WOODEN

TEETH
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence! Intelligence!
I've looked everywhere - but I can't find yours
Where is your intelligence?!

Oh, didn't you know?
It's been on exhibition for years - since High School
at the Binet Gallery
open every day
gray matter in a plexiglass case
on display
just one standard deviation above Mean Avenue

Are you sure I couldn't come by it somewhere
in the area between 85th and 90th?

Well,
That's possible
It may have been moved.

W.M. Turner

Amy Gould
"G St."

They move in
and out.

And while they are here
we live
across the hall,
up the stairs,
in the basement,
side by side.

So different,
adults,
throwing dice,
creating triangles;
seeking space,
confused
by all paintings,
literary portraits,
soft pastels,
stolen cookies.

Cakes, cookies, who cares;
Someone'll bake another,
Someone'll love another,
in Toronto or Thailand
or Providence.

Pushed and shoved,
I am here.

Putting out,
letting in,
holding on.  Linda Hellner

TERMITE (worker)

Biting the first fibers
face in the uneven wood
with a billion previous holes.

Head digging
waist deep
feet folding in last

Light gone-
blocked by a wingless body
No room to about-face
No instinct but to go forward
Blind-
in darkness

Knocked - pushed
Knocking - pushing

Tunnels turned & never turned

Teeth gnawing
set in steel-like jaws;
seemingly beyond control

Fearing the last bite
that opens the path
into its resting light

W.M. Turner

THE CHESS GAME

The board is polished
Squares of wood
Light and dark

The sun glints
On the far side

He moves only the pawns
Forward in two
Then one and one and
One

Or maybe the horse
From its night square
It charges out
In its angles

The king is still
Guarded
It has never been moved
Or (I was not there)
It has been moved
Back

The queen's place
Beside him
Is empty
The square is stained
It looks like blood

The sun glints
On the far side

P.K. Gansel
THE ADVENTURE OF JOSEPH PORNODEOS

Not asleep, exactly. Certainly not what you'd call awake. Some lingering, quarter-state. Eyes shut, the body could still find its way around. Loose flesh and slack pajamas; he leans flatfaced at the window. Is he seeing it, any of it?

Ilse, dog, squats and delivers against Elm, tree, three hard steaming dog-biscuits. It is three in the morning in Porter Street.

Having left all speculation, he simply turns from the window and makes for Bed. Bed, he finds, warmed and paneled and nobbed, is the greatest possible good. If everyone, he wishes, could be so Bedded. Warmththinking, noshinking, he smiles.

Holiday, he thinking, no me here now, not even. But no, how? Always words. Or thoughts even: warm, soft, close, I. Would but can't stop; ever. No sleep tonight. Or is this sleep? Dreaming now? No. N... No. Never in dreams no.

Chin against knees, he hears the buzzing in the walls in his head.

Business.

Hears the plumbing rumble through the pit of his stomach.

Humble mummers.

Hears—what's this?

"LOOK!"

Someone screaming a single syllable in his head, no dream this. It goes on and on and on, feelingly.

"LOOK!"

Awake, awake now. Awake. My god, what is this? I heard that, I heard, what? I-

"LOOK!"

Look at—what—Oh good god.

"LOOK!"

Good god.

"LOOK!"

Opening the eyes in his soul, he saw it, all of it.

Nathan Athols was washing the feet of the dead when his employer came down to the workroom.

"You could be he," said Nathan, indicating the deceased.

"Ah..."

"In fact, I'm seen better."

"Last night."

"Your eyes are black and blue. Blood down there under the flesh. Ruined capillaries."

Shuddering, sighing, he fled the workroom, taking no more than a few seconds in the mirrored chrome of one of the machines to convince himself that the damage wasn't fatal. He jogged the chrome deftly.

Nathan Athols went back to washing the feet of the dead. Joseph heard the sponge slapping the metal table, water dripping from the feet of the dead into Nathan Athols' polished bowl. There was slapping, and there was dripping. It went on.

Joseph wanted to scream. He sprang on Nathan Athols, grabbed the sponge and tore it in pieces. He seized the polished bowl and winged it across the workroom scattering warm water and Lysol on walls, apparatus, floor tiles.

"What's this?" wondered Nathan Athols. Whitecoated, he squared off in front of Joseph, who stood staring at his wetted hands.

"Sorry," Joseph muttered and then staggered away, Nathan Athols picked up the polished bowl and the mutilated sponge. He crossed the room to a sink and drew more warm water.

"Be careful," he said to Joseph. "You'll wake Mrs. Williams."

Joseph regarded the dead.

"Mrs. Williams," he said, and with thumb and ringfinger flicked a speck of lint from a limp, pale, dead pop.

Mrs. Williams awoke at the touch.

She opened her noddeed eyes, rolled into a frightened squat, wailing quite like a newborn.

"Look here," Nathan Athols said to his employer.

"You've resurrected the lady."

"Oh," said Joseph, "oh..."

In the next three weeks, Joseph Pornodeos resurrected forty-seven more people.

...I know that you have for some time desired that I do something about the leaking plumbing in this our house. All the heart-to-heart talks in the dead of night, the fits of tears and screaming, the small acts of violence and of retribution (including the mutilation of the cat), which was perhaps a bit beyond the bounds of decorum, the pouring of the dishes and buckets in which you had so ingeniously collected the leakage over my head as I tried to sleep, the anonymous telephone calls to the Department of Health—I have not been oblivious to any of this.

Let me assure you in all sincerity that I am aware of the gravity of the problem and shall do, and Indeed am doing, everything within my modest abilities to correct it.

I have no intention of calling a plumber.

...At first, Joseph Pornodeos would not talk to the men from the media. He was adamant about barring them from the funeral home, but couldn't keep them from camping out across the street.

Four wire services, two news magazines, three networks, and a free-lance group bought out the block of Porter Street facing Joseph Pornodeos' property. Cameras with telescopic lenses were fixed in the windows. Shotgun mikes were aimed at the funeral home. Three trailers filled with electronic gear arrived. Five direct phone lines were installed. A small microwave transmitting tower was erected on the tallest building in the block.

Joseph locked his doors, boarded up his windows, called the local police and declared himself under siege. He asked that the press be cleared from the block. The police told him that he should not talk to the press, because he was under investigation. Joseph despaired.

"You'd better get out while you can," Joseph told Nathan Athols.

"I'll stay, thank you," Joseph finished nailing the back door shut. "This could take some time."

"I have time."

Joseph shrugged.

... (continued on next page)
As it developed, it was Nathan Athols who spoke to the men from the media. He came out twice a week and answered questions for fifteen minutes, while Joseph peered out through a sash hole in a third floor window. It was like this.

"Have there been any more miracles?"
"No."
"How many has he raised from the dead?"
"Forty-seven."
"Will he try again?"
"I don't know."
"How does he do it?"
"I don't know."
"Does he know?"
"I don't know."
"He just touches them and they come back?"
"That's right."
"Why won't he come out?"
"I don't know."
"What's his religious affiliation?"
"Methodist."
"I thought he was Eastern Orthodox."
"No."
"Has he seen God?"
"Yes."
"Is it true he's been offered fifty million dollars by a group of Saudi Arabian businessmen?"
"Yes."
"Has he been in contact with the President?"
"Yes."
"Does he really have a halo over his head?"
"Yes."
"How many colors?"
"Six."

Lee Pierre Fouillon

The situation, you tell me, has worsened considerably. I have reviewed your urgent dispatches from the basement, advising me that the water has now reached the third stair from the top. I have given close attention to the communications from the Department of Public Works, which assert that our account is in arrears in the amount of $456.93 for water drawn from the municipal supplies. I have noted (but not as yet confirmed) your report that there are four dead rats floating in the courtyard behind our building.

Believe me, all this evidence does not fail to leave the most profound impression on my sensibilities. We are indeed, as you suggest, in peril of imminent inundation. What is more, I have concluded through my own speculations that the effect of the waters currently occupying the basement on the foundation of this dwelling may add a second danger, that of momentary live burial, to our present worries.

I suggest you leave.

"LOOK!"

It came on him even in the road. As hard as he tried, it was out of his hands. Lying in the dry grass on the edge of some interstate, staring with mad eyes at the moon, it flashed again in front of his soul.

"LOOK!" Joseph Pornodeos got on his feet and gathered up his shaking body.

"I don't want to look, he said. "Take it elsewhere."

"LOOK!"

"No."

"LOOK!"

"NO!"

One night, after several months of siege, Joseph Pornodeos finally left the house on Porter Street. It happened in this way.

Very late one evening, about that time when the very last light dies out in the sky and the birds huddle on the telephone wires, a panel truck stopped in Porter Street. The sky was like a clear dark pool, and there were many stars but no moon. Three men in grey coveralls got out of the panel truck. They wore leather aprons in which were hung hard tools, like hammers and saws and screwdrivers. The streetlights came on just as the men stepped down from the truck.

Joseph Pornodeos stood at his sash hole and watched the three men in aprons. One of them turned around and waved up at him. Meanwhile the other two opened the doors in the back of the panel truck and began to unload it. The men in coveralls were unloading large pieces of lumber. Joseph could see them shining pale in the lamplight.

Thereupon, without a second's hesitation, Joseph Pornodeos ran downstairs, applied a crowbar to the back door, pulled on a heavy coat, and took to the road.

It is very dark now. It is dry here, but I can hear the water. I suspect that there isn't much time left. It is dark in here. I wonder if you will find this at all.

Ah. The carpet seems a little damp there. Is that water coming in under the door? One could, I suppose, move upstairs. But what would be the point? Purely rhetorical question. One is alive here, now, in this moment. And in a long series of past moments, through the good graces of memory. What more is there to concern oneself with? If it wants to happen, let it.

Very dark.

Joseph Pornodeos rolled over in a field of overgrown ryegrass. The white sun burned glassily in a cold blue skyvault. The ground under him was warm and lively. A vigorous breeze blew across the open field, but Joseph wasn't cold. His stomach was dry and flat, but he didn't feel weak.

He knew two things: That no voice would ever scream in his head again; That he would live for a very long time.

Stuart Moulthrop
SCAR
(An isolated rock in the sea)
Whale rolls of black slick sea
undulating into darkness beyond
the moon’s barren light!
Starry pinpoints reaching down the sky

Scar gray
and forgotten by land
breaking the moving surface:
the waves slapping
filling cold fissures
with pale trickling silver
It bays its silence
stumbling into the third wave

& waits-

primordial shark tooth
upturned in the ocean
for passengers
lunging on the tide

W.M. Turner
BROWN FALL

Brown fall is the time for love
when Canadian fronts blow icy calls
against the wrappings of lovers
chilling air overflows their shoulders
painting damp Van Gogh curls on their faces
two bodies join ceasing to shiver

Invading waves - towering breeze
throwing the heads of balding trees
they come to stir the hollows
between empty buildings & between
the dusty cracks of window frames

Street's crisp earth stars
crackling underfoot
Fall's brittle rain of leaves
rustling sea of brown quilt
layered on the green grass
& crowding under leaning shrubs

On tarnished silver days
Gray facades blend with the sky
I walk down along the water's railing
worn soles gritting wet pavement
-cold rains dripping from umbrella veins-
& I alone beneath

Tweed & empty is my life
A stiff brooding Baron is my part
when I am surrounded by fall's battlements
without a lover's heart

Below-
a child's rubber ball
surrounded by crushed cups, bark,
& dead fish
licks its cracked red cheeks
against the channel wall.

Squirrels across the tilted sidewalk
stock their nests
to meet the sleep of coming winter
Tin cans clank sharp notes to the curb
Newspapers crab-walk vacant lots
clinging under cars to stillled tires

Night falls-
throwing its seamless velvet
puckering beyond the horizon
Street lamps stand
helmeted in russet haloes
& night sways
like the body of a day maid
on the six o'clock train home

W.M. Turner

MEMORY

He takes my puppy outside-dragging it down the back steps. The yard is dark. Kitchen light outlines the sidewalk, the tree, the case of beer for a party. He makes a big shadow. The dog’s shadow quivers.

My dog is bad...but Mark threw it down the basement stairs. I know you have to teach it not to bite, but not like that...

He keeps hitting and hitting the dog’s head against the edge of the box. It must hurt worse than falling down. He keeps hitting it. It’s not crying anymore. There is blood on the box.

It was trying to tell Mark not to throw it down the stairs. Mark didn’t even get hit hard—there’s not any blood on him. YOU'RE GOING TO KILL IT!

She runs down the steps, pushes him away. “Son of a bitch” she says, “you goddamn son of a bitch—you didn’t have to do that!” She wraps the dog in a towel, makes him bring the car to the alley, says “What will we tell the vet?” She sends me to Ecky’s house.

Stop patting me on the head. But I’m not crying for my dog. Why did he do it? After there was all the blood, why did he keep hurting it? What’s wrong with him?

Becky’s mother keeps telling me not to worry, not to worry—the dog will be better. She wants me to stop asking questions. So I stop.

Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been a week since my last confession. He almost killed my puppy—he didn’t have to do it that way. I hate him and I know that’s wrong.

The priest tells me not to be silly. He says my father got carried away and didn’t know what he was doing. My pain is to say the rosary and then to go home and tell him I love him. The priest says I’ll get over it.

Why don’t they listen? There’s something wrong, I know. I throw the beads away.

Cynthia Zander

Untitled

Steely-eyed, she gazes across
barren fields, just visible in
morning grayness,
barbed wire strands wind through
unbroken pasture across from
a white farmhouse.
Nothing else is alive.

Tim Dave
Daddy,
yesterday you walked around my office
and screamed at me again.
You wore another man’s face but I knew
you were there.
I found you underneath his anger.
I wanted to scream back, “Daddy,
I know you’re in there. Stop doing this to me.”
But I didn’t.
It would be too easy to catch you
wearing that man as your mask.
I need to find you in your own face
to make you stop haunting me.
I don’t know when you’re going to appear next.
And, Daddy, I’m afraid.

Cynthia Zander

friday afternoon

a chance
to talk
didn’t matter i hardly know you
face moves, skin


 crankles; eyes speak how
good it feels to break this wretched
pace
of anonymity.

must find my friend
to flood with overflowing words
where are you, the one that here still is left for me
i hurry from the elevator but
but no one familiar, not on five,
not on four.

reluctant
i close my door,
not so superior like her
just so my music will stay
inside
and not disturb the others.

why
aren’t
quite enough
alone

Linda Hallier

LEAVES

leaves shiver at open window
outside crickets and cars
harmonize
sound fills empty morning
she remembers other nights

sidewalk cool
mad summer around
she walks
untill dawn
trying to touch
her death
dark, cool comfort
surrounds her
the night city a playground
she walks
and writes songs
to accompany the leaves:

blackness flutters
insects cry
weaving light
the stars pass by

she walks past the dinner
carafes in the window
ready for morning
catch lamplight
in their bright water

one night she sees
only water
volatile without glass
swirling around her
mild yet insistent
she is the riverbed
eroding
so slowly changing
she becomes water and
leaves her bones
to catch moonlight

Cynthia Zander
Ocean City, at Night

doesn’t sleep
Oh sure it settles down a bit
smoking and drinking
in boardwalk bars and hotel lobbies
’til it’s time for breakfast

You wander out on the boardwalk
up past Change 3,
where the sea is a little closer
and the arcade lights don’t quite reach
A cool breeze blowing out of the north
is playing with the fringe on your cut-offs

Dawn the beach
the night-crews have come out
By arc-light
they pilot great machines
to suck up tourist trash
and pack the sand against the next tide’s assault

Stone piers
have been erected
jabbing out into the sea
to try and hold the place together
The sea rages at them
while the sand creeps away from foundations
licking at the boardwalk posts

The night seems denied
by the artificial daylight flashing across the beach
but it ends at the pounding surf
Past that is only an
infinite black

You let your mind drift out
trying to find that faint line
that separates sea and sky
and the black swallows you up
folds you in~
Far behind the city lies
a narrow band of light
against a massive surging dark
the bridges to the mainland
like silver chains
and it’s cold
so damn cold
A breeze blowing out of the north
is playing with the fringe on your cut-offs
Your hands white-knuckled
gripping the splinter-smooth boardwalk rail
You turn and head for the nearest bar
close and warm
to wait for morning

apart (warm)

tall pines whispering in a dry
wind, blowing snow to fill the
thin crisp air that falls
quietly
about me.

my lonely footprints
fleeting like the gray light within
tumbling clouds
about to blanket,
smoother, with softness cold.

a stronger gust
welcomes dark, making blackness
above (abound),
dancing in swells like satin falling
solitary and silent-
but for a muffled breath
on a warm scarf.

Bruce Marton

WHAT BRINGS PIGEONS TO CHURCH STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

In the cold of winter they are stiff,
molded into the deep window sill corners
of old castle-like homes.
The pones are radiant and are saying
quietly we live
These fragile birds gather there
and never leave.

Though I’ve seen them
on the boardwalk in Atlantic City
where they cluster in the broken rooms above
the shops, eating decay and breathing salt.
On a fishing pier I saw two boys
with their fishing knives, lying on the planks,
stabbing between the wooden boards
the imprisoned birds which had built their nest
in the rafters beneath.
The pigeons fluttered frantically, breaking wings
but they were trapped, the blood matted
to their numbed bodies.

The boys left the birds crying
and I can see them now,
still on the deep sills of church windows
with radiant holy scenes behind them.

Carol Deektor

Scott Monahan
CHASING YOUR TAIL IN ORDER TO FIND IT
It's important to know what you are--
to take your right arm
and see if it fits where your left one is.
But I've tried it before
and I usually just end up turning around.
Carol Deakter

4:00 A.M.
Sacred sleep
suddenly interrupted,
Blurry sounds yank
me from this
state of solitude.
I turn and toss,
side to stomach;
shift sheets,
scramble blindly
for a pillow from the floor.
Seek refuge-
Slap it over head.
Still unsure
what beneath my window
shrieks.
The motor answers,
screams excitedly,
Applies momentum,
lifts the dirty metal dumpster-
Turns it over
and
drops
s-l-o-w-l-y
one-by-one-
bottles and boxes,
cartons and cans,
while Coca-Cola and Columbus
rest quietly, far from here,
in commuters' stomachs.
I cringe while
out they fall down
into churning energy,
Grind hard, faster
Crush.
Crunch solids sounds
harsh, grueling
gruesome.
Outside, under amber shadows
blue collar workers
shout their animosity
to the intellectual community.
Interrupt startled screams
somewhere there.
If here how can I sleep
anymore...again.
Noise streaks
through my dreams,
Stolen now,
Awake
Hours lost
Head
aches
Eyes wet,
Whimper.
Linda Haller

Susan Ritchman
Good Hair favored and was favored by his father
In a time when being hair was being favored
He hadn't asked for either being born had left him
Marked along his outside in visible sign
The contribution of both his fathers' worlds and his mothers'
Cloak of many colors coated him sealing off
The impertinence of tragedians but not of his brothers
Who considered it a sin everybody loved Good Hair
But not his brothers who could not fit his fortune
To theirs and wondered why he played at Indian chief
African king Mexican cowboy everything
But what he was since what he was
Was why he was so
Favored in spite of all he hadn't asked
For yet he played the part accepted the ashen gift
And handed nothing round to them
Three times a seventh son he grew and as he grew
More freely loaded to log it over all till taking
Good Hair in hand his brothers pulled his prideful thing
Out from the house into the field and drawing him cross a preaching stone
Hacked it off

Good Hair steamed relaxed to winter's waving iron
Enjoying the way he feathered into his lover's ear
Curled to the pistil in her ear
Grinding in red collars to Da-Wop Da-Wop
While Mama and her white lights were out
And stiff knee slow-drag held sway Good Hair burned
Dripping the dye into her lady's mouth she twisted
And chewed and spit it out as bills and babies
All repeating Good Hair's heady infusion
Become a raggedy act
Corked upon his coxing brain and ran him out
Of slap creased satin and stingy brim and white silk socks
Good Hair's confessions were out of stock and himself
Unshelved the promise breach'd and fugitive
Good Hair was lambent on the city's cracking skull
An unfurrowed mule straining at the bottleneck
Curls falling beneath the rain's polluted do-rag
Dripping into rolled up high water slacks
Couldn't drown the man who carried in his cups
Four roses and a fifth for balm
Good Hair was revolting
(1968)

Good Hair thinning and out of style had no use
For invention picks after all he'd had his
Natural for ten years inadvertently
Forked over in the absence of anointing oil
Taken straight for want of even straining bread
Good Hair was cornered surviving squeeze
Immunized against prevailing trends biding his time
Till youth approached
Dungareed
Militant and disarming they cut a swath
Combed through the folk for salvageable soul
Passed up Good Hair stuffing himself into surplus
Reefer falling into the intersection anxious
To sell a day's labor or lacking that
Beggary securing change his self-effacement repelled
Spare he wheeled unsure spilling out
Upon his own passing impervious kind spoke Good Hair
"Dirty Britches! You can't speak? You ain't worth the wiping
Anyway, I've killed at least one white man more than you;
Even if it was only me, You ain't doing nothing for me to learn.
I am the Blues! Come see about me!"

(1978)

Good Hair in his element at last
Briefly waves the third finger and returns to drowning
No one cares dancing as his discs slip back beneath the surface
His one beat samba goes better beneath
They come they look they leave him there
His relentless improvisation dragging him down
Under the staid sands of the quickening motive
No one dares be about Good Hair
But all take up his floating mane
Lining their heads with his hoary wares
Brotherly homage to the self-diminshed mind
Looks no where for cause or corollary
Prances to unchanging count
Minces the meat of history
The long playing revolutions wear the needle down
The jockey changes but the rhythm remains
Sterile like gargling Good Hair whirling round
In whitening esophageal death of his own kind
Kindly trampling this last evacuee whose
Head is all that holds them up the floor skin waxes
Rolls into the exit light dancing away with Good Hair's dancing yeah

A. L.
PANE
(Inspired by the statistics on the annual number of rapes)

Pristine sheet
Clear pane
Flashing tip
over smooth tip
Airless slow motions
down a dark mind shaft

Striking at bottom
Noiseless
Leaping, exploding
up & out
Splintering bits
spinning, pirouetting
A folded ice skater
All blurring
All white
blades of light
Chunks of shapes
-variations on the rectangular-
only jagged
rumbling
Flaring spikes of S.O.S.

The body-
a mouth paralyzed shut
In a stroke of pressurized silence
Hair blood matted to the brain
never to be untangled by the mind

With time wounds crust over, scabs fall away
but chips of glass make a deformed pane
Sharpened trust grotesque under the footsteps of strangers
Winds now peel back at the window sill
Sentinel sheets of glass restrain weak and still bedroom atmospheres
Shredded shadows cast from the torso of bars
stand on the floor, ripple pale sheets & claw the walls-
protecting a scarred mind crouched behind the gaze of
fragile eyes.

W.M. Turner

THIS STOCKING CAP

...which so recently restrained
your naked thigh
snagging my caress
now oppresses your napping hair
drawing it into an abstraction
you would wish
for morning

And there is something at once strange to me in this
nightly rite you have revived
from childhood for reasons
more obscure than your scalp
something synthetic in the way
you have stretched my intentions
capped and captured
to your own ends
just when I had you
so near at hand

A.L.

They cleaned your room.
Moved
everything
out.
Dust dropped,
mopped floors,
scrubbed rug,
stirred particles-
ions that have settled space...

Yours
and Mine,
those that merged-
Disturbed,
Deodorized;
As if your life
there
was contaminating.

Linda Heller
THE DAY BEFORE

Did you have a red dress on
Pressed
From school-house to yard and treed
Pout hovering irrevocably above
Did it tangle in the limbs
Rising winded up past knees
Skinned ashless from winter’s
Burning release
In time to counter-evolve
From fun not necessity
Fittest lover over vanquished town
The tree’s caress survived
Assuming yourself leafward
Unsprung energy agelessly prompting
You
Up from mathered tongues into
Bowerred solitude and aery reflection

"Why put a dress on Miss Badness?"

To draw one eye off course
From that passing unbeaten boy
Below who saw beyond drawers
Into your red-tinged haven
Wandering from sidewalk soliloquy
Down to dusk
If you might ever
Even if only nearly to him
Fall

THE DAY AFTER

Will you have a red dress on when
Laid up in the deepest shore
Your limbs disseyed and trimmed
This sand sprite
Brusquely dusted from sleep!
Conduct my buried inquiry into
The percussionist waving
Drunkenly down the beach
Bleeding from your fabric my age
Will you girlishly espy my castled form
Sun melting through glass to smoke
And shoveling bared feet into your approach
Bucket me free from cabbaging grace
Where my burrowing gaze havens into your tinge
Newly abrasive upon my tan
Reddening into sight will you
Upon an emergent mountain of shoulder tap to see
If I am
In there
Will you ask......But then
I hear so many things seeping through
My slumbering shell and all is
Sanded down to this
"Will you come home and live"
With me
Marjorie

Marjorie was in a very snappy mood. She picked ripe mint from the table bowl and plucked them into her mouth, laughing, spinning, and swirling away, glancing into the round-faced mirrors to catch her image. Hands grasped to catch her and hold her, but she darted, delighted, and hid under the end table. She whimpered, wondered where she would get out, reached her hand out to grab a spilled mint. Then she shrugged her shoulders, joined her mates, and engaged in lively conversation (and a few kisses snick behind the large potted palm) far into the morning. One of her mates told her that she was certainly in a fair mood that night and Marjorie rolled her eyes, smiled sweetly, and kissed her. Her companions had various names. One was Jeannette and Marjorie had never kissed her anywhere but on the nose, for Jeannette was French. Michel was French also, but Marjorie never kissed him, not even on the ear, for he preferred other company. He came anyway and brought his German boys, but Marjorie did not know them. Except one. His name was John (a strange name for a German, she thought) and he leered at Michel so perfectly that Marjorie wanted to pull him up and tug his hair. Instead she pinched him when he looked at her and tickled his moustache when he glanced away. John thought Marjorie very impetuous and ignored her, but his moustache was getting very itchy. It made him sneeze to be tickled so, and he worried that his nose might become too red to be to Michel's liking. But Michel admired a red nose, since his had never gotten anything but brown, and he trooped around a crowd of sunburned Dutch boys on Thursdays. Marjorie did not know about the Dutch boys. She despised them. When she had been very small, a Dutch boy had jeeringly stuck her finger in a dike and it had taken the doctors weeks to get her finger out; it had grown so fat from Dutch candles. Marjorie had hated the Dutch from then. Michel loved them anyway and pinched their fat little cheeks when nobody was looking. But the Dutch were not there this night; it was a Friday.

"But now it is Saturday morning!" cried Marjorie, standing up and pouring a glass of gin on Jeannette's head. Jeannette laughed and grabbed for Marjorie's long, blond hair (she was an American,) Marjorie swatted her hand away, kissed her on the nose, and announced: "We're all going to my house! You two, Jeannette." The Germans all cheered, for they had heard of Marjorie's house. Jeannette blushed a deep purple.

Marjorie's house was a wonder house. It was made of glass on the outside and green vinyl on the inside. All the furniture, except that in Marjorie's room, was real leather, dyed a deep pink. Marjorie's room was in ecstatic blue, with silver clouds hung beneath the fluorescent lights. The silver clouds reflected Marjorie's every move in the room. Every man that had been in her room loved it; she didn't allow women to come into it, with the exception of her Bosque maid, Gabrona. Gabrona was a pretty young girl of twelve and loved to lounge on Marjorie's double, king-sized bed with the cotton pillows on warm afternoons and cool mornings.

Marjorie called her collection of horse-drawn carriages into the restaurant to take her mates to her home. Marjorie's horses, who had been dyed purple at birth, strutted into the restaurant. The employees had barely time to gasp at the sight of purple horses drawing carriages, before those violet beasts had sucked Marjorie and the rest into the bellies of their cars, and pranced back into the early morning.

The trip to Marjorie's house was rapid, although of quite a long distance, for on this day these violet wonders had been taught to fly. "Sure beats chartering a plane!" Marjorie would cry at times of extreme smugness. Marjorie owned the only such animals in the world. It was true, Marjorie would readily admit, that a family in Kansas had taught their horses to fly, but on fuel costs; but, Marjorie would counter their horses are of a plain brown color and large-hoofed farm beasts to boot. Then she would give a whoop, and jump up and down in circles. She was certainly proud of those purple horses.

As they arrived at Marjorie's house, the German boys were shocked to hear loud, bursting noises. They stuck their heads out of the carriages and saw pink, green and white sparks lighting up the sky. The carriages pulsed to a stop in front of the immense glass house and the German boys watched Marjorie jump down from the top of the first carriage, whooping and screaming. "More! More!

(continued on next page)
At the top of the stairs, Jeannette stopped, dragging Marjorie too, and screamed down at the hordes of naked bodies. "You men are disgusting, disgusting, disgusting! All men are disgusting! I hate you all! Vivent les femmes!" Then, panting, she pulled Marjorie by the waist. But Marjorie could not move. She had never heard Jeannette speak before, much less scream. Her mouth hung open as she looked at the scene and thought about Jeannette. Suddenly, she felt Jeannette pulling her and turned to look at her. Jeannette's eyes were wild and her face bright crimson. Marjorie stared at her. Then she leaned over and kissed her for the first time on the mouth and led her down the hall. Marjorie opened the door to her room and ushered Jeannette in silently. Gabrona, who had been spread out on the bed, jumped up and ran to get her clothes. Then, turning, she saw Jeannette walk in. Gabrona opened her mouth and eyes as wide as they could go, then shifted her shocked face from Jeannette to Marjorie.

"Marjorie! What do you do? You let another female into this room? What?" Gabrona continued to stare at Marjorie while Jeannette sat down on the bed. Marjorie looked at Gabrona, seeming to see her for the first time, and smiled.

"Gabrona, Jeannette will be living here. You may leave now. Be careful of going downstairs. There are awful goings-on down there." Then Marjorie gave a great whoop. She picked up a blue chair, held it above her head, and ran up and down the length of the room crashing into a million pieces the silver clouds that hung there. Then, with an even greater whoop, she threw the chair through the bedroom wall. She and Jeannette burst into screaming laughter at the crash, and Gabrona shook out the back door.

Pamela Allergott
The Six Persons of the Dialogue:
Eugenius - a natural critic
Thrasymachus - a boisterous young man who cannot overcome inertia
Diotima - a woman of considerable merit, whom Eugenius considers his rival
Two Clowns, Dum and Dee - modern students
Demogorgon - a dabbler in chaos

Demogorgon: "Buzz, buzz, buzz."
Dum: Shakespeare!
Diota: Macbeth, Act IV, scene iii. The line number I forget.
Thrasymachus: Bah.
Demogorgon: I submit to you that this line is the epitome of Shakespeare's art.
Eugenius: "Confusion now hath made his masterpiece."
Demogorgon: I submit to you that this line is the epitome of English literature.
Diota: Uh. Thrasymachus: Your face is on backwards.
Demogorgon: I submit to you that this line is the epitome of western art.
Eugenius: Your reason, sir, your reason!
Demogorgon: (spreading his hands upon the air) I leave the proof to the company.
Thrasymachus: That figures.
Dum: Well, to me it's sort of as if Shakespeare means that we're supposed to see the characters as bees. You know, the world is a beehive. That sort of thing.
Dum: The words "buzz, buzz, buzz" indicate the disharmony of the cosmos as evidenced by the degeneration of the normally harmonious mosaicidian into the harsh and offensive, not to mention dull and repetitive, sound of the inanimate in motion, as in the noise of household electrical appliances.
Thrasymachus: Bugs and electric toothbrushes.
Demogorgon: But my case is proved: So much in so little. What more can one ask from art?
Eugenius: Tomorrow the scholars will discover a last variant of Macbeth, in the authentic hand of the Bard. In it the Thane of Cawdor holds to his resolution at the end of the first act not to kill the King. He puts his life to death for treason and lives a long and happy life in loyal service to his monarch. The ensuing acts present delightful tableaux of quiet domesticity.
Diota: Oh come now.
Eugenius: What interests me is the kind of society which would put such a play on the stage.
Thrasymachus: It isn't a "dagger of the mind," you know. Lady Macbeth is dangling the little booger from a balcony.
Demogorgon: The day after tomorrow the scholars will discover a second last variant of Macbeth, similarly genuine. In it Macbeth kills the King, is driven instantly mad, and cuts the throat of everyone who comes in front of him (Banquo, Macduff, Lady M, pages, dogs, etcetera). Curtain on Macbeth, solus in the empty castle.
Eugenius: Art is greater than life. Yes or no?
Dum: Without life there can't be any art, therefore--
Dum: Damned fly.
Thrasymachus: There is no such thing as art. Only neater forms of masturbation--I'll kill the blasted thing.
Diota: It's a ridiculous question. Like asking what is the utility of food--Ugh, it's on my head.
Demogorgon: I reject the question as well. If all things have the same innate value, then nothing has any value--now it's on me.
Eugenius: You're all wrong. There's no such thing as life. Just art. (The fly settles on Eugenius' head and dies)
Demogorgon: Tell us, you well-born man, what is the nature of the poet?
Eugenius: Ask Thrasymachus. He has the soul of a poet.
Thrasymachus: And I won't part of it.
Demogorgon: Whose soul would you have instead? A hero's?

Thrasymachus: Words don't build cities, carve black roads through the jungle, rise screaming on the wind, spit in the face of nature. Men do that.
Eugenius: What I'd tell you
Demogorgon: I see. You want the soul of a man.
Thrasymachus: (pointedly) Bite through the bone-locks and vomit out the steaming marrow. Run red war across your backyard. Waken you to torch-throw at burning morning.
Demogorgon: By all means. Stay a poet.
Thrasymachus: Those that can't do, sing. I eat your poetry.
Eugenius: And so art becomes life.
Demogorgon: There once was a man who spent his life scribbling away. Scribble, scribble, he scribbled. And scribble, scribble, scribble.
Dum: Some of the writers most highly respected in later years are, curiously enough, held in absolute scorn by their own ages. Thomas Hardy comes immediately to mind, or D.H. Lawrence to a lesser extent. There would seem to be a tentative correlation with a negative social conception peculiar to writers of a given temperament. A stinging, as of the gadfly, which can only be appreciated in the more generous context of--

Thrasymachus: (belching sonorously) History.
Eugenius: I have it! I have it! Charles Dickens.
Demogorgon: Scribble, scribble. Writing books doesn't change society, does it?
Eugenius: Not right away. But it is important that certain things be said.
Dum: Take the case of Joyce.
Eugenius: Joyce is dead.
Dum: (singing) I dreamed I saw James Joyce last night, alive as you or me, "But Joyce," I said, "you're beastly dead."
"I never died," said he.
"The never died," said he.
Demogorgon: The unquiet spirit of the Master walks the night.
Dum: (rising to leave) Well, all very amusing, but I'm sleepy. Later, gentlemen.
Eugenius and Demogorgon: (rising at the same time)

Wait.

Diota: For what?
Eugenius: Until we settle the issue.
Thrasymachus: I wasn't aware that there was one.
Dum: What were we talking about anyway?
Dum: To return to the question of Joyce for a moment. If my--Damn! That fly is back.
Eugenius: I was about to make an assertion.
Demogorgon: And I was about to offer a refutation.
Thrasymachus: I was going to open another bottle. You might as well stay. (Diota sits down spectacularly.)
Eugenius: Assertion: That art is not only possible, but a more or less regular occurrence; further, that a science of art is possible; that one can, through the application of reason, learn how to move and shape the soul.
Diota: What?
Demogorgon: What?
Dum: Yes, by all means. It makes perfect sense.
Dum: Jesus, I've never heard anything as ridiculous.
Thrasymachus: Don't you think you've been just a triffey silly up here ever since?
Eugenius: Stipulated. But where is it decreed that all system is evil?
Dum: Oh come on. The idea of suffocation isn't dangerous in itself. It's the reality that turns you blue in the face. When you start imposing systems on everything you open the garden gate.
Thrasymachus: And in strolls the devil.
Demogorgon: Tell us, O well-born man, whose system you prefer, Father God's or Brother Bacon's?
Eugenius: Whichever works better.
Diota: Works? You were talking about art a few minutes ago.
Eugenius: Doesn't art work?
Demogorgon: Even if artist's frequently don't.
Diota: What do you mean?
Eugenius: Did you cry at Gone With the Wind?
Diota: Yes, So what?
Eugenius: Why?
Diotima: I don't know. It's melodrama. You cry over melodrama.
Eugenius: And how did you feel when you read Paradise Lost?
Diotima: Bored. I didn't cry once.
Eugenius: I submit you cried and were bored for definite reasons. To wit—you cried because you had put yourself in Vivian Leigh's hoopskirt and you fell asleep because of Milton's syntax.
Diotima: What?
Eugenius: Look at Milton. He is verminous with subordinate clauses. Why?
Diotima: I don't know—fashion, taste.
Eugenius: No, it's so the sense won't come clear until the end of the paragraph, after all the ordeal in between. Now, what does Milton want you to believe about history?
Diotima: All right. Milton's syntax imitates Milton's theory of history. How does that lead to a science of art?
Eugenius: I submit that Milton conditions you, the reader, to respond in a certain way. You believe that God will triumph at the end of history because Milton always triumphs at the end of his distended sentences.
Diotima: That's theory. Where's your science?
Eugenius: Voila—only needs to produce a calculus of response. A small infusion of measurement is all we need.
Diotima: Measurement!
Demagorgon: You'd fit us up with electrodes and read poetry at us?
Eugenius: Something like that.
Thrasymachus: I think you're really in over your head, buddy.
Eugenius: But just think of the returns! A more perfect poetry! To pierce the heart and soul of the reader with the maximum possible efficacy. Think of all the unpoetical lives out there, crying for improvement.
Diotima: He's clearly dithering.
Demagorgon: I find myself presiding over the dissolution of a fine mind.
Dum: Yes, I suppose it's all trash.
Dee: I think it's outrageously brilliant.
Thrasymachus: I am put in mind of the Dog Howlybursus, that Chaseth Its Own Tail.
Eugenius: I offer you the liberation of the poetical spirit! I offer you the revolution of the imagination! Dee: The dictatorship of aesthetics!
Eugenius: A great leap forward into the age of Life as Literature!
Diotima: Buzz.
Thrasymachus: Buzz.
Demagorgon: Buzz.

Stuart Moulthrop

HOMEOSTASIS IS NOT ENUFF
I am so fucking busy
I am so fucking busy
I am fucking busy
I am so fucking so am I
Busy so am I
Busy fucking so am I
Busy fucking so am I

David Goren
NEEDED YA SO BAD, BABY (WHY'D YA LET ME DOWN?)
(a non-traditional blues)

I sprayed mace
in your face
I sprayed lye
in your eye
I threw eggs
at your legs
and smeared pie
on your tie.
I crushed a pear
on your hair
Whipped rubber hose
cross your toes
I slopped for weeks
on your cheeks
and landed blows
to your nose.
I wanted to harm
your entire arm
I set out to wreck
every bit of your neck
I planned to cause pain
to pound in your brain
and to box your ears
till you cried bloody tears
Everything done
was such good fun
Every bit of this
was done in bliss
The entire play
gave me great joy
But I must confess
you look quite a mess
So I'm gonna leave ya, baby.
I'm gon' to New York City, goodbye.

Charles Dennis
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