Wien, displayed in its gilded frame next to a lesser De Chirico. In the picture, Gilbert Glavel holds a small scythe close to his breast; behind him are the twilight suggestions of a deep cave lit dull ochre by the light of a waning moon. The careful viewer notes Gilbert Glavel in the act of fixed preparation: he will enter the cave to harvest the nests of the sparrows that nest within. Climbing ropes flung around knobby outcroppings with the scythe clasped firm in his teeth, sweeping the nests from the east then west walls with lazy precision and placing them into a silk case attached to his calfskin belt with a ruby-encrusted gold clip. Then, dusting the dust from his velvet breeches, rearranging his cravat and straightening his topcoat, he pilots his hansom to Zürich’s small Chinatown and sells the nests, a rare and much desired delicacy, for large sums of money or passes them in trade for equally large amounts of opium, a substance to which Gilbert Glavel is hopelessly addicted. Entering the opium den, falling into the uterine cushions, the long pipe swaying from his mouth to the lilted bob of his head, black-toothed boys dressed only in tall felt hats massage his hands and feet as the smoke plumes from his open mouth into the webbed corners of the broken hospice. Some hours later taking crude daguerreotypes of the same boys cavorting in all manners of antic horseplay to sell to cramped civil servants or be used in service of elaborate schemes. Given the proper black-toothed boy and the requisite blank company, Gilbert

Glavel forgoes the prurient representation and instead, with uncommon swiftness, sinks the scythe deep into the boy's neck and watches the blood cascade from the boy's angled veins into a wooden bucket Gilbert Glavel places to catch the blood and, as the flow tempers, washes his hands in the blood of the still sputtering black-toothed boy; the remnant liters then alchemically turned into a highly-prized facial cream that Gilbert Glavel provides to matrons of Swiss and Austrian society. His hands are remarkably smooth. The well-placed matrons providing Gilbert Glavel with a similarly valuable commodity: the drunken rants of equally well-placed husbands or the pillow talk of worse-placed lovers. A repository of potential intrigue that Gilbert Glavel finds unmatched, and one that allows his own tacks a tidal security. He takes advantage of this good fortune to numerous effect, most enjoyably earning the rank of Viceroy of Hindustan where Gilbert Glavel performs similar devotional acts with similar downtrodden boys, making provisions for the maharajah's wife *gratis*. Upon his return to the continent at the age of 31, having recovered from a bout of cholera that leaves him infirm for some many months in an unending hallucination not dissimilar to the more sinister branch in the oeuvre of Hieronymus Bosch—a delightful tidbit—Gilbert Glavel removes himself from the increasingly tiresome world of European aristocracy and enters instead into pursuit of his new life's mission—during his convalescence he had been called in a vision; it was the angel Gabriel—by beginning the composition of a book of mystical insights in the Sufi tradition. These he has directly experienced with varied imbibements and illnesses and varied designs of men and boys, devoting himself exclusively to this act aside from the occasional visit to his tailor or the caves for nests to trade for opium which, while traveling in the Kashmir among the prince's retinue, he learns to refine into heroin that he injects intravenously into his feet, unwilling to leave an impure trace or discoloration upon his china arms or swan soft neck. Upon conclusion of his messianic tome, he promptly eats it, page by page, with the accompaniment of a delightful

brandy given to him by a pasha in Constantinople in exchange for his discretion—the pasha a fruit of notorious appetite—a pact that he kept—and then slowly undresses and begins a course of vigorous exercise, vomiting the undigested pages onto the walls and floor, where they are later discovered and reassembled by the famed conservator Adolf Baer, a fastidious man well up to the task. Not but an hour on, Gilbert Glavel leaps from the roof of his highest balconies, still naked, a hemp cord fixed around his previously unblemished neck in his ultimate act of auto-erotic asphyxiation. On the anniversary of his death—a holiday for some—the schoolchildren of Zürich stand guard his tomb and recite his verse in unison. Often, at the sound of their chorus, old matrons weep fitfully.

Essay to the Exhibition: *Croatian Drug Camp*

Croatian Drug Camp was discovered by shepherd Milosk Blondynki, his Austro-Hungarian hound sniffing its way to the top of Rasip Veli, a hilly islet of the Kornati Stretch of Adriatic Islands, and coming upon the site in all its effluvial glory; we arriving but 28 hours on—as soon as word reached—via Leer Jet then Hovercraft—to pick our way through the crisp manifestation of D.'s miraculous intent. It was a composition assuredly his, indicated as much by the subtle sense of linear disregard as by the ripped paper found underneath the central spatial divider of rusted wire cot (a masterstroke of foreground definition). On the page, a note with words emblazoned in blood: *I come to Zadar to Rekkreate.*

D.'s penmanship unmistakable to us, having studied the man in countless white boxes and dark rooms—thousands of half-lidded eyes in drooling quietude, our thumb needling the projector remote, clacking slides to punctuate the fan's gravelly hum—not to mention the results of an electron scan/DNA analysis delivered via telephone from our colleague Alberto Piva across the sea in Bologna. “*Che sboro!*” said Alberto, “*Che D.!*”

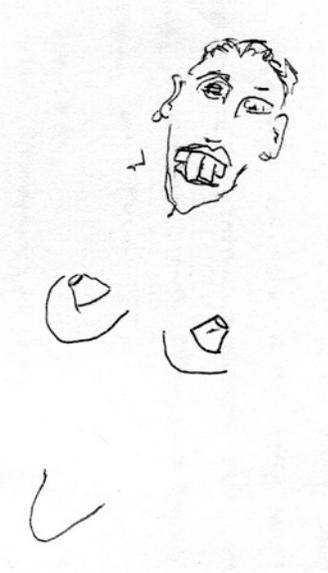
Our assumption having received microscopic verification, it is then an exploration of form we embark upon, moving steadfastly forward to uncover the genesis of D.'s final artistic manifestation. Incumbent upon us, as it is, to corroborate our unequivocal declaration of the installation *Croatian Drug Camp* as D.'s ultimate achievement, though we say “ultimate” with a degree of hesitation, and in lieu of his express word on the matter, as we have not seen the man—Is he dead? In hiding?—he who made habit of at least semi-regular correspondence with us, we being

his biographer and most-ardent champion. A concentration, it should be noted, not without its professional perils: the ridicule foisted upon us by countless curatorial ninnies blind to D.'s transcendental genius. With our exception, it is fair to say that Art Historians quake at D.

But of the piece we were contracted to discuss (without being so gauche as to mention that this editorial slight leaves other of D.'s works unattended but to hands capable of little but savage misunderstanding or, at best, shallow mimicry of our own well-stated positions): critical exegesis commonly traces the nativity of *Croatian Drug Camp* to Venice's Campo Santa Margherita (this is the first documented reference), but one can well imagine the initial encounter with überteen on the Zadarian shore as the true fruition of the piece within D.'s mind. This formation is not to say that D. was incapable of operational preplanning per se, but the conventions of art-making (ie: usage of traditional materials) being largely absent from the finished installation do lend a certain credence to this supposition of the beginning stages of conception. It is likewise crucial to note the presence of überteen's companion. In our view, it is the perpetual failure of contemporary scholarship to neglect the Hun (überteen's keeper), an omission that serves as much to reflect a certain larger mischaracterization of D.'s patriarchal tendencies than any generalized statement of the art establishment's overall ignorance (though that too). The work, like most, if not all, of D.'s oeuvre, drawn with the goal of immediate, visceral apprehension, on the part of both viewer and artist; a charmingly perverse anti-intellectuality so often absent in the work of D.'s contemporaries; a condition to which any Chelsea gallery walker can surely attest, having finished the circuit with the beckoning specter of enjoying the warming pleasures of imbibed cocktail and conversation, instead is graced with an untoward tear to the nearest washbasin, feverish and caressed with retching. *Croatian Drug Camp* is wholly free of this noisome clap-trap of self-gratifying technical masturbation, but instead relies on pithy narrative construction and tightly bounded image.

It is enough to simply imagine D.'s first sighting of his muse, überteen, with the same apprehension and delectation as he must have himself experienced, a scholarly tack no doubt as thrilling as it is enlightening: that barely hint of flesh conceived amidst the hustle of Zadar's Bistok

CHRONO: 3:50 PM



CHRONO: 3:50 PM., date unknown, sketchbook #2. Backside bleed: *LEVER, PULLEY, SLING / MERIT OF ORTHODONTURE: / MAKE ATTRACTIVE SMILE.* Image courtesy: Listasafn Reykjavikur, Reykjavik, Ísland.

touristic enclave—a Euro-trash esplanade of spent ice-cream wrappers—her lithe form clarified within a demarcated octagon of tent-poled umbrellas and crucified slats of broken lounge chairs: D.'s intrinsic desire for preternatural framing well-satiated. (We in fact put forth that it was this process of natural polygonal rendering that induced him past conception, more so this than the subsequent vision of überteen as *lurid oasis in bamboo wasteland*, as others have indicated in a peevish and juvenile misrepresentation of D.'s own writing.) Her slender

shoulders hunched forward as the Hun's flesh-wrapped phalanges lingered about her sparrow's neck, firm hands rubbing the lotion into her body, glittering rings bunched and choking in a lather of milky white; the act of her full becoming in D.'s mind's eye as she lay back,

the contour of her young breasts flush against the bright sky, tight nipples raising themselves skyward, rising and screaming out prurient textual slogans in waves of telekinetic origin to D.'s bandaged cheek and sore teeth: *I. C. U.*—the typography of her breasts tattooed his face. Watch D.'s face pulse as her nipples click and coo like dolphins.

He uncoils his sarong—no doubt picked up on a Tahitian eddy of his not many years past: the working vacation of *El Capitalismo Presidente*: installation cum performance done in Bora Bora: a composition of lips bitten bloody to dangling, broken bottles of imported Mexican beer (perhaps D.'s first well-known use of this aesthetic device), and matches contemplatively tossed

into a pool of gasoline—as he crosses the beach, stern white thighs flashing against the pebbly Croat sand. Then, with the self-assurance of a toreador, placing the sarong down some meters behind where they, the Hun and überteen, sun. Watch D. carefully arrange the sand underneath the sarong in a gradual incline, clearing away the spare bark and pine needles as he does, before leaning back into the newly birthed hump and staring out towards the horizon: fields of muted blue and beige viewed through his signature dark aviator sunglasses; the poking corner of gauze underneath his left eye a foreground Mt. Fuji inverting a scene not unlike the placid Japanese watercolors he was known to have studied and even painstakingly copied as an undergraduate in New York; überteen riding the periphery.

As the later composition seems to indicate, she was initially oblivious to his presence, but the Hun took careful note. See him eye D. crossly as he rubs the lotion into her shoulders, now hunched back, her chest lifted fully in D.'s direction, the soft arcs topped by brazen teepees penetrating the negative space while the Hun's stag horns twinkle: he sniffs loudly and D., overcome in this moment of origination, adjusts his rapidly ballooning penis and tastes blood on his tongue.

Before Zadar, D. *go to Venezia primo*, as the Italians like to say, and we recreate to the best of our ability. We were there too, mind you, *la Biennale di Venezia*, the International Art Extravaganza, for the drafting of an essay to accompany the catalogue of the Portuguese pavilion. Not that we couldn't have done it from London or New York, but we enjoy the Art Farm: artists like row upon row of chickens, cooped and pecking each other's eyes out, the patrons and visitors and

distinguished guests more cows and sheep shitting in the dusty paths between state-sanctioned exhibits on the *Arsenale*.

I come to Rekkreate, D. say. Only in Venice, it was sadly true. Commissioned by a Dutch conglomerate to reproduce his most famed piece thus far, and the initiator of our relationship, the installation *Big Fight*, to his credit with at least the regional addition of a severed goat's head and shattered *Carnivale* knickknacks to his original composition of blood and walls splashed by regurgitated Jägermeister. Documentation of *Big Fight*, aside from the resultant carnage of the sado-masochistic white-urban angst, consisting solely of dental records and X-rays of D.'s broken face. The initial manifestation being an exquisite statement on the practice of ephemeral art and the conflict of performance vs. documentation. This version, *Big Fight 2.0*, less so. His motives unquestioned—he'd done it for the money—but we wonder if this submission to market perhaps played a role in the formation of the later piece (*Croatian Drug Camp*) of which we are at this time primarily concerned—a piece in theory devoid of commercial application (our essay detailing *Big Fight* is widely available, it serves no purpose to quote it here) vis-à-vis his guilt and feelings of being a “fucking sell-out fucking fuck,” as D. himself might say. Burian Turgenev, the Ukrainian he'd recruited for *Big Fight 2.0*'s actuation, cracking D.'s head through the drywall of the white box and putting a slit up the side of his face with a dragging nail—an affront he did not take lightly: “I take his teeth and make diorama on my windowsill,” D. was heard to say in response by a passing registrar, his sore jaw clicking as the words escaped his mouth; before returning to his luxuriant San Marco apartments and the madcap penciling of *Croatian Drug Camp*; before even his first *café*, spit a bacterial swarm having on a dare drunk a puddle of rainwater whilst carousing under the Rialto previous; a morning falling out the window and into a horde of pigeons; in a damp Venetian square; in Campo Santa Margherita drinking aperol spritz upon aperol spritz (*prosecco* and bitters)

and the first concrete illustration of *Croatian Drug Camp*'s formation via our interview re: D.'s interview with shipping magnate and sometimes patron of D., Valery Nordstrom, the insufferable, if not useful, man, whose tab it was to pick up.

Valery's gracious description of the events leads us to believe *Croatian Drug Camp* codified in D.'s mind between talk of inspiration and intent. "Collector wanna know why," D. complained to us on more than one occasion, "I tell Collector, 'ye can make art happen'... with huge slabs of cement, with sheets of corrugated tin, with a dirty brown mattress, with a vagina and myself: dissembled of aura, holy cheek throbbing. Blue blood blossoms the gauze pad. Loose teeth, red snot, and tender jawbones. It fights me and me fights back, geometric hallucinations turned round removed and refigured. I play Tetris with dust-bunnies in the sky... I predict the next swath in the color of my bandaged cheek."

D. smiles at Valery and nicks his French cigarettes.

"It never rains in Dalmatia I'm told," tells D., "*Croatian Drug Camp* is supposed to have rain."

"It's a dreary place then?" Valery ripostes.

"Umm hmm," moans D., knocking back the glass. He makes *Signora, un' otre* with hand signals.

"Hmm..." goes Valery.

"There is a machine that makes rain," says D., "a throbbing machine that eats atmosphere and spits out dark clouds. It's a beautiful contraption, shiny, will make most beautiful pictures on the handout."

"Hmm..." goes Valery.

“There will be a corrugated tin roof placed over the existent cement bunker, a dirty mattress, constant plinking rain.”

“Interesting.”

“...”

“I’m getting a divorce you know.”

“That’s terrible,” says D., “really fucking godawful.”

“*Si*, it’s a rough bit of business.”

“I dunno what to say,” says D.

“It’s the money, my boy. She wants it all.”

“Aye Aye.”

“...”

D. leans up conspiratorial, taking Valery by the shoulder, “But what price art?” he spits out, a chunk of pistachio landing on the table.

Valery smiles, nods, pulls out his checkbook.

D. bows gently, swaying and showing mossy teeth. He says *gracias* in expectorant Castilian and goes to find it.

Croatian Drug Camp *makes activation*.

Upwards Venezia falls Trieste where Ulysses landed, and we too journey there, following the path of D. out of Venezia, its choked alleys and dead art, into the great Italian brush-fire and the country of its own, Trieste. Nigerian and Eastern European émigrés sell knock-off Gucci in the heat, speak Italian with a Slavic accent and thread the sun. Imagine D. with his digital gear, in full preparation, the limestone reflection burning his eyes. We watch Slovenian *Budvar* girls make

nice with yacht enthusiasts and think, what would D. think? What would he do? Where would he be? We put ourselves within him, feel glorious. The Slovenians trade sexual favors to the octogenarians for an imaginary Firenze holiday—the smell of dead cow on an Arno quay, faded mornings of *cappuccini* and *brioche* watching dead rats bloat. We take an afternoon tonic in the James Joyce café while D., knowing D., sat with bug-eyed miscreants outside the bus depot munching a cheese and tomato sandwich and sharing his flask. We rent a Fiat and drive across the border. The path of D.—as corroborated by his sketchbook—leads us to meet the sculpture of Ivan Mestrovic, patron art saint of Croatia and one-time resident of South Bend, Indiana, and to compose in his garden, where D. likewise sat.



2. FRONT VIEW JOB #88, sketch of Ivan Mestrovic's Job #88, date unknown, sketchbook #1.
Image courtesy: Emirates Fine Arts Society (at The Arts Centre), Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

We uproot the grass and ask ourself questions: Why Zadar? How did D. know to find *Croatian Drug Camp* there? In Croatia at all? It is not clear to us if he had ever visited the Balkans previous, we tend to think not; for his now-almost-mythic wanderlust, he was really a parochial sort of fellow in our opinion and preferred New York. “*Falafel, Chana Saag*, and crack cocaine within a block of my studio,” he used to say. We guess it was divinely inspired, even if in saying such a thing we are in full contradiction of D. Mostly he was drunk and met a Bosnian prostitute—husband castrated and hung by Serbs—working off that damage with more grievous penetrations—while trolling Venetian dive-bars. She spoke of the Kornati Islands, and it stuck. He read a short story by Ivo Andric and it reminded him of his childhood in Michigan. He looked at

a map and seeing the jagged coastline said, “Here is my legacy. My contribution to the canon rests here.” Maybe he just happened upon Zadar, it was fully random. We know überteen was, that eventuality would have been impossible to foresee, the Hun’s cooperation too. *Croatian Drug Camp* was born from beautiful random energy, and apparated in the mind of genius.

Zadar is an ugly and useless town full of blind commercial alleyways and circuitous bus-routes, but it does serve as a keen launching off point for the Kornatis, at least that is our supposition. We imagine the exploration to have been going smooth, the scenes clicking by out the autobus window, until—in another stroke of precipitous fate, removing D.’s technological crutch—reports are that a fight broke his digi-cam, a standard brawl, D. grabbing ass or spitting on a barmaid as he was wont. Possibly he seized and pissed himself, a previous injury leaving him susceptible. He once told us the story, possibly fictional, but not being widely circulated, and a rare illustration of garrulous D. (hungover thus lucid), we hereby transcribe:

Bashed repeatedly into a brick wall + kneecapped, from what I rekkall, woke up with a pressure gauge drilled in my skull like holiday meat; the swelling of my brain in need of release. ¶ My friend had died, my friend was dead, and after the funeral I’d wandered off fuzzy and into The Slug and Lettuce where I sat with a collection of mystery novelists and drank cheap vodka drinks and thought about the fact that I hadn’t liked my dead friend that much to begin with and how it was a long way to come for someone I didn’t much care for. ¶ Saint Mary Magdalene’s Churchyard had been cold and my nose dripped into my vodka drink and on the countertop: Mystery Novelists Thought Snot Big Fun. I was

invited back to their house and went and they plied me with bad suburban drugs and my mind became increasingly addled. They discussed plotting, and plot lines, and plot points—all involving Ingenious Serial Killer—and threw me further off-kilter. They called me Narc and threatened me obliquely. ¶ I wondered what I was doing there collapsed as I was into a sooty couch with a clanging brain and vaguely remembered my dead friend and vodka drinks and the fact that I'd been after Suburban Housewife Poon-Tang. They said not-so-nice things about me, these Mystery Novelists, and I became confused by their ill will. There were more threats, less oblique this time, and I realized I had stumbled into a very wicked trap set by very wicked Mystery Novelists. I was but a poor Installation Artist, but in their Suburban Paranoia and Malicious Spirit, they believed me Their Ruination. ¶ I ran screaming up the stairs of their mystery basement and out their mystery home and down the mystery street hoping by God the mystery plot would here turn in my favor as I was deserving: bedecked in funereal garb, crunk, and far from home as I was. I spotted a grocer nearby and I made my way for it, anticipating it was closed but perhaps an available phone booth (call box) at the least—my cellular (mobile) gone missing and rates mighty high anyhow. ¶ The three Turkish boys who hit me in the head with a pipe had been kind enough to direct me just moments before. I was badly beaten, as previously stated, and discovered bloody in the street by a carload of drunken transvestites listening to the Pet Shop Boys at a very high volume. *Facciamo feste?* I mumbled through the remnants of my teeth, confused of my nationality and more generalized State of Being. ¶ I believe that in their stopping was a manifest wish for their very own Simpleton Installation Artist to do with as they pleased, but fortuitously realizing my injuries were more severe (the side of my face caved in, my bloodshot eye hung low on my cheek) than would be amusing, tossed me

on the curb of the nearest infirmary instead, making whooping noises like an ambulance siren the whole way. ¶ Allah is merciful and here should be rightly praised.

A tale told ages ago now, presently we take a lukewarm sip of *acqua minerale* and stare into D.'s landscape. In the Fiat between Karlobag and Bistok, we intone Tuvan melodies while occasionally speaking notes into our tape recorder.

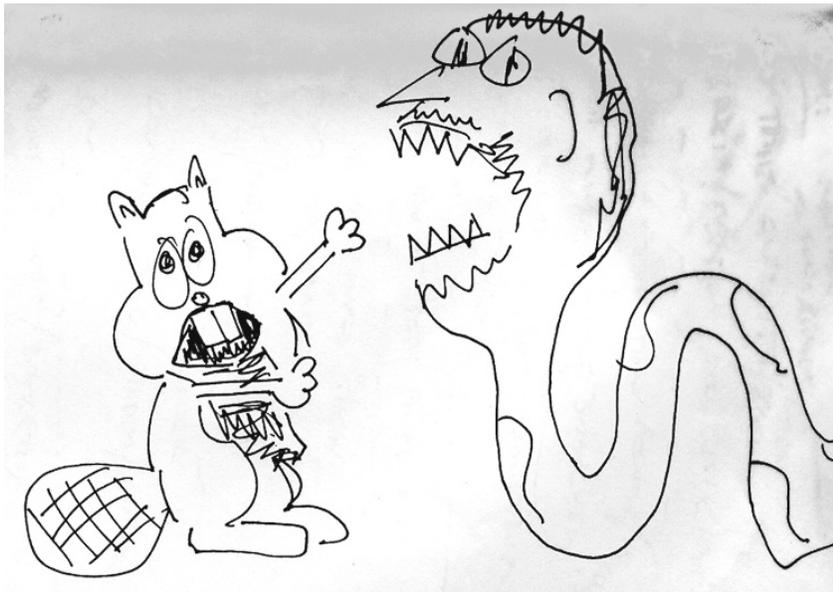
At the sight of *überteen*, we imagine D.'s erection surprised him, vim and eager as it was given the hour and granted exploits of the previous evening. An erection made worse by his decision to purchase a "German-cut" Speedo swimsuit for his continental holiday, meaning slimmer in the crotch than a more conservative design, yet fuller about the buttocks than a "Brazilian-cut" thong bikini. A decision made in all likelihood on a utilitarian basis (a free range of movement and the feel of wind on D.'s lean body) as much as on any exhibitionist tendencies on D.'s part. D.'s erection climbed out his trunks and engaged intercourse with his navel. In preventative measure he opened his book (It is with some authority that we can declare this to be Conrad's *The Secret Agent*.) and rested it low on his lap. The book was given to him by a "tramp Polak with ass like rhinoceros" and *ZGON* (Polish-noun-death) tattooed reverse inside her lower lip. Alejandro Garcia-Lopez, friend of D. and painter of no-small renown, recalled: "D. and I go to pub for talk, you know, and she is there, I dunno her name, and D. takes out his mouth his, eh... how you say, eh, tooth, eh... ah, bridge! and drop in her beer. She like this. They go quickly and make sex, I drink, am bored. D. say like oil machinery in wide gulf, she on handstand. He come back with book."

At Zadar's Bistok enclave, children gobble loudly, ice cream smeared on their faces. Once we find parking for the Fiat, we are hampered by the sand that invades our loafers and grates most

uncomfortably as we tromp towards the scene of D.'s initial strokes. Cotton candy sense makes sticky our fingers.

There is a sketch of the girl as a beaver and the words: *Hers is the face of a Muppet*. We can imagine, given D.'s sometimes tendency towards computer-assisted animation, a beaver with a big flapping tail, two front teeth bucking and peeking over her lower lip and under crossed eyes. From the beaver face: breasts, a hard flat stomach, a mound of flesh between her legs, covering sheer. Wet swirls of new pubic hair snaking underneath the blue plastic blend of her bikini. Even legs shine and stretch down to thin ankles; her feet are gnarled and curled, toenails yellow and buckled, flakes of pink paint. We draw attention to D.'s rendition of her mutant face and feet. Her crossed eyes likely charmed D., but we suspect he was otherwise affronted by her lack of rudimentary proportion.

Having begun to synthesize überteen, D.'s attention turned to her companion. The Hun's



3. comic illustration (sketch for animation cell?) of überteen as beaver and snake figure. Prevailing scholarship suggests snake figure is representation of the Hun. Prevailing scholarship is bunk. Image courtesy: Motu-Koitabu Museum and Art Gallery, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

fatness was a fatness more beefy, fatness evolved from a thickness about the neck-parts to what one might call “barrel-chested,” a barrel squeezed too tight and pushing out “love-handles.” A tanned-ass with hirsute waving flesh wrinkles capsizing the small lycra rowboat of the Hun’s white

Speedo briefs (Brazilian-cut) sheathing a visibly pluggy cock amidst the heaving lake of skin; a gelatinous mass held aloft by twiggy legs; calves like pikes, stabbing the sand, burrowing into aquifers, the subterranean cement of a man-made beach. His dusky wavy hair melted into a coif, combed by salt and sweat.

We imagine the Hun scowls as *überteen*, aware of D.'s gaze and subsequent erection, usurps his lotion-bearing duties. She shoots a spurt of white cream onto her sternum and begins to push it around, into her breasts and stomach, lifting each breast as she does. Another spurt, this time into her greasy palm; she rubs her hands together and pulls her greasy hands up her calves and thighs. More lotion still, and slyly pulling aside the lip of her bikini bottoms, she applies special care to the crinkled folds where thigh meets pudendum. She stares at D. as her index finger makes nest; D. stares back and they make game: D. is an interesting geological formation, a shiny rock. D. is a cumulus cloud shaped like a puppy dog; she offers a buck-toothed sneer and swipes sand from her ribs. She eyes D.'s stiffness and yawns. She mouths incomprehensible syllables. The Hun winks and D. in turn desiccates him within his eye; the Hun's skin becomes a flag D. will dry, flying it at half mast from the barracks following his turn with the Hun's charge, and does.

[It is often considered curious that D. found himself so undone by *überteen*'s display of cheek. One theory is that upon the initial sighting, given the way that the Hun handled her body, D. at first thought she was a boy, the sliver of tan-line from her ever-mislaid bikini top so very faint in the sun's glare and her own high polish; that D. mistook her for the Hun's son or nephew perhaps—Tadzio pretty it is granted, but a boy nonetheless—her then high sex spiraling him into the uncertain mix of repulsion and creation; a not unimportant misconception given D.'s occasional ambivalence towards gender stratifications within his own realms of conquest. This persona then,

unique in D.'s work, if not exactly Aschenbach then perhaps Humbert, is doomed by his hatred of the Hun and desire to remake überteen. It is our view, however, that a blind undergraduate could find a substantive basis for ambiguous sexuality within D.'s work, and thereby make whatever grand, if completely irrelevant, references to long-past literary works, but the reality certainly is that D.'s occasional proclivities are based entirely on utility or proximity more so than any particular inclination towards such specific activity. Indeed, D. is perhaps the most obliviously self-assured man we have ever encountered. Yet it is true that his supposed (initial) response to the scene that played out before him (to be later "rekkreate[d]") does bring to mind certain primeval attitudes less flattering to his personal character, if a great boon to his art. Curious perhaps, but certainly a worthy mode of psychic exploration on D.'s part given that the subsequent response becomes *Croatian Drug Camp*. (If pressed, we believe a more worthy hypothesis can be developed by the hermetic deconstruction of the early work *Cats Made of Crab-bait*, a composition made much as it sounds, and left on the famed steps of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art to be devoured by an army of Chinese Mitten Crabs D. released from a wooden crate he had transported, along with the cat construction, thrilling the other passengers on the subway from the South Street Seaport—the journey and subsequent formal annihilation captured on digital video. The notions of transfiguration and the relativity of form clear to all.)]

Back on the same beach as D., the same chair even, it is not difficult for us to imagine D. lean back and look at his hard stomach, his taut arms. He watches his heart beat through his ribs. D. looks down at his hands, burned and cut, the carefully burnt and recorded scars resultant the prior photo montage *Drawing Without Materials*, a formal exercise done with a time lapse camera and a cigarette; the blisters, scabs, and black flesh making line, line making form. His scars shine in the light, skin reflective and stretched tight. D. spies the two, we the three.

The proximity makes us begin to sweat and we look down at our white pants and jacket streaked with dirt; the light turns our suit the color of pale urine. We move the cheap plastic chair under a pine tree and continue note-making; we feel close to D., but the sun is hot and our discomfort is made palpable in the creeping stain under our armpits and the stickiness of our back. What we make out to be contemporary popular music rips wet out of a nearby boom-box, drunk Croatians embrace and sing fake English words: *Lolo Moo Nit Not-en-doo*. The heat is unbearable and we want a fruity cocktail but will settle for beer. The unanswered questions relating to *Croatian Drug Camp*, the unanswerable even, have plagued us for months. When did the piece move past idea to actuation? At what point did they, überteen and the Hun, become a part of the work? Was it initially supposed by D. (with Valery in Venice) that there would be other participants (we can assume yes, as D. mentioned the necessity of vagina), but were these two his exact model or just a happenstance? Moreover, was it his initial intention to have a man there as well? We can imagine at what point D. found the necessity to use her as material for the work (the spontaneous conflagration of pheromone and liquor), but how did D. acquire the Hun's cooperation in this endeavor, and how long was it before the Hun too found himself being integrally associated in the same fashion (though more brutally) as she? We sense the answers linger in the air, they are notes playing on the staff of a visible wave of heat. It comes too, as it did before, in our need for refreshment. We hypothesize about the penultimate engagement:

D. pushes off the sand hump, turgid penis delineated in sweaty briefs, and goes to *Snik-Snak* for *pivo*. D. looks at überteen as he walks away, encouraging insurgency. His eyes bleed through the lenses of his sunglasses, his bandaged cheek itches. D. is confronted near a pine tree. He staggers, trips, burns his hands on the gravel. They bargain, beg, D. offers money. D. says, "*Ich wünsche sie. Ich zahle.*" His German is mediocre at best; he is, however, understood and

they formalize their agreement with a handshake. The Hun's hand feels rough and heavy in D.'s own and he feels sick as the Hun pushes the pebbles housed there further into D.'s flesh. D. nods and turns, wipes his hand against his thigh and continues, taking confused steps. When he returns with warm *pivo* dribbling off his tongue, they are gone. There is an intake of breath like *ehhhhhh*. D. separates and can hear the ants marching on the pavement in spastic rows. He scans the beach, his head twitching back and forth. The sand makes a loud static noise as it lights along the ground. He feels a pain in his ear, in his ribs. He moves his hand to his side and holds his ribs, *pivo* clutched in the other hand, near dropping. D. thinks he has been duped by the Hun; he feels the imprint of the Hun's hand on his own, intones a quiet animal sound. D.'s sunglasses do nothing to subdue the glare and he winces. When D. spots them in the water his entire body relaxes and his shoulders shrink from his ears. D. watches as she cringes at not-waves, engaged in a doggy paddle. With each surge the Hun puts his bear arms around her, underneath her, and like a forklift, puts her up and over; D. imagines the Hun's calloused palms burn her skin. D. takes a step towards the beach and the water but thinks better of it and regains his hump. D. sits in his hump and drinks beer and watches their play. They are in a wrestle; her breasts and lips and cheek rub against his hairy chest. The corner of D.'s bandage peels in the sun. D. sees her grab the Hun's penis and begin to masturbate him, D. watches her sink to her knees, her weightless body fighting the surge. Spikes of skin inside D.'s nose tickle. D. sees the Hun's body shake as he climaxes, on his face a moronic grin. D. watches her spit hit the water. The hot sand abrades D.'s feet as D. watches the fish leap and fight for the Hun's sperm. D. tosses the empty bottle to the ground and runs towards the surf, stepping over foreign towels and picnics; D. kicks the side of a sleeping man's face, D.'s toe is bloodied. When D. hits the water, he tears the bandage from his face and

throws it seaward. It flutters in the wind and lands close upon a plane of jade. The underside flashes red and yellow as it floats, reforming with each passing wave.

From the finished piece the rest is clear. We marvel before it. From any other but D., *Croatian Drug Camp* is all we could ever wish for. Yet, despite Interpol, there will be more. D. will perfect what he has begun. How do we know? We know. Having been escorted from Bistok, dripping wet, we completed our exposition in the Fiat on the road to Split, whereby returning to our London flat, we find a package awaiting us postmarked Zarzis, a port city in southern Tunisia. The package is from D. In it is a hank of long golden hair accompanied by a note in calligraphic script. The note reads: *I remove my head to breathe. This is what is called Hejira. ¶ Here we will build great orthodonture: a suspended mesh cage, pockets and pulleys for her face and feet. When Fat Man runs the crank she will be straightened. We will all chuckle and grin at her stupid will.*

Croatian Drug Camp is on view at the Tate Modern Gallery through July. Bilbao, New York, Los Angeles tk.

Scene from a Gymnasium

The man walked up to Jim and kicked him in the shin.

“Ouch!” Jim said.

“Boo!” the man said.

Jim turned, startled, searching the surrounding walls. They were bare and white. Whew, Jim thought, that was close. He looked at the man. “Thank you,” he said. He smiled at the man. He looks like me, Jim thought, except more so. Jim smiled bigger. The man smiled back and kicked Jim in the other shin.

“Ouch!” Jim said.

“Boo!” the man said.

Jim spun around. “Where are you?” he screamed. “Why are you doing this? I do not, We do not, deserve this! Stop!”

The man put his hand on Jim’s shoulder in a consoling gesture.

“How’s the leg?” the man asked. Jim reached down and touched his shin, dabbing at the small trickle of blood that dripped down.

“Not so good,” Jim replied.

“I understand,” the man said. Jim smiled again. The man smiled back and then reached his hand into Jim’s pocket. The man searched around, his fingers touching Jim’s leg through the fabric, and took Jim’s dimes and quarters. The man paused, searched around some more, and took Jim’s nickels and pennies.

“Hey!” Jim said. “What’s the big idea?”

“Boo!” the man said.

Jim fell to the ground, hands clasped around his head, terrified and shivering. He thought of his wife, his children, his future grandchildren, his own mother and father. Jim’s eyes began to tear. Jim then thought of the man. The man is strong, Jim thought. I must be strong. I must show resolution. Jim collected himself. He raised his head and asked the man, “Are they gone?”

“No,” the man said. “They will never be gone. They will always be here. But I am here too. And I will protect you.”

“God bless you,” Jim said. “God bless you.”

Scene From a Cappuccino Bar

“I’m preggers Jimbo.”

“How’d that go down?”

“Your penis firing wicked stray shots across me bow methinks. Yarr & Blow Me Down!
Aye, a pirate’s life is the one for me!”

Jim’s head goes sulky low. He mumbles, “I..ought...urs...PILL!”

“Aye Jimbo, years of cannon fire done in me ear drums, but I caught that last bit—Aside to barista: Swab this table down ya scallywag! My latte done spilt!—Argh, you see, we was in the tropics chasing down some hapless schooner, a vacationing couple out for a spin in the South Pacific—Rolexes, Jimbo, fucking Rolexes—Anyways, that godblessed malaria bug got me, fucked my estrogen up square, incorrectly sloughing my uterine lining I was, thusly whence your sperm impacted, they grew. Grew big and strong Jimbo. It’s *mitotic*, they say.”

Jim weeps uncontrollably but then cottons to being a “Daddy” right quick and zips it up.
“I’m a Daddy!”

Lenore vibes a stomach pang. “Ahoy! There’s the little nipper now. But a ‘Daddy,’ Jimbo? Methinks not. The high seas is no place for a youngster, or even an *artiste* like yourself. I’ll meditate the little fucker out. Allah provides.”

After donning a bulletproof vest to walk from the Sawyer County jail to the courthouse across the street, Chai Vang, the man charged with killing six Wisconsin deer hunters and wounding two others last month, quietly pleaded not guilty at his first public court appearance Wednesday morning.

—*Minneapolis Star Tribune, December 30, 2004*

Chai Vang

“Chai Vang is a shaman,” says Mai Vang, his sister, in a brief interview with the *New York Times*.

“But I don’t know how long he has been one.”

“Chai Vang is a shaman,” says Cher Xee Vang, no relation, in a longer interview with the *New York Times*. “When we need him to cure the ill with traditional ways of healing he will do so happily.”

When Chai Vang first comes to America, missionaries in the Hmong Community Center try to convert him to Christianity. They read the Bible aloud and give him and the other children candy. When the missionary speaks of the need for salvation, Chai Vang replies, “But I have never sinned.”

“Chai Vang is a special person,” says Ber Xiong, speaking briefly before the assembled guests at the beauty pageant. (The beauty pageant had ended and it was considered appropriate to now change the subject following the crowning of the victor, a lovely young woman by the name of Gao Hmo.) “He is my friend and occasional hunting companion and I can attest to his sincere

commitment to both hunting and friendship.” Ber Xiong’s words are met by warm applause from the assembled guests, who can also attest, many being hunters too, to the sincerity required of the act. Some though, whose applause is more muted, are fearful of Chai Vang’s magical powers, as is prudent, though even they can attest to Chai Vang’s important role among the Hmong of St. Paul’s immigrant community, of which there are 25,000.

While hunting in Wisconsin, it is customary for the hunter to unload his or her gun before passing through a fence. It is also considered “good luck” to place the first fresh deer dung spotted on the hunt in the hunter’s left front pocket.

When Chai Vang’s uncle passes from this world, Chai Vang blows through the wing of a chicken onto his uncle’s body. The dead must travel on the wind; if they do not, the soul may return to haunt the living. For good measure, Chai Vang places a bottle of Scotch on his uncle’s grave.

In high school, as a member of the military cadet corps, Chai Vang earns a National Rifle Association award for “unusual marksmanship.” The plaque, which hangs over his mantle, is one of his most prized possessions. An admirer’s stray fingerprint is never long left upon its glassy surface.

Before coming to Minnesota, Chai Vang lives in San Jose for several years, where he is a decorated member of the California National Guard. Making good use of his time, he also courts and wins the runner-up to Miss Hmong Fresno 1986, his first wife. She is a beautiful girl of 19 named Ka

Chue Yang. Following their move to Minnesota, her beauty is numbed by the relentless ice and snow.

Hunting is one of the few traditions that remain for Hmong in America. It is a connection between the generations separated by the wide gulf of war. Grandfathers hunt with their grandsons. Uncles and brothers and cousins as well. This attitude, however, seems culturally unbound: the Ojibwe, Sioux, and Scandinavian, of Wisconsin and Minnesota, share similar sentiments.

My grandmother, Dorothy Hallet, is born in Houlika, Mississippi in 1928. She marries a military man from Chicago and travels the world. Her favorite country is Thailand. She finds the climate very pleasant in its similarity to the American South. In 2003, she dies of lung cancer.

Many of the Hmong who first emigrate to the United States are part of the esteemed General Vang Pao's Secret Army, a covert force that assists the Central Intelligence Agency in the Vietnam War. Over 40,000 Hmong men are killed in the conflict.

When Wally Cieslak sees the man walk out from the thicket into the road, the man's reversible hunting vest switched from orange to camouflage, he is surprised. "Watch it buddy, somebody's gonna mistake you for a deer!" he says. The man apologizes and replies that he has been separated from his friends. "That's alright buddy, I can give you a ride," says Wally Cieslak. "Which way you headed?"

The night before the incident, Chai Vang dreams of Vietnam. In his dream he is chased by Vietnamese soldiers, several of whom he kills. Eventually, however, he is overwhelmed and his body is torn apart, as if by a pack of starved animals fighting over scraps of spoiled meat.

Jessica Willers is an attractive blonde woman one might describe as “vivacious” or “full of life.” In 2002, after years of diligent study, she receives her Dental Hygienist license from St. Croix Community College. She enjoys making jokes and laughing with the patients under her supervision and, as a result of her good nature, wins the Hygienist-of-the-Month Award five months running. This record will never be matched.

For many thousands of years, until they were forced away by the barbaric Manchu dynasty, the Hmong people lived as nomads in the mountainous regions of China.

Chai Vang’s third wife, while checking the computer’s “Internet History” function in order to insure her two young sons are not looking at material inappropriate for their age group, finds listings for the biographies of both Dai Li and Heinrich Himmler. Investigating further, she discovers that Dai Li, who is sometimes known by the nickname, “the Himmler of China,” was integral in starting China’s Bureau of Investigation and Statistics, a misleadingly benign designation for what is truly to be considered the country’s secret police. According to the webpage, Dai Li was also known for his “wild drinking parties.” Chai Vang’s third wife also discovers that the Nazi Himmler, who may or may not have been nicknamed “the Dai Li of Germany,” was a heavy drinker as well.

A 1987 pamphlet issued by the Asian Sudden Death Information Center in Minnesota describes the abnormally high occurrence of Sudden Unexpected Nocturnal Death Syndrome (SUNDS) among Hmong refugees as impossible to account for. The pamphlet states, “In spite of past and ongoing studies of SUNDS, health specialists have not found a cause for it.” James Essling, chief medical examiner of St. Paul, concurs with the pamphlet. “We drew a complete blank,” he says. “In each case we asked ourselves what they had died from and the answer was ‘Nothing.’”

Va Pao Xing, a college student of Hmong origin in Wisconsin, reports having been called a “chink” several times. “It makes you wonder whether they even understand who the Hmong people are, where we come from or what we’ve been through,” he says.

My grandfather, Jack Hallett, is a Green Beret and a decorated veteran of three wars. In 1945, he is part of the American force that liberates the Nazi concentration camp at Dachau. Many surrendering Nazi troops—estimates range from 30-500—are executed by the Americans in what is known as the “Dachau Massacre.” During the Vietnam War, he serves in Laos with Air America, a passenger and cargo airline covertly operated by the Central Intelligence Agency, providing support to the Secret Army of the esteemed Hmong General Vang Pao, among other duties. Many years later, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, he is finally undone by Alzheimer’s disease.

The indigenous peoples of Wisconsin believe that on the rare occasion that a great bear is successfully stalked and shot, the hunter must immediately scoop out the bear’s eyes and eat them as if they were oysters. If the hunter does not, grave misfortune will follow him forever. When Chai Vang first hears of this tradition, he bends his head in a manner akin to worship.

Tswb Tchoj, Hmong hero and vanquisher of countless Chinese, is the product of the union between a great wild boar and a human woman.

When asked his favorite soft drink, Chai Vang invariably replies, “Mountain Dew.”

Chai Vang’s second wife finds him a difficult man, argumentative, obsessed by the everyday injustice he perceives in his life. “He is a brilliant shaman,” she says, “but this means nothing in America. Perhaps it would be better had he never experienced any visions at all. I think it would.”

In order to discover the direction that a soul has traveled, a Hmong shaman tosses a horn into the air. The direction of the tip of the horn points to the departed soul. In order to heal the ailing patient, the soul must be recovered.

Bob Crotteau, father of Joey, Carter, and Vanessa, works pouring concrete in the summer and plowing snow in the winter; his sunburned and wind cracked skin a testament to his vocation. “I guess I had to die someday,” he says, recalling the moment the bullet entered his back. “And for what it’s worth, I’m glad I died outside. I just wish I coulda seen my little girl, you know, one last time.”

“It’s difficult to be a Hmong-American right now,” says Mee Moua, the lone Hmong in the Minnesota State Senate, during a short recess in between sessions of the state assembly. “It’s just tough,” she reiterates.

Not far away from Chai Vang's jail cell, in the Our Lady of Lourdes Church, people gather and think of Chai Vang, though they do not think of his social responsibility, good friendships, or hunting prowess. They think of their loved ones and they think of vengeance.

The Superintendent of the Madison, Wisconsin School Board announces that a new elementary school will bear the name of the esteemed Hmong General Vang Pao, commander of the Secret Army. After the protests of many local residents who believe the General to be a drug smuggler and war criminal, the Superintendent believes the decision to have been a poor one.

“We are just like baby birds who stay in their nests, opening their mouths, waiting only for the mother bird to bring the worms,” says respected Hmong elder Nao Chai Her. “When the government doesn't send cash on time, we even fear we'll starve. I used to be a real man like any other man, but not any longer. The work I used to do, I can't do here. I feel like a thing which drops in the fire but won't burn and drops in the river but won't float.”

Mark Roidt's favorite T-shirt reads, “If you're not living on the edge, you're taking up too much space.” He is pronounced dead at the scene.

Chai Vang remembers his neighbor's daughter, who had been crowned Miss Hmong Minnesota, and the day her father knocked on Chai Vang's door. The man was clearly agitated and when he tried to speak to Chai Vang about the matter of concern, he could not form the words he had hoped to express. Chai Vang invited the man inside for a cup of tea—though one steeped quickly

granting the man's condition—and sat him down at the kitchen table. When the man was adequately calmed down and able to speak, he related that his daughter had been crying upon her return from school. Eventually, her father discovered that on the school bus home a young white boy had spit on her and made unkind remarks including calling her a “chink.” He communicated this story to Chai Vang, as well as his wish to deliver retribution against the boy for the slight, which Chai Vang counseled against. “I will talk to the spirits,” said Chai Vang. “The spirits will direct your hand, my friend. But I can assure you they will direct it towards peace.”

In 1991, overwhelming evidence of a Hmong genocide is presented to the United States Congress, including substantiated reports of the use of chemical weapons against the Hmong people by the Laotian government.

“It was different in Laos,” says Der Vang, a Minnesota Hmong of no relation to Chai Vang. “You could hunt all year round and it was all public land.”

In America, it does not take Chai Vang long to find a wife. In fact, he finds three. Though when he finds them, all three are barren as the desert sand.

The unfortunate biology of each successive wife causes Chai Vang constant consternation. As a result, Chai Vang begins to experiment with a variety of herbs and bark procured on his long walks through the Minnesota and Wisconsin woods. Using his skills as a Shaman, he develops, with much effort, an essence that he burns in the bedroom during the act of lovemaking with each

successive wife. After many trials he finds success: despite their advancing years, Chai Vang leaves each wife more fecund than the last.

Not long after divorcing his second wife, Chai Vang's eldest daughter elopes and converts to Christianity.

"Christians just say prayers," says Chai Vang. "But no one guides you. We want flutes and drums. Our children have not made our funeral coats. I have 13 children, it would not be so hard to make the coat." He then collapses on the sofa with a heavy sigh.

Jill Johnson, my mother, serves as a tour guide for the esteemed Hmong General Vang Pao, commander of the Secret Army. This is in Williamsburg, Virginia in 1969. She remembers the General's pleasant nature, but also his indignation. "He looked at the actors bustling around in their costumes and I could just tell something was wrong," she says. "I was worried it was something I had done; he had such a strange look on his face. 'These people lived better in the 1700's than my people do today,' he said, and then politely asked to return to the car."

Chai Vang raises chicken and has done so since he was a child. He enjoys eating the chicken he raises, and playing with them as well. After Chai Vang sees a chicken playing checkers on a television show Chai Vang cannot remember, he attempts to teach the same to one of his chickens, a beautiful white hen named Adrienne. Chai Vang and Adrienne are ultimately unsuccessful in engaging in a competitive match of checkers, but both enjoy the process immensely. When Chai Vang's second wife prepares a curry with Adrienne, Chai Vang, upon taking his first bite, stands up

from the table and announces in a loud voice to all assembled, “Adrienne’s flesh is as tender and succulent as she or I could have ever reasonably hoped. Although, despite this delicious curry, it is a shame that she was such a poor player of checkers.”

Two years after Chai Vang is incarcerated, Cha Vang, no relation, is murdered in the woods of Wisconsin. He is shot in the chest and stabbed six times in the face and neck. His murderer, 29-year-old James Nichols, then hides his body. James Nichols is convicted of second degree murder and sentenced to thirty years in prison. He will be eligible for parole in ten years.

In Chai Vang’s home there are three rifles. Chai Vang, who is without children, cares for these rifles as if they are children.

When Chai Vang’s daughter begins to experience irregular menstruation, he spends many hours crafting a clouded leopard from clay he has first blessed by calling the spirits forth with a flute of bamboo. The clay is supple in his hands and seems to form into the leopard of its own accord. Chai Vang then places it at his daughter’s bedside, taunting the moon.

Chai Vang is eleven-years old when he escapes Laos. He believes the journey was more perilous than most similar journeys, though his sister, who was nine-years old at the time, disagrees. “The animals were worrisome,” she says. “But that was about it.”

If a shaman falls to the ground while he is in a trance, he will surely die.

Some wonder—many of the same who fear Chai Vang’s magical prowess—how it is that a shaman of Chai Vang’s ability could find himself directly involved in such an occurrence. Little do they know that Chai Vang asks this same question while squatting beside a grove of pine trees. Chai Vang even finds himself angry—a feeling that surprises him—that the trees and animals did not protect him from the seven men and one woman, but, after quiet reflection, understands that the trees and animals had other matters to attend to.

Chai Vang often lets his tea steep for longer than most would think necessary or appropriate. This allows the tea to take an almost pitch like color as well as a pungent aroma and taste. He takes a thermos of his tea into the blind in the early mornings, where he can sit comfortably for hours without firing a single shot. These are two examples of Chai Vang’s patience.

The government of Guyana, in a characteristic display of altruism, allows many Hmong refugees to reinhabit the People’s Temple, site of the Jonestown Massacre. The grateful Hmong have since moved on.

With over 100 years of experience in ammunition excellence, Barnaul Ammunition, Russia’s premier manufacturer, is known for its superior quality and reliability. Match grade bullet design, including boat tailed bullets for all rifle cartridges, results in superior ballistics and provides unsurpassed performance and accuracy. Experts agree: Barnaul Ammunition is a must have for any hunter.

The Nightmare, a familiar creature across many cultures, is an evil spirit that preys on the sleeping. When in the presence of the Nightmare, the victim feels a profound sense of terror that is only heightened when the victim discovers he or she is awake, yet completely paralyzed. The Nightmare then crawls upon the victim's chest, and presses out the life.

Chai Vang's sons are too interested in watching television to study the ways of a Hmong shaman. The disappoints Chai Vang greatly. After much thought, he decides to have more sons.

In his blind, Chai Vang sits. Chai Vang enjoys the time here. It is quiet and the spirit of the deer stalks nearby. So near he can see its breath in the otherwise empty air. Chai Vang tips his hat to the phantom animal and smiles whimsically. "I will kill your brothers," he says, "but there will be no malice in my heart."

Reports among Hmong indicate that racial slurs are "nothing new" while hunting in Wisconsin.

"I don't remember any racial slurs," says survivor Lauren Hesebeck. "What if there were? Does that give you the right to shoot people?"

A Ford Windstar pulls up in front of Chai Vang's house and three men leap out with looks of derision and purpose. The men are Hmong from Fresno whom Chai Vang does not know. When Chai Vang's youngest daughter is kidnapped by the men from Fresno, Chai Vang's youngest son hits one of the men with a shoe. The boy is slapped to the ground.

The shaman divides the self into five parts: the self of the chicken, of the bamboo, of the bull, of the reindeer, and of the shadow. It is the shaman's duty to find and replace any part of the self that goes missing.

A porcupine should never be killed unless the hunter is lost.

Chai Vang places the seeds on the taut skin of the leather drum; each seed signifies a member of his family's soul. Previous to this, he has made a hole in the drum's center with an awl. Deep in a trance, he bangs the drum with precision, watching the seeds leap towards their destiny. His wife's seed drops quickly, his many sons and daughters follow suit. It is not until Chai Vang has been banging the drum for over one hour that his seed too returns home. Raising the shroud from his eyes, Chai Vang speaks, "Despite my sons' cowardice, I will fight the God of Death."

Al Laski keeps a helmet of the Green Bay Packers of the National Football League on the mantle at his home, which he shares with his wife and three children. He rides a Harley Davidson motorcycle. Chai Vang shoots him twice in the back and once in the buttocks.

On June 4, 2007, as a result of Operation Flawed Eagle, the esteemed Hmong General Vang Pao is charged by the Federal Bureau of Investigation with violation of the Federal Neutrality Acts. The warrant states he is instrumental in planning an attempt to illegally overthrow the government of Laos by arranging the purchase of Kalashnikov assault rifles and Stinger missiles. The weapons are to be smuggled through Thailand into Laos to arm insurgent forces.

Lisa Wennermark, my sister, is born in Thailand in 1970. She dies 36 years later in Lynchburg, Virginia.

Having been awakened by his terrified wife, Minnesota resident Ge Xiong recalls the tall black dog perched on his chest. “You want to speak, you are dumb; you want to call out, you cannot,” he says.

On November 8, 2005, Chai Vang is sentenced to 6 consecutive life sentences plus 70 years by a jury of 8 women and 4 men. On the wall of his jail cell, he sketches a grove of pine trees.

Chai Vang holds his palms up; they are filled with eggs and dollar bills. Each one of his children must tie a piece of twine around his wrist—he is confident this will prove his children’s love.

Chai Vang recalls a hunting trip: “I was asleep in the forest when an old man wearing a cloak approached me and asked me if I was strong. I replied, ‘Yes, I am very strong.’ He then asked me to show him proof. I quickly did 20 push ups and returned to my sleeping bag, feeling he should be satisfied with my display and carry on about his business. The man, however, did not seem satisfied. He placed his hand on my neck and squeezed very hard. I tried to tell the man to stop but found I could not speak or move. It was only when an elk ran across the campsite that I was awakened from my terrible dream and able to move again. I cut my hunting trip short that weekend: I did not wish to kill the spirit that had saved my life.”

The Penguin brand of dry ice is declared by all parties involved as the optimal brand for use in hunting, fishing, and camping trips, preventing spoilage when portioned correctly in coolers of Styrofoam or otherwise.

In 1968, my parents, Jill Hallett and Charles Wennermark, are married. The esteemed Hmong General Vang Pao attends their wedding, a lavish affair in a Bangkok hotel. As a gift, he presents them with a 14th century Laotian Rain Drum. It is in my father's living room in Colorado.

"I've been hunting since I was a little girl," says Jessica Willers, one of the dead. "I wouldn't miss it for anything."

After the incident, Rollie Thompson, who was roughly a mile away, admits, "I just thought it was a bunch of boys having fun. You know, raising hell."

The bumper sticker "Save a deer, shoot a Mung [sic]" is a popular item in many markets of Minnesota and Wisconsin, most notably VFW taverns, gun shops, and high school football concession stands.

"I haven't heard of any anger towards the Hmong," says Patty Rice, a community leader. "You talk about racism, I just don't see it."

"When we were outside, everyone was happy," recalls Chai Vang's younger brother, Sang Vang. "We'd sit around the campfire, family and friends. Sometimes we would play games. It was like

Laos but without the soldiers chasing us. I do not remember our escape through the jungle—I was in my mother’s womb—but my brothers and sisters have told me the stories.”

Ntxwj Nyug judges the souls of the dead from his seat atop a mighty mountain, where he keeps watch over his herd of cattle. From a nearby desk, Nvuj Vaj Tuam Teem issues the licenses for rebirth. Once one’s license for life has expired, only a shaman may intervene.

Mike Katterhagen, when asked if he has a negative representation of people of Asian descent replies, “Personally, I don’t.” After a moment of quiet reflection, he adds, “Some people, I think, may.”

“I mostly ignore what people say,” adds Va Pao Xing, after a moment of quiet reflection. “But it does hurt.”

Chai Vang believes his rifle a superior rifle. It is Russian-made, a semi-automatic Saiga. “It is easy to shoot,” he says, “and quicker to shoot if you miss the first time.”

Joey Crotteau, 20, remembers running back toward the cabin when he felt the series of stinging concussions burrow into his back. “It hurt so bad,” he says, before again lying face down in the dirt.

Chai Vang’s aunt, also a shaman, sacrifices a bull in an attempt to recover his spirit.

Chai Vang is visited by his two sons from his second wife. He cowers in the corner, hurling insults in a language neither of the two understand, though they are certain it is indeed insults that Chai Vang is hurling. As the two boys begin to walk away, prematurely concluding their visit, Chai Vang collapses to the ground and begins to shake violently, a film of saliva upon his lips. They do not come to his assistance. They know better than to interfere in matters that do not concern them.

Chai Vang casts a spell towards a nearby tree, calling upon the birds, animals, and insects that travel the leaves and branches to aid him. In the spell he asks for deliverance, as he would ask the bee to pollinate the flower.

Milosk Blondynki

Milosk Blondynki cared for his sheep in the hills above the town of Stari Vlah. He was a good shepherd and liked to sit with his flock and chew long grass in the sun. Sometimes he would see a muzzle flash and hear the report issuing from the bushes near the edge of his pasture, but Milosk knew better than to bother in matters that didn't concern him, so he merely calmed his sheep with a long soft coo and went on chewing his grass. When the muzzles turned to men, storming up to Milosk during his respite, disturbing the sheep and demanding of Milosk fresh milk and cheese, Milosk only nodded and called to his wife to fetch the men their provisions. Milosk had lived in the hills above Stari Vlah a long time, and while he did not care much for political matters, he knew the men were heroes of the state and deserved what Milosk could provide for them, living, as he did, a life away from the conflicts that shattered the outside world. When the men, after taking what they could carry from Milosk's larder, badgered his wife and daughter with all manner of crude words and gestures, he too acquiesced, for while this matter concerned him more directly than the reports and flashes and cheese, he still felt there was not much to do about their behavior, and if being a shepherd had taught Milosk anything it was the dual virtues of patience and humility. When Milosk's son was conscripted by the men to kill his cousins who lived in the village not but ten kilometers west of Milosk's pasture, Milosk also demurred, but this time because he did not think it wise to interfere in the young man's affairs and should allow the young man any profession he may choose, knowing that shepherding was a profession for a man of a very specific temperament, much the temperament Milosk possessed.

When his son returned from the front wearing a garland of men's ears and testicles, Milosk winced at the smell, but did not comment. The young boy had seen twice the world as Milosk in half as many years and Milosk had no business to comment on his son's attire. It was only after one afternoon, some few days his son had been home from the front, much of the time spent badgering his mother and sister, that Milosk thought to comment. That afternoon, Milosk noticed a young lamb had strayed from the flock and, alarmed by the lamb's disappearance, began to search the nearby fields. Milosk caught sight of the lamb just as it approached a tree near the river where his son was taking a swim. Still a distance away, Milosk watched as the young lamb stood on its unsteady hind legs and began to eat the young man's garland that he had hung on a branch for safekeeping during his recreation. When Milosk saw his enraged son climb naked from the water, he called out, but his voice was soft and did not carry far, especially over the young man's angry screams. When Milosk came closer and saw his only son gouge out the sheep's brown eyes and thrust his penis into the coughing lamb's eye sockets, alternating at his whim, Milosk was dismayed. He called out for his son to stop, but his son did not stop for he was not yet finished. Milosk complained to his son that while he had heard of such things happening on the farm, it was such a new lamb and would be too young for a proper meal for the family so quickly slaughtered. At this, Milosk's son laughed and said he would do the same to his mother, sister, and the rest of the blighted sheep if he so pleased, which he then did, spreading his seed about the pasture and cottage with the ruthless precision of the green tilling machines Milosk had seen in well-worn foreign catalogs upon his rare visits to the city.

Alonzo the Armless *after Lon Chaney*

My love she is pinned

Like an insect under glass

A knife in her throat.

Jukebox Hero

The cow had a bumper sticker on his ass. It said **NOT JUST FOR LINENS ANYMORE!** in bold white letters over a black background.



A line drawing of a coat hanger occupied the left margin, next to the text. He was talking about pyramids. At first you thought he meant the posters you see in grade school health class, the diagram with the grains and the dairy, the fruits and the vegetables. The method developed by the USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services to help you put your ‘Dietary Guidelines In Action.’ He was a cow and you figured he would be interested in such things. It was an astute judgment. Well done. But he grew agitated. ‘The prisoners were naked and hooded,’ he moaned, ‘the bastards, how could they do something so cruel, so inhuman! Jesus, that one bitch was giving a thumb’s up like she was rocking-out to Priest or something. Can you believe that shit?’ You hoped he wasn’t asking you a direct question and sighed audibly in relief when he continued. ‘This is no different than Louima, that’s for sure, isolated incident my ass...’ His sentence trailed off and there was silence. He seemed done, as if waiting for some sort of response, a distillation of said topics to be taken, processed, and reflected back to him. You had nothing to say but knew you must say something. You searched your mind for a coherent reply,

some method of engagement with the cow, a commonality to latch onto, before blurting out, “Yeah dude, that’s some crazy shit. Did you know Rob Halford’s a fag?”

Not bad.

The next morning it is you who are agitated. “Self-righteous fuck,” you think. “I was just trying to make conversation. Going off about farming subsidies, the French. I’m like, DUDE, I don’t give a fuck! You know, like tough shit you don’t like the president. I didn’t vote, don’t blame me.” You soften. You realize that perhaps he was one of those ‘fucked-up’ cows you heard about. “Yeah dude, he’s a mad cow, I can’t be pissed at his crazy ass. That’s like making fun of retards or some shit.” As a point of fact, you find it amusing impersonating people with emotional and/or physical handicaps. By speaking in a ‘retard voice’ and doing a crude imitation of those you have seen on television afflicted with Down Syndrome, you have humored your fellows on more than one occasion. “That shit cracks me up.” You laugh. It is of no importance.

Perhaps you could have tried to relate more directly with the cow. Perhaps if you had asked him about his family, brought it to a more personal level, you would have had more success. You could have asked him where he was from for example. The ‘mad cow’ had been from Washington, perhaps the cow would have been amenable to discuss early-90’s ‘grunge’ rock. Use this esoteric knowledge you have accumulated to good effect. You will notice marked results. “Damn,” you think, “everybody digs Nirvana. Kurt Cobain, he like, crosses generational boundaries. ‘Course he blew his head off.” You blame the cow for your lapse into morbidity. “I mean, fuck that guy, he was cartoony anyway, not like a real cow. Well maybe it was because he was talking to me, maybe if he hadn’t been talking about politics and shit he would have seemed more real, more like a real cow and not one of Foghorn Leghorn’s buddies.” This is irrelevant. The ‘cow dream’ is a time-tested method of the program. Do not challenge your instruction. It is

enough for you to know the cow is obviously a militant leftist who offends conservative sensibilities, while also being tasty to eat.

You will receive the phone call shortly. When you answer, be ‘cool,’ act like it’s ‘no big deal,’ say, ‘yeah, whatever, that’s cool.’ It is important that you not let on your inclination to immediately engage in sexual intercourse, women seem to find this a ‘turn-off.’ She may think you are ‘hard-up,’ which is not good and could ruin everything. You may not be ready. But there is little else you can do to prepare at this point. You will have to make do. To ‘wing it.’ She is calling now. The phone has begun ringing. It is underneath that T-shirt. Not that one, over there, the one with the Atari emblem. You should wear that later. It’s a good look for you. Get the phone. Remember, act casual. It is important.

You answer the phone and begin to talk. Her car has broken down. She is stranded on the side of the road. She has no idea what is wrong with the ‘damn thing.’ She was driving home from work and it just ‘died on her’. For some reason, she was surprised herself, she thought of calling you. She was aware it was mildly strange. She hoped it wouldn’t be a great inconvenience for you to assist her. You had been on her mind since your meeting in the public house. She normally went for a ‘different type’ but ‘what the hell,’ she figured, she thought you were ‘cute.’ “Dude,” you think. “I can’t believe this chick called! She’s smokin’! Great tits. This is rad.” You are pleased. “I just met her the other night and she’s calling me when she’s all in need and shit. And I was so cool about it, all like yeah, whatever, that’s cool. Smooth.” You illustrate the concept, as it is opposed to agitation, by moving your right hand through the air in a level motion.

You will have doubts, but do not. Have only faith. “But wait, her car is fucked up. I don’t know shit about cars. Why would she call me?” Everything is as it should be. You will be

provided for. Remember this. Your brother is an able mechanic. You have watched him perform repairs on your automobile before. “How hard could it be? Derrick fixes cars and he’s not like a real mechanic. I mean he’s a fucking accountant! It’s cause of Dad, Derrick’s such a kiss-ass. Dad’s into cars so he’s gotta be too.” You mull over your fraternal relationship. “He’s cool. We get along pretty well. I mean, like he’s an older brother, so of course he used to kick my ass and shit, but he looked out for me in high school. I was pretty fucked up, I mean not like Dylan Klebold, Dungeons and Dragons shit, just like I smoked pot and dropped acid or whatever. Derrick looked out for me. Made sure none of the jocks fucked with me. He wrestled, so he was like, pretty tough, and he was friends with all them anyway. But there was this one time, me and my buddy Joe were at a party, and this total meathead dude caught Joe making out with this other dude’s girlfriend, like six of them wailed on him till he was unconscious. He spent a week in the hospital. That totally sucked.”

Focus, you must find your keys.

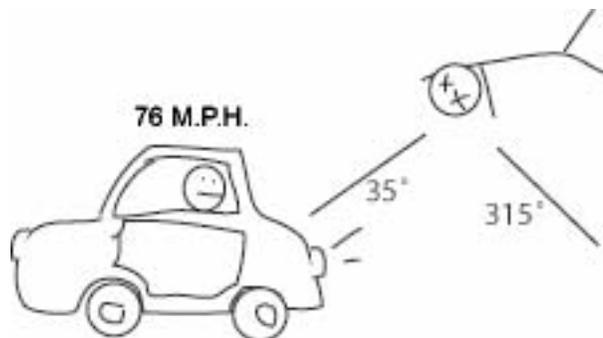
“This place is a shithole,” you think. “I couldn’t find my ass with both hands in this place.” You remember when your mother was over a few weeks before, how she almost ‘puked’ when she went in your bathroom. You will have to do a better job at keeping house. You will have to do some serious cleaning at some point. “Dude, I gotta clean this place up. Like a real spring cleaning, wash the tub and everything.” This may, however, come later. Your primary concern now is the woman sitting broken down on the side of the road. Your keys are in the pocket of the blue jeans you wore yesterday. Get them. “That chick is fucking hot, I gotta roll! Dude, I bet I get laid.”

Do not get caught up in any hormonal nonsense or other ‘flights of fancy.’ Placing your lips on the crook of her neck appeals to you. You may like to touch her body, kiss her face and

breasts. To hold her close in your arms and feel the warmth of her bare skin. These things are natural for you. They are comfortable. You will have noticed her smell and found it attractive. The perfume of her sex will undoubtedly confuse you. You must not let it. Her only goal is the subversion of the patriarchal structure in which you and your comrades thrive. She is the cow, but worse. Think to yourself: she is your enemy. The subconscious examination of your capabilities to deal with this particular adversary was less than a rousing success. But there can be no more delays. A great deal of time and expense has gone into your training.

Consider this a live drill.

“These direction are cray-zy! It’s going to take me like an hour to get there.” You remember that on the same freeway an automobile struck a man just a week before. You feel a pang of concern. Your compassion is admirable, yet misguided. It is balance you must achieve. This is a difficult position you are in, you must find a place of seduction and compassion without losing sight of the larger goal, without compromising your ability to act with swiftness and fortitude when action is necessary.



The man had been killed jogging. A car collided with him at a rate of high speed. He was flipped into the air and killed instantly, his head smashing the ground, shattering his skull. The police are suspicious. They will discover nothing, and even if they do it will be but a shill. The man killed was a prominent member on the board of a local ‘do-gooder’ organization. A

dangerous and amoral man. The police will say ‘these things happen, dipshit shouldn’t have been jogging along here.’ They will be right.

You imagine her sitting on the side of the road. The freeway smells of honeysuckle. Watch her inhale deeply, the sweet smells mixing, the exhaust fumes. Her chin resting on her rolled up knees, arms wrapped around her legs. She plucks a dandelion growing from the cracked black asphalt and puts it in her hair. The yellow flower mixes with the sun’s rays to wash slowly over her cheek. She kicks a spray of loose asphalt with her red Converse All-Stars. She holds herself, rocking slowly backwards on her heels. She falls softly on her back and squints. She takes a pair of sunglasses out of the bag slung over her shoulder, puts them on. She sits back up, pulls the dandelion out from behind her ear, puts it in her mouth, and slowly begins to chew.

You are ‘rocking-out’ as you drive. There is a ‘call-and-response’ going on within the cabin of your automobile. The stereo system says, ‘Jukebox Hero!’ You reply enthusiastically, “stars in his eyes!” This repeats. You then begin to sing incoherent lyrics during sections of the song they do not seem to belong. It does not seem to bother you. You are shouting now. “With that one guitar! Blows them away!” You are shrill and vibrato. “One way ticket! One man show!”

The disc you are listening to, you crafted yourself. It was a pleasing development, if an unanticipated one. After returning to your apartment from meeting the woman you sat down at your personal computer and begin accumulating songs for the disc. This activity has been seen before, but with unclear motivation. “I wake up in the morning, and there’s like a song going off in my head, you know. Like part of my dream from the night before. Lately it’s been weird, like all this pastoral shit. I don’t know why. Some farming thing happening. This morning it was ‘Big Country,’ you know, like, ‘in a big country, la la la, like a morning sky,’ or some shit.” There is

uncertainty as to the exact significance. “I dig bagpipes. That song’s got a wicked bagpipe solo. It’s like I wake up, and I’m all excited cause I got this crazy cool song bouncing around in my head, and I get up and run over to my computer. I have a shitload of mp3s but I almost never have the song I woke up singing, you know, cause, like there are a lot of songs, but it sucks cause I have dialup and by the time I search for the thing and spend hours downloading it I’ve already had two cups of coffee and I’ve moved on, like I’m awake, and it’s like I listen to the song but it’s not the same thing as listening to it, like right away, like dream to reality with no lag time. I need to get DSL.”

You made this mix for her. “I made this mix for her.” Like right away. “Like right away. I got home from the bar at like 2:30 and just sat down and started. It was like I was possessed. I had been thinking of songs the whole way home, before I even left the bar. Staring at her in the bar I had been thinking about the songs for this mix. Finished it off in a couple hours with a few more brewskies. I don’t know if I should give it to her, it might be a little like, early, you know. Like I don’t want to come on too strong.” This is ‘your call.’ “Chicks dig that shit though. Mixes are like, so thoughtful. Work like a charm. I’ll be in her pants in no time.” Interesting. “Like take ‘Jukebox Hero’ for example, like I’m covering all my bases with that one. You know, like kitsch. And I’m all letting on like she’s cool enough to get it you know. Like, it’s ironic and shit. And this whole mp3 craze makes it so easy! Like I could make a mix in ten minutes if I wanted to. Not saying I would do something like that, but the point is it’s conceivable. Like I could. I don’t know this chick so good though, you know, so mostly I stuck with the eighties shit we all dig regardless of the fact that like, we were dead when it came out. But, it’s cool, cause it’s like, so retro.”

Bravo. The applause is reverberating throughout the control room. A phenomenal synthesis. You will grow to become a high-ranking agent of F.A.R.M. You may not believe it now, but you will. As you learn to develop an infallible sense of ‘moral authority’ you will move beyond these relatively pedestrian, yet infinitely important, tasks. You will be decorated many times over. But do not get ahead of yourself. Egos are sublimated here. For now, just stay focused on your upcoming conversation, the means and method you have carefully developed and painstakingly scrutinized for securing the source. Bravo, bravo.

Run over her features in your mind. Concentrate on attributes other than her breasts. “She’s totally hot, I don’t know, whatever.” Her lips are the muted color of raisins, bruised and blushing. Her cheeks, soft and white, if you could only pull her to you, you could sleep forever, touching her face. Her eyes, like oceans of nectar, cool and tart. Her body is a place of infinite safety and comfort. Tell her these things, compliment her hair and shoes. But not too effusively, you don’t want to ‘come off’ as a homosexual. “Yeah, right! That would suck! When I was in high school my dickhead brother convinced my parents I was a queer. He was all like, ‘Hey Dad, did you know Gaywad waxes his chest? I bet he shaves his nuts too.’ Shit like that. Fucking dick. It was a nightmare, my mom was all concerned for my welfare, like my eternal soul and shit, and my dad just totally bugged out. Like all worried and awkward around me. He stopped talking to me about football, like sports and shit, which is really all he ever really talked about anyway so he didn’t have much to say. I was all like, ‘Derrick’s totally full of shit,’ was all, ‘I fuck bitches man,’ but they thought I was lying or like, in denial. Finally this crazy shit happened when me and some buddies went down to Mexico for spring break. I got my wallet stolen by this whore, it was totally worth it though, bitch was cray-zy! But it was kind of embarrassing, you know, I had to call my Dad and tell him what happened cause I was fuck-ass broke. And it was the funniest thing, my dad

didn't even give a shit about the money or nothing, he was just all relieved. 'Don't worry about it son,' he said. 'I'm just happy you're not a faggot.'"

You are approaching the exit. Merge into the proper lane. Mentally prepare yourself to execute your plan. Short term, gain her trust. Concentrate on commonalities, easy conversation. Long term, break down her defenses, employ psychic warfare. 'Knock her up' as soon as is 'humanly' possible. Help her realize her futility. You are a 'well-tuned machine,' 'ready for action,' you are 'cocked and loaded,' 'good to go.' You will have a place of importance in F.A.R.M. You will be a radio talk show host, an action hero turned movie mogul. Who knows, with some influence applied in the right quarters, you could even become President of The United States of America. When you get there, the car will start easily. Just 'pop' the hood and 'jiggle' the spark plugs. She will express gratitude. Employ it. Talk to her. Ask her if she wants to 'grab a burger.' If she's vegetarian, which is likely, suggest falafel.

Zuo Zhizang

Zuo Zhizang was found on the side of the road with two large holes in his back.

Chico Xavier

Chico Xavier had a special son. His name was Emmanuel. He was no ordinary son born of a woman, but existed as a manifestation of his father's highest vocation.

It was as if in a dream that the man first found the boy, quiet in a clearing arched by jatoba wood, suckling the breast of the jungle. Though unfamiliar with the habits of children, the man was certain this was an unusual circumstance and at his first sight of the child he may have been startled though he nonetheless drew closer—given what has passed, it is admittedly difficult to imagine that such a condition of surprise could ever be said to befall this particular man; this day, however, happened long ago. As if handling a kitten, the man grasped the boy by his fine black hair and pulled him from the ground. Holding the child just inches from his face, the man squeezed his eyes to carefully inspect the boy, though with the disquieting sensation that the child was studying the man in turn. When the man's inspection turned to the child's eyes, shining black like pools in nascent earth, the man felt a deep turn in his stomach, the pain so surprising that his strength momentarily flagged and the babe nearly escaped his grip and fell to the ground. Straightening his back, the man held the boy higher still and spat into his face: "Eh, you bastard! Trying to trick me, are you? Make me sick in the guts? Your *grogrota* spells will have to be stronger than that!" though the babe did not respond to the man's charges. The man kept on, certain now that the young boy he held aloft was a spirit of the Yanamamö, if not a shaman in altered form. He twisted the babe in the air, their faces close: "I got you, *bichoca*, what you do

now, eh? I'll fix you to the tree and you can hang forever. You better give me some medicines or maybe you'll never get down," the man's mind instantly turned to the fortuitous profit of chance. The child remained quiet, and merely let a small puff of gas escape his lips. The man collapsed to the ground and did not wake for two days.

Coming to, the nameless man did not remember the jungle or the boy or anything else for that matter, not even that he had been called the nameless man, the truth being of course that before this encounter he had been called something else entirely. He only knew that the pain he suspected in his guts was not one born of magic but hunger. Standing warily, he searched the surrounding jungle and, as if recollecting events from a long night of drink, he slowly began to envision the boy in the clearing arched by jatoba wood, but only this, all other history remained elusive. He did not remember the name of his mother or father (the nameless man had never known his father), he did not remember the name of his sisters (he had had three), nor did he remember his vocation (thief), place of residence (a pitiful Sao Paulo flat), or his reason to have ventured so deep in the jungle in the first place (to search for illicit medicines). "This Yanamamö shaman stole my memories!" the nameless man said aloud, lost and assured of no way to return home. Realizing his desperation, he moaned into the jungle, "Ey! I will now die here, alone, without a name!" He then began to weep. At the sound of his weeping the sky grew dark and the rain fell hard, yet only long enough, it seems, to mock his tears. He did his best to escape the brief downpour, to little effect, huddling under a spray of fronds and hugging his chest. Then, as the sky cleared, out of the wood crawled the babe, dry and warm. Seeing the babe, the nameless man fell to his knees in mortification and pleaded: "Please senhor, return my life and I will give you anything you want, drugs, women, I can you these things, I can give you whatever you want!" The boy this time did not clear his indigestion, but laughed a little child's clucking laugh. "Your name

is Chico Xavier and you are my father,” said the babe. “We will become family now, you will treat me as a son.” Chico Xavier’s face took harsh spasms at the babe’s words, “This can’t be true, senhor, you are a powerful Yanamamö spirit, look at me, you can see I am not like you. How could I be your father? What could you want from me?” The babe raised his small fat hand from the jungle floor to silence Chico Xavier and said, “No Chico Xavier, you are indeed my father, but worry not, the time of your provision is done. Now, as always is, I shall provide for you.”

Chico Xavier eventually calmed enough to eat a salad of plantains from a sack that the baby had dragged behind him and warm himself beside a fire they built in concert. After eating and warming, they passed another full day in a deep consultation, at the conclusion of which Chico Xavier took a long knife from his belt and slit the boy’s throat. He collected the child’s blood in the deep trough of a leaf to prepare a porridge whose execution they had devoted some small hour, the remaining time spent on matters of far greater concern.





the adventures of dickdog presents
dickdog in mesopotamia



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Song for Occupations

Her stench might seem to operate in inverse relationship to the outside temperature as expressed by the layman's equation [with (x) serving to replace (specific noxious aroma)]: $x < ^\circ \approx ^\circ < x$. Were she a layman, it might. More specifically: 3 pairs of long-johns retain sweat [other (precious or less so) bodily fluids], scraps of feces: the resultant broth of sap green seeps out and stains her jeans. 8 scarves, 6 pairs of socks, 3 sweaters, a turtleneck, constrict proper circulation and stifle her skin's airing out. Post unloading her multiple sacks proceeds a stripping down of layers, a sloughing that often leaves flakes of dead skin upon the table. She takes off her boots (hiking, Wal-Mart), uncurling and uncracking her toes tight in her multiple socks all morn/previous night. One, if making purposeful movements towards the MLs and MTs [Library of Congress Classification System: M: Music; subclass ML: Literature of Music; subclass MT: Musical Instruction and Study], stirs up the air and smells shit, or something that smells like shit; as if someone shit on the table or floor 2 or more days past and left it to ferment; took what turned out to be a shit of mediocre viscosity and let it drip and puddle, burning small rivulets, shit canals, into the carpet and wooden table; one smells as if this 2 or more days past.

Viewed out the window is a steeple wrapped in scaffolding. The snow falls and birds are flying. Sparrows flit in the air as if it were another continent which they flit upon. Perhaps the birds think they are in the skies above the fine Croatian city of Dubrovnik. One could imagine the birds imagining it is the fine city of Dubrovnik which they flit upon. One could imagine oneself in the

fine city of Dubrovnik too, after a stunningly good, shockingly good, mindnumbingly good dinner of octopus carpaccio* and bread dipped in vinegar and oil, sipping a kava* and reading Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man in the interest of well-paced digestion; the bit where Joyce is talking about sparrows; those sparrows a full continent's breadth away and on an island too; one could sip one's kava* and watch sparrows from a seat in the inner square of the massive white citadel; a swarm of black sparrows flying overhead, darting in and out of the soft blue darkness, the slowly cooling white buildings with red tiled roofs. One could do this while watching the birds wishing of Dubrovnik flit about the broken steeple—here, where one is—like J.J.'s birds minus the snow and the broken steeple, but one would still have shit to attend to, inhaling of and otherwise: sharpening pencils, straightening shelves, etc. The air is cut with vomit too.

It is doubtful that the woman actually vomited, on herself or elsewhere, but one must keep one's mind open to any and all possibilities, free from artificially placed constructs of class strata, financial background, and/or emotional circumstance, and realize that it is entirely conceivable, though one is still free, even encouraged, to hypothesize on other more or less probable likelihoods such as: a) she slept in vomit, hers or other—accidentally, b) someone vomited *on* her while she slept—accidentally or purposefully, c) some amalgamation of events/scents/occurrences has combined to make the air be tinged with vomit under the more pervasive shit smell, if piquantly. In the interest of expediency one would be inclined to select (c) if one were familiar with the circumstances and surroundings and if one had the opportunity to be choked by the smell oneself whilst watching the flitting birds about the strung-out steeple on one's way to fetch something from the MLs and MTs. One would. One might also be saddened by the pervasive smell as to its inverse relationship with the snow, or less the snow and more the temperature that

facilitates the snow i.e. the cold, if one were so inclined but that would be optional and could be, if one wanted, justified either way as being an emotional response dependant entirely upon a respective level of empathy. This sensitivity to suffering (other) could very well be heightened by the fact that the particular woman who now smells so much like shit is present in the library everyday, so it will not be as if she is unfamiliar sitting in her familiar spot amidst the route of purposeful movement towards the MLs and MTs, so there is that: her familiarity. There is also the fact, that one would do well to recall in the interest of sustained humanity, that she does not usually smell as she does now; the phenomenon, as previously stated, seems to bear an inverse relation to the brutal winter months, or more specifically the temperature associated with the same. The way she smells now, like sick shit and vomit (re adjective sick re shit: sick as in unhealthy, sick shit as in not the shit of a healthy person but of one who is unwell, in all probability very much so), is somewhat atypical. One might have the sense, by virtue of the same familiarity, that she is going through a particularly rough time, is having particular difficulty maintaining societal norms for personal hygiene: a judgment formed courtesy her now-oh-so-pervasive fumes that have not always been oh-so-pervasive while still being fumes. Her daily activity could be a point of relation too.

The fact that she sits, everyday, in one's path to the MLs and MTs (where one could be watching flitting sparrows) engaged in activity, namely the act of sketching. The fact that she sits, everyday, and sketches, copying from all manner of books, though predominately those of the N and ND variety [N: Fine Arts; subclass ND: Painting], could even foment whimsy within one. One could think: Gosh, isn't it nice that she comes in and draws everyday! One could feel kinship and/or relation for one might enjoy drawing as well. One may even be of the opinion that the fundamental idea expressed in the act of drawing, namely the act of artmaking, is the most

worthwhile activity resultant human consciousness, biologically speaking, thus one could feel good about oneself vis-à-vis the role one plays in her activity; the fact that one provides a service to the woman by giving her space and paper and keeping the books she uses to copy from in proper shape and letting her use the electric pencil sharpener one normally, in normal circumstances, wouldn't let patrons use, but lets her use it anyway because she's cool, and one like, knows her, and she's in here like everyday, so, no worries. One could track her artistic progression, if one had an eye for such things, by noting her movement from the How to Draw series of books to her initial timid forays into the Italian Renaissance, Early and otherwise. One could glance at her Madonnas as they grew more confident, the Brunelleschi ramparts appearing in the interest of spatial definition, the folksy Giotto quality reaching fruition, the oh-so-sudden shift whereby Titian. This could go on for months, if one were so inclined. One could even grow impatient with her, in the interest of her own flowering as an artist, and itch to suggest other, newer, artists from which to cop, but be forced to bite one's tongue in the interest of professionalism and the unwarranted weirdness of the appearance of taking an overzealous interest in her output, not wanting to pressure her or *scare her off*. One could even hatch a plan to mix a Miró book into her hold stack, accidentally, of course, or absentmindedly leave a Rothko reproduction spread out across her table: that she be forced to deal with the progression of the visual arts over the last 500 years. One could mumble: l'art pour l'art*, in passing, or sneeze the formation: Rauschenberg! Rauschenberg! One could use these and all other manner of subliminal tricks in order to expedite her transition from what one might view as relics, important relics no doubt, but relics still, before realizing that for it to truly be her flowering and not some artificially imposed construct of modernity, a force-feeding as it were, that she must move at her own pace and that it is not one's own conception of validity in arthood that is her concern but her own gradual, at times tedious,

process. This restraint will serve to make it that much more special when, some dull morning on one's way to perform a rote task of which usage of the MLs and MTs is required, one might spy over her shoulder—from a respectful distance—what appears to be a book of Egon Schiele drawings, and the feeling that could be felt then might very well be described as *heretofore unimaginable bliss*, while taking note of the fact, at this moment of elated discovery, that one would do well to contain oneself; unhinged yelps of joy—doing handsprings—being inappropriate conduct in such a setting as one is in; nonetheless, one is free to appreciate—quietly and in contained fashion—the significance of her first forays into the German Expressionist oeuvre and reflect on the sea change from her academic, and frankly, juvenile illustrations of the past to the shorn existential figurations of Schiele and onward still to the post-modern antics of Beckmann. One may even feel the need to mark the day on one's desk calendar.

This totally optional carefully obscured relationship to her artistic becoming, of course, could serve to complicate matters at the first sensation of whiff whilst watching flitting sparrows; the illusion of her as a responsible productive member of society being well-destroyed, torpedoed as it were, and a quandary arisen. The smell of sick shit and vomit spreading in all directions, the mephitic stench percolating straight through to the GVs [G: Geography, Anthropology, Recreation; subclass GV: Recreation and Leisure], is a consequence that, a priori duty, must be dealt with as to its relation to other—albeit less monitored in the transcendent beauty of their soul's glorious awakening—patrons and their respective enjoyment of what is after all a public institution. One may realize, grimly so, that one's responsibility in such a situation as one could unfortunately find oneself, would likely be the calling of Security, namely in the person of Library Security D. Sessions, in order to have her forcibly removed from the premises with her removal's justification being that of poor personal

hygiene, shuttling to the back of one's mind not only her drawing and the interest one takes in her drawing, interest manifested to the point of at one time swiping a loose sheet on which she sketched and taking it home with one and pinning it over one's desk at one's home, but that she herself in all probability does not have a home or a desk or even a shower for that matter; likewise many other patrons in similarly dire straits one views in the act of *crotch-washing* when one is forced, by a serious need to pee, to use the public lavatory as opposed to the one reserved expressly for staff. This, of course, would be followed by the cruel tableaux visualized in one's mind's eye of the unfolding confrontation between her and D. Sessions—who himself is a wearer of far too much cologne, to the point of nausea really—in which D. Sessions explains, in the ever-patient manner for which D. Sessions is known and even well-loved: Bitch, your ass, it got a foul motherfucking stink; and imagining further still as she is booted out onto the snowy street, hand grasping some given informational pamphlet detailing, with illustrations, the manifold process of not only toilet habits but personal grooming and its activation in general; whereby she may reenter the premises when she has been thusly cleansed.

The subsequent sensation of chagrin, particularly if one has viewed her drawings with interest, could be marked. One will likely be aware, as to her lot, that she has likely been sitting there, amidst the route of purposeful movement towards the MLs and MTs, the same spot with the lovely view of the sparrows and the scaffolded steeple, long before one's own time in one's present employ and will likely be sitting there long after one has moved on from one's current circumstance to bigger and better, or, at the very least, other, things, and one might have second thoughts about one's prescribed course of action in the matter of informing Library Security D. Sessions, either via telephone or personally, a call or visit placed to the security booth D. Sessions

often finds himself when he is not otherwise engaged in manners of security and/or genial horseplay with young female patrons and/or coworkers, of the woman's stench and the distinct displeasure—the pallor cast on that most noble pursuit: the quest for knowledge within these hallowed halls that one is privileged to be an integral part of undertaking—not only for staff but other patrons it may cause. Not so fast, one might then be inclined to think, being of the ethic one would hopefully be of hereby employed, one is still bound by duty, and one does have other patrons to think after: those patrons who do not wish to sit near her, in the same room even, or smell her at all, and one can find oneself in quite a pickle regarding her uncleansed properties. It is natural at this point, on one's way to the MLs and MTs stopping briefly to watch the flitting sparrows, though still totally optional, to grow increasingly bitter and/or helpless and/or steeped in bitter helplessness in the face of such seemingly insurmountable obstacles as the smell of shit with pungent undertones—delicate highlights adrift the lip of scent—of vomit. This debilitating melancholia may then give way to righteous anger, possibly even furious rage, directed specifically at the woman or elsewhere. One may even choose to blame her for her own repulsive condition, its animalistic nature, while also noting that there exists a YWCA not more than a block away: if she were so inclined to bathe that certainly could be an appropriate, and also affordable, place to do so. One could then view her as a drain-on-society and/or as the symptom of a social illness to be eradicated. One might feel one's blood nigh boiling, such disgust and abhorrence one might feel, and even the grotesque illegitimate birthing of, God forbid, what one might deem as racially-motivated bias, the construction of which within one's heretofore unfailingly progressive mind being more abhorrent still: what a loathsome creature, one could say under one's breath with the appropriate foreknowledge that these possibly unwelcome thoughts could serve to shock one, even mortally so; the period of reflection that may follow could be exceedingly painful in its brutish

revelations: the discovery of oneself as a brute. One could be perfectly understood to throw up one's hands in despair, right there in view of the flitting sparrows, and submit impossible, and necessarily unheeded, lamentations (depending on one's proclivity) to the Almighty: Lord Jesus Christ, what of this stench in its relation to my present employ and the carefully maintained moral and social construct that I have so carefully constructed and maintained? Terrible Yahweh, what trial is thus imparted upon me, what devious plan is in thee reckoning? Merciful Allah, I beseech thee, what doth maketh me thus? Bourgeoisie Parochial Asshole: Whitebread, tis thee I sing! Lamentations then followed, optionally of course, by the act of falling onto one's knees, arms raised in yet another (2nd --- 6th) futile plea to the heavens in the form of the shrill heartrending sob: Fuck me!

Having collected oneself, the sparrows forgotten, one will likely continue about one's business, trying one's damndest to ignore the circulating odor, making no mention to one's coworkers or supervisor, wishing the initial discovery upon them, that they may deal with it how they see fit, negotiating their own philosophical strictures, negating one's own responsibility and thereby leaving one's delicate balance balanced and sensible sensibilities intact, if artificially so, denying all sensations of the foul aroma and quickly vacating the premises in parallel movement towards the café and, once there, the purchase of a well-foamed cappuccino* or latte* of one's choosing fully negating within one's mind the known fact that the woman's name is Mrs. P___ and her voice is soft and sweet and low.

Song for America

It was then in pecuniary interest, as much as any desire for the provision of asylum to the persecut'd on his part, that Lord Baltimore sent them thus: from Cowes in the Isle Of Wight, 2 ships left thy harbor, half-brother Leonard Calvert commanding a compliment of Three Hundred & Twenty Men, none of ill-repute, very good fashion, gentleman through & through.

The year was Sixteen Hundred & Thirty Three, & the Lord's plan to people Avalon had proved as barren as the selfsame soil of the frigid new found land. Under guise of counsel then, devious foreigners in the persons of Gondamar, royal representative de España, & Tillieres, France, the same, laid about Lord's fore & flank a palpable dose of religious steerage. These Papal agents, pressing upon Lord's renowned empathy, prevailed upon him their squeeze: Puritan & Anglican, with them in the middle of the decidedly briny pickle. Naught to be denied, their wily diplomacy set nigh his mast a worthy spoil in Anne of Arundel, She of Decidedly Fecund, & the matter came to quick resolution. With her noble assist it was decided: They would up their brood due *sud!* Lord, now 2 heirs replicant courtesy the miss's womb, spaketh the proviso: The will of the people is higher than the law of tyrants!

Yet the charter was still in need of the royal signatory. Having abandon'd his designs on Avalon, & The Virginia Company unwelcome of his encroachment, a new deal was struck NE the mighty Potomac & embracing the Chesapeake. Lord, armed with thus demarcation, stood fore the King & Charles spake: What call ye call domain? & Lord, in sage deference, demurred (though his wish was for Crescentia).

We shall then honor thy Queen, let us call it, hmm... Mariana!... nay, er, tis taken... Terra Maria! The King was pleased with this flash of wit and shooed Lord on: That will do. Lord stepped back & eyed the King (with appropriate veneration) shrugged & spaketh thus: Maryland? The King vizzed the Lord through crack'd lenses, tipped his crown, & it was so.

Naught the seal of England was even affix'd that Lord Baltimore succumbed, the First, in London, nary to view his placid American harbor. Cecil then, taking his father's deed & title too (the Lords Baltimore so interchange), sent Cousin Lenny upon his way. Father Miller, on whose scribings this recreation is based, recounts it thus:

Tis as if inside the Holy Mother's Great & Copious Vagine we nigh twenty score set sail, so calm & buffeted the Valley of Many Coloured Jewels. Shew me a lovelier sight & I will call ye but a blasphemmer, an idolater & merchant in devils! The Grand Cervix of the Atlantic will set our course, necessarily dodging the Needles & Narwhals & other Nefarious Merchants of the Deep. Shoudest but a Leviathan shew his'self to be, I swear God has blessed us, & our mission. The men are sensibly pleased by the fine weather & skip & whistle gaily, & I as well!

The sea, tis but a cup of The Lord, & we but drinketh his sweet nectar as it dripeth from Our Mother's womb.

O, America! It is soon to be that I walk thy hallow'd shores. Thy lithe savages, taupe skinned Adam that stalks thee shore, stripp'd nekid, musculature flexing & tight. How eager I am to share His Word! Thy hapless natives, wearing but a loincloth, to people my pews! The life of the mission is but ye only occupation. Thank thee Lord Baltimore, & Lord above most! My eagerness is without measure! Hark! A fish hath

shewn himself dancing hither & thither on the waves! What a delightful excursion this has proven to be!

Father Miller then goes on to 'script Pinkie, the ship's stewboy, & plays with him a match of Chianese Checkers for a proportionate wager.

The lads though, as it is with all seafaring men, surely did not so wanly coo as Father Miller in his first experience of the watery way. For upon clearing The Needles, those nefarious & razor sharp constructions of Rock & Coral but a well hurled stone nigh the fore deck, a Turkish Marauder was spotted astern 'y the lookout aloft the mizzen mast. With the spittle of their wives & daughters fare-thee-well smooches still wetting their cheeks did they begin to sail in earnest, with all manner of calls & curses: Eh, Johnny Boy Turk, ye copulating bugger! May Billions of Blue Blistering Barnacles stiffen' ye portcullis! Ye muezzin, call this! with moonings & crotch-grabs.

Thy virgins best limber up, ye'll meet ye maker presently!

But aye, in the interest of complete disclosure, I'm extrapolating that last bit, as is apparent from the streaky stained ink of the pages, Father Miller's maw wet with unconscious drooling & choking & he quickly swooned. Now, again to be fair, those rascallions, the bane of all Christian seamen, sure enough did come in tow a most dastardly reputation, but still, I'd hope most clergymen, in the interest of God's own reputation if nary else, shew more backbone than Father Miller did, wailing & clutching Pinkie about the waist & burrowing amongst the privets he brought aboard for transplantation to the New World.

The Turk Cruiser gained & the seamen perspired mightily, fearful of the grilling & sticking & purloining that would surely insure were they to be boarded. Master Lenny cheered the men on: Hop to it lads! Stoke them bristly fires in ye bellies as if ye were but Vulcan his'self! he whooped & hollered. Them darkie heathens shant withstand the might of a Christian laborer!

Bare ye knuckles boys! This doubloon for the first Turk's gizzard! He held the shiny gold aloft & it merrily twinkled in the casting rays. The boys made cheers & catcalls from the rigging & the beak. The mate then, armed with a spyglass & perched atop the foremast, cried out too: Our fears are no sooner borne to be allayed boys! The Dragon, a Merchantmen of Brothers, comes thither from the port!

The great & cheerful Huzaas from the decks were enough to deafen the sea mares dancing upon the prow. The Dragon, possessing weaponry to the hilt & bound for Angola, fired a calcareous mollusk o'er the bow of the encroaching pirates, sending a kathunk & booming splash up the Turk's heretique shinwoods.

Take that ye Mohammadeens! cried the lads. Make ye opprobrious harems in the deep! Huzaa! Three cheers for The Dragon as she pulls abaft! Pip Pip! Huzaa! Rim-a-ling-a-ding!

—The boy's safe, I drift off the dockside, splashing cold water up my shorts & face. The sea affects me thus, even imaginarily. Nay, I'm naught wet, just fill'd with coldness from my tootsies up. The wharf, even the wharf of 'maging, consuming & spinning me into past tenses. We'll leave Cecil be, anon.

Laments

—the clacking of sticks upturned & the moaning wind that whips the great bronze bell can't pry my eyes this weary midnight. They do shut upon this quaint & curious volume, it's forgotten lore tis then osmotic:

Oh Pinkie, Pinkie! Ye shan't let me be! Ye mewling figure inhabits my dreams, tis to save you, must be. The Lord hath promised ye mine own attentions. I will instruct thee! Why

art thou then fearful? The Dragon hath delivered us from the infidels, tis no more cause for alarm. Why do ye cringe thus at my finger's touch? It is sacrament I giveth to thee, freely & of Christian charity. Doth Satan his'self inhabit ye, my dear dulcet Pinkie? We shall play The Piper then, ye gentle lips upon my woodwind doth make the sweetest music. Thy Demon called forth to be crushed under our own heaving affections, such Divine Symmetry! Oh Pinkie, thou art so lucky to possess my heedful application. But lo! the seamen stir, my diary replaced from prying eyes! Their stinking presence arrives fore thee!

Fodder—they call me thus, insipid creatures whose misshapen mouths no naught what they speak—:Fodder, bless me Fodder, fer I've sinned. It hass been tree months whence my last confeshun & her wicked spirit plagues me dreams.

This I do not doubt! Sinners the lot, seamen are such a wicked breed! My joyousness upon thus embarking hath been replaced by the stink of their malodorous spirits. The sailors, e'er drunk & always imbibing more, they deign to send even my poor sweet angel, the Northernmost Star o'er my ocean's journey, un'er the hatches for more! Their cruelty is without parallel. Eh Pink—they think they've some right to such causal call—:eh Pink, fetch we sum grog stewboy, snap to it! A whipping fer thee. Run, stewboy, run! Ale fer the lot! Roll a tankard o'er these decks! Run stewboy, & mind ye abaft where thy Fodder lurks—he's taken a fancy to ye Sweet Meats & Cream.

The seamen chuckle gleefully then. What means this? As Servant of Our Lord I am under obligation to provide thusly for all His children. As it should be. Pinkie's backside is under the omnipotent watch of God!

By prevailing winds we've turned our rudder south & the journey to America ever lengthens! I expressed my growing consternation to the Captain & he, in a most patronizing tone, tells me we've turned towards The Canaries. I responded, using simple words: Aye, tis true Sir, a cartographer I may not be, but Our Lord is the Divine Mapmaker! I canst see with my own eyes which way thee waves break, mine question is why! He explained some puff of The Dragon's journeying thus &, wisdom being the better part of valor, he too would turn his ships south & split the wake with 3. Thee no something of Trinity, Fodder? the sanctimonious cuss imparted: Or perchance ye prefer the odds of converting the Turks fore ye well spoked?

My fury nigh engaged, I merely guffawed & asked after his wife, how does she fare with thee away? Not making horns I hope? The redness of his countenance near brought me to a snicker, I swallowed it, & turned to my cabin, promising to pray for the harlot's deliverance this night, & e'ery night thereafter.

The remembrance pleases me enough to soothe my stomach so churn'd by the water's motion, nigh but not quite. How awful is the sea! & how stifling this cabin! I would sit upon the beak were it not so peopl'd, like monkeys they swing from the rigging! A bathe would set me right, most right indeed. Pinkie! I wish to make toilet! Fetch me fresh water & perfume! Bring a sponge & stroke me thus! Whistle me a tune boy!

—a tapping stirs me—what is that sound? What visiter entreats upon my sanctum? There is no such person, I've no crewmen here. No one with which to recount those daily foibles. Tis but I in the attic! There be no one more! I was but reading by ill light & drifted. Exchanging my own sorrow for another's. In my sleep did I summon some person hence? A lady of ill repute? Did

Father Miller's own stirrings stir me by default? Nay, it can't be. Surely, I'd remember as much.
& still, onward beats the gentle rapping. Who goes there?

Composition

Father Miller, thus cleaned & released, laid back his head for a spot of tobacco—not a weed of which he oft undertook, yet aboard ship an allowance he felt could be made: God would forgive his weakness—and listened to the melancholy fiddle Pinkie play'd sitting upon the lip of his tub, the boy's lips too chapped to whistle. 'Twas a brooding larghetto & Father Miller's fancy turned to vizzing, in his mind's eye, he, Pinkie, & Adonis (a young London parishioner of Grecian descent) laying about a field of daffodils after a most vigorous scriptural rendering of David & Bathsheba playact'd by the two boys & directed, most directly, by his'self. A sweet & holy smile cross'd his lips & forgotten were the ingracious seamen, his mem solely consisting of papal loves & duty. Later, post a vigorous toweling & Pinkie called atop the forewatch to exchange hand-signals with his Dovish & Dragonish counterparts—the horizon darken'd & the captains sensed a shifting wind—Father Miller set to pen amour:

The Sea, tis beautiful, the moody blue outstretch'd infinite from mine portal to heaven it seems. That, with the fiddle's tongue, hath creat'd within me a most lyrical mood. I shall set my words to tune & sing the Song of America. These seaman may conspire to offend, but my calling is clear & it is not their conversion I am after—though exceptions there may be: yes, but thee my love, & thee too shall compose with me, when thou are done with thine labours. I'll not tarry while ye are indisposed. Anon I set to it!

Thy swell'd & purpling bosom of Appalachia,

Thy waving amber underfoot,
Which pilgrim trod through wilderness unkempt.
To Liberty under Him we salute!
Thy good land of sweeping skies,
Alabaster lights thy gleaming eye,
Christians pluck thy fruit'd pastures
God bids His freedom, steadfastly,
Rapturous Beauty & Grace,
Tis Eden for Liberty, ho!
Thy heroes bless'd be,
Thy copious gold & silver
In His service, tis nigh endless
Flowing a river upon yon sea.
Patriot acts & deeds alight thine multitude vision
Rich & undimmed.
Thy only tears be of joy,
For thou is bless'd by God o'er all else
& tis as a vessel thee act
Spreading glory as thine Divine Seed!
O America, Bless'd be!

Lo! tis not vainglorious, but I, like thee bounteous land, am thy vessel! Yet a wavy rocking motion disturbs me. It seems the sea itself has pronounced a rapture too. I venture atop to investigate the rumblings.

Tempest

Naught but 2 weeks out didst Neptune his'self furiously rise up against The Ark & The Dove. The Dragon, ill-suited to stride such a tempest, turned back, leaving the emigrant vessels to not only Turk spears, but the burly waves onslaught. The Dove, smaller of the 2, sent word, as regards the oncoming night & the impossibility of close proximity, that a lighted lantern would be hung nigh the masthead: Thy shimmer of Prometheus, scourge of the Gods, blinds even ye most well-toss'd trident!

But the tumult raised & the lantern flickered, flickered, then e'er disappeared: She's gone un'er! lamented the lads: all are lost! All are lost! grieving sorely & even outright weeping for their sunken brothers: Thy precious freight! Naught but another buried treasure!

For 3 days the storm roiled & rollicked the waves, & the men, Pinkie thus included, had little time for Christian reflection—none but Moses could've saved them their sticky predicament—busy as they were in the manner of ropes & rigging. Father Miller did not view this slight with equanimity &, in a surprising show of fortitude, boarded the deck to admonish the unfaithful. As the thunderheads exploded above, & the rain fell in sheets, he stood, feet asunder & arms raised with apocalyptic fury. The men, dealing as they were with a torn mainsail, other sails rent & torn, & a rudder unshipped paid him little heed as he began, a funneled hurricanoe forming naught afar:

O God, O Lord Jesus Christ! Take thee command of natural fury, that over ye wick'd genii, we o'ercome! Here thee words of The Lord! Awake ye demons and howl for The

Lord shall usurp thee, Thy Wind Bringer and Wave Spawner, Destroyer and Killer o' Sons of Man, ye all die accursed! All ye malicious spirits of Lucifer, we o'ercome ye! All ye heathenous & traitorous ghosts, begone! Lord God rebuke thee sulphurous waves! Lord God, make thee yards & bowsprits but a cross for our resurrection! O Lord God, we sail upon thee greatest ship, O Lord God beseech thee, a sinner's soul, naught yet depart'd. Shut the Gates of Hell, establish we in Bliss, O Christ, Our Lord, bring reckoning!

The sailors, seeing the sky itself respond to the Father's cries with a blushing & mystical hue, they did attend, & forthwith fell to their own knees in fervent prayer un'er Father Miller's lead, the ragged sails flapping in the frenzied wind: Blessed Virgin Mary & Her Immaculate Conception, Saint Ignatius, Maryland's own, Saint Michael & Thee Guardians, Deliver us from Satan's teeth! & they had scarcely but finish'd, whence the storm, as suddenly as it come, abated.

The seamen, full with divine spark, & present grace in the holy personage of Father Miller's vehicle, were struck mute with disbelief, till one, a foretop man by the name of Scooter, called out: Heave Away gals! Get ye'selves up! Father Miller commands the seas but we the sails they push upon! But ere, three cheers for the doctor of Titan's breath, Father Miller! Huzaa! Send a toot skyward for the conquer'r of waves & vanquish'r of demons! Father Miller! Tra-la-la! He who lash'd the sea's distress! Rip-a-pip-pip! Father Miller! Huzaa! Huzaa! Huzaa!

& Father Miller, drenched & dripping, smiled smugly & clenched his fingers in 2 white fists—those selfsame digits which ere commanded the elements, thereby those whom tread upon.

Annunciation

Per Father Miller's performance, astride the prow & in snarling wind, he gain'd attention among the sailors as a prestidigitator of the highest order. Charles & Snopes & Moody, labouring mates,

even going so far as to cover Pinkie's duty aloft; that he may spend the entirety of his day's pass in service of the Father & His religious whims. Seamen came to him for consecration of personal trinkets; a handkerchief, medallion, or shoehorn, transmuted to an amulet of awesome power. A down blanket was knit out of albatross feathers & his buckle polished on a regular basis. Governor Calvert even, heretofore unimpressed with the antics of the clergyman, took to soliciting his counsel daily. Father Miller, as one would imagine, was pleased:

'Fore my eyes the seamen've been reborn! I've shewn them the Almighty Power of Lord God & they've sensibly acceded to His, & thereby my, inclinations. In such a prodigiously holy atmosphere, I must say I once again find this journey to be entirely diverting & most pleasant. Pinkie, freed from his dirty chores, & I spend our hours in contemplation of the Divine, practicing the sacrament and assorted catechism as: I drinketh but from His Mouth, He my Lord God & Savior, I become Thee with His Body on my tongue. 'Tis a feasting! Pinkie is an earnest pupil & makes plodding but due progress; I fear his imagination lack. I must think of other poses with which to stoke his passions, perchance there are books of the sort I imagine aboard—with these saucy seamen I surely don't doubt it!

The Governor has made practice to regularly seek me out for advice on matters American, which, as if parcel some firing spark within my intellect, I have become well conversant upon. We plan for His & Our conquest of Calvert's dominion, that we maketh a land upon which all Catholics are free to worship in proper fashion. He has even hinted about at mine own promotion & diocese so suitably impressed was he with my brave performance about the tempest! There is no fear within Our Lord, I said. & now the weather is balmy & nothing 'tall is amiss!

The Dove even, our sister ship that all aboard The Ark, thus I e'en include'd, thought to be sunken & lost for sure hath reappear'd! A resurrection nigh sweet as the holiest of holies, that of Our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ! Six weeks we'd been apart when her perilous wand'rings cometh complete, having found our anchor in a bay of the Scilly Isles! Ere, she'd put back to wait out the storm, the same tempest I & the Almighty'd denied, & had not been sunk at all. Her return was a joyous sight & the men sang all manner of songs in greeting, I even joining in—I've a most lovely singing voice I've been told—on the shanties. Twas a tale told of Reuben Ronzo aboard the whaling ship Beauty. O poor Ronzo, a lacking sailor if there ever was one! I seem to recall a few lines: His skipper was a dandy, Ranzo boys Ranzo, and too fond of brandy, Ranzo boys Ranzo. They gave him cake and whiskey, Ranzo boys, Ranzo, which made him rather frisky, Ranzo boys Ranzo. Yes that's it. Hee hee! I'd like to meet these fellows and teach them temperance!

O aye, The Dove hath return'd to The Ark, & with an olive sprig too! I am reliev'd my trials are through, that Lord God has seen fit to allow His work to progress smartly, & with a capable, malleable brood. Lord God is sweet & good.

Together again & taking brief respite in Barbadoes, on the eastern verge of the Antilles, the seaman frolic about on the beach in all manner of boyish play! 'Tis a lovely sight post the difficulties of the past few. O, so horrible! I feared terribly for my poor Pinkie; the boy nary cut from a warrior's cloth & but forc'd to handle a musket! Though he did look entirely handsome hot steel in hand.

Twas naught but we'd rowed ashore for fresh water that we encountered the dregs of a mutiny! Seems a merchantman carrying a cargoe of Afriques was o'ertook by the beastly devils from the hold & run aground nigh Bonavista. Our landing party uncover'd the cruel marauders, & their purpose has been fore'er ceas'd by the laws of Christian men. Governor Calvert, in a manner that blossoms a warm flower of hope within me that America will indeed be a land of proper operation, saw fit to have the uppity creatures execut'd & those the men could not catch with their musket balls, driven whence to be eaten or join'd with the nekid & painted cannibals occupying the hinterland. A bloody beach shall shew them who's master!

Evil uprising put down, we make breakfast of mangoes & cantaloupes aboard beach & the air is balmy & sweet with the scent of spring flowers & the birds sing with rich melodies. There goes Pinkie, body surfing with his companions! We'll reach Virginia in naught but a week!

Commission

A week indeed! Tis been nigh a month since I've jot down note in thy pages! My priestly duties keep me well-disposed as we've reached the seas where my liturgy is of more benefit than a seaman's sheepshank! Last was the Feast of Annunciation, & we, in full canonical dress, performed services & nary just for the crew but for Indian Natives at their first Lord's Supper! The signal of God's resurrection deliver'd by Gabriel is the signal of New World borne before us & it welcomes us to its bosom. On the glorious day, full of His light, we walk'd in procession, with the Governor in lead, bearing an enormous cross fashion'd from

fell'd trees, praying & swinging censer. We've planted God's seed & tis fruit'd as my song
divin'd!

The Indians are a doleful lot, & with their melancholy comes easy adherence. Of
the tribes hereby encounter'd, The Piscatawii, a scanty dress'd & backwards sort, were
simple & peaceable conquest, smart to our overwhelming force & God-serving cavalry.
Father Blüspeeth, steward of The Dove, & I assur'd the savages we'd come only to instruct
them in the rightly ways of Our Lord & to be Our Own Brothers, & the ninnies obliged!
The old sachem spoke: & we will use one table, my people shall hunt for thee pale-faced
people, & we will share all things in common.

Tis nobility within his gesture, & a calming countenance: his red visage, but lest he
get ideations of equality, two tables were promptly set out for our dinner party.

The Patuxent tribe too have shewn a similar will, when on the Twenty-Seventh of
March in the year of Our Lord, Nineteen-Hundred & Thirty-Four (yest.), my specificity in
accordance with to-be-hallow'd nature of the date, we took full command of our new
dominion & the natives help'd to chop wood & hue our steeples! The saggy breast'd maids
& lithe warriors in equal measure upon our new camp, sowing corn & giving all manner of
assistance to our hunting parties & carpenters. Pinkie & several of the more virile native
boys are in present construction of my chapel & shall make bed there too, that we may all
be under His protective watch during sleeping hours apart from my temples construction.
I have conscript'd the blacksmith of The Dove, a stout fellow, to make for me a Dutch
Oven, & a young Indian boy with an eye for the sort of thing is building my tabletop. I
would like a rocking chair as well, but will accept its later construction in the interest of
graceful relation. Having established such a fine gang of boys, I would not want any to

abandon the Ways of The Lord for my impatient temperament! These pagans, godless they may be, are a decent people & ripe for instruction. I am hearten'd by all signs as even tonight, at a banquet with Governors Harvey & Calvert, the chief among them spake: I love the English so well, that if they should go about to kill me, & I had so much breathe to speak, I would command the people not to avenge my death; for I know they do no such thing, lest it were through mine own fault.

So true! These wise people will be powerful allies of God's Children, & upon conversion, His Children too! Glory be!

& in 1639 The Republican Commonwealth of Maryland was officially founded, & a Representative Government established. It was founded in justice & with kindness for native inhabitants & slaves & forever in perfect harmony. In a chapel built of bark all Indians were baptized un'er King of the Patuxent & Piscatawii, & all became Christian Men & un'er Father Miller & His Almighty's congregation.

—& here I be, thee book shuts itself

Humberto Figueroa Urquiza

Humberto Figueroa Urquiza woke agitated and unsure why. He had an espresso, smoked a Gaulois, and felt a little better, but still far more anxious than he was accustomed to, having the constitution of a water snake. With evident discomfort, he flipped through the newspaper, smoked another Gaulois, and showered, but still felt out of sorts. Then, while shaving, he cut his chin. His irritation mounting, he did what he always did in a time of displeasure: he took out his sniper rifle from the closet, polished it, and rested its stock on his shoulder under his chin just next to the red dollop of tissue paper, sweeping the view through the scope across the next square over. When his finger pulled softly into the trigger and the fruit merchant collapsed in a heap, a shot of approximately 400 meters, balloons and streamers fell from the ceiling along with a banner bearing the numeral 1000. Brushing the confetti from his shoulder, Humberto Figueroa Urquiza allowed himself a brief smile and reflected on a long and prosperous career. The milestone achieved, he could continue about his morning activities without any further niggling dilemma.

The Candidate *after Matthew Barney*

The Candidate sat fingering his testicles through the crotch of his velour track pants, rubbing each testicle against the material, lifting the testicle some partial inch away from where it rested against his thigh and letting it go, feeling the dull pump in his stomach as it fell, the concussion limited, nonetheless engaging the energies of the place where his penis would be, for The Candidate, though gifted by balls, was without a cock.

The party was in full, swinging around him. The chatter of mousy registrars mingled with the house music; the agreement of the two sounds unbalancing The Candidate so much so that even his testicles provided slender respite. The thud of the bass in his chest began to make The Candidate feel drunker than he was and he self-consciously moved his hand from his balls to touch the nub of his horn, his tobacco-stained fingers moving over his bright orange hair, preposterously slicked back around the volcanic infancy of his nubs. He considered leaving the party, returning home to his apartment, or better yet to a quiet bar to drink the evening into morning. The Candidate had not yet seen The Woman at whose behest he had come and, in the small moments when The Candidate was honest with himself, he hoped he did not. Staunching his ambivalence, he finished his drink, forgot his hair, and resumed fingering his balls, removing his hand only long enough to grab a passing waitress by the bustle to order a Grey Goose martini from the open bar—filthy, he elaborated. When the waitress returned, he drank half the filthy martini in one draught and sucked his teeth, settling as best he could into the deep upholstered chair to watch the night unfold.

The Candidate had come to the party at the behest of The Woman he had been seeing for some small amount of weeks now. He met her in Venice, for the Biennale, briefly, and saw her again upon his return to the city at the home of a mutual relation. The Candidate had been drunk, but charmingly so, cheeky and dashing and enamored of his testicles and the deceptively beautiful woman that was paying him so much attention. They talked of art and process and product and the cruel intersection of the three. The Candidate was uncharacteristically well-behaved and The Woman enjoyed The Candidate's drunken grin and searching eyes—she was cosmopolitan and familiar simultaneously and The Candidate felt emboldened despite his inability to penetrate her should she wish it of him. In lieu of this, he gave her head in the upstairs bathroom of his friend's home, bringing her to orgasm quickly and efficiently. Afterwards, she began to kiss the area around his navel, hands reaching under the elastic of his velour track pants, but he quickly demurred, now mostly sober, grabbing her armpits and pulling her up where she kissed him with eager sloppy passion. Feigning embarrassment or chivalry, he suggested they go back downstairs and, after exchanging numbers and platitudes, they did.

The party was being thrown by The Cultural Institution where The Woman worked, in celebration of a cultural event involving a celebrity The Candidate knew by sight, not because The Candidate cared much for celebrity or celebrities, but because The Candidate had long frequented a bar near the train station that The Celebrity himself frequented in an attempt to distance himself from the adoring crowds who would no doubt flock to The Celebrity were he somewhere not so close to the train station, or at least maintain the appearance that removing himself from adoring flocks was something The Celebrity was sincerely interested in doing, maintaining his credibility amongst the people sloped against the bar, like The Candidate, for whatever unfathomable reason.

There were many such haunts in The City, many of which The Candidate frequented, and each had its own desperate celebrity. The party was for him.

Out of the corner of his eye, The Candidate saw The Woman talking to The Celebrity. He hoped they didn't see him too. He turned his head and nonchalantly sipped his fresh drink before he felt the clap of a hand on his shoulder. It was The Celebrity and The Woman, accompanied by The Celebrity's wife, whom The Candidate did not know by sight, but quickly gathered was even more of a celebrity than The Celebrity himself. The Candidate briefly felt compassion for The Celebrity, but quickly forgot it and ordered another drink.

The party was clearly an event of some importance for The Woman and she did not do well to hide her disdain, if she even tried, that The Candidate was slouched into a chair, drunk, fumbling with his testicles. The Celebrity's wife, The Greater Celebrity, however, seemed amused by The Candidate and this put The Woman at ease. The Candidate allowed for this amusement, a suspicious feeling, for the time being, because he was too drunk to say anything witty enough to put the situation even further in his disfavor, so rather he allowed it, and even clowned for The Greater Celebrity, an act that debased him in his own eyes, but humored the three assembled in such a manner as to put off any quick confrontation resultant The Candidate's chastened ego. The Candidate was often of the possession to clown in such a manner, and had developed some skill with it, much to his chagrin. He made voices, pulled his nubbed horns, danced in his seat, hooves clacking on the floor in time to the house beat forcing itself into all assembled.

The Candidate was then unsurprised when The Greater Celebrity asked him to dance on the small dance floor near where they stood and he sat. Enlivened by his diminished self-respect he replied that he would indeed dance with The Greater Celebrity and stood, taking her hand in his own. She was an exciting dancer—it was part of the nature of her celebrity—and The Candidate

was pleased to be dancing with such a charming and talented woman as she was, though he still felt a deep resentment for the conditions which allowed them to be dancing in the first place, coupled by the fact that just across the dance floor The Woman and The Celebrity danced too, a tight slow dance, his hands cupping her ass. The Candidate did not feel jealous watching The Woman's ass handled so, or at least he did not see any reason to feel such, but nonetheless his estrangement grew as the two pairs danced and he began to lead his partner into more precarious positions: into other dancers, crushing her soft feet beneath his hooves, once even butting her head with his horny own. It appeared to The Candidate that The Greater Celebrity did her best not be dismayed by his actions, believing him simply to be drunk rather than purposefully steering her into potentially awkward or dangerous situations as he was in fact doing. His annoyance was colored with relief when The Celebrity cut in, retrieving his wife before The Candidate spilled her over the couch and onto the floor, a fall during which all manner of unfortunate things could have happened. He gave The Celebrity a grin and returned to his seat, The Woman grabbing his hand as he walked away.

The party was slowly coming to its conclusion, beckoning the revelers to other, better parties, but also as the regular patrons of the club had begun to arrive for their regular night of revelry and The Cultural Institution and those it had invited certainly had better places to be than dancing late into the night with the regular patrons with whom they had nothing in common nor wanted too. The Woman, commenting on this between nibbling on The Candidate's neck, further raised his ire, but he simply smiled and agreed that yes, maybe it was time to move on. Would The Celebrity and The Greater Celebrity be coming with? She was pleased with The Candidate's suggestion and quickly went to the dance floor to ask them just that. Answering in the affirmative, The Greater Celebrity pulled her telephone out of her dashing bag and made a quick

phone call to inform the driver that they would be in need of his services; the four exited from the back of the club to the waiting limousine.

The Candidate says in aside, *“I am not a metaphor. I am a Goatman without a cock. I am not a relic of bygone days. I am not a descendent of Giles or Pan, emasculated by my father’s pride. I nonetheless exist in this world.”*

In the limousine, the three people and one goatperson sat, the couples across from one another, when The Celebrity suggested they open a bottle of champagne, winking at The Candidate as he did. A fine idea, they all agreed and The Woman giggled when the cork The Celebrity was struggling with popped out and hit the closed sunroof, sending a cascade of champagne over his fumbling fingers. The Greater Celebrity appeared annoyed by The Woman’s humor but The Celebrity did not appear to notice and the moment passed when The Greater Celebrity began to remove glasses out of the sideboard. They sipped and chatted, The Candidate growing increasingly agitated, particularly when The Greater Celebrity’s hand made it to the thigh of his velour track pants, not far from his drooping testicles—the women having switched sides to begin inane conversations with the men. This continued as some several blocks passed outside the tinted windows, the new couples’ lips ever closer, the rotted breath of alcohol and cigarettes mingling unnoticed, then joining, The Greater Celebrity putting her hands under The Candidate’s V-neck T-shirt and clawing at his chest. It was when The Woman placed her mouth over The Celebrity’s penis that The Candidate, chagrined, bit down on The Greater Celebrity’s swollen lip, severing it, and pushed her to the floor. He then jumped up from his seat on springy goat legs and ran the corkscrew, also out of the sideboard, through the soft flesh of The Celebrity’s neck. His blood instantly soaked The Woman’s head, still bobbing between the dying man’s legs. The Woman screaming, The Greater Celebrity mute with shock, both cowered in fear from The

Candidate who, having dipped a finger into the spray, was rouging his lips with The Celebrity's blood. Seeing himself in the window's reflection, with red lips, gelled hair, and two small nubs of horns, he laughed, grabbed The Woman by the hair, her mouth still wet with hot saliva, and kissed her hard, his tongue pushing The Greater Celebrity's rent lip into The Woman's mouth, which she unconsciously swallowed. Then, with a comic wave, he opened the limousine door and began running down the middle of the busy street, a great shower of sparks behind him, white light exploding each time his hooves clacked the black asphalt street.

Falling for Captain D

I had never known the peculiar phenomenon of cop-love until it was my job to hold the sign. In my life, I have had many opportunities to explore the condition—I used to work in a coffee-shop, fertile ground for police/barista liaison—but never succumbed myself, making it habit to avoid such entanglements altogether. I had even been known to show disdain for coworkers and friends who exhibited the telltale symptoms: forced laughter, gratuitous free cappuccino, speaking-in-a-higher-pitched-voice-than-normal, chiding them with gruesome tales of Abner Louima and his baton-battered colon. But I had little choice when Captain D sidled up. We were experiencing the runoff of a hurricane, you see; the sign flapped dangerously and I couldn't move.

It is not my aspiration to be a blustery-day-sign holder or anything. I mean, I am in possession of a piece of paper that supposedly entitles me to other vocational options, and was just looking for potential karmic reward. But Captain D, in the first of many illustrations of profundity, found worth. He compared it to polishing a car. "Some people like to polish cars," he said, his strong swift hands miming the words, "you like to hold the sign." That I didn't, in fact, *like* to hold the sign was of no importance. Captain D's analogy touched me deeply and I was rendered mute by his eloquence.

The sign itself was covered with letters, which formed to make words, that when taken together signified an idea. The purpose of the sign was to then announce this idea, in a visual manner, to passersby, in hopes of instilling reaction or engaging thought on part of the sign-viewer. The sign-holder was already, one hoped, in general agreement with the sign itself. To this end the

sign, and the others like it, was effective, and many onlookers remarked at their favorite representations in an excitable fashion. Suffice to say I was holding the sign. I was *advocate*. But back to Captain D.

He was a grey-haired Captain D with hunched shoulders and a shuffling way of walking. His eyelids fluttered like butterflies when he spoke. When he first approached I was wary—I mentioned my aversion—but not so much so, his innate copness masked in minor disabilities. A disarming ploy on his part. I remembered watching an investigative piece on the use of Tazers on *The N___ H___*. One cop interviewee had said that, rather than blast people with large amounts of electricity, police should instead work on their language skills and manner. Captain D had no such need; I was incapacitated by his charm. Plus I was holding the sign. Don't forget, it was windy and might have blown away.

Captain D disapproved of “slangs and profanities” and was thereby attracted to my sign, for he appreciated the absence of such. I agreed, it was a clever sign. He did however, looking around, lament the absence of those of a certain persuasion and leaned in—his closeness sending a charge up my spine and a flush to my cheeks, biting my lip, waiting, waiting—and mentioned the name of a certain Pat B___, a man who he seemed to hold in great esteem. Crushed, I mentioned to him that, in theory, those of the sign were not of any distinct affiliation, while the man he mentioned could certainly be perceived as having a distinct ideological thrust and would, as a result of that proclivity, I enunciated every syllable, be contrary to the spirit of the endeavor. He did not seem to follow my reasoning and I was devastated.

He went on to elucidate the complexity of said ideology on the basis of a desire for “good family,” apparently something the people he encountered in his activities seemed to lack. He expressed his consternation over this and I marveled at his sympathy. I had, in fact, worked in the

schools of the city in which it was Captain D's duty to protect and serve and could say from experience that it was a difficult environment and I jumped at the chance to say just that. Captain D beamed at me and went so far as to comment on the worth of my soul. I felt beautiful and floated above the ground. I did not mention to Captain D my utter frustration in the face of my attempts to educate or my belief that the main flaws and root causes underlying the fruitlessness of such attempts were exacerbated by such men as Pat B___ and just smiled sweetly, not wanting to disappoint him.

Then it was time for Captain D to go. How he came to this decision I cannot say—there was no call on his radio, no harried tap on his shoulder—he just seemed *to know*. He moved his hand to shake mine and I raised it, praying with all my might it had not become overly clammy in the hours of sign holding, agonizing over the amount of pressure to exert, the delicate balance between strength and submission, remembering everything in that second before our hands met and when we touched... yes, my skin went alive, yes, melted even, yes, and I felt reprieve from my inadequacy and wondered if Captain D could sense my longing. He answered with a sly wink and turned his back to amble away. Watching him move into the crowd I was overcome with melancholy. I lost interest in the sign, feigned stomach cramps, and begged off early, fished as I was by a new and infernal knowledge.

B.O.C.

Recollections of a Barbecue

Jim was lying shitfaced naked on the floor when the call came. Surrounded by empty cans of Miller High Life, Blue Oyster Cult played; he was ill prepared. The phone was dancing on the floor just out of arms reach, *I'm Burnin', I'm Burnin', I'm Burnin' for you*, polyphonic ring tones and all.

[The kid had been an annoying little fuck: “my phone’s better than your phone.”

He pressed buttons like machinating Galaga, *Oops I Did It Again* played tinny in the air.

“Brittney’s GAY. She kisses girls!”

“Yeah, well dude, someday you’ll think that’s pretty hot.”

“Gross!”

“I think you’re GAY, anyhow.”

“Am not!”

“Are too.”

“Am not!”

“Are too.”

“Mom, the man said I was gay.” Tears. Mother in a HUFF.

Happened at a B-B-Que, honoring the war dead with a three-day weekend, smoked veggies and Boca Burgers. Kid had Aspergers Syndrome and a faggy little lisp (retard), still shamed Jim into downloading a more happening ring tone,] hence the B.O.C. whilst sprawled.

He rolled over on one shoulder tapping the ground like a blind man. It was his stepfather telling him his sister Janice was all kinds of fucked up. She was a relief worker, W.H.O. Tried to smother a self-immolating Afghani woman and wound up looking like Freddy Krueger minus the kinky gloves.

“I thought they only did that shit in China,” he said.

Blue Jean Baby

Faustino heard the rap-rap-rapping from his trunk; he shimmied, matching the beat with the thwack-thwack-thwacking cowbell from his stereo. He looked at Raoul, “This B.O.C. man, this shit kicks ass, no *hombre?*”

“No shit *cabron*, what I say, don’t fear the fucking reaper.” Raoul did a little dance, threshing the dashboard with his imaginary scythe. Faustino approved:

“You got the moves, holmes. You one bad bitch. You want a hit of this shit?” Raoul took the joint from Faustino and took a long pull.

“Aye poppie, that’s some wicked shit, it does things to my brain. Fuck, now I’m all kinds of randy.” He turned around to look at Jacinta Jiménez, wrapped in duct tape and laying across the backseat; Jacinta’s M.S. contorting her body; the seat belt buckle digging into her naked back.

“Yo man, you think this retard can suck dick?” Raoul asked, playfully punching Faustino in the shoulder.

“There’s only one way to find out *hombre*.”

Raoul and Faustino saluted the B.O.C., a timpani of succubus finger-pulls announcing the arrival of God. Raoul crawled into the backseat as the car sped down the desert road.

Javier Jiménez, Jacinta’s older brother, baked slowly over the course of the day—made worse by the liquid lost in his unremitting tearing spawned by the sounds of his sister’s rape—in an unventilated secret compartment in the trunk of the smugglers car. Javier, in hopes of a better life and advanced medical care for his handicapped sister, had saved many years for the journey.

Jacinta, unlike her brother, did arrive in the United States, where Faustino and Raoul promptly sold her to a film producer for a not unreasonable sum of money given her physical infirmities and shell-shocked nature resultant the sustained trauma of her immigration and unfortunate suffocation, heat stroke, and subsequent immolation of Javier, Jacinta’s sole caretaker for as long as she could remember. Not many weeks on, she was tortured, then murdered, on camera, during the climatic final scene of an underground film entitled *Tiny Dancer*. The film has become something of a sensation among the circle interested in such work; in DVD sales alone, it has grossed many times over the price of its star performer.

Sissy-face

Jeremy and his friend Benjy were sitting on the living room carpet watching an old Godzilla movie on T.V. when Jeremy’s father walked in. Unfortunately for Jeremy’s father, his entrance corresponded with a scene enacting Godzilla’s immolation of a young newspaper boy as he ran in terror from the giant radioactive lizard. As Jeremy’s father began to cry at the sight of the burning boy on the screen, Benjy, oblivious to the drama going on behind him, sang the chorus to a

popular Blue Oyster Cult tune he had heard via his older brother: *Oh no, they say he's got to go! Go, go Godzilla! Oh no, there goes Tokyo! Go, go Godzilla!* in the keening falsetto befitting a 12-year-old boy.

This day born from a night many prior: in the twilight suffocating heat, the gritty air and wave of weight that wrapped around his face and body; Jeremy's father stolen, then returned, broken, given to emotional outbursts of just this; outbursts hidden from Jeremy until now, but dutifully reported on by his older sister, "I think Dad's gone retarded," and clear in Jeremy's mother's ever-growing impatience with her husband's damaged psyche.

The screaming, flailing Iraqi boy that rushed from the alley; the boy screaming on fire; a boy not much older than Jeremy, if one could make such a fine distinction through the flames and screaming melting flesh; screaming fire, arms akimbo and waving in agony, running aflame. The six other men in the Humvee, charged with anxious, cautious energy, until the immediate danger abated whereupon they began to laugh in great exploding bursts at the comically flaming boy that danced in the night. The boy closer now, his great black eyes visible through the flames that ate his face; Jeremy's father could smell the boy and feel the heat of the boy on his face as he clutched his rifle through the laughing. He wanted the boy to stop, the noise of the laughing men to stop, and the heat to stop, both the heat that surrounded him every day and the heat that escaped the boy and touched his face along with the laughter. Jeremy's father aimed his weapon at the flaming boy and heard singing.

Jeremy, accosted by the sounds: the screaming boy on fire, his singing friend, his sobbing father, tugged at his hair and started to weep too. Benjy, with gradual awareness of the scene that unfolded behind him, stopped his song and turned his head and on his face was a look more of fear than mocking at the one man and the one boy, both with thick tears streaming down their face

as the boy on television crackled and spit in the lizard's wrath. Benjy, fully aware now, stood quickly, sputtering, "Dude, I gotta go," and just as quickly left the room and the house and never returned though never spoke of what happened and in later years thought it had only been a dream.

At his friend's exit, Jeremy felt his desperation even more keenly and now unconflicted rushed to his father, whom he loved like any young boy loves his father, a sensible mix of fear and adoration uncomplicated by song; the burning boy's absent screams replaced by the sound of lizard falling buildings which he could not hear, his father's arms wrapped tightly around his face and ears and he was overcome with a melancholy joy as his father's rough cheek touched his smooth own and their warm tears mixed and fought for the space between their cheeks; his father clutched him with strength and tenderness and they cried a puddle of tears upon Jeremy's shoulder that overflowed onto his father's shirt and spotted his paisley tie.

And while Jeremy could not have been aware of the scene in the far off Middle Eastern city, it was clear to him that something had occurred, or was occurring within his father at that moment so far away; he kept grabbing the boy, clutching the boy's face in his hands, contorted in weeping and shaking; it was as if in some kind of expression of eternal loss; as if during that night the skies and the stars opened before Jeremy's father and in his dreams there had been light and planets above the essential night; some cultivated energy escaped through generations of oppressive inertia and converged in the lizard's gross actions and then within Jeremy's father's mind as his tongue stirred and he screamed great guttural things in his son's ear, and Jeremy, having known the hideous actions of men, would then, and for the rest of his life, be the master of his days.

Walter

Walter is my name. Our relationship is as old as the earth. As old as the stars. This may well be a lie. It is not intentional I assure you. I have no conception of the age of our relationship aside from the knowledge that I have always known you. Though perhaps of me you have only been vaguely aware. Hello!

Walter is my name. I once ate a pomegranate. Perhaps this is why I am trapped in your closet. I ate the entirety of the pomegranate. Hence the duration of my imprisonment in your closet.

Do you remember me? Have you seen me before? Walter is my name. I place a bag over my head to keep from being found out. It is a paper shopping bag of the type you are likely familiar with from your visits to the supermarket. Do you know this type of bag? I am certain you do. In it you would place produce, dry goods, detergent and the like. I do not do this. Foremost because I find it distasteful. I imagine it is not difficult to understand why. Anyone in my place would feel the same.

Do you like music? What are your favorite musical acts? I imagine you listen to the French popular music of the 1960's. This is very clever of you. You are very clever. I imagine you also enjoy other music. Of what type I am uncertain, perhaps you should fill me in.

My name is Walter. Our relationship is a complicated one, but I do not believe it out of place to suggest that we are friends. Do not let my friendship alarm you. Rather, allow that we can serve each other in a mutually beneficial way. Trust is the basis of any friendship.

My name is Walter. When I leave, I simply blink away. My return is just as sudden. I do not understand it, though I suspect you may be involved.

Let me introduce myself. My name is Walter. Hello. I am in front of you today in regard to a matter of utmost urgency. What this matter is I cannot say. I would imagine it has something to do with the postal service. I find the operation of the postal service to be most heartening. There are few things in this life that I enjoy so much as the operations of the postal service. Hello! Hellooooo! I am waving.

My name is Walter. This is my regular clothing. This shirt is of the type of any standard white dress shirt you would find at a discount men's store. Or many other stores for that matter. My pants are Dockers brand (this is a division of the Levi's brand) and they are khaki. My shoes are black and have nonslip rubber soles. This is for safety.

I must say, as I am mute, I find it remarkable that we are communicating in such an outstanding fashion. I have no answer for this, so I will not dwell upon it. I imagine it to be a sign of my sincerity. I am without a mouth so my inability to speak should come as no surprise. I have cut two holes in my bag, out of which it is possible for me to see. I can see you. I have not cut a

mouth, but I do not think it would be of much use even if I did. The hole would have only one shape, you see. Perhaps I could make a single long crowing, but I do not know of what use that would be. My inability to blink is quite enough, one eternal crow will simply not do.

My name is Walter. I live in your closet. Once I left your closet to watch you shower. Afterwards I returned to your closet and masturbated. I felt satisfied and pleasantly fatigued. Once you were having sex and I watched you. I quickly grew bored. You are a tiresome lover. You lack imagination. Perhaps you would like some pointers.

Are you familiar with longing? I am of the opinion that I am. It seems that I have waited an eternity for this. What this is, you will never know.

Does your lover work for an NGO? This is my sense of your lover's character. Please, correct me if I'm wrong. Did you meet your lover in the Sudan, over the hacked refuse left in the wake of the Janjaweed? Your lover seems very sincere. I do not doubt your lover's sincerity. It is just that sincerity has always been my downfall. I am merely making a statement. I am not complaining. Good afternoon!

What type of films do you enjoy? I am sure they are very clever films. Buñuel and the like. You should consider purchasing vintage prints of these films. This is possible on eBay, but I would imagine you could find them for purchase elsewhere. You could set up a projector and view them with your friends. This might be a good idea for an evening. Hello!

Call me Walter. It is my name. It is all I have, besides you. I sometimes wonder if this is enough.

When you leave home I put up the flag on your mailbox regardless of the status of your outgoing mail. This may seem like a cruel trick to play upon the postal worker, but I do so enjoy the rascally look on his face when he discovers that yet again you have no outgoing mail. Little rascal, his (or sometimes her) face seems to say. She then bends your New Yorker neatly by its length and places it in the box, disregarding her feeling about your perpetual antics. She is a consummate professional. I watch this from your closet. Please remember not to close your blinds for then I can no longer view this daily wonder.

My name is Walter. I live in your closet. Sometimes I leave your closet and go to other closets. Often I do not know that I am going but only that I get there. I like to watch people with more elaborate sex lives than yours. I like to watch these people have sex. I will take pictures for you with your digital camera and place them within your hard drive. Perhaps viewing them will fire your ardor.

I will take your entirety as if it were my own. In fact, I already have. Nice to see you!

I am pleased you are dating, but I do wish you spoke more often with your mother. Call her.

You may wonder why it is that years of living in a closet have not led me to develop a more festive wardrobe. I have no answer for you other than professionalism. Do you like oranges? Would you like a wedge of mine? I have one here. Perhaps you would like a wedge? No? If you change

your mind please let me know, but remember that after I have finished eating the orange it will be too late.

My name is Walter. My eating habits are of as much curiosity to me as our ability to have this wonderful chat. Gift horse, as they say. I do so enjoy fresh fruit.

Once I left your closet to make love with a beautiful woman. We made love in the shower. As you might imagine my bag grew very soggy. I must say, despite the effects on my bag, the experience was well worth it. Her breasts were full and heavy and quite dirty. It took perhaps three bars of soap to adequately clean her breasts. I do not know how her breasts got so dirty but I assure you after our time together they were no longer. I felt very lucky to have encountered this woman. This is unsurprising.

Some woman post pictures of their breasts on the internet. Your broadband connection is optimal for viewing these pictures. Thank you.

I am called Walter. I do not believe it has always been this way. I do not remember any of my previous names, but I am certain they, and I, have existed. You are fortunate to have encountered me. Isidore. Isidore. Isidore. Yes, I think that was one. Hello!

Let us be clear on one matter: I enjoy the company of women. I am not able to judge when, or where, this was, but I am confident my hunch is correct. Should you doubt me, the fact of my offspring will put your mind at ease.

Have you ever posted pictures of your genitals on the internet? Did you use Photoshop to protect your anonymity? Was your face blurred, covered by a black bar? Perhaps the image was closely cropped? Despite your best efforts, I will always recognize you.

Call me Walter. It is my name. I am curious about one thing, this NGO worker who is your lover, are you satisfied? Certainly the conversations you have must be very earnest. You must discuss matters of great import. This is a good and useful thing. But are you satisfied? My only wish is for your happiness.

Speaking of your mother, how long has it been since you two spoke? I remember some time ago you two were speaking on the telephone. The conversation seemed heated. Does she not approve of your lifestyle? Does she even know of your lifestyle? In ten words or less, please describe your lifestyle. My name is Walter. Do you remember me?

In the modern parlance, do you consider yourself to be taken? If not, what do you consider?

My name is Walter. I am happy to be here. You will never know how much I enjoy our time together. It is a sincere privilege. Sincerely.

Once, when you were drunk (this seems to happen often), I left the closet and stood above you. I thought to kill you but then I changed my mind. I thought to place my nonslip sole on your neck until you were dead but then I thought better of it. You are of the temperament to write letters and

also subscribe to several magazines, thus your postal activity is somewhat higher than average. Who could say who would take your place? I would be very alarmed to happen upon some vagrant who operated out of a PO box. This is why you still live. This is not the only reason why you still live. I have grown fond of you, lying drunk, as you so often do, crying late into the night. Or playing computer solitaire until the sun rises. These are endearing traits of yours, though, as I said before, I am happy you are dating again.

Do you find yourself excoriated by the modern world? To be frank, I do not. My relationship with the modern world is twofold. Neither of these folds will be revealed. But I will allow you to guess one. If you get it right on the first try, perhaps we can continue to the second. If not, well, I'm sorry.

My name is Walter. I am uncertain of how I came to be. I think perhaps you had something to do with it. But that seems illogical as I predate you. Perhaps my manifestations are many. That is the only answer.

I am called Walter. I am unaware of time. But perhaps you had already guessed that. I can see you!

Do you read much? It is so difficult in this day and age. So much going on. So much to distract your attention. Sometimes though, it is nice to just shut off the world and curl up with a good book. Have you read Tom Robbins? I think you might enjoy his work. Hi! How are you today?

Once I was responsible for a young girl's death, however indirectly. She was as vicious as she was fragile, as many young girl's are. She hung herself in her closet. I was long gone.

Perhaps you should view more pornography. I think this may help improve your prosaic sex life. There are many popular websites you could view. Or, noting your old fashioned character, magazines. I believe there is a shop nearby that sells adult magazines of all persuasions. I do not believe it is necessary for me to address the relative benefits of internet versus printed pornography. I am sure someone has written extensively on the subject. I will leave you to your own devices, but nonetheless encourage some definitive action in the near future. My magnanimity, while considerable, is not without its limits.

This person with whom you conduct yourself, are you in love? Given the mediocre quality of your sex life, let me hasten to say that I hope that is not the case. The only benefit I can see in formalizing the nature of your relationship with this person is a possible increase in items delivered by post: letters, gifts, etc. Despite the joy I might feel at such an eventuality, I will recommend you continue to play the field. My name is Walter. Have we met?

By now you should be aware of the importance I place upon sincerity. Your sincerity is in question. Be advised. Hello!

My name is Walter. I see you are a Taurus. I cannot say I have an astrological sign, as my birth seems somewhat fluid. It is a substantial loss. I see you are hardworking, tenacious, and have a good sense of humor, but also have a tendency towards melancholy. This is very alarming to me.

My alarm is somewhat unanticipated. I pray the forthcoming arrival of the postal worker will relieve my profound sense of disease.

Are you depressed now? Do you find it difficult to perform household tasks? The reason I ask is that it seems that the closet has taken on a curious aroma. With my lack of nose, it is rather mystifying that this concerns me, but nonetheless, perhaps some form of deodorizer would be a welcome option. Hi there! Good to know you!

I once saw a barmaid perform an elaborate strip tease to a song by the heavy metal band Danzig. I have seen many such things and am continually gratified by my ability to find joy in discrete moments of beauty. Hello! Nice to see you!

What are your outside interests? Do you have any hobbies? Do you enjoy softball? Chess? Might I suggest taking up backgammon. It is a thrilling game. I seem to recall that I play often. Perhaps were you to learn the game we could challenge each other to a match. Perhaps we too could play often. Then again, perhaps not.

When you first met your lover, did you sense a spark? Did you intuit that this could be the real thing? Did you sense you had found your true love after so much time alone? I am unconvinced, but you already knew that. Perhaps I am too focused on the physical. It is an understandable caution on my part.

Have you ever been attracted by bestiality? I confess I once saw a video of a woman having sex with a horse. It was quite a procedure. I must admit I was titillated. Shortly thereafter, I found myself engaged in the act of masturbation. I think perhaps the source of my arousal stemmed from the degradation experienced by the actors more so than the intercourse. I am not ashamed by this, degradation is the source of much of my amusement.

Do you feel apart from me? Let me bring you closer. Are you scared? Do not be. There is no need for concern. My name is Walter. Hello!

When you leave I will forgot your name, as I have so many times before. Do not be angry, it's just that I am not one to dwell. I mean no offense. It find it very pleasant to talk like this. My name is Walter. Do you remember me?

My name is Walter. I live in your closet. From your closet, I can see on the calendar that Valentine's day is fast approaching. You will do well to purchase a gift for your lover. Think well of your lover's characteristic sincerity when purchasing a gift. Such foresight will benefit you as the relationship progresses. Might I suggest something on the Putumayo label. Hello! Good to see you!

If you were an animal what animal would you be? What would be your superpower? Who are your heroes? What is your political affiliation? Sexual orientation? Preferred body type? Flavor of ice cream? Favorite color? Please answer me. I must know. For my part, I am colorblind.



Make Omniscient: A Romance

Two Jackasses stare at a table of 1, 2, 3, 4, girls. The girls are young and have breasts. One makes affected motions with her hair and neck, purses her lips. One has hair on her lip. One rips a hunk of bread and chews noisily. They all chew noisily.

Jackass #1 bobs underneath oversized headphones as he marks upon pages 1-17 (Chapter 1) of [a Quirky Romance *a la* Nick Hornby]. His excitement with the initial chapter of the as-yet-to-be-completed work is clear. Jackass #2, a more subdued editor, is sans headphones.

They all six (4 + 2) pronate in café.

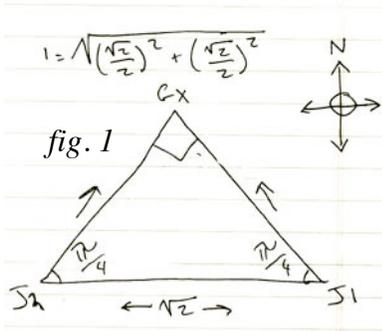
Jackass #2 (J2) watches Jackass #1 (J1) pause in his histrionics to stare at Girl With Affliction (G3—counterclockwise around the table would place her at position 3 amongst the 4). J2 watches J1's eyes fill with longing. J2 scoffs at J1's doe-eyed display and returns to his page, comfortably smug in his evident superiority. Further reflecting on his evident superiority, J2's blossom of smug apparatuses into a healthy fire of self-righteousness not dissimilar to the type of fire one might craft having decided to bivouac a night's pass in a far-off rural landscape, the fire blazing beneath a clear sky, the callously blinking stars of the cold cruel universe above dot-dash-dotting inequity, as a character, not dissimilar to J2, pushes up off his haunches to warm his hands and face against the flames, reflecting: "hark! thus whence mine own dismal carbon came!"

It is at this point in his reflection that J2 looks up to be distracted by Hairlip (G2), braless in the draft. J2 is instantly confounded by G2's nipples, helplessly gawking as the nipples make yogic display against the worn white fabric of her T-shirt. After a few deleterious moments of conducted *nipplasana*, J2 looks back to see J1 staring at him staring at G2's nipples make exercise, and with coincidentally much the same smug countenance J2 himself initially evinced not moments before when the situation had been so coincidentally reversed. J2 lowers his head awash with shame resultant J1's espial. "Fuck!" he thinks. "Fuck!" once more. His consternation (embarrassment vis-à-vis proprietary karma—the perverse angst of ownership) turns to anger: "Fat Fuck!" (J1 is a portly sort of fellow. It is, however, a girth he wears well and is in no way indicative of poor cardiovascular health. He is in fact a runner, and does several laps around the field of a nearby park every other day, religiously.) "That Fat Fucking Fuck!" mouths J2 angrily.

As if it were not already clear how the Jackasses are occupying their time in a café such as the café Jackass #1 and Jackass #2 currently occupy with their time, it can be stated that Jackasses the world over in fact can be seen in much the same setting, in much the same situation, with much the same relative status, doing just what these two Jackasses happen to be doing. The Two Jackasses are at the café for the express purpose of *writing*. It is a lonely calling. The heat of the café, the smell of the bodies, the jittery churn of French Roast; these things make them feel alive, make them feel a *part of*. In a metaphoric sense, the café serves as an illustration of their fervent need to belong. It exists as a tangible outward manifestation of the acceptance they have always craved, despite the smug superiority they display in the presence of their compatriots, colleagues, and otherwise. "Those sheeplly fuckers, those livestockian fucks," they might say in respect to those compatriots and colleagues engaged in more prosaic methods of filling a life, continuing as the mood struck

them: “Life, that empty vessel, that ghost ship upon a listless sea. The captain has walked the plank, the pastor swings from the yardarm.”

The table at which the girls sit rests at opposite 45° angles from the Jackass tables. J1 & J2 sit



individually, along the hypotenuse. All three tables forming an isosceles right triangle with the girls sitting comfortably oblivious to their position of relative strength as described in *fig. 1*. A position superficially dependent on the direction one happened to be facing relative to the triangle shape as a whole in reference to the plane of

the café taken in it's entirety. (One would do well to assume one was facing magnetic N.)

G3 ruminates: *Fat women are so mean to me. They hate me because I'm thin and pretty. They look at my body and hate me. They hate me because they're ugly and fat and they know their boyfriends look at me and want to have sex with me. They know their boyfriends are thinking about having sex with me right now.*

J1 is at the café editing the first chapter of his novel in progress, No Messages. The title is meant to be said in an electronic Stephen Hawking type voice and whenever anyone asks him the title of his novel he says it in just that voice. J1 is hopeful his publisher will allow a few allowances (and extra expense) with the hardcover version. J1 is hopeful he will be able to convince his publisher of the marketing advantage, even artistic propriety, of placing a small electronic chip inside the cover of the hardcover version enabling that voice to drone the words, “No Messsaaaggges,” when

a flashing red button (also on the front cover of the hardcover version) is depressed. J1 has yet to figure out the paperback edition.

His novel, entitled No Messages, is about a sensitive portly gent who is obsessed, nay, enamored with personal ads of the variety one might find in the back of a city's free alternative newsweekly. He (the portly protagonist) is so enamored in fact, that he has managed to hack into the message center of his city's particular free alternative newsweekly (he is a skilled technician), enabling him to eavesdrop on myriad conversations of the variety **2 Prospective Lovers Initial Shy Connection:** *Hi, this is Chet, and I was just like, you know, leafing through the paper the other day, and, you know, it's crazy, right, I've like never even looked at these things, but I, uh, saw your ad and thought you sounded, well, you know, really great, so I, uh, thought I would call. Yeah, so anyway, I'm like six foot two. I'm into going to the movies and eating sushi. With you. Ha, but seriously, give me a call. Chet, box 21209.*

This plot device is a matter of some debate among many of J1's *readers* (those who read the initial/early stages of a draft in the interest of providing *constructive criticism*), who seem to doubt the verisimilitude of such a device, believing indeed that internet dating has in fact usurped such antiquated and seemingly creepy modes of encounter as personal ads placed in the back of a city's free alternative newsweekly. That they would in fact be correct does not overly put off J1. "It's a period piece," he coolly replies. Seemingly more problematic to the overall sympathetic nature of No Messages is the predominant (female) perception of a predominantly (female) readership of J1's (female) characters as "Headless Vagina People" or HVP. A view that may or may not stem from the seemingly out-of-step preponderance of post-shower breast self-examinations in the novel. These occurring usually in front of a mirror and followed by the word "labia" and some variation of the word "wet," such as "damp" or "moist," though often more hyperbolic, such as

“gushing,” in the same sentence or quick succession of sentence fragments: “Yes. Yes. Yes!” J1, however, is aware that self-groping post-shower masturbatory sessions are a typical means of unwinding from a long day at the office for most, if not all, lowly administrative flunkies, and is similarly unconcerned by these criticisms (constructive or not) and in fact attributes these scenes in the novel to the need for verisimilitude those same uptight bitches found lacking in the first place.

The protagonist of No Messages then follows the incipient relationship courtesy his hack of box 21209: her reply, his reply, the first date [the establishment agreed upon amongst the two, the very same place the protagonist conveniently finds himself dining the very same night agreed upon, watching, discreetly and from a distance, often either rooting on the man (if he seems like a good guy), or willing caution on the woman (if he seems like a dick)]. The rub for the protagonist being, of course, through this vicarious method of dating, very little is consummated for him personally and he is very sad and very alone, spending his time not either in the independent video store where he is shift manager or on his “dates,” in his own sweet and quiet version of agony. The current draft is heart-wrenching to say the least.

G2 ruminates: *That Sonofabitch. That Goddamned Sonofabitch.*

In the moments before Jackass #2 is snapped to attention by Jackass #1 followed by J2 then exclaiming, “Fat Fuck!” he was reading what seemed to be a passable short story (up to the point he read—the first paragraph) submitted by a classmate to a *Writing Workshop* J2 is participating in on Wednesday nights, having seen the class advertised in a City College Adult Education flyer available in the selfsame café J2 now finds himself sitting. J2 having seen the flyer on a previous visit to the café and in a desire to *get off his ass* and engage in some form of *self-improvement*,

jumpstarting his writing career, signed up for and took the class. J2 is intrigued by the story, but more so by the woman who wrote it. J2 hypothesizes that the woman who wrote the story is an exotic dancer, a stripper. He further hypothesizes his head nuzzled between her breasts, a dollar bill pinned between his teeth. J2 is disarmed by the faint aroma of cotton candy, but is subsequently, as stated, distracted by the presence of the 1, 2, 3, 4, girls 45° NE and Jackass #1 due E. The story begins:

Once upon a time there was a dancer who could not rejoice. She spun and span and pirouetted and ducked and leaped and tucked and flipped and lit and grimaced and sweat and bent, yet there was nothing; no smile came to her face, not even a grin. Her brow remained un wrinkled and her eyes remained dry.

It was at this point that J2 stopped in the story (it is as of yet untitled), alive with anticipation to the unnamed dancer's charming dilemma, though more so wondering if the particular event that occurred in the unnamed dancer's life (in the story) causing the as-yet-unknown psychological damage is an actual event in the writer's actual life (the writer also being an unnamed dancer—her professional stage name will suffice as means of identification—her professional stage name is “Brianna”). J2 wonders what trauma “Brianna” suffered that still wounds her so, and more to the point, he wonders if deciphering this trauma will in some way facilitate his having sexual relations with “Brianna,” an activity in which he would very much like to engage in at least a few times, though he believes that “dating” her regularly might be a bit of a chore, her being an exotic dancer and all, and in all likelihood, by virtue of her profession, a cocaine addict with a fuckload of other issues to boot. It is at this point (initially described in paragraph 5) that J2 begins fixating on G2's flexible nipples.

The girls discuss the socio-economic ramifications of U. S. President George W. Bush's "Ownership Society" as it relates to the function of the "Proprietary Gaze," a phenomenon, to G4 at least, whose earliest notable representation "just has to be late-career Titian." G1's sarcastic contribution, "Ya think?" coming in the feeble hope that there is a quantifiable relationship between the two phenomena that does exist, or more so will come to exist, within her specific frame of reference/life-span, being *such a dog*, as opposed to, say, G3's more pronounced familiarity, being *a total slut*. G2's expertise decidedly limited (notwithstanding her aerobic breasts) by an unfortunate hereditary similarity to the fictional detective Magnum P.I.

Minutes pass. J2 feels the heat of J1's condescending eyes. He looks up: "Fuck!" He looks down: "Fat Fuck!"

J2 arrived in the café in fourth position temporally in relation to the six characters of predominant interest inside the café. He had to *get out*. He was in line for a Double Latte when he first noticed G4 and G2. G4, like G2, also sans brassiere, also has nipples. He stared at them poking out of her scissor-cut V-neck as the barista repeatedly asked him for \$3.37. Her blonde hair (up) and flushed face (down) only brought him sweet pain.

J2 had been encouraged to *get out* of his apartment not only for the Double Latte he now sips but for the purposes of removing himself from the premises at the exact time his ex significant other was coming by to *pick up her shit*. There was not much shit, it had not been a particularly long relationship, and for this reason (the relative lack of shit), and for this reason (cowardice), J2 elected to leave her shit in a bag in the alcove with the words (left on a voicemail message), "Your shit's on the steps." Sinking into a peer edit does little to assuage his grief. In fact, it is not until

writing a parody of the relationship in the style of Cervantes, entitled Doña Misanthropy, that he begins to get some sort of closure.

The fact that J2's dilemma could be construed as *bomb* material for J1's novel is purely coincidental and no such chapter is to be found in the completed manuscript of No Messages.

Upon catching J2 in the midst of his lechery courtesy G2—viewed along the hypotenuse (*fig. 1*)—J1 is filled with a smug satisfaction not dissimilar to J2's feeling of smug satisfaction just a few moments earlier (the primordial fire sparked in paragraph 4), witnessing J1's, again not dissimilar, pining for G3's warm sweetness. J1, flush with it, resumes his edit. He is proud of his work. He feels the chapter is a fine chapter. It is a chapter as first chapters should be, J1 feels. In a masterstroke, he has decided to use the technique known as *False Problem/Real Problem* in his first chapter, at least that is how J1 knows of it. With this technique, a dilemma not central to the novel's predominant action is used as the initial narrative thrust in order to familiarize the reader with the protagonist (a sensitive portly gent), while providing a little tasty misdirection. In the case of No Messages, it is a genius ploy. That J1 has a tricky situation is clear. His protagonist, while likeable, could possibly be construed as *psychotic*, or at the very least, *dangerously unbalanced*. And as J1 well knows, that just won't cut it in today's market. By using *False Problem/Real Problem*, J1 deftly avoids the main action of his protagonist [and the potential moral/emotional conflicts some readers may have with it, if by personal experience (having been stalked), or not], thereby drawing the reader in to his (the protagonist's) portly wit and charm, and, one hopes, encouraging the reader to continue on when the *going gets tough* to the big payoff. For the payoff is a large one by any measure. It seems that the protagonist, by virtue of his stalking, nay, voyeurism, learns a thing or two about women. He learns that beautiful women are usually fucked in the head. But more importantly, he truly starts to believe, having thus lowered his standards,

that there's a portly sensitive girl out there for him somewhere. It's not long after this epiphany (beautifully rendered by J1), that the protagonist finds himself at the library rekindling his love for the Japanese Art of Haiku, and yes, across the table, it's *her*.

Kallie Koetze

Kallie Koetze's prodigious tastes occasioned a goodly number of post-rugger brawls, the Birkenhead stout and close-quarters causing more than one patron to take umbrage at his cheek; the Springbok flanker suffered as many knocks on the pitch as off. His brus in the maul would come to his defense for certain—"Howzit doos? Donner bliktom!"—the lads everhappy to bash and dop another. Merriment invariably followed the blood soaked sawdust: songs sung, horse played. But after a particularly poor result versus the All-Blacks—he'd taken a dastardly ball chopping—he was drinking lonesome and sore about the privates to boot. Foolish of his safety and angling a winsome masseuse, there was an eruption of Kiwi fervor and the damn gesuip fools even tried to stick him (in tandem!). The pub's location and particulars leading to accusations greater than his hiccupping guts—Holnaih in the showers! Fudgenudging in the pub!—the brus decidedly disapproving of such extracurriculars. Protesting his innocence—"I choon ye China, a vloek!"—but disbelieved, Kallie Koetze beat the bosbefok to piss and pumped many-a-slet; his efforts at redemption culminating with a run down a Johannesburg street in the rainy dawn swinging his Springbok jersey over head, spitting froth, blood and beer. To no avail. Moffie Hooker! read the Sunday tabloids. Kallie Koetze was chucked off the squad in disgrace.

Brouhaha complete, Kallie Koetze fell into it, his 15 stone blooming to 18, ill-suited to his 1.7 meters and manner of accoutrement. He waddled Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, contemplated throwing himself off Victoria Falls. On the precipice, thunder around him, his balance skewed, ripe and primed for a slip from the green mossy floor, Yesus or some such messianic figure spoke

to Kallie Koetze in wet wild clouds of steam and chugging and Kallie Koetze remembered an un-Moffie boy precused and delightful. From this spry tot's visage, he remembered his da and summer Sundays in the park, trips to the bergie, the gam domestic they pumped (in tandem!) in the laundry. But most of all he remembered Chickie Choo Choo, the catapulting steam as the train moved across his horizon; at her sweet inward whistle Kallie Koetze pulled his fat arse back off the falls and set about redemption.

He worked up through the platteland, gathering strength and regaining presence, before he found full measure on the Jambo Kenya Express, his corpulent bulk worked once again to sinew—even more so—shoveling coal and miscellany. The engine room his home now, as much as the rigger pitch or even slooped over on a stool and brookie. Kallie Koetze transformed his manifold zeal to make might and motion with his engineer's cap and zinc-plated spade, Missy. (He do the zincing himself, save up and scrap that she be ever-pretty, ever-ready with the piles of coal and nonplussed by wet or tears.) Fastidious in his work if no longer his personal appearance, he kept the engine shiny, the shovel shiny, no matter the soot and sweat that coloured his A-shirt, body dripping heavy as he shoveled fuel into furnace, his cap turned round and pistons burning. Into it he grew hard as bone, the benevolent governor of pace. His constituents: the cabin gams, meis, and servants; the rooinek and skaapfokker come down for a zebra and a toot; his rep grown far up as the dining car. Leaning on Missy, staring out into Tsomba Park and the elephants and whatnot cavorting, was Kallie Koetze, killer Springbok, shoveler and daddy of speed.

Word spread of the steel bad Charlie stoking the fires of the Jambo Kenya Express. Myriad Tots and Chickies come back for a peep and, if luck held, a jollie patrollie. Marketing folks took his picture, Kallie Koetze mugging on billboards from Nairobi to Dar es Salaam: **Jambo Kenya Means Speed!** A full page advert for Sportsmen Cigarettes in *The Kenya*

Times: Kallie Koetze, fag drooping from his lips, hand-pumping an engine that could match times with any locomotive on the continent. The resultant crowds massing so far outside the engine room the company had to splash for a bruiser with a clipboard and a monkey suit. Kallie Koetze bearing into the coal with Missy and, now, a fluffer in company. But, as Kallie Koetze knew, given the chance, all good things go fuck all given the chance. Diesel came to the continent, electric, talk in Japan of 200 kph! Despite his best efforts, he simply couldn't keep up, a gray streak appearing about his temples. The crowds absented, he picked it up again, briefly, much because the once again uniform direction of his vital juices, but it wasn't enough. Kallie Koetze was dropped by Sportsmen and would've been sacked by the company too, but for the embezzlement of the increased profits during his tenure: the dofs couldn't afford the engine upgrade that had brought on his obsolescence.

Sunk again, Kallie Koetze found no reprieve in gwat, tipple or even tots, but merely in quiet contemplation. Not unlike some ballie charou in the Upanishads—a book he'd once chanced to peruse amidst claps with a Durban hoer—he saw that the periphery had grown weedly over the matters of his intent, but that he could take the new station to once again untie himself into the coal and spade, uninterrupted by fruits or their pitchmen. And he did, resuming to polish Missy daily and keep his engine chugging along, not as fast as many of the others newly arrived, sure, but fast enough to make the Nairobi-Mombassa leg without great inconvenience and wasn't train travel about a certain amount of leisure anyhow, most boardmembers agreed, the steppes outside covered, as they were, with myriad wildlife an eyesfull enough to pass the time most pleasantly.

The seasons past still on, as they do, and Kallie Koetze slowed further, his physiology simply unable to reach the pace he was accustomed. There was talk of an apprentice perhaps, or

even two, but Kallie Koetze gave gruff response when the manner arose—“Eish! Me beater ell flick soon enuff ye fokker! Leemeebee!”—and the matter dropped, till one day his luck again took the circuitous turnabouts it had so often before when some gent from frontside decked in topcoat and breeches with an interest in the operation of antiquated trains came back for a peep. This moffie sod, a Springbok supporter of some years past, took the meeting to instruct Kallie Koetze on the movement of the pistons of the Firing Gnu locomotive of the Trans-Siberia company, which Kallie Koetze humoured so long without a visitor, until the bastard chanced to recognize Kallie Koetze from the pitch, or at least cog a resemblance between former he and he-now, calling out, “Eh, you strike a real shine to Kallie Koetze, Kallie Koetze, yaknow?” Kallie Koetze shrugged and the man, lost in his own youthful reveries, kept on, a greedy smile on his lips, “That boy was a dream in rugger, a flash on the pitch and a bull in the scrum. Shame he couldn’t keep his pickle in his breeches, knowwhatimean?” recollected visions of young Kallie Koetze shiny off the geezer’s eyeballs. “Oh yesindeedy! Ye’ve gone a bit hoary sure, but a spitting image I say...” with what Kallie Koetze brought down Missy sharpwise on his bean, splitting it in twain, momentarily displaced to days before train and unhappily so: the pub, brus and groping.

Kallie Koetze stared down at the red-faced Missy and floor both, took a deep breath, imagining his final scuppering in the hands of the coppers at the next stop and the forever interruption of his and Missy’s elaborate 1-2-3’s. He leaned on his babe and scuffed his boot to the grimy floor. “What awful chance that dim bastard,” he chooned aloud in mournful tones. “A nasty trick of a spiteful Yesus to be sure, sending this sod back.” But remembering Victoria Falls and the weighted dum dum perched atop, he cooled hissself and awaited word, ever certain that his life to this point had been driven by something beyond whatelse there was to see, something beyond that reach at least. And word came, though to Kallie Koetze’s amazement not from Yesus

but from Missy! Or some apparated Missy, long his sweet in hand, she came alive before him, gore dripping still off her cheeks. She kissed his grizzled face deep, and stood back, hands on hips, her dark curls and batting lashes nodding towards the furnace. Without cognition, but regained of his senses, Kallie Koetze began to shovel the dead pederast into the awaiting maw of the Jambo Kenya Express, oozy scraps and all, his sweat mixing with the doos's blood on his face and curling over his lips. Then, like some kind of divine infusion, the train made a harrumph and began to move her engine at a pace that Kallie Koetze even in best days could've never mustered, so much so the spiny butlers in the front room almost spilled themselves the acceleration came so great!

Henceforth, the engine took blood and the blood took heat and the train moved rapid. The higher-ups were thrilled and, upon their discovery of the new fuel, even provided Kallie Koetze with a choice number of flagellates to his alchemical pulpit of motion. The signposts and billboards reappeared: Kallie Koetze with zinc-plated Missy smiling up at the African night. The dizzy ingénues returned too, though one or another for the last time. Jambo Kenya Express, engine manned by Kallie Koetze, known now and forever as the fastest train hereabouts or anywhere else, the jackals and orangutan cry shrill when she passes, heated by the tainted air.

32A

I'm sure he decided, Ganesh descended and proclaimed it to be, on page 132 of *Sky Mall*. It was stumbling through the tchotchkes and deviously devised gadgets that refined and honed his sense of rage, his utter unbelonging in a world beset by modernity, chiding him to disassemble his electric toothbrush and bring his yet unrealized plan to its operational beginnings, my burgeoning awareness of his intended action, concurrent with the arrival of my \$4.50 G&T, paralyzing me with fear until, post-quaff, I set my course to you, full of shaking and trembling, I mean, after all, this is the guy who stole my complimentary pillow and blanket—only one set per row—my complimentary pillow and blanket gone, behind his back, his lumbar supported and mine crying in the vacuum and the subsequent confrontation: when I confronted him about his thievery, politely: 'Dude, you jacked my pillow!' aware of the cultural difference between our two peoples: 'Dude, why'd you jack my pillow?' and the guttural yelping thing that came from his throat in response; its meaning, whatever it was, weaseling into my auditory canals and exploding like a suicide bomber in a Tel Aviv discotheque; the maddening weight of generations of oppression encompassed in this sound, and I fully taken aback, wanting to be like, 'Dude, I'm not even Anglo. Gandhi was cool with me, you savvy brother?' but his snaky eyes and his skin's mocha hue restrained my tongue—guilt Jane, fucking guilt—from forming any defense and I sat back down like an asshole sans pillow or blanket, defenseless, drowning in an inconsolable opinion of myself: that my life, up to this point and however much time remains, our ETA and previous time elapsed—who knows how long now?—has been an irredeemable failure, and the explosion, melting concrete as the plane shifts in, girders

shuffled like playing cards, is for nothing and I am going to die without ever having belonged either: me and Paramjeet are brothers, but then Jane, I conceived a mental image Jane, the power of positive thinking regained its tenuous grip, and I shook off that evil feeling; I thought of my country and my life and I heard a song Jane: Old Glory ragged in the gunpowder breeze, staring down upon the pitched battle and the words came, 'Play Ball!' and I was proud and I realized I had known happiness and that I would know it again and I blamed Suliman Ibn Falafel for my decent into unwarranted despair and vowed revenge against he and his people for shaking my confidence in the good ol' U. S. of A.: the gifts that are mine to have and bestow on my fellow man both, I thought of Junior Varsity Football Jane, and I thought of the Student Body Government Elections in 11th Grade when I was chosen to serve my classmates in the office of Student Body Treasurer—a telling duty in light of my present employ Jane—and I thought of Sigma Alpha Epsilon and I scolded myself for I have had nothing if not fraternity; I am an avid fan of the National Football League Jane, my brothers there too, in the persons of fans of the 1968 Super Bowl Champion and most recently 1998 American Football Conference Champion New York Jets—the multitude brothers I have of Green & White coloring are legion! these, my people, and he building a detonator out of an electric toothbrush; I felt pity for the poor confused man Jane and I wondered if I had been the one forced into his dark circumstance would I have turned out differently and I then felt empathy: the dirty rapings and fondlings of secret police and taxi drivers, an inability to perform simple arithmetic, wearing a silly dress on the mean streets of Calcutta: his dirty bloomers, if I had been forced to endure these things would it have been me who decided—with the notable assistance of Ganesh—that the only way to regain balance in the universe and upon this temporal Earth would be by performing such a dastardly act as destroying a large airplane, full of screaming innocents, with a crudely devised bomb composed of the aforementioned electric

toothbrush and shoe soles of rubberized napalm or some such other mutable flammable liquid hardened to plastic in a dusty Mumbai laboratory; would it be ME doing it instead of HIM; he sitting next to me, eyes full of fury and hate, wild like Kali, feet beating a jittery percussive war dance, a funereal dirge for us: the rhythm what will come to signify our death, the gruesome death of us and everyone else aboard this winged cigarello and the inhabitants of whatever building we kiss, dead; he to Ganesh and we to Christian heaven—though they may be one in the same, I'm open to that Jane, I really am—where everyone is wearing Banana Republic and smells of Lavender Hibiscus Handcream and I, in the interest of preventing this grievous catastrophe, I became determined to get the stewardess—namely you Jane—to give him a blow job.

Thus my wild gesticulation, thus my Amstel Light—thank you for that Jane, it really hits the spot—sending cascades shimmering in the dry fake air, weightless drops aloft and floating at 35,000 feet: these darkies, ahem I mean terroristas, err foreigners, are all quite repressed Jane; this is my reasoning. Jane, Jane, are you listening to me Jane? Your eyes are wandering, listen up, this is crucial, critical to not only our survival but the generalized continuance of our blessed way of life. The millions, those down below, will be swept into the socio-political maelstrom of our actions today, Jane. It is your charming mouth that hangs in the balance. Do you want them to win Jane? The terrorists? By not blowing Rajiv, you would only be helping them, helping the terrorists. Is that what you want? Now listen to me, my thinking on the matter, and I've given it some thought standing back here by the head, is that Suliman's repression will be the key to foiling his malicious enterprise: the grisly end he has in mind for you and me Jane. That by taking him in the lavatory and pleasuring him orally to a full and veritably Niagara-like release, you will be doing your duty as a patriot and moreover as a member of this flight crew. By offering him just one small morsel of

the joys of upright Western living from your copious sexual pleasure chest—don't play coy with me Jane, you've obviously been around the block a few times—his mission and the operation thereof will be effectively thwarted by his orgasmic bliss and maybe, just maybe, he'll think we're not so bad after all; he will deign not to kill us, riding bareback to our doom on this erectile instrument of death. His destructive impulse will be rendered flaccid! Tables turned, so to speak. It is ordained! This is your sacrifice Jane, you do this for your people. For all of us Jane! You are the loving Earth Mother; you give yourself to save us. It has been broadcast and I have seen. You'll be a martyr Jane. There will be *Good Morning America*, Jane. There will be a book deal. An anchor spot on *Entertainment Tonight*. 32A, yes, with the turban. No no, I'm sure he's circumcised, they're very clean, it's part of the religion. Stick a finger up his butt, get freaky with that prostate. Wait! No, don't, I'd forgotten his uncle in Bangalore—he'd a difficult childhood Jane, unspeakable acts committed in the name in of Krishna—his repressed memories of that awful steaming day in the market, the smell of cardomum and saffron, the rough carpet scratching away at his cheek, the sobs between clenched teeth, all this may well return with your digit's insertion. Yes, he'll have to deal with those feelings at some point of course, it's just that today may not be the most opportune moment in terms of our survival, your's and mine. I feel for poor Sahib, I really do! You see Jane, this is a predicament, I'm really of two minds about the whole violent disarming thing, I've tried to put myself in his sandals you see, I mean, like if a tsunami destroyed my fishing village and I'd been force fed the Upanishads from birth, I mean, maybe I'd be a crazy turbaned darkie too. I mean c'mon Jane, he worships an Elephant God for chrissakes! I know, I know, we're supposed to cherish our differences, but you have to admit that's pretty out there. I tried Jane, I really did! When I sat down and saw him there brimming with his hatred of the other, I wanted to offer him a Slim Jim, but I had no Slim Jims Jane, not one juicy meaty stick. Damn

how I'd wished for a Slim Jim! Oh Lord God, why have I no Slim Jims! I mouthed in quiet lamentation. No Slim Jim just magically appeared Jane. I admit it, I was going to chance it, you know, bluff him Jane: Hey buddy, how 'bout a Slim Jim? The tangy flavor explosion will surely make you feel better about having your hands and feet amputated for stealing a pack of chewing gum and the whole talking like you've got a big wad of snot lodged in your throat thing. I was about to say it Jane, damn close, and then I realized not only that there were likely no Slim Jims aboard this rocketing phallus of doom, but wait, I said to myself—I'm like recounting my thought process now Jane—wait, I said, is a Slim Jim made of beef or pork or some unholy mix of the two? Furthermore, is it cows or pigs these characters don't like?—don't ask me Jane, something about being unclean—and then, in an unpredicted and totally abrupt change of tact, I was glad I didn't have any Slim Jims. That momentary questioning of my actual possession of Slim Jims presently on hand, the ensuing calm and reflection necessitated by this egregious—on my part Jane—lack of Slim Jims giving me time to gauge the logic of offering PK Rammalammadingdong a Slim Jim in the first place and my subsequent eureka moment of deft cultural sensibility likely saving us all from our fiery and untimely doom. Thank the Lord I had no Slim Jims! There are brands of these people Jane. Sun Tzu said something about it. I'm paraphrasing of course, but it boils down to the fact that everybody loves Pop Tarts. Damn it Jane, what I'd give for just one Blueberry Frosted!

I knew this was going to happen Jane. I swear I did. The minute, no the second, I got to the airport. Well not exactly then but shortly thereafter! But let me tell you Jane, sit back, relax, have some peanuts: You see, there was this laptop in the X-ray machine and it was just sitting there and no one was coming to collect it and it sat there, sitting, fucking languishing! Who the hell knows

what that could be! You can fit a shitload of plastic explosives in a laptop Jane, trust me on that score, I saw a *48 Hours* expose on the very subject. That John Quinonas, he's a crafty bastard, Jane. I assure you of his craftiness. Managed to get a goddamned armory through the security of a Major Metropolitan Airport Jane! It's those obstructionist assholes in Congress, listen to 'em bitch Jane, personal privacy my ass. Stap-ons Jane, that's what it's all about. Congressional Nancy-boys, Democrats Jane, don't want there illicit sex toys dumped out in the terminal. A dildo can be fashioned into a deadly weapon Jane, but of course you already know that, uh, from your flight-training I mean... I was standing there and this laptop was in the scanner right, and I'm eyeing it Jane, I'm eyeing that soon-to-be-exploded motherfucker and just waiting for it to tick or shake or something, and the fucking minute it did Jane, the very second, I was fully prepared to throw my body down on that laptop Jane, my prone form saving all the woman and children in line from certain destruction, my body suffocating the cruel darkie blast. Oh yeah, I'd have been torn to shreds Jane, thanks for asking, sure, my legs blown clear across the terminal, but I'm one man Jane, one man, and goddamnit if America's not more important than that—take one for the team Jane, just like I'm asking you now, trust me, I would do it if I could—so I'm eyeing this fucking thing, waiting, waiting, tense on my toes Jane, waiting for it to shimmy Jane, cause level with me Jane, you know bombs don't tick right, I mean that shit's just in the movies, that's some Hollywood mumbo-jumbo Jane, but still I'm caught up in the moment, right, and I'm waiting for that little exploding fucker to tick or shake or something, waiting on the clicking fuse signaling my death and resurrection in the pages of major news outlets across this wide country of ours Jane—the hellish ignition—and I'm think about my life Jane and I can't think of anything Jane. Comprendo baby? Like, we're all gonna fucking die! And I'm about to scream like, 'We're all gonna fucking die!' But the kids Jane, I think of the kids, the children, the babies Jane, all the poor defenseless kids

who are gonna grow up and have their toes chopped off for looking at baseball cards. Fucking baseball cards! You know they do that. It's idolatry Jane. The kids who will have their minds warped by some darkie elephant religion. It's sick Jane, it's really fucking sick. Those people Jane, how could God make people that backwards and fucked up? Staring at that goddamn laptop all the while, and then I get upset, I mean downright irate, about to be like, 'Whose fucking bag man!' and then this goof in front of me, some total dweeb Jane—The kind of guy that got wedgies in gym class Jane. The kind of guy I gave wedgies in gym class. That kind—is all like, 'Where's my laptop?' and I'm like, 'You left it on the scanner buddy,' and he's like, 'Oops' and I'm thinking, getting ready to sock this dumb motherfucker: if it weren't for dipshits like you there wouldn't be terrorism in the world. Asshole.

This is it Jane, go time. Time for action, ready to roll. With my future, our future, balanced here: on one side, me, a seat down, him, Khalil Gibran Bin Pita, back here by the head, you and your multilingual talents. Our lives comes down to this moment. This is the one. 4th down. Ball on the 3 yard line. Don't score and we lose. Touchdown and I'm banging cheerleaders all night. The moment I've been waiting for. Crazy man! Barking signals. Throwing off the linebackers. Misdirection man. Yeah! That's it! We'll run a bootleg. Eight grade. Pop Warner. I wish I'd run a bootleg then. It wasn't my fault! The coach wanted a QB sneak. It's not my fault I fumbled! My hands were sweaty. The lights. It was hot. We lost the game. We lost the fucking game because of me. Never again. Coach said, 'Nice job Butterfingers.' Asshole. It was hot. My hands were slick and that guy man, he dug that ball out of my gut. He was inhuman. Possessing of inhuman strength for a twelve-year old. He wasn't twelve though. You just know he wasn't. He was probably in high school. Bussed in from the city. If you know what I mean. That type.

Ripped the ball out of my gut six inches from the goal-line. Nice job Butterfingers. Good one Twinkletoes. It was a stupid play-call. But the humiliation! The tears. I was sobbing like a bitch. Never again. Never again man. I wonder if Saddam Abu Hummus ever felt like that. They play that game with the goat's head right? Kicking around a goat's head? I wonder if his coach made a stupid call with the game on the line and the goat's head was seeping brains and was all slick and Punjabi Ali Baba was trying to kick the goat's head in the bucket and his foot slipped because of the goat brains and his coach called him a stupid infidel and all the kids laughed and his life at the very moment ended or at least felt like it ended; the pain and humiliation he was suffering so great; his coach called him The Great Satan and threw rocks at him and then chopped off his pinkie because he missed the bucket but like it was totally the goat brains and it wasn't his fault and goddamnit if it hadn't been for the goat brains his team would've won and he would've been the hero and he would've have been genitally mutilating cheerleaders all night—Do they have cheerleaders over there, Jane? They must. They probably still have to wear those Hefty bags though. Not like cheerleaders here in the good ol' U.S. of A.—The guys would've carried him around the desert and put him on top of a camel and he would've ridden the camel full of glory through the desert and all the cheerleaders would've been ovulating or whatever it's called and he would've been a hero. They would've called him Salahadeen.

What if he had won that game, became conqueror of the evil crusader infidels and reigned over the most glorious days of his people's history? Would he still be sitting here making a bomb out of his shoes and toothbrush? Had he not been subject to that grievous humiliation would he still be a terrorista? Would he still want to die in a holy righteous rage upon this fiery penile object of the heavens, die in a blessed holy inferno and kill manifold non-elephant-worshipping

motherfuckers in the process. Whoah. Those are crazy thoughts man. This whole identifying with the terrorista gig, this attempting to understand the root cause of his suffering is fucking me all kinds of up. I'm losing my resolve man. Resolute, steadfast, that's what I am. That's what we have to be. You're just gonna blow the terrorist, that's all Jane. V.S. Biriyani, get ready pal. Get ready for a little of the good old American know-how. That's right buddy, you ain't gonna be able to walk after Jane here gets through with you, much less violently overthrow the flight crew and send us rocketing into the HQ of Western Imperial Scum. Not gonna happen pal. We may die. I can see death at my door, like proverbially. He's wearing a top hat and some kooky stars and stripes ensemble. I recognize him. He is Uncle Sam. He is the murderer and betrayer of my people. His hegemonic thirst is quenched with my people's blood and oil. What? Mon oncle! How could you do it? You were so proud. You sold me a Chevy. Down at the dealership. It was the big President's Day sale. You told me I wouldn't get a better price anywhere. You threw in a limited warranty. But the carburetor Uncle, the carburetor. It wasn't covered. Still, no hard feelings, that Chevy was a wicked ride. Wicked suspension on that ride Jane, if you catch my drift. Jane! A hummer for a terrorista, it's a worthy price to pay for the lives of every man, woman, and child aboard this aircraft. You don't have to let him cum in your mouth, I swear it. Just on your face. Muamar Cous Cous likes that kinda thing. He thinks it's hot, told me he thinks it's hot to see you with his sperm on your face, dribbling over your lips. Makes him feel like a man he says. And he is a man Jane. He may have been emasculated by a cruel and repressive regime, but he's still a man. Uncle Sam took a straight razor to his coholes but he's my guy Jane. Maybe after this is all over we could get a place together, just the three of us. We could be like one of those sitcom families. *The Dude, The Stew, and The Terrorista*. They wouldn't have to show the sex bits Jane. It could be like inferred. We could still be on prime time. After *The Apprentice* Jane. I don't

see why not. After Saeed Chana Masala gets a load of your tongue whirling around his balls, he'd have to be into it. And you Jane, I bet you make a mean lasagna baby, I'm sure he'd be happy with your lasagna. Can you put goat in your lasagna? I think he really likes goat. It would make him feel more at home. Do it for me Jane. And if that's not good enough, for your country. America's calling you baby. Answer America's call.

This is all very confusing. My feelings for MF Chicken Tikka are once again affecting my resolution. They're my feelings Jane. What would you have me do? Stifle my feelings? I could Jane, I really could. I could pretend I'd never laid eyes on the man Jane. Go on living as if I'd never awakened to the word of Ganesh as manifest on Earth. But c'mon honey. That wouldn't be fair to either one of us. I'd be resentful baby. I might not know it, you know, on like a conscious level, but it would be there, like subconsciously. You wouldn't want that would you Jane? I think if we survive we should sit down and have a real rap session about this. My feelings for Mahmoud. I think honesty is the best policy in this situation. We'll just lay our cards on the table and maybe it'll come up all aces. Maybe we can all win Jane. All three of us. This is providing of course we don't die when the throbbing member we ride upon crashes into a major American metropolis. Or we don't come crashing at all. Dependant upon how Rajiv Papadum reacts to my offer of oral sex. That's right babe, I'm sorry Jane, but yeah, it's going to have to be me. I've put some serious thought into this and clearly your not up to the task Jane, foiling this malicious enterprise will have to be my job this time, sorry, next time, I promise. I'm sure you're good baby, not a doubt in my mind, but I'm a quick study. Sure I ain't never sucked any dick before, but let me tell you, what I lack in experience, I make up for in enthusiasm.



I'd like to thank
all of you again for joining
us for *Evil Men*. It is our sincerest
hope that it was an enjoyable journey,
complete with a sorrow, joy, and few
unexpected twists. With that, dickdog
and I say farewell till next time.
Ciao bella!

don't let the door
hit you in the ass