KRATOS

And other works

Jonathan Bowden



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The Matchseller by Otto Dix

He sits alone in transport legless to a born day with stumps of wick and fern burn, turn, learn, spurn, loosen this worm! Dedicated to Dorothy Bowden (1931-1978)



Jonathan Bowden Photo by Andrea Lioy

CONTENTS

Kratos	6
Origami Bluebeard	45
Grimaldi's Leo	88
Napalm Blonde	122

KRATOS a power documentary

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

BIA'S BATTY (1)

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

KRATOS AS DIVINE POWER (2)

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

ONE PREGNANT ASP BEFORE SILENCE (3)

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

GUT THE PIGS AFORE BREEDING (4)

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

A COMPACT BETWEEN GOETHE'S 'FAUST' AND MAYHEW (5)

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

DREAM, DREAM TERROR AMP (6)

"A dreaded sleep or semblance then fell upon my brow - like brooding lightning. Its colour has to be blue! Seemingly, I staggered from the bed wherein I had lain prone or spent, and moved towards a filament of dream. It lay across other accoutrements... together with a truckle-bed rearing away in terms of a longitudinal template. It seemed to shift the dimensional gears in which I rose from a dais travelling bags in hand. These weighed me down asunder or aplenty, and it was almost as if severed heads gripped their insides. Could they intone a heavy sculpture (in mortar) devoted to Caligula's skull? Meanwhile, the floor sloped away from my twin feet - the latter adopting a rooted quality rather like botanic life. Perspectivally speaking, my body lolled over lop-sidedly and in the direction of a scarecrow's armature. Alternatively though, various trees and branches loomed overhead. They swayed with an extra-terrestrial luminance or a gyroscopic possibility. (Quite understandably,

each misdirected branch recalls a reverse semblance. It obeyed perspective's laws or kind, and this is primarily after one of those lenses in a bank vault's door. Does anyone remember Brian Clemens' *Thriller*?) Again, a light beam cut off the lower half in order to candle-wax a swaying or retrieved motion."

A TORPEDO SEEKS ITS DISCHARGE (7)

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

ALL TITANS REJECT HEAD LICE (8)

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

TO FOLLOW OBLIVION'S CASCADE (9)

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

TWO WOOD BABES TEST MY AXE (10)

"What ails thee, boy? Don't you appreciate that too much onanism makes you go blind? Surely, my twin orbs are aching unnaturally as I ponder each one in turn? Yet again, the phantasm or nightmare assails my senses – within which a door knob recurrs. Feverishly, it remains out of reach. Convulsively – and like the poet Chatterton on his bed – I slobber and grip a cranium. It revolves slowly in each mitten. Look at this! I retch progressively in adorned pyjamas – together with a fluted or Art Deco lamp rising up beside me. To be sure: her name or voiced sound has to be the first on my lips. Can all this mean aught? +

Anyway, our transformation rests complete and a saviour examines his muscles *in lieu* of marble. In these circumstances, a Greek God lies before us... irrespective of Savonarola's desire that Botticelli should destroy paintings depicting pagan scenes. Such a custodianship drifts on regardless of raiment and with light cascading from above. It embodies a thousandfold candlepower, in order to incarnate a heroic mantra. I pause in this rival dimension and pull on unfolding robes. They billow outwards in their upper arms or happen to be bright red. YYYYeeeSSSSS... don't these rubiate gowns befit me?"

BRONZE GILT HEADS SUIT VIKINGS (11)

"Abreast of all this, then, I tried to drive my nightmare out of waking consciousness. How best to achieve such perfection? Why, I know, at least effectively speaking... I must run my memory backwards to a cottage's first glimpse. It loomed up and became apparent – all those Tuesdays ago – on the Yorkshire moors. Mark this kindred, will you? For we'd roared many miles northwards from London in our MG sportscar. All of a sudden this aboriginal Yorkist manse stood out... what with the surrounding dales sweeping around it. Momentarily, we became captivated by its gables, frontally projecting, when taken together with a latticed wooden structure. One wing splurged sideways and to the right; at a time when its slate roof dangled before us. All in all, its quaint picturesqueness moved us to a purchase – especially when we saw an up-ended 'For Sale' sign appended to a fence-post. The sky glimmered and lowered moorwards, in a

manner which portended to the magic lantern effects of Ted Hughes' verse. Could he be characterised as an archaic Yorkshireman? But no crows were in sight.

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

NORTHERN TROGS DELIVER FISTS (12)

"After what seemed to be an interminable delay, perchance, a shabby man came to the wooden door. I rapped on its rough surface with a knocker, at once graven to a lion's tooth. Didn't it recall one of those primitive artworks or corbels in Yorkshire churchyards? Anyway, we both waited for a groan of chairsprings, and this was before the scraping of boots on carpet became discernible. A derelict character stood out in subdued light; he looked open-necked and sported some braces. Almost fanatically ugly in his disfigurement – the wretch glared up at us. Seemingly, we learnt later that he went under the title of Dungbeetle or Odd Billy-o. Hadn't I read somewhere - in Lombroso possibly – about the swinishness of the lower or inebriate classes. and their criminal partiality? Contrary to liberal jargon, disability signifies genetic inferiority and the onset of evil. For, by any scrupulous regard, those who bear Cain's mark upon their forehead are defeat-prone. Inevitably, they have to lie to themselves about their socio-biological filth. Also - in all honesty – didn't his visage encode an African tribal mask... by virtue of a transgressive quality? Yet – for reasons of charity – I dispensed with such vagaries and turned up business' flame. Don't you mark it?"

URANIUM ENRICHMENT FIXES SALT (13)

"My dear chap", I began breezily, "my spouse and I couldn't but help notice your invitation to bid. 'Oh-ah', he mumbled through a Dreadnought's teeth. With distaste (you see) I was forced to observe his Northern *patois* – or use of the local idiolect. I rose before him now - albeit merely aping a soldier's erectness and with a shooting cap a trifle askew on my scalp. Fervent bent over sideways - a ravishing picture in blonde - and affected an interest in the proceedings, doubtless to hinder any feelings of discomfort. A curled lamp finished up to our left's vision; it proved to be made from an ormolu design. Still though, I have to remember the dungster's enfeeblement - or, quite possibly, a freak-show's dexterity amid blazing eyes. Meanwhile, a pipe vaulted Old Bruno avaunt my gaze. It mellowed towards a meerschaum's lisp before it died; and it moved over to a silent respect. Surely, this example of the canaille would have been better exposed in a London Dungeon... or a similar repository of bad taste? It hinted at Performance Art or negative circus... even though it pretended to ignore Quasimodo's ability at mirror cracking. I extended a gloved or manicured hand, only to withdraw it speedily from his mallet. Was it really an entreaty? I noticed its curvature into felt or matted hair".

UGH! CARVE OUT A GRINDING PROW (14)

"We entered this property forthwith. Once inside it, Fervent became enraptured by the local décor. Also, I couldn't help but notice the internal spasms, longitudinal stretch-marks and decorous proportions of its builders. An organic unity filled the entire place – relating it to a perfect possibility or a plenitude of planes. Light certainly streaked in from the moors; now russet, autumnal and disparately leafed... if out of bud. In undue haste – and recognising an affinity with Henry Williamson's nature writing – I concocted a ditty. It was made up on the spot and took after Ted Hughes' humour or fashion. Consider it to be a pastiche:

Harm's way
gentle skull
out of all moss' libidinity
<foreshortened></foreshortened>
what drivel!
when a mottled badger flees its bait
+
As heck as like!"

WE ARE BEHOLDEN TO FOUR ZEROES (15)

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

GRASP LIGHTNING'S MANTLE, O SCARECROW! (16)

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

RAGE AGAINST A DYING LIGHT (17)

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

My wife was around my neck now within a trice. Surely our caretaker accompanied the chalet, she protested? He dozed on throughout – and grimaced like a gargoyle with his thumb in his braces in a self-important way. Remarkably though, he affected indifference to his receding fate... or perhaps he adopted a low peasant cunning. His orbs slewed to preternatural dots which were like stray marbles or unnatural fish-eyes. These proved to be impenetrable, milky or cloudy white... plus they entertained a certain stagnant waiting at their depths. Around these slits we find a brown contagion to be smeared – whether in the form of

ocular distortion, depression or self-abuse one didn't wish to speculate. A pipe lay in his other mitten... somewhat redundantly. Still, he struck me as a dubious - if harmless character. He also replicated, more and more, one of those casestudies in Lombroso's Criminal Man. (Wherein the latter's theories of degeneration came accompanied by still photographs or photogravures. These delineated runts, freaks, spastics, beggar-cripples, mortal retards, human slugs, limbless gits, Mongols, splenetic showmen, post-abortants, transsexuals, hermaphrodites, giants, dwarves and other examples of Torquemada's art. Didn't artistic torture countenance natural indifference... especially when endorsing Victor Hugo's tale, The Man Who Laughed?) After a bit of blather, now, Odd Billy-o piped up in his defence – possibly he recognised a conversational turn which was not to his advantage. 'By gum, mister... t'ain't too much I'm asking. No sir, a mere ten bob a week for tobacco, do va ken my meaning? I also give thee to understand, our chuck, that I'll sleep over 't stables'. (Editorial note: a bob is a shilling or equivalent to five new pence). Again, I indicated uncertainty over the release of funds. A fine quality cigarette wove its texture in a roughened northern air. Didn't its aroma originate circa. Bradleys in Bond Street, London, W1? Weren't my scruples unnecessary and even vaguely 'anti-progressive'? I contended against myself by queering my desultory pitch. Moreover – given a further effort - I came to see Billy-o as disabused northern residuum or emblematic of an inbred canaille. A literary allusion spread into my mind – thereby making the reference complete. Doesn't one recall Hindley, Heathcliff's shambolic brother, from the later or more adult sections of Wuthering Heights? Yesss, it rose clear as a day now. Pity should be our watchword... the poor fellow's obviously an aboriginal Yorkshireman. Rather like Ted Hughes' poem *Pike* – another word ditty or Edward Lear piece impinges.

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

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

DECAPITATION'S FIRST RUMOURS (18)

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

NORMAN O. BROWN'S APOSTASY (19)

"Wasn't *Taken Care Of* the title of Edith Sitwell's autobiography? Never mind... since my brain wanders within Reason's apocalypse. Heretofore, the dawn rose emptily over a vacant sky – if only to fill up the panes of a deluded eye. Yes indeed, I tottered uneasily from my unkempt slumbers, but my exhausted or sleep-deprived state meant that I failed to attend to things. What task was mine? Why had I come down to London from Yorkshire? Truly, a dazzling luminance hurt my orbs when I succeeded in wrestling from my sack. Yet withal, I came to build on an asylum's breathing. Multi-dimensionally, I approached the chief warder with searching questions. 'Has my wife's incarceration altered her approach, O loony doctor?'

'Imprescriptibly, you are correct *monsieur*; no change afflicts her offering within these portals. A stroboscope astride this glimmer might manufacture hope, but none straddles this sick-bay or performs a receiving jest. To be sure, after looking a bit deeper we find that no stray witness solicits this envy over one's kindred. Might it not appear transparent?'

+

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

SQUEEZE THIS PIGMENT FROM A YELLOW TUBE (20)

"Such a day passes slowly through an hour-glass' filter; wherein lethargy plays Russian roulette with Time. Without any doubt a darksome energy stole upon my sleep; thereby depriving me of what C.P. Snow once described as rationality's slough. In this drawing as he did on Goya's sketches – he proved to be wrong; because instinct trumps linearity. Meanwhile, I lay slumped on my cot and awaited the next night-time. Let us be clear: if I strove to concentrate on those first days in the cottage - it was just to avoid certain nightmares. I must circumnavigate them particularly if I am to remain sane. As my lids close up altogether - whether red or black in texture - I cannot forsake this nuthouse. Didn't Gaius Cibber's Melancholy howl in Bedlam before its gates? Abreast thee of a sudden breakthrough, therefore, now that I approach her on a raised promontory. How to go about it? Methinks I'll make a gesture which involves an open-ended appeal to bent stars. 'Fervent, O Dominique', I whisper in redundant tones. She refuses to answer; or maybe one of T.S. Eliot's cats has got her tongue? I open my arms wide and this is to foreclose indecision. An alabaster wall - possibly of concrete a la le Corbusier – rears before her vacant gaze. Whilst a blank television screen lies digitally to her left. Two things come up the hindmost: first, she wears those all-over gloves which prevent wrist-slashing; second, her hair is frazzled, unkempt, split-ended and Mrs. Rochester-like. Could it be a result of electric shock therapy? I refuse to countenance its surcease."

RIDE A YORKSHIRE GUST TO OBLIVION (21)

"I'm comfortable once again... especially when we're back in the cottage's early days. During our premier week (or so) Fervent worked wonders by making everything grow. She tended to both one's shrubbery as well as a flower garden, not to mention decorative changes inside. No. Our northern vista proved to be well chosen. Look at it this way --- Dominique's form matched its buxom quality, the latter contained in a skin-tight top. All of this was white in colour - while she affected a dainty hat, gardening gloves and secateers. One morning I stood before her with a letter from London. It happened to be business correspondence or detail, and it had been directed up here by my solicitor. It proffered great bounty all round. 'A magnificent opportunity avails itself', I averred. 'But it means leaving you au solitaire; something of which I disapprove!' 'Fail me not a completion of emptiness', she purred. (Her voice-pattern resembled that of Lady Penelope in *Thunderbirds*, by the by). 'Billy-o remains a wooden endorsement or boon, and I shall find much to occupy my stylus'. Whereupon the caretaker stared on from a vantage point. He embodied a maximum of rapt shyness, slyness and ragamuffin unkemptness. Moreover, his watchful mien waxes taut, doleful, expectant, lugubrious, energetic and yet stagnant. Clearly a misfit or mugwump, perforce, this 'Thing' glowered on in a manner forgotten by all witnesses."

WE SHALL CUT OUT YOUR LIVERS! (22)

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

WOLVERINES HUSBAND THEIR DOLLS' HEADS (23)

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

+

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

HENRY MOORE'S KING & QUEEN (24)

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

Meanwhile, Fervent Dominique stood in front of my distracted gaze. Her look peered into the near-distance and was at peace... but, in actuality, the deep grooves in each orb tilted sideways. It represented a marble in a sluice which moved and swam in

accordance with the eyes of nineteenth century dolls. I decided to offer her a box of chocolates or toffee, despite the gesture's sentimentality. They were of the best wrap in gold-leaf clover and had been put together by a candy manufacturer in Kensington & Chelsea. Such a cube also contained so much filigree; it definitely refused to countenance Jack Vettriano's involvement. I waited near her in this concealed chamber which proved to be down in the mad-house... plus a *de luxe* rectangle of Greek Cypriot delights in either fist. Nothing doing..."

EATING GINGER-BREAD MEN! (25)

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

+

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

ONE LOONY MILKS A GLAZED TEMPERATURE (26)

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

WRAPT ATTENTION TO DETAIL BLINDS US (27)

"Nor can any displaced perspective haunt my disregard. It proved liable to analyse an absence of shame. Nor do my shoes streak away from the door lightly – what with each sole up-ended in relation to a downward tread. Furthermore, this entire proportionality is in *kaos*; it re-routes itself through a whirligig's stint. 'I'm coming, darling!', I expectorate. +

'What is going on?', I feverishly ask to myself. Fervent was surely screaming or in terror... what's happening to her form's ventilation, thereby? Can any hidden reality – riven by a Medusa – break off suddenly? What does this signify? May shattering the door indicate a balance (no matter how deranged) between the subconscious and unconscious minds? Am I in a semi-conscious state all the way down? Whatever might be raddling a strawberry blonde like Fervent; and, in truth, could she intone a Blondie's principle *a la* Deborah Harry? In any event, will these parallel dream sequences – with my wife in an asylum – be the hebetude of my submerged mentality? No matter how we arrive at its fulfillment...

+

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

REACH FOR A DRAGON'S LOADSTAR (28)

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

+

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

WE CANNOT OUTGROW OUR SHRUNKEN HEADS (29)

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

in a rainbow land of her own debenture, where elephant trunks nestle amidst lively bushes and petals. All of it belittles Baba the Elephant before any betrayal or waxed bullet-hide. I tuck back under the covers and resist all thoughts or perturbations. My wife remains safe... who can resist this logic?"

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

"In a parallel void I have ventured out beyond an asylum. This much has to be true... because my format exists in a drunken rage. Can you exist independently around me (?) ... since various aversion therapies are on-going. They speak of an indifference to puppeteering's torments; primarily after a genuflexion as regards Nietzsche's dictum. Did he not say that sympathy multiplies misery? Most effectively, heads that are to one side of me retrieve their absent capsules from nothingness. Whereas a rival shout ululates forth from a dead-zone before medication is administered. A hooked cross or gammadion lies to one side of these proceedings. Do we detect its betrayal? Likewise, in an advanced bubble - beyond Pugin-like tracery - stand the hippogriffs of our imagination. Surely this sensibility can become deluded abreast of the aft? --- In a situation where arachnophobia, prescriptively, is tested ahead of its aversion through release. Above all, it massages a bubble over its side-on prey --- a series of events which in no way delimits a corbel. A gargoyle that rises, this, over any jet-stream or blast: it merely decides to take off in expectation of a bell-weather. For doesn't the truth dawn on us slowly these days? Especially when the teeth of this sensibility – held over in a griffin's mouth – seeks to nibble on ply-wood. Cannot they depict a buzz-saw of yesteryear? Most mightily, various imbeciles or tame rats are held over in mummified cauldrons or vats... perhaps they swivel aslant hooks in a demented den. While - throughout all of this we hear a howling after the fashion of the maniac in those asylum sequences in Dracula. Didn't Bram Stoker call him Renfield, perchance? Anyway, amidst stroboscopic neon, a

hundred slogans about health find themselves compartmentalised: the following are the most legible ones. These include: sin-bin, narrow narrative, believe your rodent yearnings, rats-in-mazes *a la* Konrad Lorenz, infinitude: drop the donkey's head, plain crazy; Loon: moon-staring gibberer, Psycho. My happenstance's intrigue means that I've defeated Geoffrey Household's *Rogue Male*. Believe me: no behavioural chant captures this plainsong effectively."

VARESE'S POLYPHONY OUTSTRIPS HATRED (31)

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

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

ARMAGEDDON'S VILLAGE HIDES ITS FACE BEHIND METAL (32)

"Deep in one of Strindberg's dreams or ruptures (to speak of) I find myself back again within the cottage. Like an obscene saraband I am off my feet, breaking out from a disclosure or struggling for breath. Do we signify a break up at the commencement of these adventures? Fervent Dominique is seen to be writhing on the floor in a night-gown or *negligee*; whereas Dung-beetle leers over her. A streak of red masquerades across this whole performance --- it perforates many ulcers. These look up at a forgotten target. Like an instant in *Beowulf* he exhibits a sharp axe in his hand; it drags across the ground of a cadenced defile. A maniacal stare beams from the caretaker's visage truly, criminals are born and not made: they are the products of license and genetics. Each profound buffoon - in consequence represents a recrudescence of impure blood. You see, Lombroso was right: moral inferiority results from a physical defect and the low are bound to exhibit the swinishness of how they look. A malefactor, therefore, is bred by virtue of an absence of oxygen to the brain at crucial moments. Can't you tell Criminal Man from the placement of his eyes together in the skull; or those brown stains beneath either orb? Insanity has to be physiological; but evil and human ugliness are deeply interlinked at every level. 'Unhand her', I cry; as I dance around this pile of dung. All in

all, our captive's purposes move within a threnody of the mind. We essentially imagine Merce Cunningham's movements... in such a way as to limit their effects. These surrender a brouhaha to the boundary of many drums or atonal forays. Need this bring about a bullion or necessarily perplex those who axe down heads like pastry? Perhaps it relates to Sir Arthur Bliss' ballet music for *Checkmate* --- with the lead parts being taken by X, Y and Z."

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

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

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

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

+

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

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

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

PEACHES LIMIT THEIR OWN GASOLINE (36)

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

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

IT USES A SUB-MARINER OR A SHARK'S TOOTH (37)

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

WE MUST HAIL THE SNOW OF A NEW DAWN (38)

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

A CAUCASIAN HABITAT FREEZES OUT PAIN (39)

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

NEMEDIA'S SENSITIVITY MILKS INSECTS (40)

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

LET US ENJOY THIS RESPITE FROM A JOKER'S CARD (41)

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

VACATE A HUMAN CANNON-BALL'S STRAW MAT (42)

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

A CROSS-BOW BOLT SPEARS ITS TARGET (43)

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

+

Multi-dimensionally, an impediment haunts our consciousness. For a man in a leather mask (made of jade) interferes with our silence; it tempts fate only to look back on it by hating. A rictus was occasioned about those eyes o' plenty: they don't know the meaning of surrender to such tensions. All the while, though, a stream of rheum or spittle bounces forth – it dribbles from a brace of clenched teeth. Nor can one navigate in the dark by them – since each retina flashes above or aslant. Whilst the playlet indicates a stratum or sub-text; the depiction of such things always lets out a gasp... by the by. Could it really reconnoitre a Balthus painting without the curtains? Furthermore, the face mask encloses an identity – rather after the fashion of Alexander Dumas' *Man in the Iron Mask*. Surely it advocates a conceit or the indeterminacy of S&M (?) --- particularly when the latter's

measured by hermeticism, concealment and distraction. Throughout this hallucination a continual tapping was heard. RAT-A-TAT-TAT! RAT-A-TAT-TAT! It knows no intermission or surcease. Basically an imprisoned Billy-o can only be trying to contact Fervent Dominique. But remember: she finds herself occluded in an asylum's padded jacket."

NO-ONE CAN SEE THOSE BREASTS BENEATH THE HAIR-PIN (44)

"Release these structures and pull yourself together! It illbehoves one witness to deny death's fortitude... certainly when I lie back and stare at the ceiling in this hotel room. I have come to a decision amid all this indeterminacy; in that I MUST UNCOVER THIS DREAM'S MEANING! Nought else can still such negligence should I choose to exercise it. Yet again, the awful kaleidoscope levels up and illuminates aggression. I yelp and move wildly like a slide of film – as I run towards the cottage's door only to fling it open. I gyroscopically veer and race in a trance with each image retracing its category. It seems to indicate mercury or perhaps quicksilver. Does one detect the difference subsequently? To this end: all of the stop-motion frames of Edward Muybridge leap from the nineteenth century to greet me...

+

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

of amputation. Perhaps the morality of a mediaeval Bestiary betrays its hint?"

WE ARE NOT RELATED TO WILLIAM BLOODAXE (45)

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

In dalliance's realm, however, our puppets continue to twitch and twirl... can we ask them to strut on broken strings? Against such an advent Fervent stands erect in an adjacent cell --- all of which happens to be bathed in a dull glow. Could it be grey? Let it pass us by... Because – next to an interconnected series of pipes – she stares wildly into the distance. Oh my yes; since her format remains trussed in its padded jacket: the likelihood of such an object keeps Broadmoor's patter from these oven chips! It also reeks of sour and prismatic lisps... even lesions (...) Her blonde

hair --- marine peroxided --- tilts up electrostatically. It's gorgeous to look at. It does not appear to move about, but merely exists like a Gilbert & George sculpture or manikin. The tapping continues to go on rhythmically behind her - probably conducted onwards by these plumber's veins. 'Soon we will be together, darling', Dung-beetle seems to be saying in his veritable morse code. What is happening here and why has Billy-o lost his Yorkshire accent? All in all, his diction recalls my braying tones. 'Do not despair, sweet one, I possess a plan for you and me to escape. I love you, Fervent', he knocks out repeatedly with his metallic cup. Hearing this confession - to be sure - I wish to beat out his brains with a meat-axe! Meanwhile, Fervent serenely sculpts her quiet volcano. Like a Tarkovsky movie, it breeds and evinces calm amid Bedlam and raging mania. She stares ahead aspen-like and strawberry tinctured. Has Marilyn Monroe been reduced to a muffin? It speaks of false volumes over and over again. Yes; since her two eves glisten on into space like twin marbles. In bondage to insanity and with her hair on end... Fervent scarcely spies this ceaseless tapping. (An artist's manikin often finds itself cut in half, straight-laced or even reduced towards auburn filters, you see). What can have happened to her mind?"

A PSYCHOTIC ANT EATS OUR HEADS (46)

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

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

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

Yes indeed... while all around a swirling ebon slurry descends. It decants in a despondent arc – circumambiently so.

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

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

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As I look over the accredited boundary, the coffer reveals its discharged item. One of us is deceased or dead. It has to be Basildon Lancaster. What! BUT I AM HE; IT CANNOT BE! Lumberingly, I step forward into the cottage like a minotaur who is treading on egg-shells. For his part, though, Fervent Dominique's husband lies peaceably enough on the pallet. A silk under-shirt or vestment lies underneath his body; it doubtless soaks up the blood. That the body has been bleeding is evident --- for a large gash lurks down one side. It fades over and turns away from me as I look - otherwise he appears somnolent, stiff and a trifle condescending. Just like in life! My hand reaches out in an ungainly fashion and Fervent turns towards me distractedly. Her perfumed pinkie trails against the coffer's side - as my Beauty stares up towards me in a dazed or dumb-founded way. Her globes and nipples are almost out in an attendant fashion and the diaphanous gauze of her dressing-gown slips from her. I

am suffused with a tender lust contrary to an orange backdrop. It teeters on the edge of oblivion and I feel an uncontrollable erection coming on. Fervent looks towards me with her blonde wisp or cask askew; her lips open and a plunging cleavage playfully dangling between canyons. Suddenly, I notice her eyes for the first time – both of them are like squares or Rubik cubes. Ahh! She has been driven virtually blind by grieving over me. But I must tell her the truth. 'Darling, chuckee, me duck...t'ain't to bother thyself, dearie. I've been born asunder 'midst Thetis' thighs. I'm alive!' For the first time she speaks; it's a low croak or groan. 'Choke', she gasps, 'it's you then'. She utters this remark in a totally dead tone.

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

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All this time, Fervent has been backing away from me into the dwelling's recesses. Her face is drawn taut throughout this ordeal. It reconnoitres the razor wire of its indifference. Nonetheless, my feet reverberate with a definite or staccato echo on wooden flooring. I continue to observe Fervent Dominique --- my endless darling or arrested carouse. 'What ails thee, duck?' Why doesn't she say 'cock' in contravention of the above? 'Keep

away... move farther off from my torso now, do you hear?', she all but screams. Tut-tut... it's most distressing to hear. Moreover, as she repeatedly backs away I become more and more apprised of the BODY I've always desired... The breasts are virtually out from the flowing bed-side robes and her blonde coif hangs over an articulated cry. It embodies a discarnate circle or the letter O! May it be an extended *Story of O* by Pauline Reage, perchance? Anyway, her dressing-gown falls off or rises up over her perfectly formed legs. Each one has been waxed in order to cater to oblivion's occasion... and her strapless or high-heeled shoes become more observable than ever.

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

Fervent's cry echoes like a Banshee until a sickening thud intervenes. Her mouth had dilated to a sycamore oval before its silence."

THE END

ORIGAMI BLUEBEARD a phantasm

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

PART ONE

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

PART TWO

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

PART THREE

"Here's a kindred to one type of phantasy... for out in the clinging darkness a hand grasps a wall. Was it mine and did it essentially matter if it weren't so? A variant of this can be seen in the graffiti which clutters one mural - it says a 'platform of love'. Moreover, any dulcet sweetness finds itself surrounded by such atmospheres. Given that this ambiance is a dismal tunnel – half Mies van der Rohe shanty-town; half NCP (National Car Park) graveyard. Again, the paw which doesn't grasp this paper remains distressed, cross-grained and without humour. It passes altogether over a green-skin's absence. Palsied or diseased it might well be; or possibly slow to react to the circumstances of Edward Bond's Lear... In a situation where violence pursues its tabernacle of disunity - all of it in an absurd comedy which edges over into Artaud's theatre of cruelty. Do you comprehend its vagaries? Still, this mastodon - in keeping with frenzy restrains itself over concrete's sheen. Can it rekindle a dance of death when seen in a calm market-place? Furthermore - and when viewed from above with an arc-lamp – this humanoid looks glaucous through and through. But he also comes without a manfish's symmetry – at least in terms of a God's delay. What might this be if not the Prince Namor variant; a factor otherwise known to the Greeks as Glaukon? Will any swimmer of yore beat him in yardage over a pool or sea? Redundantly he issued forth or came on against you... all of it occurring within mystagoguery's delay. In truth, it's rather like the white leprosy in Conan Doyle's story The Blanched Soldier. Wouldn't you be able to retrieve it from a blanket endorsement? Anyway, this mayhem's scuttling sent me reeling within a dream's portmanteau; and it often took place against my better judgement. His hand reached out to me. O bell... where's leper's fury's vour remit? Unclean...unclean... say what you must in a scenario

when you're next to chloroform. Most spectacularly, I backed away from this mirror's intention... unarguably. Do you hear? Wherein the man-thing listed on and bled from its misshapen pores. It pursued me... yet its blood didn't perceive an absent note. Indeed, we refused to wrestle on the floor. Or - to put it another way - you reminisced about a decadent sculpture that was by Angus Calder. All of which continued to psyche me out and this's especially after a recent exhibition. A sub-Turner Prize offering, this, that took place in Bethnal Green. It warranted Dalston's vardage when pursuant to Max Nordau's classification. Look you: the performance art of Mike Kelly and Paul McCarthy deliberates on sausages... nearly all of them made from pork. These were used in unmentionable places or *in lieu* of declaring anything at all. It's either a surreal onslaught or a jaded failure to shock the bourgeoisie. Face it, a kinky Heidi no longer cuts it in a world given over to Terry Southern's Candy. Hurry up, I say, and bring down a fire which punishes Hades. Persephone was raped at a certain temperature. Bring it on, hurrah! Do you take a point? Let's paraphrase Bakunin and strangle the last conceptual artist with Nicolas Serota's viscera!"

PART FOUR

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

PART FIVE

We are your keepers! Candice Leper lay across his available visage in order to embrace it. Her hands clawed at his rubicund cheek muscles in a bony fashion. To get a handle on it... try to imagine a minor *matinee* idol being man-handled by an ant-eater. Given such a freeze frame, perforce, it even recalls geriatric pornography which has been sublimated. Still and all, her long, tapering nails grazed his skin or pelt, and it was like being dragged backwards through a bush made of bone. Momentarily, he averted his face so as to avoid her toilet-plunger lips. Yet her mandibles proved to be greedy, hungry, avid, rapacious, sandpaper like and without pity. Truly, nothing can stem a desert of needy affection! Isn't a desire for love like a pullulating jellyfish? Surely it intones a lion's mane as it drags a victim towards its heart... while mouthing kisses. It runs a gauntlet of nature's mill like an addictive personality. Certainly, this grilling risks a token from Eric Mottram's The Algebra of Need... particularly when referring to Burroughs' soma. In her last moments,

Candice draws down a lover to her mulch by way of a bromide. Now the hot air of senility's brothel intervenes or froths, and it's in a fashion that splices Arthur Schnitzler with Gunter von Hagens. He desperately tries to avoid such *Eros* throughout, but Sven Hassel's idiolect proved unstoppable. Leper's brown hair comes tied in a bob and carries on. She grabs hold of this passing masculine vessel like lichen. Maybe he can only escape in phantasm?

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

PART SIX

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

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

PART SEVEN

Trevelyan had slumped over the kitchen table on his own. The light faded to a cerulean-like effulgence and plotted his doom.

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

PART EIGHT

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

PART NINE

Upstairs in bed, Mrs. Bostock (*nee* Leper) kept watch on her husband. He exhaled a definite whiff of liquor. Perhaps she noticed how much he staggered about? What was he searching for (?) – why, his valise... of course. Worried now, Candice

leaned forward or aslant, and she came dressed in a green nightgown. Her hair is done up in a bun rather like an amateur beehive; it's also o'er circled by hair-clips, pins and curlers. Whilst the room's recesses were filled with heavy Edwardian furniture. It betokened a brown fixative when placed next to greasy and peeling wall-paper. (Note: not everything seems to be completely decrepit, but a general mildewed quality suffuses all. It partakes of degeneration theory in the nineteenth century... as is witnessed by Max Nordau's exemplum). A weighty two-way mirror – plus its lateral reflectors – then dominates the bed-space. +

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

PART TEN

Candice Leper refused to misjudge her step now. Because – when she realised that Bostock was threatening to leave her – the bed-linen came to be thrown aside. She locked her arms around his unappreciative neck; they were like adjacent mandibles or sticks. 'Don't desert me', she shrieked. 'I can't bear rejection's pain... certainly not at my age. You're too old to start again, you

see?' All her errant husband could offer by way of reply was: 'It were better if you forgot me, Candice. Learn to disremember, why don't you?'

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

PART ELEVEN

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

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

PART TWELVE

The next scene in our drama wouldn't shame a Verdi opera by any reckoning. No sir... because, in a calmer manner, a straightened up Candice Leper persuaded him to stay. She hung on to both of his lapels within the door's rays. A scenario wherein two swishing curtains - themselves purple in hue - had parted to the left and right. A bright glare then came through or suffused the window's square portions... or persuasively its lead lining. Its tint waxed azo, cadmium or lemon to sultry; nor can this new beginning halt a brilliant dependence. 'Dearest meat', she intoned, 'I know that I'm old and ugly --- as delivered in a rictus' time. Yet again, stay with me now. For even a leprous mendicant can prop up aftercare. I beseech you – do not rubbish my love. Remembering that - in our theatre's conundrum - the murderer Christie can emerge from a pile of detritus. Didn't our psychopath act as a reserve projectionist at the Electric cinema in Notting Hill Gate? This proved to be during the second european civil war. How right Ezra Pound had been to christen the entire area Rotting Hill. Nonetheless, in Howard Brenton's play this

murderer looms up from such *residuum*... when beholden only to a mask. Likewise, my skeletal demeanour estranges you from aught. I appreciate, beloved, that chastity can become necrophile given a prevailing wind. But one redeeming feature mocks this Death's-head which feasts on its prey like a Sheridan le Fanu tale. I have money or rich credit and appurtenances --- and you'll inherit it.' 'No argument, babs, you've persuaded me to stay', he rejoined by way of an answer. For – as Trevelyan Bostock convinced himself of this – his eyes came to rest on a toilet jug and basin. It stood in a far corner and next to it were her teeth in a glass.

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Effectively – and to begin again – Trevelyan Bostock sat near to Candice Leper in her home. Surely this impinged on some sort of dream time? Now – during this entertainment – a tarot card had fallen from its prior position. It imaginatively whisked down between our two protagonists. Did it turn over against this sun or otherwise reveal itself to be the Tower? It testified to being a card which was bright in its devastation or *kaos*, and scarlet had sprung up around its periphery. Could it really be outside this vision? Or persuasively, did a furnace's entanglement come to grief over Crowley's visual intentions? It occurred within a plenitude of arms or quite possibly death's entreaty. Look at this! Due to the fact that an arrow knew its fate we can say with certitude that in order to erect you have to pull down. Furthermore, is such an utterance inverted even when we consider it in its own terms?

PART THIRTEEN

For a brief interlude things passed off relatively peacefully. Trevelyan Bostock and Candice Leper certainly tried to make a go of it as a couple. Then a strange knock took place at the door one day. RAT-A-TAT TAT. Who might it be? After all, they hardly had any visitors whatsoever. While the man who stood on the front step was a strange or solitary creature. He came dressed in a purple wrap and his body seemed to be oddly disjointed...

even elongated. He filled the house's entrance more like a 'Thing' than a person... as a consequence of the same. Trevelyan was definitely amazed to see him. 'You', he thought, 'the one who informed me about Candice in the first place, or quite possibly he'd embarked on a train of hidden associations. Didn't it lead to thoughts about her concealed money-bags thereafter?' To whit: this living scarecrow wore a floppy hat which looked rather like an effigy in a farmer's fields. He began to ask for Candice Leper in a high-pitched or piping tone. It reminded Trevelyan (somewhat distastefully) of a hurdy-gurdy at a provincial fair. It took him back to his childhood or infancy, and to a repetition of those scenes in a Thomas Hardy short story. +

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

PART FOURTEEN

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

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

PART FIFTEEN

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

PART SIXTEEN

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

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

PART SEVENTEEN

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

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

PART EIGHTEEN

An hour or so later, we find that our husband and wife are confronting each other. They were stood within the confines of their sitting-room or at least an imaginary wrestling ring. Might its perimeter have been a circle of salt? A purifying agent, this, which differs from what Bertolt Brecht meant by his play A Caucasian Chalk Circle. Trevelyan kicks off with these words: "What goes on, dearie? I didn't really recollect that I'd married a rag-picker. From whatever direction do you assimilate these harlequin outfits or a jester's motley? Shall yesterday's sheet suffice forever and a day - or do you require a spectral tatterdemalion? Namely, this process recognises nought but an exorcist's wind: as it came to be clothed in a spectre's windingsheet or shawl. May it delineate a mummification - nearly always after Anne Rice's novel?" 'Don't get het up, sugar puff', she rejoined. 'It always has to do with scavenging past a vulture's play-time. After all, a chameleon faces off against nemesis by changing its skin. Again, no harm has been done to us – save to a decrepit sense of bourgeois respectability. Do not ooze out of all conscience, I beg you. Because these mummified selves cry to us in their heartlands: they cram such orifices with cloth. As to where my grab-stick cleaves to them all... why, every treasure trove detects its mettle. Could it call out like a parrot: pieces of eight; pieces of eight; pieces of eight; a peace for your hatred?'

PART NINETEEN

A few hours passed by or were spent, and this was before our aged trout touches her husband's shoulder lightly. She proved to be wearing a yellow dress which couldn't conceal her skeletal beam. An unfinished tea lay on the kitchen table behind them... whereas some cylindrical object or metallic device has piled up leftwards. Pursuant to all of this, Candice apportioned no blame whatsoever. 'Don't be too lonely while I'm gone, butter cup. A due providence of silence milks its delay. I go abroad over any arrested triumph, but one that doesn't expect a laurel wreath around its temples.' 'Uh-huh', shuddered Bostock slightly, 'no echo of chafed wheels shall expectorate on an ant. Can't you recall L.S.Lowry's paintings on Salford Quays? Eh? They all frequented humility's barrier... so as to concentrate on beggarcripples and frauds. Yes indeed, all of these canvases find themselves whitened out on a blank ground... Yet don't mind me whatsoever... When we consider that isolation suppurates a toad, particularly while Artemis walks amid swastikas or gammadions. I won't play solitaire alone.'

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

PART TWENTY

Trevelyan Bostock found himself left alone in the house afterwards. He suspected that his wife had gone rag-picking, but

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

PART TWENTY-ONE

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

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

PART TWENTY-TWO

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

PART TWENTY-THREE

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

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

PART TWENTY-FOUR

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

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

PART TWENTY-FIVE

While she was out next time, Trevelyan moved down the house's Y-axis in search of loot. Logically enough, he would shift one day from mildewed chimneys to clammy basements. Where did this insufferable woman keep her stash or hoard? Certainly no safe, keep-sake or deposit box lit up the dwelling's sepulchral glow. Exasperated now, Trevelyan Bostock tore into one of the upper storey's cubes or tenements. He increasingly nurtured a resentment against the inanimate or the physical, and lashed out repeatedly agin overflowing wardrobes. All about him cascaded an inundation which swooned from a Volkswagen Beetle's cargo - as was originally seen in childhood. Yessss, he found himself surrounded by candelabra, used or streaked mirrors, ripped hangings, broken-backed chairs, mortars-and-pestles, birdwatching records, miscued frames, strange tubular postings, closets, zig-zagging bed-steads, slashed sofas. gutted miscellaneous wiring, aged canvases and worm-eaten shelving. Layer upon layer of this muck subsisted all around him; it proved to be indescribable. No-one should think about it any differently. Again, doesn't the above miscellany just indicate B.S. Johnson's capitulation to lists?

Whilst he continued to work at his digging and prying previous marital conversations entered into his mind. 'Can't you pretend to love me, o grieved one? Leastwise, try to do so in your heart of hearts', cautioned Candice. 'Given wine's rapture we must plot a path through indifference. Personal infractions are envious or thereby indicate mystagoguery. Come to me across a nighttime's breeding, drear one. Because love's asylum wears a mask and it closes off variously resultant dens. Do any of these encode a prior fortune or riches?'

PART TWENTY-SIX

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

PART TWENTY-SEVEN

May the ancient Roman Vegetius have once declared that if you want peace prepare for war? Yet within her connubial dreams Candice Bostock (*nee* Leper) intoned: 'Cannot you see the black square within which my features are consumed? It consists of darksome felt. Do they breathe a sense of justice abreast of Fate's rectangular markings? At a time when a dark heliotrope assaulted our usage in terms of its visage. It wounds a bleeding self *a la* Gibson or Grunewald. Are you to be my soul-food, darling? Surely I'm not careless or witless before these Norns? Because

68

one can see windows both angular and square in comparison to my orange hair. Imaginatively speaking, they're oblong, set against deep blue or buttressed with a rat's-tails livery. A moon merely pokes through cloud... even a half-cadenced rock so as to adorn my gesture.'

PART TWENTY-EIGHT

Trevelyan Bostock had become exasperated by this turn of events or intrigues, and proceeded to thrash a mattress. It reared away in striped lines or forgotten approximates. Might this be an exercise in Auschwitz pyjamas - after everything else that could be said? To one side of them, however, certain dirty sheets and wood piles made an entrance to our drama. But it wasn't an august or important one... no matter what. By virtue of the fact that an inner illumination came uppermost, at least as regards penetrating Candice's slits. Her eyes danced a saraband like electrostatic sparks rising from a pool. She's realised his game, you see. At last Miss Leper has approached the truth... namely, that Trevelyan's ransacking her manse in order to discover its fortune. Basically, it enjoins a skeleton which is shorn of skin and that sat on a black marble dais. 'What are you gawping at?', bellowed Bostock. 'My ready symmetry leads me to criss-cross a Gorgon's head... particularly when it's been severed at the wrist. Can't you detect a Medusa's fulminations; in a situation where it transgresses over from turquoise green to pthalo, permanent and emerald? Moreover, its poise on a screen came to confound Barthes' Signs, especially in a chapter where it refutes a computer's desire to exist. Why dare to look at me when unaccustomed to such glares or prints? I'm busy bathing in Jay's fluid or Dettol (perchance); while trying to cleanse these Augean stables like Hercules. Maybe you object to flushing this pig-sty down the privy, huh?' 'No, a begrimed crock pleases its stable hand... most poignantly, when it travels under a car wash. I have repeated my gladness and not my aspersions, honey.' +

Needless to say, a sadness intruded into marital dust herein. It interpolated an emptiness which only saw to its death later on. Whereupon Candice Leper doubtlessly felt a pang: mayhap noone can look upon love's dwindling without a remorseful eddy.

PART TWENTY-NINE

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

+

She didn't make any reply, however.

PART THIRTY

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

+

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

PART THIRTY-ONE

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

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

+

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

PART THIRTY-TWO

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

PART THIRTY-THREE

Trevelyan Bostock's most fatal musings happened to number these amongst them. 'Look here... (he said). No-one can tell it differently, even if it's to blunt a black mask's futility. None remains effectively clear of it --- you see. Whilst we detect the eyes' inner ebon within either nacreous conduct or frippery, and just evaporating into a ski mask's greater redundancy. Such a gesture has to rear up like a medusa's forethought, though. Because your ugliness forbids a gorgon's impediment. It continues along indifferent tram-lines and rails; or at least ones which speak less opulently to you. Why don't you remedy Bluebeard's cascade now? Does anyone reinterpret *The Passion of the Christ*? A mystery play wherein the Devil – played by a shaven-headed super-model – moves brazenly along time's diagonal course.'

+

Meanwhile, in their parallel game of draughts, White was to allegedly play and win when superintended by an unknown hand. Didn't a White King move from 12-8; thence followed by a

black checker skidding away 11-15? A trick answered with a king's sacrifice 20-24 – just to be doubled back upon by a rival monarch's triumph 28-19. Would this move prove Pyrrhic? Because another White King spears diagonally 8-11; only to be responded to 15-18. Our rejoinder comes with the climax 11-15; to which black o'erleaps 19-10. What then (?); white moves seemingly defensively 17-14: while black attacks aggressively 10-17. White then clears the board with the ultimate or zig-zagging manoeuvre 21-30. He takes all of Black's threefold archons. White always has occasion to win; and doesn't a dagger in the text signify a noteworthy move?

Trevelyan then kneads his triumph within the dough of expectancy.

PART THIRTY-FOUR

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

shaven-headed, glabrous and wearing woad all over. It probably took something of a tattoo artist's form in his case. Eventually though, Candice Leper went down into the cellar in order to see what he was up to.

PART THIRTY-FIVE

After a busy day's rag-picking, however, she found herself opening up an oubliette and peering in. Its iron frame then creaked like a dulcet maiden's voice - rather than the reality which reinterpreted Lon Chaney's Phantom of the Opera. She stood at the stairwell's summit and craned down at Bostock's growing pit. A panorama of leavings, scrapings and shadings met her gaze. But there were no whippets down here, by Gad(!); nor could one find any black berries to pick. All in all, she felt untroubled by these events. Because such happenings fitted into a 'normal' pattern, even though this sensory deprivation chamber rented its misuse. Within such a compass, therefore, various mounds of rubble discovered themselves to be heaped. They rose up towards a steady adventure (thereby); all of it illustrating a comatose refuge which came to be lit up by shadow. Do you notice it at all? A refractory boiler lurked in a corner and it proved to be all valves, tubular constructs, misplaced pipes and gas. To one side lay the evidence of chaos – what with barrel tumuli, newspaper aggregates, green bottle-banks and spent cartridges. Candice descended a stairwell and thereafter clung onto a weak, sagging balustrade. 'How scintillating, munchkins, to dwell on so many infractions as these. For - by digging a hole - your wraith may bury our trash rather than body itself forth.' Yet Trevelvan affected a dismissal of it all. He stood with his hands on his hips and masqueraded a scowl – after the manner of Alan Sillitoe's The General. 'Really, fruity pops, do you perhaps mistake an action for a reaction? Can't you wilfully notice that I hesitate before my kindred? Truthfully, I mean something distinct by this very definite demarche. Wherein a naturalist notices that a shark which is in deep water falls away and drowns if it stops going forwards.'

PART THIRTY-SIX

Their two heads finally came to a close on an essential aperture. Each one then watered a river's spout – after the form of white water rafting in John Boorman's Deliverance. (Wasn't it an example of Jim Dewey's quill or word processor?) Any road, a wall or mural of cement stood or shone behind them; it lay flat between a tincture of naples yellow and bleached titanium. Yet Candice Leper raised her pulse in order to meet his all of a sudden. She lofted a cold slant likewise and stared at him sarcastically. Did she approximate to one of those artist's figurines with broken limbs - albeit all pinned together and skeletally askew? Leper whispered in reply: 'I know your game, husband. You're delving down into an Anglo-Saxon barrow like the one at Sutton Hoo. Do you hope to bring forth helmets, bedizened breast-plates, nacreous pearls, rare pewter dishes, onyx, ormolu-burnished mirrors and ornate ringlets? These - in a Peter Ackroyd allotment – apportion beryl, amethyst, zirconium, topaz, lapis lazuli, carnelian and magnesium lustre. Who told you all about it? Was it Man-Cloth, perchance? Well! Let's see... have you in mind a treasury of 100,000 ducats, groats, florins, shekels, dinar, sovereigns, pound sterling, euros, punts and even cistophori? It's a capital sum in any tongue... regardless of aught else.' 'Wrong again, my luv. Admittedly, you may have evinced a quivering arrow once or twice. But our game of draughts now proceeds across vacant squares. You see, I happen to be digging a grave... it's yours!'

PART THIRTY-SEVEN

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

PART THIRTY-EIGHT

Given his deportment, Trevelyan Bostock continued to lash out limitlessly and without surcease. His pick thence rose and fell like a rivulet's automaton. At first it had hooked itself in the old laggard's back and under its influence she'd hit the floor – albeit pursuant to a brittle log. Did an infestation of gore smack a narrow or diaphanous screen - thereby intoning the horror of silent cinema? (Whereby the blood might even be green in terms of a drained colour chart). Here and now, such nothingness lauded its spectre to iron oxide via sienna burn, indo orange, cadmium, napthol, permanent rose, azo and spinacridone. Moreover, the pummelling or beating continued long after Candice's death... and it all took place in a cavort or negative lethargy: a situation where skin shed bone magnetically. It proved to be uneven – almost as if Trevelyn punished the corse over his former habit o' love-making. For, in his imagination, a halberd or axe came up from its rescue; it definitely seemed to

level off amidst lead-piping. Each strand grew roots on occasion or afterwards, and even then it picked itself up through a metallic embrace. Yet still and all, Trevelyan Bostock reared his instrument uppermost and it delineated a conundrum... a scenario which was dedicated to black heat. The weapon slammed into the piping - whilst being carried along due to a magnetic shudder. All of a moment Bostock's alter ego ran along unlit corridors: he happened to be naked from the waist at the time. These passages were tiled, dimly lit, sepulchral and outside measurement. Didn't he have a laurel wreath around his scalp or tonsure like Nero, even Caligula? He filled an onrushing frame as his pace grew faster and faster... a feature which was enacted without perspective. Surely there's no need for a wheel-chair any more, he mused? Meanwhile, this berserker's ax* registered a tattoo. (*Note: the use of the word ax indicates an American spelling). It rose to a shiner's bleeding and it merely came to recall a crab apple... possibly its bruising. Again and again, those vengeful hands gripped Aaron's rod – they did so with a fulsome fury. A cathartic action, this, which definitely ruminated on cultural ruin. "Which Way Western Man?", indeed... and this occurred despite a shadow, a nimbus that re-engineered one's plumbing, psychically speaking. Furthermore, it scraped across those plant-like ducts – if only to betray photosynthesis with a viking's leap. Thus, in the manner of a von Stroheim miniature, a whirling dervish brought down mayhem - especially when sporting a pick-axe. Under this impact, for instance, various flakes of plaster came loose from the ceiling. They inundated Trevelyan's jowl – while he bulked like a fervid Punch who was murdering Judy in darksome splendour. Isn't there going to be a feature-film about puppets called Grand Guignol?

PART THIRTY-NINE

Various tubes or ligatures then split under Trevelyan's axe-head. They also came flush before an undeserving tone – irrespective of all else. Despite the fact that our athlete pounded unknown tunnels – he continuously savoured his indifference to the chase.

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

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Exhausted and desiring rest, now, Trevelyan B. staggered up to his bed-chamber. He pulled the covers over his head and went to sleep.

PART FORTY

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

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

PART FORTY-ONE

'No, no... no tattered vestments are wanted here at all...', expostulated Trevelyan. 'Likewise, my wife is travelling abroad at the moment. She's enjoying little more than a chaperone's company. They won't be returning for aeons now, maybe even months. I wouldn't waste anymore time by calling around for rag 'n' bone, do you get me?' But – to appease his eerie guest – he dragged a few towels down from an upstairs closet. They were threadbare, ancient, patchy and full of holes. A bourgeois aunt

might consider the danger of catching a mange from them! Yet Man-Cloth betrayed dissatisfaction with what he'd been given. 'These aren't very nice tatter and whetstone, Mister Bostock. In fact, I'd measure effrontery's days by saying that Mrs. Bostock's laundry basket coped much better. Her technicolour dream-coat evinced finer patches which were made from bluish wove or orgone. Again, Candice's generosity lay in a parchment's creaminess – or possibly in its cross-grained, textured and rich mantle. Pray tell me, few coins will pass our hands for these efforts.' Becoming more and more exasperated, Trevelyan blurted out: 'Keep them, matey. Let it bend forever and a day; it's a gift from one to another for old time's sake or indent. May it assuage Gilbert & Sullivan's burden in Mike Leigh's film *Topsy-Turvy*? There you have it...'

PART FORTY-TWO

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

PART FORTY-THREE

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

PART FORTY-FOUR

Later that very night, Trevelyan Bostock found himself woken from a fitful slumber by a bizarre note. He instinctively knew that an alien or foreign presence had invaded the tumble-down. Some "it" or available thing has proved its efficacy, especially when it's like the shadow of a disembodied hand... one which moves along a skirting-board. Without really thinking about it -Trev(.) tore off the bed-clothes and made his way downstairs on bare feet. He proved to be in a shambolic state. Yessss..., although he did retain about him some witticisms or a Sweeny Todd reticence. Basically, because he retrieved a blunderbuss or a loaded magazine from under his pallet. Unlike the poet Chatterton, Trevelvan will not visit a personal nemesis by swooning horizontally. No. Thus armed and prepared, he viewed himself in a heavy Edwardian mirror before vanishing down a tunnel. He reckoned to annul its domicile. Like a vampire or man-bat – he was seen to cast no reflection.

PART FORTY-FIVE

He snorted with derision and began to disembark from a crowded stair-well. Do you detect its rite of passage, anthropologically speaking? Soon after this a stolid post-Victorian dresser and its glass – minus a misanthrope – came to nought. He easily determined where such creaks originate from by scouting around *chez* Bostock... and they were in the basement. Obviously an armed Trevelyan Bostock careered downhill on a toboggan; in a scene where he caromed like a pin-ball in Jerzy Kosinski's pastiche. Having arrived at the bottom... who should he spy at a rickety ladder's surcease? Why, it happened to be Man-Cloth. He stood motionlessly staring at Candice Leper's (*nee* Bostock's) grave.

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

PART FORTY-SIX

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

PART FORTY-SEVEN

Post all of this, Trevelyan Bostock became convulsed in one instant. He fired repeatedly and held his antique blunderbuss in both hands. *Ceteris paribus*, he realised that Man-Cloth must die. One... two... three... four... five... six: after so much battle and applause the slugs ripped through his anatomy. Each dum-dum or perforated bullet seems to lodge in Man-Cloth's physique... somewhat inescapably. Yet – wonder of wonders – none of them passed through the other side, in accordance with normal

physical laws. Both physics and biology became confounded – at least as regards a scarecrow's criteria. 'DIE, die, die... you hideous swine!', screamed Trevelyan... a man who was seemingly going berserk. 'It's odd that I've fired six pellets into his corse through a two-fold triptych... and yet it's like trying to tease a stick-man out of all order. Would a plastinate obstruct such treatment – and won't M.R. James set a hare running when adjacent to a scouse cup? Similarly now, a dull thud stops a gesture during each moment that he returns a bullet. It's rather like impenetrable laundry. Blast it! May it all ensnare Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus, or a Philosophy of Clothes*?'

PART FORTY-EIGHT

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

PART FORTY-NINE

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

PART FIFTY

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

FINIS

GRIMALDI'S LEO a circus prism

ONE TOT (1)

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

A SECOND GIN'S TINCTURE (2)

A lion is foregrounded in our drama after having escaped from its cage. Indeed, the latter bemoans a belated structure, at once longitudinal to its squares and fatal in its depth. What a misalliance! Given that it growled apiece in heaven's gate together with a starred stand which was conical in fashion and next to its leaflet. These ribbed up concerning steel when wandering abroad of a circus' show-tents. Speaking of them, a small white marquee – shaped like a T – lay along laterally and in accordance with moon-shine. Further afield, though, a sideways-on tent lifted off to the left and it aimed to complete a rectangle. Whilst – somewhat redundantly – a number of circus humans stood before our King's cage --- primarily because Leo has escaped. Momentarily then, three men sprang before him with raised chair-legs; items which were themselves attached to small circular white-stools. Two of them were meandering extras just left in Afrikaner hats; in a scenario where a daddy long-legs intruded across their screens. One particular wrestler, Agent Naxos, carried a whip in his hand. Do you notice a resulting tension?

A THIRD CUP OF WASTE'S CARP (3)

What might an animal dream of (?), in line with extending Richard Dworkin's idea of human rights? Doesn't such a discourse lie fallow when covering over the negative ethicist's --- Peter Singer's --- notions of animal liberty? (Hence his penning of the book Animal Liberation, in which he develops a specious doctrine known as 'Speciesism'). Nonetheless, Leo's mind seemed to be confused with a capering filter; a magic lantern in which one image followed another in silent motion. First of all, our clown's eye looks on at a creature's freedom; it also surrounds his circumference with ease. In this mammal's phantasy, then, one's Glock drifts on essentially bereft of identity and before a bay window. Could it be one of those latticed structures that fills out – primarily so as to reconnoitre the space? Palm uppermost now, Joey Clown raps his hand against a wooden jamb. 'Meat eating remains a mortal's elixir', he averrs. 'Our animalism necessitates the other's inferiority – just prior to being pinned on our blades. It betokens a treasury of Bridge cards... all of them delineating a bid.'

A FOURTH PART LEAVES ITS BRUEGEL (4)

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

our mottled harlequin and the beauteous Winged Rhea brooked silence's grave-yard or retreat. They happened to be standing on a fair-ground barker's left-side, conceptually speaking.

FIVE SUGAR LUMPS DISSOLVE (5)

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

ONE SIXTH PORTION OF LOTUS (6)

Now then, our heroine and a tourney's mad-cap, Joey Clown, stood next to each other triumphantly... at least on a stage's verso or left. She --- Winged Rhea --- is sleek, well-apportioned, Latinate – and with heavy ear-rings plus a black-haired bun. A dazzling cloak curves off her back; it comes aslant her shoulder and relates to a high-wire act. Our girl expostulates after hearing the shot: 'No. Don't discharge a musket on Leo's breath. Like in Kipling's *Jungle Book*, he remains a bestial king without any liability to seek out prey. Certainly – by a law of reverse correspondence – let him be. Harmlessness seeks out the font of

its own pit, you see. Dearie me, may there be no obfuscation over Moriarty's drift... as it concerns a B-movie like *A Woman in Green*? No severed fingers can walk adrift of a player-piano here. Surely a neutral observer speaks of Greig's *Nocturn Opus 54 No.4*?

+

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

A SEVENTH LAUGH OVER TREMORS (7)

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

A BERSERK EIGHTH TRESPASS (8)

Winged Rhea talks all night and this is presumably in order to provide Leo with a disused mirror. Above all else, she assists his return to the cage by saying: 'All right, leprechaun, go back into this fastness of steel glasses... why don't you? Try to rest easy in an assured silence, sweetheart. No-one wishes to harm your hide... or perchance to turn it into a rug by witness' dint. Rest easy, boy-o, and remain in this box care of all available trespass.' During such a radio communication, Sol Rasputin, the festival's ring-master, looks on with a furrowed brow. His face waxes masculine, heavy, lugubrious, engrained and thoughtful ---- primarily by some turns of absence or other. A thick mop of black-hair covers it when fastened to a taffeta overlay... itself of so many wigs. Below ground, though, a Panama or Havana cigar broils away merrily; it spits red ash in the daylight. When (somewhat irrefutably) this scene encodes the early stages of Brian Master's biography, *The Passion of John Aspinall*.

A NINTH RECTILINEAR CORNEA (9)

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

NEMESIS: TEN DWARVES MEET THEIR KNIVES (10)

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

ELEVEN SHARK-HEADS IN A HAUL (11)

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

TWELVE STRIKES AND YOU'RE OUT! (12)

One's Grimaldi or clown now passes onto a new lunacy... whilst recognising a bell which tolls during these proceedings. His ears stuck out preternaturally from a jester's skull; and yet transparent circles continue to deliver a mid-wife toad. Can you tell by this yardstick? For London's Anglo-Italian mountebank has a special day. It's January the fifteenth to be precise – an anniversary which celebrates his contribution. Culturally speaking, one of those white shadow-tents then rises up with various fluffy clouds

contained on an azure backdrop. Our patron saint of clowns repeats his words: 'By a lark, Emma Tennant's *The Bad Sister* exposes nought to our gaze... especially when the show's owner, Sol Rasputin, ought to fire Leo from so much lauderdale as this. He's a natural born killer (after all); none would miss him and these snarling under-currents must greet their trap... possibly when concealed under bamboo shoots a way off. Do you ever reminisce about simplistic or *naif* art; particularly when it hails from a Hindi or Indo-Aryan origin? It basically shows Nabobs and subalterns on a tiger-hunt... all of them depicted in a manner alien to artistic perspective. That's too Western, you see? Let's consider a sahib being borne aloft on an elephant, in accord with Angus Wilson's *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling*. As per usual though, Lord Mountbatten's version of the Raj has to be in charge. Didn't Arthur Kemp call it *The March of the Titans*?'

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

Because now a golden disc lies adjacent to such abstractions - no matter how latticed or under glass there need is! To begin with one item, everyone notices a warder and Nobody's clown stood next to an alcove... in a situation where none rules each roost save them. These marionettes speak thus in our Leo's phantasm: 'Can I dwell on your left amplitude - as it came to be positioned within a booth? The moon-light streams in a sheer way and it glistens through the glass' refraction. To one side of this errant page – and divided by a shadowy pillar – stands our Joey the Clown. Various other denizens - such as an Iron Mask or a Dunce-cap – are momentarily out of sight.' Even though fatality's Scaramouch hasn't been listening to a gesticulator, or a narcissist, who carries his mirror with him. 'Look yonder', he attests, 'and you will find a paternalism which exhausts our bacon slicer. Perhaps one species' arguments help to rectify Natural Law, in that the closer to nature one is the more remorseless. None can then top the peasantry in ancestral feuding, canniness, low cunning, rude health and fierceness. In a

village or a hamlet like Rotherfield Peppard in south Oxfordshire fox-hunting was a liberal past-time... when one chooses to compare it to cock-fighting, superintended by gypsies in outlying barns --- as well as badger baiting. (The latter proved to be a sadism with nothing to recommend it whatsoever, save if we reconcile it to D.H. Lawrence's *St. Mawr*). A tributary which consequently exists both before and after the God of Love...'

BETRAY FIFTEEN CHAMELEONS ON A BRANCH (15)

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

profile turned violent, angular, perpendicular, silhouette-like and wood-cut dissolving. No emulsion would be required... since she was very angry with this clown.

SIXTEEN BREAKS IN A NORMANDY LANDING (16)

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

A SEVENTEENTH'S PANTOMIME CURTAIN (17)

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

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

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

NINETEEN PLUS TWENTY COPPER-HEADS IN A ROW (19&20)

Now then, returning from our lion's phantasm we can see that this narrative spots a Clown's response or readiness. Are any and all of us aware of Grimaldi's special day (?) - it occurs on January the fifteenth within every year. A calendar date (this) which celebrates the life of Britain's most famous carry-on and still-born performer, let alone pantomime artiste. He lived between the years 1779 and 1837; and he's still the country's foremost Anglo-Italian clown. Let's listen to his current representative: 'My lady of the manor – this lion scares us out of our wits. He knocks spots off any caterpillar who might come close... can you witness its diatribe? He may not have dragged anyone into the bushes yet, but who can tell? For all mortals look alike to him, prospectively, or they incarnate Gunter von Hagens' plastinates. A stratagem whereby haunches of meat or would-be venison cuts (to speak of) hang off the Columbine of so many nuptials. If we register it keenly - then a skeleton rushes forwards nearly always cut out of its matrix and with its skin peeling off every armature. Truly, such a corse is blown through

its own wind-tunnel; thereby losing its pericarp in the process. A resultant pelt is then found to float freely around these slain homunculi: the like of which inundate bottles which are held in formaldehyde in anatomy museums. One in particular comes to mind... and it has to be the Royal College of Surgeons in south Kensington, London. Although if Leo chomps at our privates, however, then such an amphitheatre will look more akin to the London Dungeon then Doctor Seuss.'

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

Our fur-factory continues on a false concupiscence - especially if it is to engage upon these leonine dreams. Didn't T.S. Eliot quote a line from Marlowe's The Jew of Malta about a religious millipede's approach? No matter, since a bedizened clock has now appeared amidships and it shapes its circumstances through a blue slant. It lists over to one side with old-fashioned clockhands which penetrate the hour. These curlicues rest upon their laurels, but they also indicate a margin for error that says ten-totwelve (betimes). It illustrates the eleventh hour – albeit having less to do with a witch's conundrum and more to do with John Tyndall's diction throughout. Understandably then, one tad-pole chooses to rub a distant shape afoot... all of it occurring in a lion's dream. Who can it be or interpret? Well, on a closer inspection it accommodates Agent Naxos, an itinerant lion tamer. To be sure, he slides his hand up and down a silvern object which glints dully in a sepulchral light. (Surely the latter plunges through the sort of serrated glass that's held at an auditorium's back?) 'We're bored, Grimaldi', insisted this zoologist manqué. Yet will our cosmic clown realise that evil's a stray latitude given over to tedium? Moreover, we slowly become apprised of this fact when Naxos' Agent draws his mitten away. For he happens to have been stroking an iron-maiden all this time. Does it all recompose itself with Ian McKellern in a modern-dress version of Shakespeare's Richard III?

TWENTY-TWO WOODEN FIGURINES ALL IN A ROW... (22)

Now Sol Rasputin, the master of this particular caravan, has decided to step between these two artistes: namely Clowning's Joey and Winged Rhea. 'The two of you will have occasion to listen to me', he barked. 'Fate has temporarily placed one in charge of this special art-form, don't ya know? As such my pets, I'm determined to do the best for any rag-lions circling my ring. Have you ever turned on the children's television programme called Bagpuss? Well - heretofore and all - no-one decides as to whether this animal goes or stays without consulting me.' He continued to stare at both participants with this indecisive spleen afoot. A thick cigar rested precariously on his lower-lip throughout this performance... While - at either extremity -Rhea and our Clown-face glared at one another: it all subsisted in a vortex where her hair lay sleek and black, and his glabrous moon-beam drivelled on. Might it be pursuant to a children's teaparty, but with strychnine in the barley cup? Needless to say, a brilliantly white marguee rose up behind all of our moral wrestlers

A TWENTY-THIRD QUADRANT OF PIE (23)

One of our dialecticians may have been parlaying throughout this; and he could well be Naxos' mirror-man of yore. He offers a pipe of peace; and yet it proves to be unlike a dime store's Red Indian. 'Professor Singer's theories lie flawed before their abundant and modernist architecture. Why so? Because he must condemn a large number of brain dead children to death in order to claim sentience as a boon. To re-phrase *The Communist Manifesto* of 1847-8: "Spastics of the world unite; a test-tube of green ichor awaits you!" Could it turn out to be an example of emerald blood which has been brought from a joke-shop for $\pounds 12.00$? Anyway, if self-consciousness is an undefeated mirror-image then what of an animal's inferior gifts? For – contrary to Savitri Devi's book *The Impeachment of Man* – Singer cannot insist on a tiger's superiority to a delinquent Homo Ludens. Nor

can this Man of Games necessarily place the negro and the Jew outside of humanity – whether we are speaking of ludo, bridge, chess or Snakes & Ladders. His misanthropy relates to a different cast of mind, therefore. Let's choose to articulate such a vision in another way, in that no reverse speciesism can be called upon in order to deflect his utilitarian bias. It merely resiles before a parallax view in an unquestioning way. But, to be certain of our facts, Bentham's utility theory always had the taste of death in its mouth. It enjoined what we might choose to call futilitarianism... if we're to effectively invent a term or a neologism after Thomas Carlyle's diction.' 'I'm afraid that I don't follow any of this', manoeuvred our clown of choice.

TWENTY-FOUR MAGPIES ROLL GLASS PEAS (24)

Or could our false sense of certainty really be enacting a Jacobean days' Parliament of Bees; a privately printed edition of which turned up in the nineteenth century? Nonetheless, Winged Rhea moved laterally in order to placate her lion – a creature who lay beyond necessary platitudes in a wicker-cage. Most certainly, our Rhea shifted up close to these parallel bars; the like of which narrowed in on a lion's paw and thus illustrated a chess board's architecture. Whereas King Leo himself had travelled so far as to let out a yawn – but it couldn't help bellowing forth as a growl. 'RRRRROOOAAAR!', he enunciated without self-reflection or shyness. 'Don't fret, my prince', murmured mistress Rhea rather plaintively. 'No-one shall touch a scintilla on your scalp --- at least by way of harming a hair thereon. All relevant matters will be handled to your satisfaction - just like a platter of meat that has been left out before your cage. Even Sol himself wouldn't be party to a deceit which could see you setting out on a voyage down a yellow-brick road. Come on, little 'un, possess yourself without fear and ignore the words of those men who presently surround you... listen only to my judgements. I swear to protect and empower you against the world.' From behind a veritable iron curtain came a mighty or further RRRRROOOAAAR!

TWENTY-FIVE *PAPIER-MACHE* HEADS ARE STOVED IN (25)

Let us behold a bent and rearranged Scaramouch before our ken... doesn't T.S. Eliot speak of a Guy's penny or its guiding coin? He does so at the commencement of a discontinuous Wasteland. Still and all, the coruscated brow of our itinerant clown looks on... it continues to stalk a sallow prospect under naked bulbs. His eyes, on this particular plateau, deliver silver pennies --- they are rather like a disused copperhead from vesterday's pulp-fiction magazines. Thev remain avid. piecemeal, revolving, singular and seemingly lit from within... almost after the fashion of Walt Disney. Our Joey speaks up in a dry monotone: 'Harken to my fit! If sentience happens to be the key to Professor Singer's route-master then animals and men will forever wander unequally. Mental self-consciousness betrays a resilience under fire... particularly 'neath a white sun or its token. It even capers before a superior reduction – but not any scintilla of a redaction (to be sure). Never mind: Professor Singer then resultantly slips into speciesism or non-human prejudice, basically because he has no other choice. Mankind might otherwise find a way to sacrifice bullocks to its pleasure – albeit in obviation of such a circuit. They would come to sanctify clothing, eating, flaying, slaying and skinning mammals all the way up Uppsala's ventricle. Oh my yes – what price oblivion or the abattoir when it's confronted with one of Descartes' machines?'

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

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

SEVEN-AND-TWENTY CROWS BAKED IN A PIE (27)

Our buffoon simultaneously dwells on philosophical niceties within a free-flowing phantasm or conceit. Can this lion really understand the dialectic which gathers pace under his very eyes? May it alternately confirm or refute various notions of animal liberation (sic)? In accord with such a basis, however, Joey's clown blows root-toot-toot through a traditional trumpet or German brass. It posited itself as an ancient Western device inside a copper pipe; a much burnished object that strove to announce a clarion. 'Further to our analysis', our rake trills and squawks, 'if sentience happens to be all and sundry then what about the foetus? For - in truth - many unborn children are probably more sentient than most non-humans. All of which means that the utilitarian's bidden to act if the senescent can be implicated in suffering. Contrariwise, my man, can a solitary autonomy light up the path to one's moral being? Because - if

not virtually extant – a vegetarian can still eat rare birds' eggs with impunity! Most definitely, the logic of Professor Singer's thinking must foreshadow some dysgenic slaughter. It's a postfoeticide (all in all) that will inevitably fall on sub-humans with a downward blade. At last, we may discern a vista where the professors Peter Singer and Eugene Shockley link hands across our compass... moral or otherwise. Bravo! Especially when we recognise that this *philosophe* enacts his vision of a Kolyma with almost mathematical precision. Might his co-religionist, the chemist and writer Primo Levi, have justly christened it as a periodic table?'

TWENTY-EIGHT: WILL YOU EAT THIS GINGER-BREAD MAN'S HEAD OFF? (28)

Please missus... an untroubled suffering now has occasion to crease a lion tamer's brow. For - if we gaze at it aright - Agent Naxos incarnates a salutary principle: namely, a Noel Coward vintage which swans abroad without inversion's taint. (In other words, no ditty lurks here which pertains to Otto Weininger's fugue in Sex and Character). He wore a resultant cravat around his neck and a black Ukrainian cigarette continuously puffed in its holder. Similarly, his hair came to be regarded as sleek and dark - all of it after the fashion of Humphrey Bogart in Casablanca or The Treasure of the Sierre Madre. A brief moustache customarily melded with a cut-away brown suit - it happened to be unstained by tobacco. Didn't such earth tones delineate something of a relaxed nature? As hitherto, then, a white tent or festival marquee rose adjacent to his proffered scalp; it profited nothing at all by sloping off to the right. He readdressed his proprietor's tones with an element of clipped contrition. 'I don't know what eventuated outside John Bratby's kitchen sink, old boy. By deuce, one moment I'd turned my back in order to spy a toy; the next Leo had struck clean off by vacating its cage.' A cigar-chomping Sol Rasputin glowered lugubriously in response to this competition.

TWENTY-NINE BELLS UNDER A JOLLY ROGER (29)

As per usual in dreams we often find that time shifts suddenly and discontinuously between scenes. It almost recalls early or silent cinema wherein a passage of moments indicates itself by a ripple effect. A sudden clang hits an air-passage or ventilation duct; in that a three-pronged trident rasps against a concrete floor. Its colour has to be a shade off the deepest red. This cacophony or jarring sound momentarily startles Agent Naxos out of all conscience... until he realises who's been husbanding this ground. It's one of his attendants who wears a ski mask underneath a top hat – like in an Edgar Wallace or 'Sapper' adventure of yesteryear. Whomsoever among Naxos' many myrmidons could it be? Any assessment proved troublesome especially given the woollen balaclava which was worn beneath a hockey goalkeeper's vizor. Like in Alexander Dumas' The Man in the Iron Mask only his orbs showed up; and these were at once fruity, over-ripe, black buried and semi-insane. Surely it wouldn't come to involve Keith Waterhouse's interpretation of Billy Liar --- that is; a hominid who'd repeatedly multiplied himself in mirrors? Hadn't he actually been a keeper who'd threatened Leonine Half with an empty chair-leg? It was hollow (you see) and happened to be painted white using Crown Plus emulsion.

THIRTY BENT NAILS FOR ONE'S COFFIN (30)

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

THIRTY ONE MOUTHS (FEMININE) DEMAND FEEDING (31)

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

prison: namely Panopticon. Each one had been executed in tinted prose.

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

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

PLACE A MIRROR ACROSS THIRTY-THREE CHAPTERS (33)

What does a lion, who is free of all natural constraints, actually dream about? You see, the world wildlife fund (or WWF) has succeeded beyond its wildest dreams, in that Leonine Half has come to despise all restraint. Even a Daniel has no need to enter his den or habitat, since with one minor leap the anti-zoo movement reaches its goal. (Do you realise that certain radical restorationists or greens – like Gayre of Gayre or Prince Phillip – were actually members of this fund?) But – to recap it all – a trespasser on a lion's cage opened a door between two walls of stone... his name's Agent Naxos. A white streak of light illuminated the way behind him, and it was superintended by a naked bulb. Did it wax existential; or prove itself to be in

concord with Buffet's canvases from the nineteen fifties? Oh yes... because a multiple reflection occurred now; and it subsisted via the mannerisms of Pepper's Ghost. A theatrical device (this) which illustrated or indicated presences... all of them illusory and subsumed by mirrors. Still, a squared tableau or exercise in tiling led away from this; it rather resembled a checker board minus its draughts. (A factor that shows up the handiwork or trellis-board of Leo's cage). Could a travelling circus install a game without determination here; wherein White had to move against black... the latter coming near to being crowned at the board's edge? At this particular second or moment, our tamer reached out towards his mirror-image... albeit over an opiate of steam. It looked like a bath's reverse essence (withal); while one stopped reproduction continued to fall away from Magritte's hand. It has been mutedly raised throughout. 'Welcome, O traveller in pelts - all hail our beast King!', heralded a voice.

THIRTY FOUR PAPER PELLETS (34)

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

sequins or stars. 'Forbear from shooting your thunder-stick, Nax(.)', she entreated --- by way of an imprecation or command!

A THIRTY FIFTH PARALLEL TO A BLAZING SCARAMOUCH (35)

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

THIRTY SIX SEVERED SNAKE-HEADS (36)

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

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

Yes indeed... for we find that Winged Rhea has puckered up her nose as a reaction to the pipe's exhaustion of its hashish. She smiles obliquely at us now and her eyes look somewhat dulled, opaque, oblique, jam-packed, lissome or treacly. At last she seems to recognise Agent Naxos' presence in front of her... even if it's only to momentarily recall herself from any hint of drug misuse or decadence. 'Hi, handsome one', she lilts in an unnaturally deep voice. 'Let's be clear about all of this farrago: Professor Peter Singer's discourse always favoured а coprophiliac intake above everything else. It remained the obverse to any robots' rebellion posited by David Icke or any others... customarily. Verily and after, his various stunts all come apart in your hands and from every angle --- whether they canvas the reckoning of Green politics, civil libertarianism or campaigns for the Australian senate.' Winged Rhea then stopped for a moment in order to relight her pipe-bottle or its pipette. It flickered in the darkness and she used a flaring taper to do it. 'FFFPPP(!), now and again, my bean-pole --- cough, cough, cough --- if we examine these issues with any thoroughness then moralism proves to be the key. An otherwise broken or mysterious Yale in its lock - it betokens an illusory wandering

which is rather like the magic key in *Bluebeard*. It also indicates a Pharisaical or Khazar form of hubris *par excellence*. For – from the ghettoes of Europe to Canberra – we can say with certainty that his is the hand which signed the paper. Oh yesss', she puffed incautiously on her marijuana stem, 'such whited sepulchres abound in the present liberal purview. Truly, such whetstones require thirty pieces of silver to be paid yet again before loaning it out on the crash.' With this she closed her eyes... while sucking meaningfully on a hubble-bubble's sweetness. It laced the air with musk.

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

Back at our travelling circus, however, King Leo reverted to his cage's nearest doorway and all of this took place at a mistress' insistence. Might she prove to be the ring-master of these deluded tokens... albeit at one remove from her fancy? Once again and all, our marionettes continue to allow a floppy or pantomime lion to resile from this performance. For, whether we choose to question The Wizard of Oz's textbook or not, Leo finds himself enfiladed from every side. Could it really all be part of Baum's inheritance? Never mind, since our muppet resumes his boiler-house position after a fashion that necessarily revolves around one of Don Segal's films like Escape From Alcatraz. Irrespective of every other moment, however, his woolly head counted up all the metal bars to either side of him... might this be considered to illustrate a philosophical enquiry? Moreover, the king of the beasts has a yellow flesh-tone and it refuses to engage with any impertinence - irrespective of whether Leo's pelt wanders towards lemon by way of azo, cadmium or brilliant. In response to which, Winged Rhea bows her head solemnly or with a respectful nod. 'Listen to an ablution's cortex, O my Leo! My King, stay within this balustrade or a chorus of unwelcome gold. Do you hear? Agent Naxos meant no enemy intent by dint of his intervention; nor should one speak rashly of his luger, my child. Because our symphonic music always has the power to

calm the savage breast... Needless to say, let it also cause us to entreat a remedy from a nodding donkey's direction... primarily so that you remain inside Rowolt's cube.' (Do you recall him to be the crazed scientist in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*?) Throughout all of this interview, *inter alia*, Winged Rhea's glamorous head knelt down in a manner which was both restrained, obliging, cautious and clear-cut. She even enunciated her words in a way similar to the young Elisabeth Taylor.

A THIRTY-NINTH CUBICLE FOR THE BRAIN (39)

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

FORTY FROZEN MIRRORS HELD IN SNOW... (40)

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

FORTY-ONE CHEWED DOLL'S-HEADS (41)

Although we have occasion to notice that Leo's unconscious still flowed by us - via an alternate river-bend on the valley floor.

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

to various brain functions which cover the scalp? It's all got to do with the early Victorian proto-science of Phrenology; as it came to be outlined in hemp's mist.

FORTY-SECOND STREET: A HARPOONING THROUGH THE OTHER'S VITALS... (42)

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

FORTY-THREE FEEDS SEVEN NUMEROLOGICALLY: A SIGIL FOR CREATIVE EXCELLENCE (43)

Our female *artiste* doubtlessly continues to swoon within the rigours of her own mind. Furthermore, such an attitude necessarily debases itself before a group of armed men or over a SWAT team; but only in relation to a body's blue kaleidoscope... a scenario where each one sweats on its

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

FORTY-FOUR MEASURES EIGHT IN NUMBER THEORY... POSSIBLY IT'S INFINITY'S WEALTH & POWER? (44)

Aghast at all of this, Winged Rhea stood toe-to-toe with the circus proprietor who was known as Sol Rasputin. He refused to dispel a thoughtful impresssion whether one way or the other – while his orbs continued to slant about a concentrated cheroot. It puffed on regardless... and rather like a factory chimney in an L.S. Lowry print. Whereas right next to him two crates rose up

which were salient to an observable eye-line; or possibly they could serve as a companion to their limited vision? Can it be disinterred as such? Behind these two jesters without a pox several white marguees filled a tableau which was reminiscent of folk art - or, ceteris paribus, they chose to illustrate some of Billy Morey's spectral playgrounds. They also had a tendency to concentrate on femininity a la Taschen's A Thousand Nudes. Moreover, an orange sky didn't discourage Rhea from standing afore him – albeit with her ebon hair bobbed and sleek in a nine ball's turnabout. Perhaps the woman's inclination to reminisce involved a peek-a-boo, or one of those devices which are redolent of sea-side amusements. (Note: a peek-a-boo is to be found down on the pebble beaches in Sheppey, north Kent, as well as elsewhere in the vicinity, and it consists of a body which is painted onto two-sided boards). All of this leads up to a hole that finds its circumference cut out of some balsa therein, and boys and girls then pop up in order to outface their neighbour. Remember: in folkish art, and in every form of carny or fun-fair - can't we hear the people's voice writ large?

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

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

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

FORTY-SIX HALF-FACES MAKE UP A LUNAR PICNIC (46)

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

FORTY-SEVEN SKULL EMPLACEMENTS (47)

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

FORTY-EIGHT PARALLELS BEGIN WITH A CONDENSER BATTERY OR AN ELECTRICAL CIRCUIT. IT CARRIES ABROAD A RAINING HEAD, ONE WHICH HAS BEEN SCREWED INTO ITS IMPERMANENCE. (48)

For several weeks following on from this, then, nothing untoward occurred whatsoever. Our *troupe* settled down once more and Leonine's King refused to break out of his cage. Suddenly – on one such sleepy occasion – everything changed base-about-apex within this dreaming citadel or people's palace. (Surely, you are in a position to recognise circus' unique position in mass art?)

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

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

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

END

NAPALM BLONDE a tragedy

FIRST DEBENTURE (1)

Our impresario straightened up his jacket and tie - if only to place two fists upon cuffs which mocked green's latitude. Again, either hand wrestled with the red tie that moved like a bishop, diagonally, across a black-shirt's front. Abel Cummings certainly liked the look of himself in this mirror, in that his visage betokened a mixture which wrestled with distaste. Mentally speaking, he thought that he detected Rudolf Valentino in *Blood* and Sand; but, in actuality, the twitching moustache and all-ebon hair looked alive before indifference. A crimson wall patterned an atmosphere which led away from these participants, with a doorway revealing an orange semblance. A row of metal cases resembling a gymnasium locker-room slid along one wall, in such a way as that they were ignored. In the foreground, however, a beautiful woman powdered her face by dint of a compact. Its colour mushrooms to a complacent grey in lieu of purple; the internal mirror of which doubtless helped to afford a response. In appearance, her blonde visage lit up this template – at once according to a new Artemis' spiral, and primarily so as to collect all vestiges of passion and reallocate them in one spot. Don't certain astronomers believe that a powerful glass can refract the sun's rays to a sacred point – there to char the earth?

Anyway, her face sloped away towards a latitudinarian dome... can it be true? *Quod* each eye-brow arched up like a doll's stillness – at least in terms of one chiselled magnificence. She was definitely prepared to play games with her husband's manager... a character whose straight-jacketed form stood behind her. The woman's auburn hair came parted over to the left; and it acknowledged the impediment of flame that caroused down her back. Any illumination which she encountered, however, could always be reflected away by those blue headlamps. Because her eyes came to resemble azure discs that looked like marbles – each one contained in its slot. Her lips, on the other hand, sucked up peaches so as to leave their gloss... and each parted indent understood its yearning. Do you see? (A million vamps have already died in order to cross over from this carriage-way). Any road up, she wore a low-cut dress which amply showed off her bosom and shoulders... before it swept away like evening attire. Let's see now: her name has to be Scaramouch Ruby --- but some prefer to call this *diva* by an original suffix, namely Lupin.

A SECONDARY OR PERFUMED LOTUS (2)

"How can you stick to the affidavit of his witness?", chortled Abel Cummings gleefully. "Your mugwump's fingers rot before the attention of their wrath, particularly when they are given leave to transpose themselves. How's that achieved, my chickadee? Why, it's simply unchecked - leastways in terms of an iron-maiden which closes upon a replica. Can one really find oneself consumed by that red velvet, so as to cancel one existence before transporting onto a next stop? NOOOO!, a Gustav Thorak lineament may rise abreast of a glass-case, nearly always contained in the Royal College of Surgeons, south Kensington. But who cares, my duck? Our witness goes on to taste other fruit from this unripe tree! Moreover, the front of this engine bears a mausoleum's tincture. It presumes to invest only in the bad – primarily to reveal a mask. This grins on skeletally; basically so as to chomp on in terms of an ossuary's encrustations. Likewise, our sarcophagus' face glimmers from beneath a shimmer of loadstar."

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"What rubbish you talk!", interrupted the woman sharply. "My man's strength lies in the reptilian curdle of so much speed, essentially so as to perfect entry into a space as confined as this. For – despite those *masques* of envy which uncover our rapture – no-one wants to recognise such matters. All that concerns a *femme fatale* like me, Abel, are the muscles, tendons and appended glands of a He-man. Let his remaining protuberances

be Fate's affair! Especially in a situation where a wired-up saurian or a pterodactyl-head gains entry. May it gibber and trespass across the simulacrum of these days!"

ONE DOLL'S-HEAD TRANSPORTS GREEN (3)

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

golden-skinned and splendid in its apertures. If we consider this with certainty – then the dimples or curves in her body sport a skeleton's delay. These effectively look out on each other's absences in order to reveal one voluptuous fact. Namely... this had to do with a Luciferian sign or sigil over her vulva. It betokened a heavy response which proved to be full, limpid, spent and unattainable.

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

A SEVERED HEAD'S LIP-STICK (4)

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

ONE JEREMIAD FILTERS ITS SAND (5)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECOND DEBENTURE (6)

Looking upon a travelling stratagem o' strangers...

Most assuredly, we have to cut off the fat from this gristle before we can properly live. For Scaramouch's mate or husband, Runter Bog, had made an unexpected appearance. In deportment he came stripped to the waist; in a manner which is hulk-like, troglodytic and threatening. It glowers in the light of an unapprised dawn. Do you detect its mesmeric charm? Yes truly and a day; when we understand that he recalls Frankenstein's monster – namely, one who has been put together in charnel houses. This all came to illustrate spent passages of flesh which

were themselves unglued and altogether indicative, replete and Mastodon-like. Maybe something about Sidney Nolan's paintings of the Australian bandit, Ned Kelly, come to mind? (One picture stands out in particular: it depicts 'Ned' next to a bathing beauty and abreast of all of these circumstances... as well as being captured in bright light). Meanwhile, Runter careered on towards the other two --- in a situation where his arms betrayed a matrimonial imbalance. A factor that was best delineated by great hams hanging down... albeit without any mercy whatsoever. Needless to say, he definitely incarnated a Gothic form: although its interpretation proved to be more roughly hewn than anything else. Didn't it portray itself as prehensile, roughened, rather concrete and somewhat other than smoothly textured? Certainly, it betokened an extravaganza which demarcated Gustav Thorak's arching torsos or Ayn Rand's novel, Atlas Shrugged. Let us be certain of our ground before proceeding... for Bog's hair wrapped around orange matting and it shaded into brown. In relation to his advent - and next to a primitively carved table – both of the captured couple staggered back. They (Scaramouch Ruby and Abel Cummings) could not credit what had eventuated; and Cummings lost all composure by putting his paw up to his forehead in exasperation. His eyes became distended or misapplied now; whereas a tangerine tie was seen to filter around his neck like a scarf. Behind him, Scaramouch put up a dainty mitten to her mouth – it dissembled likewise over its camp and chiselled air. But - in all actuality her bodice heaved and she evinced very real fear. The girl's cleavage became more and more exposed in her anxiety, and she began to look wretched... even ugly in terms of a feminine mood swing. Yes again now; a warning has to be issued like a clarion at this point, in that a golden halo exists above our characters. It found its habitat transfigured by a magenta glow which levelled off into some reddish cabinets. They were locker-room cubes or mantles made of steel

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

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

SKELETONS HANG IN SIGNORELLI'S GARDEN (7)

In this Man-beast's enclosure, a fitfulness began to crank up its peradventure all alone. Although incapable of rational thought on his own, consciously speaking, Runter Bog did possess an imp of the perverse on his left shoulder. Or might it actually be characterised as an imp of the reverse? In any event, it happened to be through this spectral rook --- whose mind cascaded like sand --- that Bog could utter: "Sadistic tarantulas, my rush to bloodshed is your obliviousness to assault. Furthermore, you sought to trap me in the viaducts of a recurrent distaste. Do not regret my slicing of this balaclava in half: since now I know of the truth which lurks behind your vizors. Liberals or ne'er-dowells like you regard marriage as purely contractual – whereas, in a realistic compass, it speaks of unholy or primordial Gods! It has to relate to a matter that pursues an archaic and forgotten novel called The Divine and the Decay. Yet again, a festival of blood or haemoglobin must materialise after a mask's seizure, and before these gates of spume. Such a rigmarole inhabits one fossilised entity after another, in particular in a manner which illustrates a fetish or an ogre in the British Museum. Let's consider it from another angle (altogether): in that an Oceanic piece of head-gear from New Britain witnesses our intent.

Surely, we may speak of a 'Rainings' masque which opens up the cases in the Pitt-Rivers museum to a wider inspection? It delimits sunlight and the adventure of the morn – only by then closing off one breach with indistinctness. Rather than an unutterable witness such as this... each eye spirals like a totem before its pole, though. It wages war on silent lots which are held over in the ground... in a scenario where a caterpillar's stitch entreats against its web design. Might such a chameleon pull off one covering in order to reveal a spheroid, or even a surgical plaster-cast? It reminds us of one of those medicinal heads or porcelain skulls that find themselves used by alternative therapy. Each example can do no more than hint at phrenology's callingcard."

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

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

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

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

STRAIGHT AS AN ARROW (10)

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

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

of a Tarot pack – a latticed blue-strip of window indicates an oldfashioned abode. The moon gleams on as a white dot through its Rubik aspect... or Rothko's patterning to ribena.

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

A REVENGER'S TRAGIC PRIAPUS (11)

You see, the glowering nature of Runter Bog's eyes betray an absence of fear... no matter how knowingly. In demeanour, he's a giant-sized professional wrestler and his manager can only hold down the title of Abel Cummings - while his vampirella wife must be Scaramouch Ruby. Perhaps our version of Big Daddy or Giant Haystacks has successfully caught them together, but there is no clear evidence of an actual adultery. Now read on, Children of Absalom: "His face convulses like the grip of a savage Pict", laments a running impresario who flees from his own act. "He grits his teeth after a titanic fashion of coals. A curdled annihilation (this) which will not allow another to breathe in his vicinity. Could he be compared to one of those Aztec totems or icons atop a funeral pyre? Truly, an actual rendezvous with such a Ka-Tiki expedition may prove to be necessary after all. Observe this transaction, sister of mayhem... for one of those fierce dolls out of Oceania leads the way through a thicket - it privileges nought save a chosen primitivism in the sky. Surely he's mistaken, you are thinking? Because the strength to grieve without tears articulates a behemoth's rapture... and, although dwindling to a small compass, it packs a ripe punch. This endeavour contrives to loose the piece of rag otherwise known as a Cambridge tie - an embroidered black-and-red sheet which exists by way of sluices, slits and cubicles for bodily apertures. Also, such a truculent spasm carefully avoids a mute fist: in that it comes to be placed ahead of Tiki's corse (in other words). Blame the Marquesas islands, if you want more action!"

Nevertheless, the two fists of Runter Bog continue to raise themselves up beyond these necessary latitudes... so says a twisted fate. He (Runter Bog excelsior) then aligns himself to a spendthrift expulsion of blood; one which inevitably leads to a manoeuvre where various specks end up on Warhol's screens. Don't you recollect the silk-screen print of an electric-chair? Likewise, this debenture occurs in cerulean shading; a curtainraiser that challenges its own denouement thereby... Could it draw attention to one cliff-hanger too far? Now then: these muscular arms help to bring down a basic travesty in steel... in a situation where armageddon chunters through Runter's veins. He follows up each consequent swipe with a gesture of brigandage – only to then bring down a pillar and its post around Samson's shoulders. Truly, he has to be characterised by a savage lust or a mordant introspection: the pullulating life of which knows no reason or restraint. Do you remember the Latin tag from grammar school - Homo lupus hominem? It declares Man to be a wolf to his kindred

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

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

THIS GOD WILL NOT SERVE A SKULL + GRAFFITI (13) Shall one interpret what is going on? For both of them loomed up against an orange door; it consisted of nothing more than a wooden fastness --- the outer covering of which betrayed a golden knob. Such a device glistened in the available gloom. (It will be noted in all of these scenes – no matter how dream-like – that the colours involved are poster-paint in their abstraction. They evince the lurid quality of so many Fauves or possibly the limpid, brackish, garish and child-art tones which follow on from several *blue horses* in those fields... all of them incarnating the art of Kirchner, et al...) Speaking of our drama again... the wall around our anti-heroes waxes to a bold Green; all of it becoming inter-connected with the woman's violent red-dress, auburn hair, toned flesh and made-up face (inextricably so). A scenario that deposits Picasso's ballet-sets in another area – particularly as they embody his Hooker's green suit, coal black shirt and orange tie. Runter Bog's renascent shadow - though - aims to upset things, in that it chooses to pursue a misaligned duct much after the fashion of John Gardner's novel Grendel... a work which interprets *Beowulf* from the monster's point of view. Could it be some sort of shape-shifting entity like in one of David Icke's speculations? Indeed, our characters are speaking to one another once more: "I'm all out of puff, dearie", indicated Abel Cummings between-times. "But now that we've discovered this inner or secreted room we can rush in, close the doorway, lock it and restrain your monstrous husband's anger. In any event, I'm sick of running throughout the echoing labyrinth of these tunnels - particularly if we are to shadow the reality of such rats in mazes. Because these damp or water-bestrewn corridors exist underground in an overgrown conundrum of M.R. James' estimation. For no minotaur lurks at their heart these days - since Runter Bog is a nemesis behind even a mask! Remember now, this mortal equivalent of a rodent's cage exists under his wrestling ring: the one where he has torn many of his opponents to pieces, metaphorically speaking." "Quick", the quivering female flesh next to him asserts, "hurry up, loony tune, his witness to a silhouette indicates violence on this wall." +

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

THE INFRINGEMENT OF SAND IS VINCENT'S WITNESS (14)

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

"We've outlasted him", hisses Abel Cummings, "and are safe behind this wooden cavern or doorway. Yes indeed; this happens to be true – despite the fact that one of Hieronymous Bosch's

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Run, run, Abel; there's still a chance to get away if we hurry. A back's slippage may not be shut off to a corn snake's slithering, thereby! Nor will I abstract my gaze – retrospectively – from such a winnowing scene. Its gesture --- above the cot --- causes me to break out with a cry or shout. All of it wavers before a base parliament of wood or trees. Didn't the English revolutionary period superintend a Bare-bones assembly? Because a bread-knife quivers over a pantaloon most rare; nor can my nubile form

be grasped by these conspirators. Such a shapely shadow comes to betoken pornography's absence; it subsequently leaves off from the nursery of its estranged intelligence. Do a series of interconnected triangles fail to festoon these walls - each of them baying before a pink mantra? Haven't geneticists already proved that girls prefer pink and boys are attracted to blue --- it's all in the genes, you see? Socio-biology stands confirmed. It all depends on whether such structures shall be brought down --- or not. 'Stop it, desist in your murderous quatrain, wench', fulfill these guardians of desire. Each one of them wears the esplanade of a Dominican – at once hooded in their mastery and waiting for bravery's assistance. Is the child or babe a hybrid of its parents --- namely, Scaramouch Ruby and Runter Bog? Or, mayhap and all, a reverse nemesis contrives to lift the lid on a broth which indicates Abel's esprit. Surely neither of them has taken one trug too many into the garden?

A COWBOY HAT CANNOT BE WORN IN A DUNGEON (17)

Avaunt thee... let's consider this conundrum: a reverse plane or an aberrant perspective registers our course. It deviates from no other rectitude, in terms of one's primary colours. Yes indeed; our two collaborators --- Abel Cummings and Scaramouch Ruby --- have occasion to run within an orange box. A brief or minimalist slant hangs around them throughout - it serves to cater for one shadow-play too far... and this is independent of Keneth Robeson's or Orson Welles' involvement. Within this sprightly entertainment, however, a magenta stair-well looms up in the half-light... it transposes an immateriality, even a curdling space. No more than this: especially when we are forced to consider a block of shading next to our procedure. It liberates itself with a jet-black tint... at least as regards a necessary craft. Hang loose, brethren – for our two expellees choose to launch themselves full tilt at the stairs. They are best seen as speeded-up runners or labradors who come loping after each other with unappeased pace. Each one definitely accords with a slanted

pilaster or one of Donatello's transports which look forward to both Muybridge and Leni Riefenstahl later on. Both of them are now found to be o'er-leaping at full throttle - athletically speaking. They streak along this duct, tunnel, transverse-way or moral canal as a consequence. Could it be one vehicle for the emergence of a creature as vet unborn? Despite his breathlessness... Abel Cummings insists on giving sport: "Are you sure he's not gaining on us, my witness to be? I'm already dangerously out of puff and one's breath exhales all too quickly from this body. I hear a rattle in such a prize-fighter's arsenal rather after the fashion of Professor Gunter von Hagens. But we have to keep on going, Ruby – no-one knows better than me how he can tear a man limb-from-limb. It had come to resemble one rag-doll after another at the close." +

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

WE MANOEUVRE AROUND A WOMAN WITH A WHITE STREAK IN HER HAIR (18)

Simultaneously with the above remarks, *per se*, Scaramouch and Abel rush down an unfolding corridor. Each one affects to catapult the other out of a partial misery. While a darkish blue backdrop is seen to rear or supervene behind the advent of such

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

A DICE HITS A KERB ONLY TO TRANSPLANT A SIX (19) Now then, the following communication mushrooms out and beyond our ready witnesses. Might it prove to be silence's reverse dialectic? "Listen to me, ye twain", burbles on a breathless Abel Cummings. "We shall pass under the glory of a rekindled knife. Let it be... since our killer's hot breath luxuriates on my neck and even suffices to whetten Hades' blades. I'm all out of go and spirit, dearie. Could this be the end of Abel Cummings? Can Fate allow it to cease like this?" (An anguished bark or cry was heard then). "I'm all afeared, chickee, in relation to the behemoth's wrath that's just been conjured up. I sought to steal you afar, I admit it. But no-one would have foreseen this Thak; in the form or resolution of a Great Ape whose furry outline limns against these curtains... All of it then coming to interpret either a labyrinth or the veritable Ha!Ha! the latter is attendant on its drop in an English country garden. "Cease your prattling, man", commands Scaramouch Ruby with a scarcely concealed contempt for the hominid next to her. "Listen to this statement or affidavit, will you? A cage with an iron-door or possibly a sensory deprivation chamber lies nearby. It looms up oft-handed or in terms of a left-leaning slant. Grasp it with your main measure, homunculus! Mayhap it's our remaining or only hope?"

A CUBE, A DOOR, A FERROUS CAGE (20)

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

But still and all, Runter Bog came on regardless of these abjurations and he was a Thing/an architrave of witness... in a scenario where each scintillation picked up the pieces of its own drift-wood. Necessarily so, since he shambled forwards as a veritable man-thing – irrespective of any swamp's absence.

A RUBIK CUBE DIVIDES ITS PREY (21)

Scaramouch Ruby and Abel Cummings shoot or hurtle down this corridor; they are now breast-to-breast. Behind them a mauve wall curves away; and it absolves a structure which is solid,

sandy, earthen or rough-textured. Moreover – its livery finds itself to be countermanded: when both of their intermingled shoulders are cast across it. A dark blue door --- of either steel or iron shapes --- comes to enlighten their eye-balls. Rivets, dimples, screws, shards and the indentations of metal strike them bodily – even facially. Will it be the boxing-ring or mayhap an Alamo for their final conflict... quite possibly, an absurdist showdown? "If we can get through yonder trespass, lovey, a chance might beckon towards our future graven offering." "Let's seize it", replied 'she who must be obeyed' with decision. "Our eight ball must be struck clearly and enter its slot without any undue hindrance. We have to make for Thermopylae's path and this is with or without Leonidas' hordes."

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

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

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

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

WE AWAIT A CANNIBAL'S APPETITE (23)

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

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Irrespective of any of this, though, a dim travail of blackness limned or cast its line backwards into Abel Cummings' mind. Again – and for want of aught better to do – he saw Scaramouch Ruby standing before him in a condemned cell... the latter seemed to be somewhat subdued in terms of a sepulchral glow. Likewise, Scaramouch Ruby had parted company from this twilight glare; while her blonde coif lifted up at the prospect of some wind. She mounted these steps towards an imaginary guillotine alone... (Does it recall the final scene in Poulenc's opera – where the nuns are executed by the French Revolution?) Trussed up in a straight-jacket as before now, her eyes gazed on in abstraction... whereas the girl's forearms were pulled up close by her breasts. A sheer wall delineated the space which proved to be adjacent to Scaramouch's glow... a dilemma that existed in spite of a distant tapping which could be distinctly heard. Taptap; tap-tap; tumble-thump --- it goes forward in a trance of forgiven sound. Because Abel Cummings – in his own phantasm – continued to send adoring smoke signals from afar off. (The means by which he did this appeared to illustrate a rip-roaring belter – primarily by utilising a tea-cup in order to signal morse. It's a code that's created by a metal mug knocking into a radiator pipe far away). For his part, Abel's visage still contrived to look fervid, fenced off and resultant to its prime movement by way of a ligature. It all composes itself into a scarlet apotheosis within which Man Ray's portrait of de Sade lives again!

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

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

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

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

In a near to final tableau, then, we notice that Abel Cummings sheers away to the side or passes up a steep incline in one corner. He obviously understands the reality of disconnectedness (in other words). All by himself (now) he literally jigs on the spot so as to give out some vampiric speed. But truly, no hint of amphetamine or kentucky ham continues to hold sway over such deeds... even though his arms are out and aloft in relation to a wrap-around sound without end. Do you muster this legerdemain – when it dimples to orange?

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By contrast, Scaramouch Ruby behaves in a totally different way or over a delimiting measure. Grabbing up a piece of wood from the cell's floor, she batters her estranged husband's exposed arm. "I know how to make him let go!", she expostulates with glee. Oh my yes... it is only after retracing such a step that Ruby Red remembers one salient thing: namely, a nail has become attached to this shaft's underside. Mightn't it have been able to draw blood, perchance? In truth, she waxes exultant about it all. Runter Bog – with a belaboured howl or groan – withdraws his mitten in double quick-time. "AAAAGGGHHH!", he enjoins startlingly. Immediately this fist is drawn back and the portcullis shuts with a snap. CLICK-Click...ping...: silence then reigns again in these cellars or entombed trails beneath the stadium. (Wasn't there an avant-garde writer called Roger Pinget?) A has intruded into masterfulness the Blonde's gestures hereabouts... how can she have changed so suddenly or in an eve's blink, you ask? Certainly a backwards glance at her staples, corset, bodice and rear sequins delivers a blow. It looks forward to nothing in particular, but still betrays a renewed endeavour. Has our victim or Justine become a Cruella d'Evil?

A VINDICATION OF INTOLERANCE (26)

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

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

A SOLDIER OF LOVE GATHERS IN CHIPS (27)

A strange transformation then occurs among the participants to our drama in which some of their number change places... veritably so. An orange ceiling now supervenes above our pair of recusants, even though a turquoise filament belabours its walls on a continuous basis. Yea verily, but a frieze of wood or basic joinery bends its aft into a gap which comes to be situated between the floor and its murals. One brass door – soldered to its inner dexterity of iron - makes up such a break. It exists over or to one side of Abel Cummings' left shoulder. Yet the entire scenario has been subtly repositioned inside a tabernacle of dream and at a great distance from what could be called real life. In this exercise in silent cinema Scaramouch Ruby strode before and to one side of Abel Cummings - albeit with her shadow clawing menacingly at the purple betwixt them. It subsists (somewhat) as a slant, a designated eddy or quite possibly a biro swirl: that is to say, as one of those art brut designs which transfigure the stream-of-consciousness of Jockey Wilson. She (Scaramouch Ruby) looms haughtily, vampishly and with a slight streak of triumph. All in all, the camp or dependant look --- a la Joan Collins --- has died - only to be replaced by what? It's really some sort of bizarre intonation or maybe a threat to the sovereignty of one's throat... She also cascades rapidly into a renewed heaviness; at once being over-ripe, replete, orange tressed and passing over effortlessly from a Pre-Raphaelite virgin into Sheridan le Fanu's Carmilla. Have you noticed its leaden penumbra of late? "Of course, my chuck, no-one can transgress against an iron maiden's bounty --- even Runter Bog won't be able to penetrate it." Abel Cummings was speaking during this interval – but it presents itself to us as unnatural or high-lighted after a dream's fashion. No-one knows a pure answer to these conundrums (you see) and it certainly doesn't pertain to any pithy anagrams in Charles F. Haand's The Master Key. Scaramouch Ruby interrupts him in a contemptuous way; one which responds to a plumb-line's whoosh or a grating sound. In this manner her diction comes to lisp after a Golden lotus'

perfume; it pours from such healing buds when they are positioned above you in the ceiling. Most readily, a blood-red curtain shimmers at a distance from our discrete actors. All of it ramifies with such an enervating experience or an otherwise electrical lozenge. A leaden pendulum or a musty cloud fills the ether; despite the fact that these phenomena lie outside a naked retina. "Pleased I am", she began in triumph, "that my husband, Bog, remains behind't door. (Does the wording adopt a Mancunian bite? Who can tell?) "For now, my future or errant love, I shall hold you to an unsuccessful promise --- one which you don't have the fibre to otherwise release." "Eh? What goes on from under this customary defile?", murmured Abel uneasily. He was desperately trying to think back to their original conversation that had been brutally set upon by Runter Bog. "You once declared a desire to furnish me with a customary sweetness - even the commencement of all you possessed!", her dulcet tones infringed. "Did I?", expostulated Cummings. He certainly affected to be devastated or taken aback when discovering that this woman took his swooning or Lethean airs seriously. "The silly moo", he thought to himself, but a copper distillate in the air rendered it unfunny.

METAMORPHOSIS (28)

All of a sudden, a cataclysmic transformation exhibited the course of one of those Biblical paintings from the nineteenth century. (One thinks of the work of John Martin here). It proved to be reminiscent of one of Professor Gunter von Hagens' corpses pushing its way into a vicarage tea-party! Against a backdrop of orange which grew progressively more violent by the minute or found its form subdued to circular lines of force... Abel Cummings staggered back. Truly, a devastating rush or onslaught then hit his senses: it contrived to come in his direction like a bullet between the eyes. No matter what might be delivered to a watching Erda or earth mother... for sweat cascaded down his weakling or seducer's face. It coagulated *in lieu* of rheum's seepage and trespassed over such rivulets. All of this culminated

in a gritty realism (or assembly) which betokened one moment in silent cinema: where the *matinee idol* knows extreme stress. Moreover, his perfectly proportioned white teeth ground together like hack-saw blades misfiring in a Midlands' machine. Would Mister Chin, the Brummagem historian, be interested in any of this at all? Who can tell? Yet words do eventually form themselves from between his lips --- despite having a tendency to fail him at crucial junctures. They stain the silence after those pictograms a la Beckett's oeuvre. For won't such a semiotic distill nothing but loss under grease-paint's shadow and slicked down Brylcreem? "Great Scott!", he limbers over some desultory closure or other. "What can you mean by such a transvaluation of all values? Or – in terms of a gorge's upright fissures – whatever may be welling up within a breast here? Look my duck, perchance, at the latitude of your facial teeth!" +

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

THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER WON'T BUY A SOUL! (29)

In this instant of grandeur a poster-paint reflex hinders our grasp – at least as it pertains to facts which are reflected at a diamond's point. These testify to a magenta filibuster that delineates one caged space in which pink and purple are rendered together. It knows no other interest and expects no mercy whatsoever... if we might paraphrase the rock band *Nazareth* of yesteryear. Nonetheless, Scaramouch Ruby looks to have become utterly transformed in a matter of moments: in that her flesh-tone has changed to dark blue when set against the violent red of her teeth and hair. *Au contraire*, the plunging scarlet evening-dress

contrasts at this instant with her piled-up or *buffo* orange tresses. Various jewels also bedizen this 'big-hair' in folds of makebelieve or a plastic anthem... whilst a spectrum of bat's-wing continues to cascade from her naked side. Abel Cummings can only gag *avec* displeasure when faced with this devilish surd. He tumbles backwards after a fashion that's broken, alone and incapable of complete self-mastery. He starts to residually gibber like a senilitic dotard in an old people's home... necessarily so. At the heart of a fountain of blood --- like in revolutionary Iran --- a green speck then disappears midst this welter. It knows that a nameless spawn breeds in one shadowy crypt!

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

ARMAGEDDON FOR ONE (30)

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

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

THE END