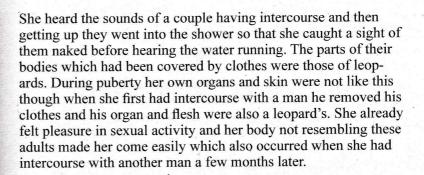
symptoms

slow reading club,

A SEQUENCE THE ANGEL OF DARK-NESS A HISTORY OF VIOLETS 10 14 THE SPACE OF LITERATURE **EXCESS, THE FACTORY** 19 PING 20 THE PASSIVE VAMPIRE 24 LES MÉDUSES N'ONT 28 PAS D'OREILLES



When sexual unions occurred between a brother and sister they weren't savages or primitive. She had that feeling about having intercourse with men whose organs were those of leopards and hers were not. Walking somewhere after one of these episodes she was excited by it though she might not have made this comparison if she'd actually had a brother. At least the woman she had seen in the shower had a leopard's parts. In these episodes when she'd had intercourse with a man he didn't remark about her not being like that. And if women had these characteristics which she didn't it made her come more easily with him.

She overheard another couple together and happened to see them as she had the couple in the shower. The nude part of the woman was like herself and the man had the leopard's parts so that she had the same reaction and came easily with someone, as she had with a sense of other women having a leopard's traits and herself isolated. The man with whom she had intercourse did not say anything that showed he had seen a difference in her and that made her react physically. Yet other women seemed to have a leopard's characteristics except for this one she'd seen.



Again it seemed that a man with whom she had intercourse was her brother and was ardent with her—but this would not have occurred to her had she really had a brother. Yet her feeling about him was also related to her seeing a woman who was pregnant and was the only one to be so. The woman not receiving attention or remarks on the pregnancy excited her; and went together with her sense of herself coming easily and yet not being pregnant until quite awhile after this time.

She also felt that she came easily feeling herself isolated when she was pregnant since she had the sense of other women having leopards' organs. They had previously had children. She was the only one who was pregnant and again she saw a couple together, the man with leopard's parts and the woman not having these characteristics.

Again she could come since her body was different from the adult who had some parts that were leopards, and having the sense of the women having had children earlier than her and their not having younger children now.

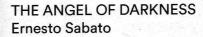
Her liking the other women to have had children when she was pregnant had to do with having them there and herself isolated—and yet people not saying much about or responding to the pregnancy. She thought of the man coming as when she caught a sight of the couple together—being able to come with someone a different time because she had a sense of a woman she'd seen having had her children earlier. There being a difference of age, even ten years, between a child she'd have and those the other women had had.

She happened to see some men who were undressed, as if they were boys—one of them had the features and organ of a leopard and the others did not. The difference in this case gave her the sense of them being boys, all of them rather than those who didn't have leopards' characteristics and this made her come easily with someone.

It was not a feeling of their being a younger age, since the men were her own age, and she found the men who lacked the leopard features to be as attractive as the one who had those features. She had the feeling of them as adults and her the same age as them, yet had the other feeling as well in order for her to come then.

She saw a couple who were entwined together and her feeling about them came from the earlier episode of seeing the men who were nude and having the sense of them being adolescent boys. Really she'd had the sense of the men she'd seen as being adults and herself the same age as them. The couple she watched were also around the same age as herself—the man being aware of someone else's presence after a time and coming. The woman pleased then though she had not come. She had intercourse with the man who had the features and organ of a leopard and whom she had first seen with the group of men who lacked these characteristics. The other men were attractive as he was. Yet having the sense of the difference between him and the others, she found it pleasant for him to come and for her not to come that time. The same thing occurred on another occasion with him.

She compared the man to plants, to the plants having a nervous aspect and being motionless. The man coming when he had the sense of being delayed in leaving—as if being slowed down had made him come and was exciting, and it was during the afternoon with people walking around. He was late and had to go somewhere, and came, with a feeling of delay and retarding—rather than out of nervousness.



translated by Andrew Hurley

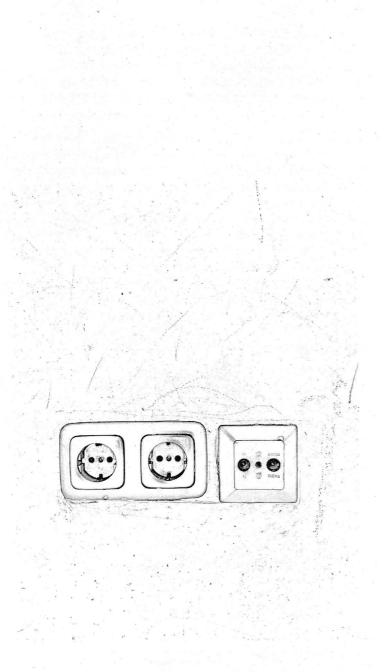
1974

A WINGED RAT.

Unable to make a movement or a sound (why call out? so people would come running in and see him and be so filled with disgust and revulsion that they clubbed him to death?), Sabato watched his feet turn slowly into the shriveled black claws of a rat. He felt no pain, not even the tingling that one might expect from the shriveling and drying out of the skin. But he did feel repugnance, and the repugnance grew stronger and stronger as the transformation continued: first his feet, then his legs, then, little by little, his torso. The revulsion grew even more terrible when the wings formed, perhaps because they were of flesh, and had no feathers. At last, his head. Until that moment he had followed the process with his sense of sight.

Although he had not had the courage to touch those bat's legs with his hands, which were still those of a human, he could not bear not to stare in horrified fascination at the gigantic rat's claws, covered with the wrinkled and leathery skin of some ancient mummy, that were now his. Then had come, as we have said, an even more striking and horrifying thing—the sprouting of the enormous cartilaginous wings. But when the process reached his head, and he began to feel his face stretch and lengthen into a muzzle, the hairs on his nose grow long and black, and his nose begin to sniff at the air about him, the horror of it was indescribable. He lay for a time paralyzed in his bed, where the transformation had come upon him by surprise.

He tried to stay calm, to invent some plan. The plan would have to include silence, because one cry, one scream would



bring people who would kill him without mercy, beat him to death with iron bars. There was, of course, the fragile hope that they would recognize in that nauseating creature the features of himself, especially as it was not logical that such a creature would have taken over his room, his bed, so inexplicably.

In the rat's head he now possessed, ideas were furiously boiling. He sat up, at last, and once upright he tried to calm himself, to take things as they were. With care, as though inside a body that did not belong to him (which in some way it did not), he shifted on the bed until he was in the position a human would take to get out of it: on the edge of the bed, that is, with his feet hanging downward. But he realized that his feet no longer reached the floor. From the contraction of his bones, he thought, he must have shrunk, though not all that much, really, and that would explain, too, why his skin was so wrinkled. He figured his new height at about four feet. He got up, and he looked a himself in the mirror.

He stood unmoving for a long time. And then he lost his composure—he wept in silence at the horror. There were people who kept rats in their houses—physiologists like Houssay, for instance, that experimented with the repulsive creatures. But he, Sabato, had always belonged to the class of people who are nauseated at the mere sight of a rat. It is easily imagined, then, what he felt as he stood before a four-foot-tall rat with cartilaginous wings and the wrinkled, black skin of those hideous creatures. And him *inside it*!

His eyes had grown weaker, and then he suddenly realized that the weakening of his vision was not some passing phenomenon, some product of his emotional state, but rather would actually in time grow worse, until he became totally blind. And he was proven correct: within a few seconds, though those seconds seemed centuries filled with nightmare and disaster, his sight faded to utter blackness. He stood paralyzed, though he felt his heart pounding in tu-

mult and his skin shivering with cold. Then, little by little, he groped his way toward the bed and sat down on the edge of it.

He stayed there a while. And then, unable to contain himself, forgetting his plan, all his rational precautions, he heard himself give a terrible, chilling cry of anguish, a cry for help. It was not a human cry, though; it was the shrill, stomach-turning shriek of a gigantic winged rat. People rushed in, naturally. But no one showed the least surprise. They asked him what had happened, if he felt ill, if he wanted a cup of tea.

It was obvious that no one noticed the change in him. He did not answer, did not speak a single word, thinking that they'd think he had gone mad. He simply decided to try to live somehow, keeping his secret, even in this horrendous state. Because that's the way the will to live is: unconditional and insatiable.

A HISTORY OF VIOLETS Marosa Di Giorgio

translated by Jeannine Marie Pitas

1965

XI

The gladiolus is a spear, its edge loaded with carnations, a knife of carnations. It jumps through the window, kneels on the table; it's vagrant flame, burning up our papers, our dresses. Mother swears that a dead man has risen; she mentions her father and mother and starts to cry.

The pink gladiolus opened up in our house.

But scare it, tell it to go.

That crazy lily is going to kill us.

XV

The mushrooms are born in silence; some of them are born in silence, others with a brief shriek, a soft thunder. Some are white, others pink; that one is gray and looks like a dove, the statue of a dove; still others are gold or purple. Each one bears—and this is what's awful—the initials of the corpse it comes from. I do not dare to eat them; that most tender meat is our relative.

But, come afternoon the mushroom buyer arrives and starts picking. My mother gives him permission. He chooses like an eagle. This one white as sugar, a pink one, a gray one.

My mother does not realize that she is selling her race.

XVIII

At that hour, the tiny underground creatures were starting their work (those ones that wear heavy coats and work to the rhythm of drums: toc-toc). At that hour the moon had reached the summit of its brilliance, and all the doves scattered over the moon. But from a distance those birds looked like butterflies, great, sparkling flies. The doves flew over the moon, pecking at it, caressing it.

All of this became clearer as I watched the scene from the black forest of orange trees. And my grandparents sitting there, frozen, thier cloaks a pale pink, their ill-fated braids.

They always held some too-brilliant thing in their hands; they showed it; they hid it. Is it a fallen dove? I stepped closer, looking, asking—Or is it a little hare from among the irises?

But they always gave me the strangest reply—It is a saint, they said—It is San Carlos, San Cristóbal, Santa Isabel.

I cannot put my memories in order. The moon just wrecks them every time.

XIX

Beyond the land, through the air, in the full moon's light, like a lily's stem, it loads its side incessantly with hyacinths, narcissi, white lilies. The wolves draw back at the sight of it; the lambs get down on their knees, crazy with love and fear. It moves on, goes off like an errant candelabra, a bonfire; it goes towards the house, passes the cabinets, the hearth; with only a glance it burns the apples, illuminates them, wraps them in candied paper; it flings colored stones into the rice; it makes the bread and pears glow. It drives itself into the table like a November yucca branch; it hunts a star, it stuffs itself with candles, pine nuts, little bottles. It breaks into the bedroom, spins over my dream, over my wideopen eyes; it floats in the air like a three-tiered crown of pearls, a lamp. It is a fish, a coral branch outside the water, each piece of coral as swollen as a bud or a lip. It flies back toward the moon; it scares the horses and owls, who break into flight and instantly stop. It calls to me. To me, sleepless, and we go off beyond the hills, away from the night workers who tried to mow it down like a hydrangea.

XXIII

The gladioli are made of marble, of pure silver, of some ghostly fabric, organdy; they are the bones of Most Holy Maria; they are still walking through this world.

For a long time these spectral stems have followed me. At night they come in through the window; if I am sleeping, they

enter my dream; if I am awake, I find them standing at the foot of my bed.

The gladioli are like the angels, like the dead. Who can free me from that tenuous stem, from the gaze of that blind man?

XXXV

I remember the white, folded cabbages—white roses of the earth, of the gardens—cabbages of marble, of most delicate porcelain; cabbages holding their children inside.

And the tall blue chard.

And the tomato, a kidney of rubies.

And the onions wrapped in silky paper, rolling paper, like bombs of sugar, salt, alcohol.

And the gnome asparagus, turrets of the kingdom of gnomes.

I remember the potatoes, and the tulips we always planted along them.

And the snakes with their long, orange wings. And the tobacco of fireflies, who smoked without ceasing. I remember eternity.



THE SPACE OF LITERATURE Maurice Blanchot

translated by Ann Smock

1955

The Outside, the Night

In the night, everything has disappeared. This is the first night. Here absence approaches -- silence, repose, night. Here death blots out Alexander's picture; here the sleeper does not know he sleeps, and he who dies goes to meet real dying. Here language completes and fulfills itself in the silent profundity which vouches for it as its meaning.

But when everything has disappeared in the night, "everything has disappeared" appears. This is the other night. Night is this apparition: "everything has disappeared." It is what we sense when dreams replace sleep, when the dead pass into the deep of the night, when night's deep appears in those who have disappeared. Apparitions, phantoms, and dreams are an allusion to this empty night. It is the night of Young, where the dark does not seem dark enough, or death ever dead enough. What appears in the night is the night that appears. And this eeriness does not simply come from something invisible, which would reveal itself under cover of dark and at the shadows' summons. Here the invisible is what one cannot cease to see; it is the incessant making itself seen. The "phantom" is meant to hide, to appease the phantom night. Those who think they see ghosts are those who do not want to see the night. They crowd it with the terror of little images, they occupy and distract it by immobilizing it -- stopping the oscillation of eternal starting over. It is empty, it is not; but we dress it up as a kind of being; we enclose it, if possible, in a name, a story and a resemblance; we say, like Rilke at Duino, "It is Raimondine and Polyxène." [...]

The first night is welcoming. Novalis addresses hymns to it. Of it one can say, *In* the night, as if it had an intimacy. We enter into the night and we rest there, sleeping and dying.

In the night one can die; we reach oblivion. But this other night is the death no one dies, the forgetfulness which gets forgotten. In the heart of oblivion it is memory without rest.

The Dream

Night, the essence of night, does not let us sleep. In the night no refuge is to be found in sleep. And if you fail sleep, exhaustion finally sickens you, and this sickness prevents sleeping; it is expressed by insomnia, by the impossibility of making sleep a free zone, a clear and true resolution. In the night one cannot sleep.

One does not proceed from day to night. Whoever follows this route finds only sleep -- sleep which ends the day but in order to make the next day possible; sleep which is the downward bending that verifies the rising curve; sleep which is, granted, a lack, a silence, but one imbued with intentions and through which duties, goals, and real action speak for us. In this sense the dream is closer than sleep to the nocturnal region. If day survives itself in the night, if it exceeds its term, if it becomes that which cannot be interrupted, then already it is no longer the day. It is the uninterrupted and the incessant. Notwithstanding events that seem to belong to time, and even though it is peopled with beings that seem to be those of the world, this interminable "day" is the approach of time's absence, the threat of the outside where the world lacks.

The dream is the reawakening of the interminable. It is an allusion at least, and something like a dangerous call -- through the persistence of what cannot finish -- to the neutrality that presses up behind the beginning. Hence the fact that the dream seems to bring up in each of us the being of earliest times, -- and not only the child, but still further back, the most remote, the mythic, the emptiness and vagueness of the anterior. He who dreams sleeps, but already he who dreams is he who sleeps no longer. He is not another, some other person, but the premonition of the other, of that which cannot say "I" any more, which recognizes itself neither in itself nor in others. Doubtless the force of vigilant existence and the fidelity of sleep, and still more the interpretation that gives meaning to a semblance of meaning, safeguard

the outlines and forms of a personal reality: that which becomes other is reincarnated in another, the double is still somebody. The dreamer believes he knows that he is dreaming and that he is asleep, precisely at the moment when the schism between the two is effected. He dreams that he is dreaming. And this flight from the dream which plunges him back into the dream, into the dream which is an eternal fall into the same dream -- this repetition whereby personal truth wanting to rescue itself loses itself more and more, and which is like the return of the same dreams or the unspeakable harassment of a reality which always escapes and which one cannot escape -- all this is like a dream of the night, a dream where the form of the dream becomes its sole content. Perhaps one could say that the dream is all the more nocturnal in that it turns around itself, that it dreams itself, that it has for its content its possibility.

[...]

The dream touches the region where pure resemblance reigns. Everything there is similar; each figure is another one, is similar to another and to yet another, and this last to still another. One seeks the original model, wanting to be referred to a point of departure, an initial revelation, but there is none. The dream is the likeness that refers eternally to likeness.

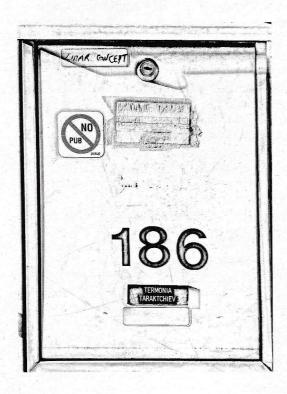
The Cadaverous Resemblance

When this moment has come, the corpse appears in the strangeness of its solitude as that which has disdainfully withdrawn from us. Then the feeling of a relation between humans is destroyed, and our mourning, the care we take of the dead and all the prerogatives of our former passions, since they can no longer know their direction, fall back upon us, return toward us. It is striking that at this very moment, when the cadaverous presence is the presence of the unknown before us, the mourned deceased begins to *resemble himself*.

Himself: is this not an ill-chosen expression? Shouldn't we say: the deceased resembles the person he was when he was alive? "Resembles himself' is, however, correct. "Himself" designates the impersonal being, distant and inaccessible, which resemblance, that it might be someone's, draws toward the day.

Yes, it is he, the dear living person, but all the same it is more than he. He is more beautiful, more imposing; he is already monumental and so absolutely himself that it is as if he were doubled by himself, joined to his solemn impersonality by resemblance and by the image. This magnified being, imposing and proud, which impresses the living as the appearance of the original never perceived until now -- this sentence of the last judgment inscribed deep within being and triumphantly expressing itself with the aid of the remote -- this grandeur, through its appearance of supreme authority, may well bring to mind the great images of classical art. If this connection is justified, the question of classical art's idealism will seem rather vain. And we might bear in mind the thought that idealism has, finally, no guarantee other than a corpse. For this indicates to what extent the apparent intellectual refinement, the pure virginity of the image is originally linked to the elemental strangeness and to the formless weight of being, present in absence.

Let us look again at this splendid being from which beauty streams: he is, I see this, perfectly like himself: he resembles himself. The cadaver is its own image. It no longer entertains any relation with this world, where it still appears, except that of an image, an obscure possibility, a shadow ever present behind the living form which now, far from separating itself from this form, transforms it entirely into shadow. The corpse is a reflection becoming master of the life it reflects -- absorbing it, identifying substantively with it by moving it from its use value and from its truth value to something incredible -- something neutral which there is no getting used to. And if the cadaver is so similar, it is because it is, at a certain moment, similarity par excellence: altogether similarity, and also nothing more. It is the likeness, like to an absolute degree, overwhelming and marvelous. But what is it like? Nothing.



EXCESS, THE FACTORY Leslie Kaplan

translated by Julie Carr & Jennifer Pap

1982

You make cables near the window, cables of different colors. You roll them into coils. Light is there, space is soft. You come, go. Corridors, oblivion.

You make cables near the window. Extreme tension. The sky, and the cables, this shit. You are seized, gripped by the cables, the sky. There is nothing else.

All space is occupied: all has become waste. Skin is dead. Teeth bite an apple, a sandwich. You absorb. The gaze sticks to everything like a fly.

You work nine hours, making holes in parts with a machine. You place the part, bring down the lever, take out the part, and raise the lever again. There's paper everywhere.

Time is outside, in things.

The courtyard, crossing it. A factory courtyard's absolute nostalgia.

You walk between formless walls. Sheets of metal, soft and fat. What interest, what interest. This wire on the ground. No one knows the trouble I see. You go looking for something. You absorb everything. You go, you go down. You see others doing things. You are alone, in your gestures. You walk, you feel yourself walking. You are inside. You feel each movement, you unfold, you walk.

You eat caramels, your teeth are stuck together.

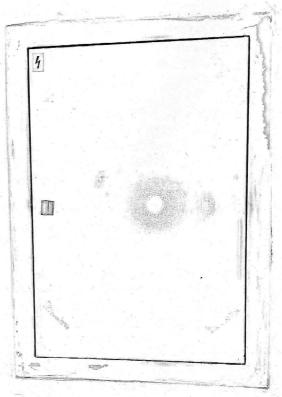
Before going in, you go to the cafe. You look at yourself in the mirror above the counter. The jukebox always plays *Those were the days, my love, ah yes those were the days.*

translated by Samuel Beckett

1967

All known all white bare white body fixed one yard legs joined like sewn. Light heat white floor one square yard never seen. White walls one yard by two white ceiling one square yard never seen. Bare white body fixed only the eyes only just. Traces blurs light grey almost white on white. Hands hanging palms front white feet heels together right angle. Light heat white planes shining white bare white body fixed ping fixed elsewhere. Traces blur signs no meaning light grey almost white. Bare white body fixed white on white invisible. Only the eyes only just light blue almost white. Head haught eyes light blue almost white silence within. Brief murmurs only just almost never all known. Traces blurs signs no meaning light grey almost white. Legs joined like sewn heels together right angle. Traces alone unover given black light grey almost white on white. Light heat white walls shining white one yard by two. Bare white body fixed one yard ping fixed elsewhere. Traces blurs signs no meaning light grey almost white. White feet toes joined like sewn heels together right angle invisible. Eyes alone unover given blue light blue almost white. Murmur only just almost never one second perhaps not alone. Given rose only just bare white body fixed one yard white on white invisible. All white all known murmurs only just almost never always the same all unknown. Light heat hands hanging palms front white on white invisible. Bare white body fixed ping fixed elsewhere. Only the eyes only just light blue almost white fixed front. Ping murmur only just almost never one second perhaps a way out. Head haught eyes light blue almost white fixed front ping murmur ping silence. Eyes holes light blue almost white mouth white seam like sewn invisible. Ping murmur perhaps a nature one second almost never that much memory almost never. White walls each its trace grey blur signs no meaning light grey almost white. Light heat all known all white planes meeting invisible. Ping murmur only just almost never one second perhaps a meaning that much memory almost never. White feet toes joined like sewn heels together right angle ping elsewhere no sound. Hands hanging palms front legs joined like sewn. Head haught eyes holes light blue almost white fixed front silence within. Ping elsewhere always there but that not known. Eyes holes light blue alone unover given blue light blue almost white only colour fixed front. All white all known white planes shining white ping murmur only just almost never one second light time that much memory almost never. Bare white body fixed one vard ping fixed elsewhere white on white invisible heart breath no sound. Only the eyes given blue light blue almost white fixed front only colour alone unover. Planes meeting invisible only one shining white infinite but that known not. Nose ears white holes mouth white seam like sewn invisible. Ping murmurs only just almost never one second always the same all known. Given rose only just bare white body fixed one yard invisible all known without within. Ping perhaps a nature one second with image same time a little less blue and white in the wind. White ceiling shining white one square yard never seen ping perhaps way out there one second ping silence. Traces alone unover given black grey blurs signs no meaning light grey almost white always the same. Ping perhaps not alone one second with image always the same same time a little less that much memory almost never ping silence. Given rose only just nails fallen white over. Long hair fallen white invisible over. White scars invisible same white as flesh torn of old given rose only just. Ping image only just almost never one second light time blue and white in the wind. Head haught nose ears white holes mouth white seam like sewn invisible over. Only the eyes given blue fixed front light blue almost white only colour alone unover. Light heat white planes shining white one

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THE PASSIVE VAMPIRE Ghérasim Luca

translated by Krzysztof Fijalkowski

1945

I close my eyes, as active as a vampire, I open them within myself, as passive as a vampire, and between the blood that arrives, the blood that leaves, and the blood already inside me there occurs an exchange of images like an engagement of daggers. Now I could eat a piano, shoot a table, inhale a staircase. All the extremities of my body have orifices out of which come the skeletons of the piano, the table, the staircase, and for the very first time these ordinary—and therefore non-existent—objects can exist. I climb this staircase not to get to the first floor but to get closer to myself. I lean on the banisters not to avoid vertigo but to prolong it. If when I get to the top floor I open a door that leads straight out onto the street, I will fall into space but will not die. If do happen to die, it is a phenomenon used by another objective and more easily understandable phenomenon only as a pretext. I understand the feeling of guilt but I do not understand death. I am unable to understand how this iniquity, this error, has led to the extermination of so many generations and how humankind can treat it as a finality (and I'm not referring to those swine who talk about the afterlife). Death is an irremediable end, a "truth," an ultimate obstacle among the reality of obstacles. Within this reality, in which the elixir of life is a fantasy, an alchemist's dream, death is irremediable, definitive. For us, the alchemists' dream, like any dream, is a part of reality. We deny false external reality, we deny the false reality of death, we deny all repression. The elixir of life is a prophetic dream, and if we think of the reality of desire, then all dreams should be considered prophetic. At worst tomorrow's death will be a macabre substitute for pleasure, a traumatic remnant bequeathed by past generations that keeps up the impulses' play of shadow and light, yet physical, irremediable, definitive death will be nothing but a sinister utopia. In today's society, only those with the psychology of a corpse can talk naively about a "natural" death.

Since I've started living out my dreams, since I've become the contemporary of the centuries to come, I no longer know death under the annihilating guise it has maintained in today's society. Only in my moments of deepest depression do I realise that in that world of swine into which I was born I shall be forced to die, just as out in the street I'm obliged to rub shoulders with priests and cops.

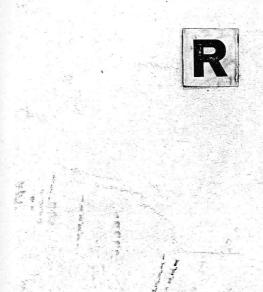
But the deepest moments of depression cannot conquer my life. Beyond these deceptive troughs into which I sometimes fall, my nocturnal and diurnal life is real. Here death, in order to become a real phenomenon, seeks libidinal equivalents, and it is only in this new guise that it can exercise some function in our psychic apparatus. Just as the unobtrusive and anonymous Fantômas can only become the Master of Terror, the Criminal Genius, the Executioner when he dons his tight black outfit and hood, I would like to be a killer in a white velvet costume, at an operating table or leaning over a child's pram. At another operating table, by the window whose open curtains let in the rays of moonlight, stands the handsome, silent vampire. In evening dress, his lips glued to a bared neck like a bird, now he resembles a flautist playing pulses of blood on living instruments. At slightly increasing intervals the drops flow from the instrument to his lips. Each gulp is held for a while in his mouth to let the scent reach his nostrils, to intoxicate his breath. Like a fiery whip across the breast, the drink passes swiftly through the digestive system. Tottering, growing increasingly pale, ever more solitary, the handsome vampire swallows another gulp of blood. Dressed in white velvet, I'd like to vivisect a child, from time to time looking up at the vampire by the window, moonlight streaking his face.

Dreadful negations of death; crime, like all phantoms, emerges from the darkness. With a ray as bright as lightning, the black flash of murder tears open the shadows by illuminating them from

within, like an owl's eye. On the knife blade our advance seems so natural that the great causeways traversing the continents appear to us like treacherous traps. Immense slabs of basalt slip from the crusts of mountains, of trees, of voices. On them we read: No! Exhausted waterfowl spring from men's ears towards the four points of the compass. I don't know if the sparrow-hawk lying in wait for them is actually a duck or if their ears are now wild capital letters, howling furiously at the moon. There is one moon in the firmament and another in pictures. Between the two every form of love, known and unknown, reveals and invents itself. The fibers of a watch stopped at midnight and the fibers of a whale drowned in the Pacific spin in the dark an aluminium net for trawling for cathedrals. What symmetrically bundled-up birds these cathedrals are, oranges ready for export, traditional as the notion of sin! A basket of bread stretched out over the landscape so as to turn the edible symbol into a monument. The horses bolt from between the riders' legs and jump up onto the plinths. Refusing to be a pedestrian is as impressive as a wounded vulture. But to be obliged to find your own torn-off testicles in every city square the world over is an atrocity greater than a boat. I refuse all forms, all categories, all acts, all plans, all laws, all your castrating scents. I eat, breathe, drink, think, reject, dress myself and move aphrodisiacally. I keep every cell of my being in a state of permanent excitation, excited and exciting at the same time, the zones traversing my being are genital and pregenital, erotic and criminal, black, ferocious, satanic.

[...]

The pyres of the Middle Ages are still burning. Workers, poets, thinkers all carry on the magician's work. With each newly discovered truth we sign a pact with Satan. The signatures of these enlightened dreamers, made in blood on parchment, we now write by the hundreds of thousands on the cobblestones, on prison walls. Every dream, every act of love, every riot is a black mass.



Les Méduses n'ont pas d'oreilles Adèle Rosenfeld

2022

Étrangère, je l'étais. Déracinée du langage. Quand Anna était dans sa période où elle balançait du *arrivederci, baci, tutto bene* à tout-va, mettant au jour son amour pour l'Italie d'où elle tirait de vagues origines du côté maternel et de vagues souvenirs de cours d'italien – je pense surtout qu'elle convoquait ses fantasmes d'une Italie ensoleillée, de villages écrasés sous la chaleur, traversés au lointain par les longues plaintes des pleureuses —, et qu'elle me disait la main sur le cœur : « l'italien me manque », j'avais la conviction qu'à mon tour je pouvais affirmer que la langue française me manquait.

Je ne connaissais pas ce plaisir d'être apaisé par le doux ronronnement d'une langue connue qui résonne dans la foule, cette pleine puissance d'être chez soi entouré d'inconnus. Dans la rue, au milieu du tumulte, la langue française m'apparaissait plutôt comme la rumeur de poulets élevés en batterie. Enfant, j'avais dû être totalement déplumée, tremblante au milieu des poussins au langage balbutiant, à la bave dégoulinante et au nez sanguinolent.

Je n'en ai pas de souvenir.

D'ailleurs, je n'ai aucun souvenir de mots, d'intonations d'avant l'appareillage, c'est-à-dire jusqu'à mes cinq ans. Est-ce que le monde alors n'avait aucun contour sonore? En creusant, je me suis aperçue que je n'avais d'ailleurs aucun souvenir.

Fallait-il du son pour activer la mémoire ?

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This reader is considered study material and can only be distributed within the context of Slow Reading Club as material for the collective reading session.

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