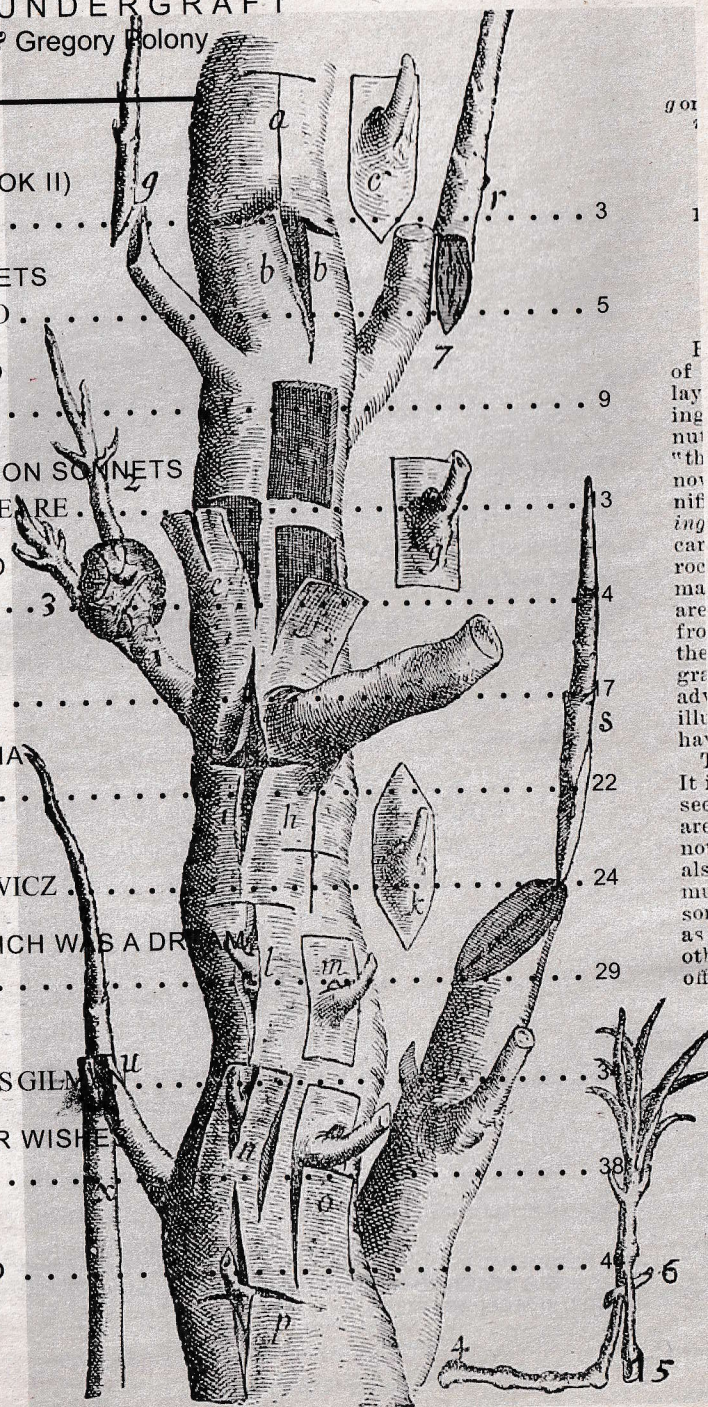


# LIMBSWOON UNDERGRAFT

Slow Reading Club & Gregory Colony

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LIMBSWOONUNDERGRAFT

## THE GEORGICS (BOOK 2) (ca. 29 BC)

Vergil

trans. Arthur S. Way

There be methods in which by her own path man's experience came:  
 One seventh cuttings of trees from the moth's tender frame,  
 And setteth in furrows: another grower will earth up a line  
 Of root-stocks, stakes four-cleft, or pales to a point cut fine.  
 While some plantations await green arches of layered shoots  
 And living nurseries clinging to earth with unsecured roots,  
 There be others that need no root, nor the pruner doubts to restore  
 To the earth her own, and to trust to her lap top-shoots that he shore.  
 Nay more, men cleave into truncheons an olive-stem – wondrous to say –  
 And an oil-bearing root from the dry wood soon is pushing its way.  
 And we oft see one tree's branched – and none the less will they bear –  
 Transferred to another, see grafter apples borne on a pear.  
 Transformed, see stony cornels with red plums flashing fair.

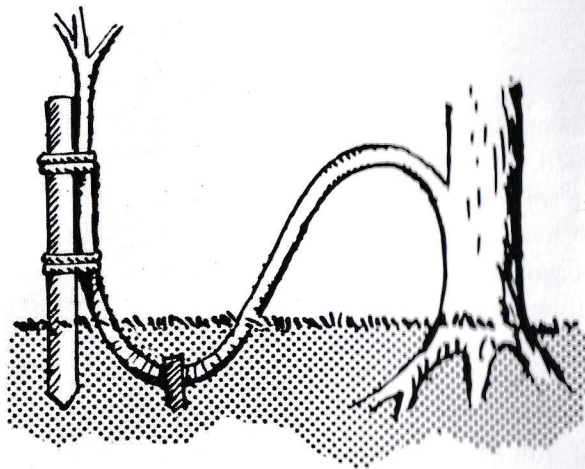
[...]

Such plants as uplift themselves unbidden to borders of day,  
 Fruitless indeed, but lusty and strong in their springing art they:  
 For under the soil stirs nature's strength. Yet even these,  
 If ye graft, or transplant into spade-worked trenches the natural trees,  
 Cast off their wildwood spirit: by tillage untiring controlled  
 Will they follow thee unreluctant, reshaped as they will may mould.  
 Nay, barren suckers withal, at the parent's base which stand,  
 Will do this, so they be planted wide upon clear clean land:  
 But now tall frondage and boughs of the mother-tree overgloom  
 And rob it of fruit as it grows, and blast it in act to bloom.  
 Moreover, the tree that springs from seed in the earth's lap laid  
 Groweth slowly: thy far-off children's children perchance shall it shade:  
 Its fruits degenerate, wholly forgetting the savour they bare,  
 And the vine bears clusters unsightly, fit spoil for birds of the air.



[...]

A beech bears chestnuts, a mountain-ash the silver-shine  
Of pear-blossom; under an elm have acorns been crushed by swine.  
Not one and the same are the methods of grafting and insetting "eyes":  
Fir where, pushing forth from the midst of the bark, the soft buds rise,  
And burst their filmy coats, even here in the knot's mid-wood  
Is a slit made: deeply in this form an alien tree is a bud  
Enclosed, and the life of the bark and its sap is it taught to share:  
Or again, cut open are knotless, and a path cleft there  
With wedges into the heart-wood; therein doth the gardener place  
Slips of a fruit-bearing tree: thereafter in no long space  
With fertile branches a noble tree hath skyward grown.  
And marvels at stranger boughs and fruits that seem not her own.



## THE HISTORY OF VIOLETS (1965)

Marosa di Giorgio

trans. Jeannine Marie Pitas

### I

I remember nightfall and your room's open door, the door through which neighbours and angels came in. And the clouds—November evening clouds, drifting in circles over the land. The little trees burdened with jasmine, with doves and droplets of water. That joyous pealing, endless chirping—every evening the same.

And then in the morning, with its tiny dead angels strewn everywhere like paper birds, or the most exquisite of eggshells.

Your dazzling death.

### II

When I look toward the past, I only see perplexing things: sugar, jasmine, white wine, black wine, the strange country school I attended for four years, murders, weddings among the orange blossoms, incestuous couplings.

That towering old woman who walked by our orange trees one night with her long white gown, her hair in a bun. The butterflies that left us when they flew off to chase her.

### IV

This is the night of December lilies. Around ten o'clock, the flowers tremble a little. The nocturnal butterflies fly over them, their wings glittering with tiny gems, and make the flowers kiss each other, marry each other. And this occurs purely through desire. If I wish for something, it will appear. I need only to let go of my hands, my braids. And then I am opened to another landscape and other beings. God presides with his huge wings and black cloak, and then the deceased ancestors, my grandparents. All sit down to devour the great peace like a meal. And from my humble place I too share in this quiet jubilation.



But then, one time, Mother came all of a sudden and tapped me on the shoulder, and such was my fear, my shame, that I did not dare to rise to resurrect.

## 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, their 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.

## XXI

At the hour when the oak trees close up sweetly, and I am at the hearth beside the mothers, the grandmothers, the other women, and they speak of years long past, of things that now seem like mere dust. And this scares me, and it seems that this is the very night when he is going to come—the cursed field hand, the murderer, the thief who will strip us of everything. And so I flee to the garden, and the little underground creatures are already there. So beautiful—I say—with their smooth alabaster faces, their sharp, delicate, almost human hands, sometimes with rings even. How deftly they advance along the paths.

They attack the best violet, the one with a grain of salt, the celan-

dine that fumes like a bit of dough with honey, the basket of butterflies' eggs—oh, how they quiver.

They act with such confidence.

One time, my mother decided to trap one; she killed her, skinned her, and put her in the middle of the night, of the meal. And that creature retained a bit of life, an almost unreal death, she seemed to have fled from a funeral banquet, or jumped out from the casket of some marvelous corpse. We gulped her down, and she was almost alive.

The ring I now wear was once hers.

## XXV

From cypress to cypress flew the planets—one of them huge, fixed in space like a lemon, like a flame.

From cypress to cypress flew the train. Their sad violin signaled the parting, the southernmost point of all things. At times, the adults said something like, "Oswald has died and they're bringing him to Station \_\_\_\_\_" but, since she was only five, neither Oswald nor death meant much of anything to her.

At that hour the adults—grandfather, grandmother, father, mother—withdraw to the altar. But she preferred to remain in her own corner of the garden, watching the pinecones fall. Oh, what light branches, full of strange cherries.

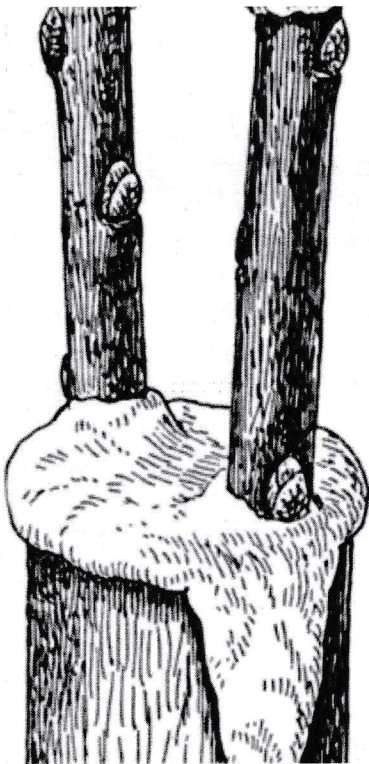
Then, Iván appeared. He said, "My heart is a rabbit." And she had to look up, because he was tall, he was a man. He stooped and knelt down; she stared at his chest, looking for the two long, white leaves, two long, white ears. But then, suddenly, slowly, she began to figure things out. Her terror was such that instead of fleeing towards the house, she ran to the grove, stumbling among the branches as she went. But there seemed to be some men and women there, motionless under that cover, perhaps with some awful scheme in mind, and animals with four or five staring green eyes that scrutinised her, gazed into her core.

And so, nearly obviously even to herself, she ran out to the open space; she was going to hide among the vines, seek refuge among their huge leaves. But, already twilight's bats were flying overhead, smoking their little silver cigarettes. And she stopped. Iván had found her and



was coming toward her, now just two or three meters away. She fainted, and he lifted her, hugged her and said, "Don't cry. I'm taking you back home."

She knew full well that this was not true.



*Just in that space a narrow slit we make,  
Then other buds from bearing tress we take;  
Inserted thus, the wounded rind we close,  
In whose moist womb the admitted infant grows.*  
[VERGIL]

## BRAVE NEW WORLD (1932)

Aldous Huxley

A squat grey building of only thirty-four stories. Over the main entrance the words, CENTRAL LONDON HATCHERY AND CONDITIONING CENTRE, and, in a shield, the World State's motto, COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY.

The enormous room on the ground floor faced towards the north. Cold for all the summer beyond the panes, for all the tropical heat of the room itself, a harsh thin light glared through the windows, hungrily seeking some draped lay figure, some pallid shape of academic goose-flesh, but finding only the glass and nickel and bleakly shining porcelain of a laboratory. Wintriness responded to wintriness. The overalls of the workers were white, their hands gloved with a pale corpse-coloured rubber. The light was frozen, dead, a ghost. Only from the yellow barrels of the microscopes did it borrow a certain rich and living substance, lying along the polished tubes like butter, streak after luscious streak in long recession down the work tables.

"And this," said the Director opening the door, "is the Fertilizing Room."

Bent over their instruments, three hundred Fertilizers were plunged, as the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning entered the room, in the scarcely breathing silence, the absent-minded, soliloquizing hum or whistle, of absorbed concentration. A troop of newly arrived students, very young, pink and callow, followed nervously, rather abjectly, at the Director's heels. Each of them carried a notebook, in which, whenever the great man spoke, he desperately scribbled. Straight from the horse's mouth. It was a rare privilege. The D.H.C. for Central London always made a point of personally conducting his new students round the various departments.



"Just to give you a general idea," he would explain to them. For of course some sort of general idea they must have, if they were to do their work intelligently—though as little of one, if they were to be good and happy members of society, as possible. For particulars, as every one knows, make for virtue and happiness; generalities are intellectually necessary evils. Not philosophers but fretsawyers and stamp collectors compose the backbone of society.

"To-morrow," he would add, smiling at them with a slightly menacing geniality, "you'll be settling down to serious work. You won't have time for generalities. Meanwhile ..."

Meanwhile, it was a privilege. Straight from the horse's mouth into the notebook. The boys scribbled like mad.

Tall and rather thin but upright, the Director advanced into the room. He had a long chin and big rather prominent teeth, just covered, when he was not talking, by his full, floridly curved lips. Old, young? Thirty? Fifty? Fifty-five? It was hard to say. And anyhow the question didn't arise; in this year of stability, A.F. 632, it didn't occur to you to ask it.

"I shall begin at the beginning," said the D.H.C. and the more zealous students recorded his intention in their notebooks: *Begin at the beginning*. "These," he waved his hand, "are the incubators." And opening an insulated door he showed them racks upon racks of numbered test-tubes. "The week's supply of ova. Kept," he explained, "at blood heat; whereas the male gametes," and here he opened another door, "they have to be kept at thirty-five instead of thirty-seven. Full blood heat sterilizes." Rams wrapped in theremogene beget no lambs.

Still leaning against the incubators he gave them, while the pencils scurried illegibly across the pages, a brief description of the modern fertilizing process; spoke first, of course, of its surgical introduction—"the operation undergone voluntarily for the good of Society, not to mention the fact that it carries a bonus amounting to six months' salary"; continued with some account of the technique for preserving the excised ovary

alive and actively developing; passed on to a consideration of optimum temperature, salinity, viscosity; referred to the liquor in which the detached and ripened eggs were kept; and, leading his charges to the work tables, actually showed them how this liquor was drawn off from the test-tubes; how it was let out drop by drop onto the specially warmed slides of the microscopes; how the eggs which it contained were inspected for abnormalities, counted and transferred to a porous receptacle; how (and he now took them to watch the operation) this receptacle was immersed in a warm bouillon containing free-swimming spermatozoa—at a minimum concentration of one hundred thousand per cubic centimetre, he insisted; and how, after ten minutes, the container was lifted out of the liquor and its contents reexamined; how, if any of the eggs remained unfertilized, it was again immersed, and, if necessary, yet again; how the fertilized ova went back to the incubators; where the Alphas and Betas remained until definitely bottled; while the Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons were brought out again, after only thirty-six hours, to undergo Bokanovsky's Process.

"Bokanovsky's Process," repeated the Director, and the students underlined the words in their little notebooks.

One egg, one embryo, one adult—normality. But a bakanovskified egg will bud, will proliferate, will divide. From eight to ninety-six buds, and every bud will grow into a perfectly formed embryo, and every embryo into a full-sized adult. Making ninety-six human beings grow where only one grew before. Progress.

"Essentially," the D.H.C. concluded, "bokanovskification consists of a series of arrests of development. We check the normal growth and, paradoxically enough, the egg responds by budding."

*Responds by budding.* The pencils were busy.

He pointed. On a very slowly moving band a rack-full of test-tubes was entering a large metal box, another rack-full was emerging. Machinery faintly purred. It took eight minutes for the tubes to go through, he told them. Eight minutes of hard X-rays being about as much as an egg can



stand. A few died; of the rest, the least susceptible divided into two; most put out four buds; some eight; all were returned to the incubators, where the buds began to develop; then, after two days, were suddenly chilled, chilled and checked. Two, four, eight, the buds in their turn budded; and having budded were dosed almost to death with alcohol; consequently burgeoned again and having budded—bud out of bud out of bud—were thereafter—further arrest being generally fatal—left to develop in peace. By which time the original egg was in a fair way to becoming anything from eight to ninety-six embryos—a prodigious improvement, you will agree, on nature. Identical twins—but not in piddling twos and threes as in the old viviparous days, when an egg would sometimes accidentally divide; actually by dozens, by scores at a time.

“Scores,” the Director repeated and flung out his arms, as though he were distributing largesse. “Scores.”

But one of the students was fool enough to ask where the advantage lay.

“My good boy!” The Director wheeled sharply round on him. “Can’t you see? Can’t you *see*?” He raised a hand; his expression was solemn. “Bokanovsky’s Process is one of the major instruments of social stability!”

*Major instruments of social stability.*

Standard men and women; in uniform batches. The whole of a small factory staffed with the products of a single bokanovskified egg.

“Ninety-six identical twins working ninety-six identical machines!” The voice was almost tremulous with enthusiasm. “You really know where you are. For the first time in history.” He quoted the planetary motto. “Community, Identity, Stability.” Grand words. “If we could bokanovskify indefinitely the whole problem would be solved.”

**XV from PROCREATION SONNETS (1609)**  
William Shakespeare

---

*When I consider every thing that grows  
Holds in perfection but a little moment,  
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows  
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;  
When I perceive that men as plants increase,  
Cheered and checked even by the self-same sky,  
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,  
And wear their brave state out of memory;  
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay  
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,  
Where wasteful Time debateth with decay  
To change your day of youth to sullied night,  
And all in war with Time for love of you,  
As he takes from you, I engraft you new.*



## THE WHOLE ISLAND (1943)

Virgilio Piñera

trans. Mark Weiss

---

The violent wave invades the wide hall of genuflections.  
No one thinks to beg, thank, be grateful, testify.  
Sanctity collapses in a gale of laughter.  
Although love's chaotic symbols are the first things touched,  
we have the luck to be ignorant of voluptuousness or cunnilingus,  
the perfect lover and the octopus woman,  
the strategic mirrors,  
we don't know how to bear syphilis with a swan-like grace,  
unaware that soon enough we'll acquire these fatal refinements.

Bodies in the mysterious tropical drizzle,  
in the daily drizzle. The nightly drizzle, always the drizzle,  
bodies opening their millions of eyes,  
bodies, ruled by light, retreat  
before the slaying of skin,  
bodies, devouring waves of light, return like sunflowers of flame  
at the crest of ecstatic waters,  
bodies, afloat, drift seawards like extinguished embers.

Its confusion, terror, abundance,  
The imminent loss of virginity.  
Rotten mangoes in the riverbed dazzle thought,  
and I scale the highest less to fall like a piece of fruit.  
There's no restraining this body destined for the hooves of horses,  
caught crazily between poetry and sun.

Bravely I escort the pierced heart,  
stab the sharpest stiletto into the sleepers' necks.  
The tropic erupts and its flow invades my head  
pinned fast to the crust of night.  
The original piety of gold-bearing sands

resoundingly drowns the Spanish mares,  
the whirlwind disorders the best-kept manes.

I can't see through these dilated eyes.  
No one knows how to watch, to study, to strip a body.  
It's the dreadful confusion of a hand in the greenery,  
stranglers travelling at the edge of sight.  
We didn't know how to fill the lonely course of love with glances.

I linger over a few old words:  
downpour, siesta, cane field, tobacco,  
with a simple gesture, scarcely if onomatopoetically,  
majestically I step through the crest of their music,  
intoning: water, noon, sugar, smoke.

And I combine them:  
the downpour sticks to the backs of horses,  
siesta binds a horse's tail  
the cane field devouring horses  
horses stray stealthily  
in the shadowy emanation of tobacco,  
final gestures of the Siboneys, smoke passing through the pitchfork's  
tines  
like the cart of death,  
final gesture of the Siboneys,  
and I dig in this earth for idols and make for myself a history.

Peoples and their histories in the mouths of all the people.

[...]

But noon resolves into twilight and the world takes shape.  
In twilight a yagruma leaf arranges its velvet,  
its silver underside the first mirror.  
The beast sees it with its awful eye.  
And at that moment its eye dilates, spreads



until it grants the leaf.

Then the beast scans with his eye the forms strewn across its back  
and the men thrown against its chest.

On this earth it's the only hour in which to see reality.

Not woman and man face to face,  
but their silhouettes, face to face,  
enter, to Newton's embarrassment,  
weightlessly into love.

That shriek of a hen announces angelus:  
abrus precatorious, anon myristica, anona palustris.

A vegetal litany with no hereafter rises  
before the flowery arches of love:  
Eugenia aromatica, eugenia fragrans, eugenia plicatula.  
Paradise and Hell explode and all that's left is Earth:  
Ficus religiosa, ficus nitida, ficus suffocans.

Earth bringing forth for centuries of centuries:  
Panicum colonum, panicum sanguinale, panicum maximum.  
The memory of a natural, uncoded poetry comes to my lips:  
Tree of the poet, tree of love, tree of mind.

A poetry completely of the mouth, like saliva:  
milkweed, wax flower, moon flower.

## SEE NOW THEN (2013)

Jamaica Kincaid

Oh, and this was the word Mrs. Sweet heard, that poor dear woman, mending socks upstairs. Oh, it was the voice of the monodist, her poor-dear Mr. Sweet. Whack, came a sound from Heracles, as he made a putt, a basket, and a score and yet was under par or over par, Mrs. Sweet could never be sure. The boy's head, free of his body with its entrails, filled up all the empty chairs in the auditorium of Mr. Sweet's youthful recital. Not that, not that, cried the young Mr. Sweet and he made the chairs empty again. The strings of the harp, gut and wire, broke and he bent down and over to make the instrument well again, so ancient was this instrument. The Shirley Jackson house was not known to him then. Never did he imagine then—his youth was his now—that he would live in such a house, so big, so full of empty spaces that were never used, never filled up even in the imagination, the young Heracles with his endless tasks of hitting balls, large and small, into holes of all sizes; the young Heracles, growing in youth, not growing older, growing in his youth, becoming more perfectly youthful, his many tasks to perform, performing them more perfectly, at first performing them awkwardly, not right at all, but then becoming so good he could place any ball of any size in any hole, no matter its width or depth or height. Thwack, was a sound caused by the quick movement of Heracles' hand sweeping a ball through the teeming air; whack, was the sound of his head sliced away from his body. Oh, was the sound that came out of the mouth of the monodist, Mr. Sweet, Mr. Sweet, as he saw Heracles pick his head off the floor and replace it on his neck, which was just above his shoulders, with such deftness, as if he were born to do only that, keep his head in that place just above shoulders.

Young Heracles, his tasks, so many, so many: wash the dishes, put them away, clean the stables, walk the horses, fix the roof, milk the cows, emerge from his mother's womb in the usual way, slay the monster, cross the river, return again, climb up the mountain, descend on the other side, build a castle on the top of a hill, imprison the innocent in a dungeon, lay



waste to whole villages to the surprise of the villagers, trap and then skin the she-fox, eat his green vegetables and his meat too, kill his father, not kill his father, want to kill his father but not kill his father, keep his head on his shoulders, survive the threshold of night, await the dawn, take a pickaxe to the iris (his eyes, not the flowers growing in his mother's garden), seize the sun, banish the moon, at every moment his skin so cold, the fire at his back, cross the road by himself, tie his shoelaces, kiss a girl, sleep in his own bed. Ah, gee Dad, said Heracles, as he raced to get a glass of water from the kitchen sink to quench the unquenchable thirst he had acquired after one of his many journeys, Sorry, Sorry. Heracles had then collided with Mr. Sweet, hitting him squarely in the head, causing starry lights to shoot out of his ears and nostrils and eyes, sending Mr. Sweet into a coma from which he emerged many years later and immediately he cut off Heracles' head again. But that Heracles, blessed with a natural instinct to live that would never, ever abandon him, picked up his head and put it back on—again, where it rests to this day, in the rising just above his shoulders.

[...]

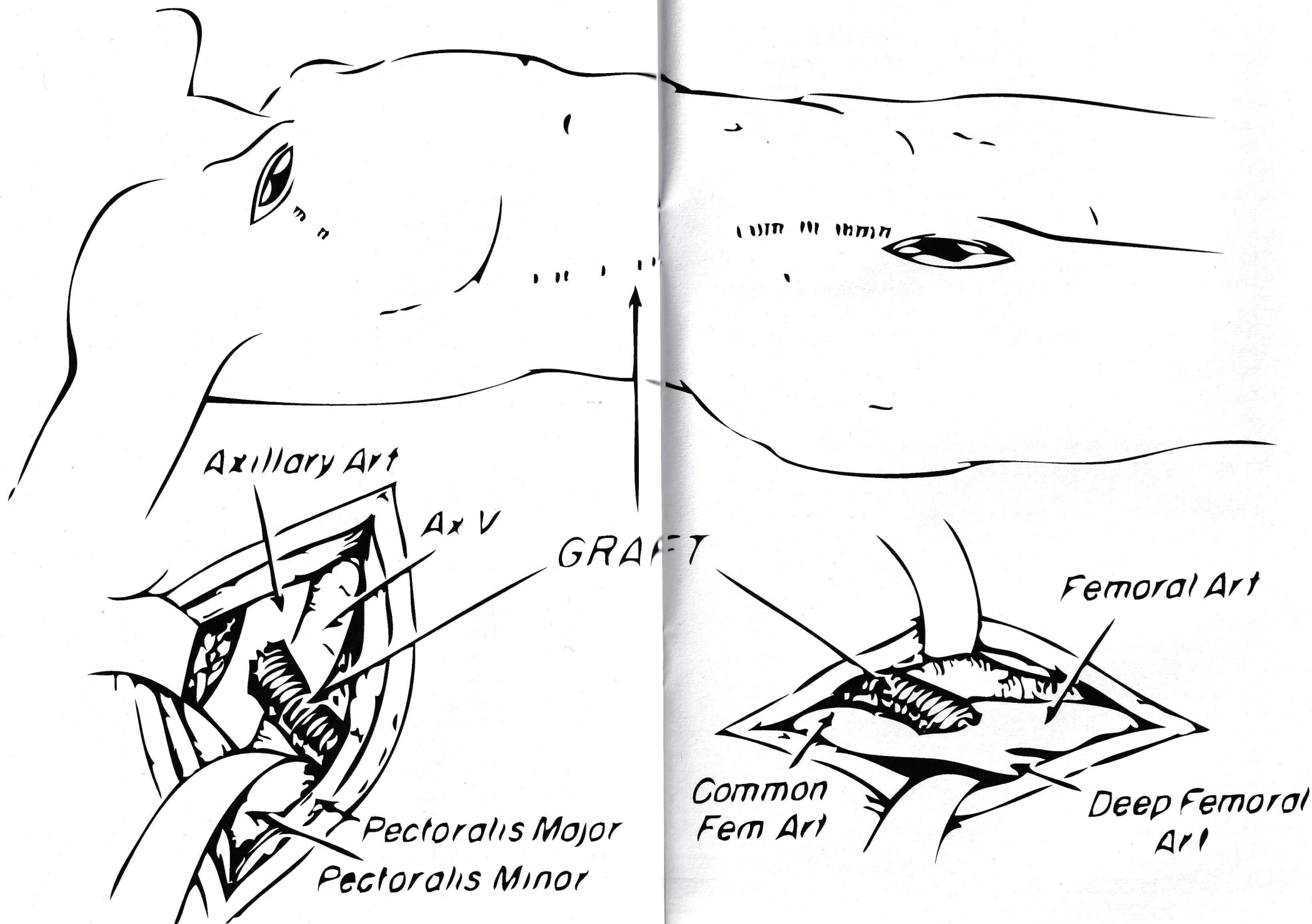
But Mr. Sweet was in his studio above the garage, where he always liked to be, it was not a funeral parlor, it's only that he was in mourning and conducting a funeral for his life, the one he had never led, and Mrs. Sweet's calling him interrupted this mourning, she was always interrupting, his life or his death, she was always interrupting. The studio was dark, then, now, but not completely, everything could be seen clearly but as a shadow of itself. How Mr. Sweet liked that, everything a shadow of itself. But there was that voice of Mrs. Sweet, not the shadow of a voice, she was not capable of that, a whisper, conveying her deepest feelings with a glance, or just stopping her breathing outright, just stop, stop, stop, right now. Mr. Sweet, she would say at the top of her voice, her voice sounding louder than a town crier's, louder than a warning of impending disaster, she was so loud, Mrs. Sweet was so loud. Mr. Sweet, can you please take the garbage out? Sl-aap. Sl-aap, came the sound of his feet that were snug in a pair of flannel slippers as he "he dragged them

across the floor and his rage was so great that it almost brought the now — dead nine-headed snake back to life. In any case his rage was such that it caused his chest to rip open and his heart exploded into pieces but Mrs. Sweet, so used to mending socks, applied her skills to this task and soon had Mr. Sweet all back together, his heart in one piece inside his stitched-back-together chest.

That little jerk almost killed me again, said Mr. Sweet to himself, and it's not the last time, he said again to himself, and he was reminded of that time, not so long ago then, he was coming down the stairs and Heracles was going up the same stairs and they met in the middle and by accident collided and by accident Heracles, to steady himself from this collision, grabbed Mr. Sweet's entire testicles and threw them away and he threw them with such force that they landed all the way in the Atlantic Ocean, which was Then and is so Now hundreds of miles away. The testicles then fell into that great body of water but did not produce typhoons or tidal waves or hurricanes or volcanic eruptions or unexpected landslides of unbelievable proportions or anything at all noteworthy; they only fell and fell quietly into the deepest part of that body of water and were never heard from again.

Oh, the silence that descended on the household, the Sweet household, as it lived in the Shirley Jackson house: on poor Heracles, who paused for a very long time at the top of those stairs; on his sister as she curled up in her bed and went to sleep "like a single bean seed planted into the rich soil of a treasured vegetable garden; Mr. Sweet removed his fingers from the strings of the lyre; on the dear Mrs. Sweet, who froze over her mending, her knitting, the darning needle in her hand, the knitting needles in her hands just about to pierce the heel of some garment, just about to make complete some garment. And then gathering up herself, surveying what lay in front of her, Mrs. Sweet sorted among the many pairs of socks she had been mending over and over again and removing a pair, she fashioned a new set of organs for her beloved Mr. Sweet, trying and succeeding in making them look identical to the complete set of testicles that had belonged to him and had been destroyed accidentally by his son, the young Heracles. And when Mr. Sweet fell into a sweet sleep of despair after not knowing what to do regarding his lost testicles, Mrs. Sweet sewed the mended socks into their place, the heels of the socks







**CLOUD'S NOSTALGIA** (2011)

from **SORROWTOOTHPASTE MIRRORCREAM**

Kim Hyesoon

trans. Don Mee Choi

---

Rabbit's ear entered as the white wall laughed  
I pulled that smelly thing  
Rabbit-cloud mushroomed-mushroomed

Buttocks-cloud came down from the ceiling  
Those buttocks belong to the wrestler at our neighbourhood gym

A rope for strangling came down, but it dispersed as soon as it hanged a neck  
The walls floated in air and barked  
The door to the room opened, where the angels were tortured and had cried  
My screams poured out like shit, so I opened an umbrella to receive them

A thousand nipples protruded from my body  
Every nipple needed to be milked white milk  
My body overflowing with milk was swollen like a jar  
The jar smelled of white rabbit

Those plastic things, paper, cloths  
I sang about the memories of my attachment to those things in my room

When I sang, all the sweat pores on my body salivated  
my black fur got wet

I pulled the mask tightly like a shoestring  
and waddled-waddled out like a wrestler

Now it's time to confess, my lover is that cloud

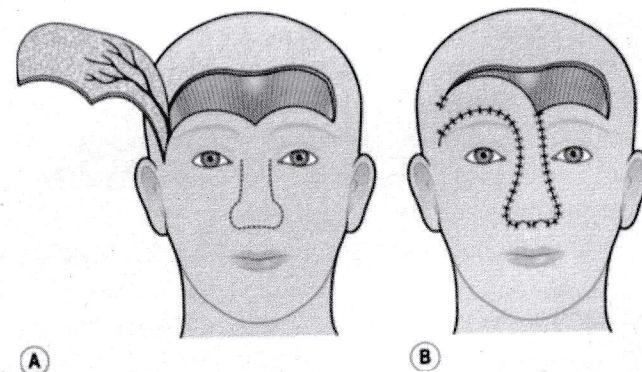
Water falls from its face every time its expression changes hundreds of times a day

Shall I call it The morning nap of someone who has left?  
(I almost said A dirty sight, for I'm unable to forget it)  
Shall I say It's a flustered rabbit because its hutch has vanished?  
Shall I say My melancholy's nostalgia?  
or Your facial expressions fall off every second and get buried in the ground?

Green-strawberry-summit-cloud  
White-hair-cloud encircles god's neck  
Hook-cloud hooks my neck's artery onto a cloud  
Lens-cloud opens the lid of my house and peers into it

Over there, the boys from martial arts gym run into the sunset with red-red briefs  
over their heads and

I pull threads from the crimson cloud and weave my undergarments and twist my fat fattened body.



SADDLE



**FERDYDURKE (1937)**

Witold Gombrowicz

trans. Danuta Borchardt

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Sixteen years old, in a skirt, sweater, and sneakers, athletic looking, easygoing, smooth, limber, agile, and impudent! The sight of her made my spirit and my face freeze in fear. I understood at a glance—here was a powerful presence, probably more powerful than Pimko himself, and equally absolute in her way, even more so than Syphon. She reminded me of someone—but who, who?—ah, she reminded me of Kopyrda! Remember Kopyrda? Just like him but tougher, similar in type but more intense, a perfect schoolgirl in her school-girlishness, and absolutely modern in her modernity. And doubly young—first by age and secondly by modernity—it was youth multiplied by youth. I was as frightened as someone who comes upon a presence stronger than oneself, moreover, my fear intensified when I saw that it was the prof who was scared of her, rather than she of the prof, that he was somewhat unsure of himself while exchanging greetings with this modern schoolgirl.

“Greetings, young lady,” he called out half-cheerily and affecting refinement. “Miss Zuta is not at the beach? On the Vistula? Is Mommy home? How’s the water in the swimming pool, eh? Cold? That’s good for you! In the olden days I myself used to swim in cold water!”

What was this? I heard in Pimko’s voice old age wheedling up to youth with athletics, obsequious old age—I took a step back. The schoolgirl didn’t answer Pimko—just looked—she placed between her teeth a small wrench which she had held in her right hand, she extended her left hand with an unceremonious indifference, as if he were not Pimko... This disconcerted the professor, he didn’t know what to do with the youthful left hand stretched out to him, so he finally clasped it in both his hands. I bowed. She took the wrench from between her teeth and said, matter-of-factly:

“Mother isn’t in, she should be back soon. Please come in ...”

And she led us into a modern livingroom, took her place by a window, while we took our seats on a sofa.

“Mommy is probably at a committee meeting,” the professor attempted small talk.

The modern one said:

“I don’t know.”

The walls were painted pale blue, the curtains were cream colored, a radio stood on a little shelf, the cute furniture was contemporary, consistently modern, clean, smooth, simple, with two built-in closets and a little table. The schoolgirl stood at the window, unmindful of anyone’s presence in the room, and she picked at her skin, which was peeling off her sunburned shoulders. As far as she was concerned we were not there—she could not care less about Pimko—and minutes passed. Pimko sat, crossed his legs, folded his hands, and twiddled his thumbs, just like someone who’s being ignored. He stirred in his seat, cleared his throat a couple of times, and coughed, hoping to keep the conversation going, but the modern one turned toward the window, her back to us, and continued picking at her skin. He didn’t say a word, he merely sat, yet his sitting thus—without conversation—seemed incomplete, imperfect. I rubbed my eyes. What was going on? Something most certainly was—but what? Was it Pimko’s imperious yet incomplete sitting? An abandoned prof? A prof?

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The incompleteness was clamoring for completion—like those nagging gaps when one thing is ending and another has not yet began. And a void opens up in one’s head. I suddenly saw the prof’s old age showing. I hadn’t noticed until now that the professor was over fifty, never before had this dawned on me, as if the absolute prof were an eternal and timeless being. Is he old or is he a professor? How so-old or a professor? Why not an old professor? No, that’s not the point, it’s that something is brewing here (they were in cahoots against me—there was no doubt about that). O God, why is he sitting? Why had he come here to sit beside



me with the schoolgirl? His sitting was all the more painful because I sat together with him. If I had been standing it wouldn't have been so terrible. But getting up was tremendously difficult, and, strictly speaking, there was no reason to get up. And that isn't even the point—but rather why does he sit with this schoolgirl, why sit agedly with a young schoolgirl? Have pity! But there is no pity. Why does he sit with the schoolgirl? Why is his old age not just a simple old age, rather than a schoolgirl old age? How so — old age with a schoolgirl? What is the meaning of — a schoolgirl old age? Suddenly things became horrible, and yet I couldn't run away. A schoolgirl old age — a young-old old age — these were the incomplete, defective, hideous formulas galloping through my brain. And suddenly I heard singing in the room. I couldn't believe my ears. The prof was singing an aria to the schoolgirl. Startled, I came to my senses. No, not singing, he was humming — hurt by the schoolgirl's indifference, and to stress her inappropriate behavior, her bad manners and brashness, Pimko hummed a few bars from an operetta. Was he really singing? Yes, she had forced the granddaddy to sing! Was this the same awesome, absolute, crafty Pimko, become this granddaddy, abandoned on the sofa, and forced to sing for the schoolgirl?

I felt very weak. After the many ordeals of this morning, since the moment the ghost visited me, my facial muscles had had no chance to relax, my face was burning as if I had spent a sleepless night riding on a train. But now the train seemed to be coming to a stop. Pimko was singing. I was embarrassed at having surrendered for so long to a harmless little old man to whom an ordinary schoolgirl paid no attention whatsoever. My face was imperceptibly returning to normal, I made myself more comfortable in my seat, and I soon regained all my equilibrium, and — oh, joy of joys! — I regained the “thirty-year-old” I had lost. I decided to leave, calm and collected, ignoring all protests, but the professor caught my hand — he seemed quite different now. He had aged, softened, he looked awkward and forlorn, pitiful.

“Joey,” he whispered in my ear, “don't follow the example of this modern girl, this new species from the postwar era of athletics and jazzbands! Custom and tradition gone wild since the war! No culture! No respect for

one's elders! This new generation's thirst for pleasure! I'm beginning to worry that the atmosphere here won't be right for you. Promise that you won't let this unbridled girl influence you. You're both alike,” he went on as if in a fever, “you have a lot in common, I know, I know, actually, you're also a modern boy, and I brought you to this modern girl quite unnecessarily!”

I looked at him as if he'd gone crazy. What? I and my thirty-year-old had something in common with this modern schoolgirl? Pimko seemed downright stupid. And yet he went on warning me against the schoolgirl.

“These are new times!” he continued, “you young ones, you present-day generation. You scorn your elders, and “right off the bat you're on a first-name basis with each other. No respect, no reverence for the past, just dancing, kayaking, America, impulse of the moment, carpe diem, oh, you young ones!”

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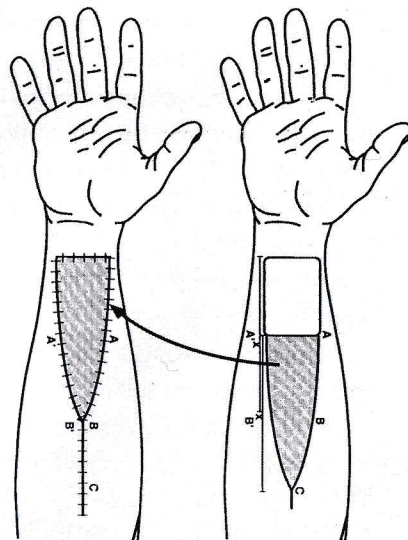
And he went on, fast and furious, flattering my supposed youth and modernity — whereas we were the modern youth, whereas for us it's only legs, whereas whatever else — meanwhile Miss Youngblood stood there, indifferent to everything, picking at her skin, unaware of what was brewing behind her back.

I understood at last what he was up to — he wanted, quite simply, to make me fall in love with the schoolgirl. His scheme was as follows: he would draw me into the girl, so to speak, in one fell swoop, hand me over — from one cute little hand to another — so that I couldn't escape. He was inculcating me with an ideal, and he was quite sure that once I had acquired this paradigm of youth, as Syphon and Kneadus had done, I would remain imprisoned forever. The professor didn't care much what kind of a boy I would become, as long as I never again crept out of boyhood. If he succeeded, right then and there, in making me fall in love, and if he inculcated me with the paradigm of the ideal modern boy, he would then be able to walk away in peace, to embrace his numerous, sundry pursuits, no longer having to personally hold me prisoner to belittlement. And here was a paradox: Pimko, who ostensibly cherished



his superiority above all else, had now deigned to play the humiliating role of an old-fashioned good soul shocked by the modern generation of young women in order to lure me to the schoolgirl. By using his fuddy-duddy, avuncular indignation he was uniting us against himself, and, by means of old age and antiquated ways, he wanted to make me fall in love with youth and modernity. But Pimko had yet another, no less important, goal in mind. To make me fall in love was not enough — he wanted me to bond with her in the most immature way, it would not have served his designs for me to simply fall in love with her, no, he wanted me to become infatuated with that particularly trashy and disgusting young-old, modern-antiquated poetry born of the union of the prewar fuddy-duddy and the postwar schoolgirl. Obviously, the prof wished to participate, however indirectly, in my enchantment. Although utterly stupid, it was all ingeniously conceived, and therefore, imagining that I was totally free of Pimko, I listened to his inept old-uncle flatteries. Stupid me! I didn't know that only stupid poetry can really entangle you!

And out of nothing evolved a monstrous configuration, a horridly poetic cast of characters: there under the window the could-not-care-less, modern schoolgirl, here on the sofa the fuddy-duddy professor bemoaning postwar barbarism, and I, between the two of them, hemmed in by the young-old poetry. God help me! What about my thirty-yearold?! I must leave, leave as fast as I can! But the world seemed to have collapsed and reorganized itself on new principles, the thirty-year-old grew pale again and out-of-date, while the modern one, there by the window, grew ever more alluring. And the accursed Pimko would not let up.



## DON QUIXOTE, WHICH WAS A DREAM (1986)

by Kathy Acker

### THE FIRST PART OF DON QUIXOTE THE BEGINNING OF THE NIGHT: DON QUIXOTE'S ABORTION

When she was finally crazy because she was about to have an abortion, she conceived of the most insane idea that any woman can think of. Which is love. How can a woman love? By loving someone other than herself. She would love another person, she would right every manner of political, social, and individual wrong: she would put herself in those situations so perilous the glory of her name would resound. The abortion was about to take place:

From her neck to her knees she wore pale or puke green paper. This was her armour. She had chosen it specifically, for she knew that this world's conditions are so rough for any single person, even a rich person, that a person has to make do with what she can find: this's no world for idealism. Example: the green paper would tear as soon as the abortion began.

They told her they were going to take her from the operating chair to her own bed in a wheeling chair. The wheeling chair would be her transportation. She went out to look at it. It was dying. It had once been a hack, the same as all the hacks on grub street; now, as all the hacks, it was a full time drunk, mumbled all the time about sex and how no longer not even never did it but didn't have the wherewithal or equipment to do it, and hung around with the other bums. That is, women who're having abortions.

She decided that since she was setting out on the greatest adventure any person can take, that of the Holy Grail, she ought to have a name (identity). She had to name herself. When a doctor sticks a steel catheter into you while you're lying on your back and you do exactly what he and the nurses tell you to do; finally, blessedly, you let go of your mind. Letting go of your mind is dying. She needed a new life. She had to be named.

As we've said, her wheeling bed's name was 'Hack-kneed' or 'Hack-



neyed', meaning 'once a hack' or 'always a hack' or 'a writer' or 'an attempt to have an identity that always fails.' Just as 'Hackneyed' is the glorification or change from non-existence into existence of 'Hack-kneed', so, she decided, 'catheter' is the glorification of 'Kathy'. By taking on such a name which, being long, is male, she would be able to become a female-male or a night-knight.

Catharsis is the way to deal with evil. She polished up her green paper. In order to love, she had to find someone to love. "Why," she reasoned to herself, "do I have to love someone in order to love? Hasn't loving a man brought me to this abortion or state of death?"

"Why can't I just love?"

"Because every verb to be realised needs its object. Otherwise, having nothing to see, it can't see itself or be. Since love is sympathy or communication, I need an object which is both subject and object: to love, I must love a soul. Can a soul exist without a body? Is physical separate from mental? Just as love's object is the appearance of love; so the physical realm is the appearance of the godly: the mind is the body. This's why I'm having an abortion. So I can love." This's how Don Quixote decided to save the world.

What did this knight-to-be look like? All of the women except for two were middle-aged and dumpy. One of the young women was an English rose. The other young woman, wearing a long virginal dress, was about 19 years old and Irish. She had packed her best clothes and jewels and told her family she was going to a wedding. She was innocent: during her first internal, she had learned she was pregnant. When she reached London airport, the taxi-drivers, according to their duty, by giving her the run-around, made a lot of money. Confused, she either left her bag in a taxi or someone stole it. Her main problem, according to her, wasn't the abortion or the lost luggage, but how to ensure neither her family nor any of her friends ever found out she had had an abortion, for in Ireland an abortion is a major crime.

Why didn't Don Quixote resemble these women? Because to Don Quixote, having an abortion is a method of becoming a knight and saving the world. This is a vision. In English and most European societies, when

a woman becomes a knight, being no longer anonymous she receives a name. She's able to have adventures and save the world.

"Which of you was here first?" the receptionist asked. Nobody answered. The women were shy. The receptionist turned to the night-to-be. "Well, you're nearest to me. Give me your papers."

"I can't give you any papers because I don't have an identity yet. I didn't go to Oxford or Cambridge and I'm not English. This's why your law says I have to stay in the inn overnight. As soon as you dub me a knight—by tomorrow morning—and I have a name, I'll be able to give you my papers.

The receptionist, knowing that all women who're about to have abortions're crazy, assured the woman her abortion'd be over by nighttime. "I, myself," the receptionist confided, "used to be mad. I refuse to be a woman the way I was supposed to be. I travelled all over the world, looking for trouble. I prostituted myself; ran a few drugs—nothing hard—, exposed my genitalia to strange men while picking their pockets, broke-and-entered, lied to the only men I loved, told the men I didn't love the truth that I could never love them, fucked one man after another while telling each man I was being faithful to him alone, fucked men over, for, by fucking me over, they had taught me how to fuck them over. Generally, I was a bitch.

"Then I learned the error of my ways. I retired... from myself. Here... this little job ... I'm living off the income and property of others. Rather dead income and property. Like any good bourgeois," ending her introduction. "This place," throwing open her hands, "our sanctus sanitarium, is all of your place of safety. Here, we will save you. All of you who want to share your money with us." The receptionist extended her arms. "All night our nurses'll watch over you, and in the morning," to Don Quixote, "you'll be a night," The receptionist asked the knight-to-be for her cash.

"I'm broke,"

"Why?"

"Why should I pay for an abortion? An abortion is nothing."

"You must know that nothing's free."

Since her whole heart was wanting to be a knight, she handed over the



money and prayed to the Moon, "Suck her, Oh Lady mine, this vassal heart in this first encounter; let not Your favour and protection fail me in the peril in which for the first time I now find myself."

Then she lay down on the hospital bed in the puke green paper they had given her. Having done this, she gathered up her armour, the puke green paper, again started pacing nervously up and down in the same calm manner as before.

She paced for three hours until they told her to piss again. This was the manner in which she pissed: "For women, Oh Woman who is all women who is my beauty, give me strength and vigour. Turn the eyes of the strength and wonderfulness of all women upon this one female, the female who's trying, at least you can say that for her this female who's locked up in the hospital and thus must pass through so formidable an adventure."

One hour later they told her to climb up pale and green-carpeted stairs. But she spoke so vigorously and was so undaunted in her being that she struck terror into those who were assailing her. For this reason they ceased attacking the knight-to-be: they told her to lie down on a narrow black-leather padded slab. A clean white sheet covered the slab. Her ass, especially, should lie in a crack.

"What's going to happen now?" Don Quixote asked.

The doctor, being none too pleased with the mad pranks on the part of his guest, (being determined to confer that accursed order of knight-hood or night-hood upon her before something else happened), showed her a curved needle. It was the wrong needle. They took away the needle. Before she turned her face away to the left side because she was scared of needles, she glimpsed a straight needle. According to what she had read about the ceremonial of the order, there was nothing to this business except a pinprick, and that can be performed anywhere. To become a knight, one must be completely hole-ly.

As she had read—which proves the truth of all writing—the needle when it went into her arm hardly hurt her. As the cold liquid seeped into an arm that didn't want it, she said that her name was Tolosa and she was the daughter of a shoemaker. When she woke up, she thanked them

for her pain and for what they had done for her. They thought her totally mad; they had never aborted a woman like this one. But now that she had achieved knighthood, and acted as she wanted and decided, for one has to act in this way in order to save the world, she neither noticed nor cared that all the people around her thought she was insane.





What they call Motherhood was like this:

They began with a really high degree of social development, something like that of Ancient Egypt or Greece. Then they suffered the loss of everything masculine, and supposed at first that all human power and safety had gone too. Then they developed this virgin birth capacity. Then, since the prosperity of their children depended on it, the fullest and subtlest coordination began to be practiced.

I remember how long Terry balked at the evident unanimity of these women—the most conspicuous feature of their whole culture. “It’s impossible!” he would insist. “Women cannot cooperate—it’s against nature.”

When we urged the obvious facts he would say: “Fiddlesticks!” or “Hang your facts—I tell you it can’t be done!” And we never succeeded in shutting him up till Jeff dragged in the hymenoptera.

“Go to the ant, thou sluggard”—and learn something,” he said triumphantly. “Don’t they cooperate pretty well? You can’t beat it. This place is just like an enormous anthill—you

know an anthill is nothing but a nursery. And how about bees? Don’t they manage to cooperate and love one another as that precious Constable had it? Just show me a combination of male creatures, bird, bug, or beast, that works as well, will you? Or one of our masculine countries where the people work together as well as they do here! I tell you, women are the natural cooperators, not men!”

Terry had to learn a good many things he did not want to. To go back to my little analysis of what happened:

They developed all this close inter-service in the interests of their children. To do the best work they had to specialize, of course; the children needed spinners and weavers, farmers and gardeners, carpenters and masons, as well as mothers.

Then came the filling up of the place. When a population multiplies by five every thirty years it soon reaches the limits of a country, especially a small one like this. They very soon eliminated all the grazing cattle—sheep were the last to go, I believe. Also, they worked out a system of intensive agriculture surpassing anything I ever heard of, with the very forests all reset with fruit- or nut-bearing trees.

Do what they would, however, there soon came a time when they were confronted with the problem of “the pressure of population” in an

acute form. There was really crowding, and with it, unavoidably, a decline in standards.

And how did those women meet it?

Not by a “struggle for existence” which would result in an everlasting writhing mass of underbred people trying to get ahead of one another—some few on top, temporarily, many constantly crushed out underneath, a hopeless substratum of paupers and degenerates, and no serenity or peace for anyone, no possibility for really noble qualities among the people at large.

Neither did they start off on predatory excursions to get more land from somebody else, or to get more food from somebody else, to maintain their struggling mass.

Not at all. They sat down in council together and thought it out. Very clear, strong thinkers they were. They said: “With our best endeavors this country will support about so many people, with the standard of peace, comfort, health, beauty, and progress we demand. Very well. That is all the people we will make.”

There you have it. You see, they were Mothers, not in our sense of helpless involuntary fecundity, forced to fill and overfill the land, every land, and then see their children suffer, sin, and die, fighting horribly with one another; but in the sense of Conscious

Makers of People. Mother-love with them was not a brute passion, a mere “instinct,” a wholly personal feeling; it was—a religion.

It included that limitless feeling of sisterhood, that wide unity in service, which was so difficult for us to grasp. And it was National, Racial, Human—oh, I don’t know how to say it.

We are used to seeing what we call “a mother” completely wrapped up in her own pink bundle of fascinating babyhood, and taking but the faintest theoretic interest in anybody else’s bundle, to say nothing of the common needs of ALL the bundles. But these women were working all together at the grandest of tasks—they were Making People—and they made them well.

There followed a period of “negative eugenics” which must have been an appalling sacrifice. We are commonly willing to “lay down our lives” for our country, but they had to forego motherhood for their country—and it was precisely the hardest thing for them to do.

When I got this far in my reading I went to Somel for more light. We were as friendly by that time as I had ever been in my life with any woman. A mighty comfortable soul she was, giving one the nice smooth mother-feeling a man likes in a woman, and yet giving also the clear intelligence and dependableness I used to assume



to be masculine qualities. We had talked volumes already.

"See here," said I. "Here was this dreadful period when they got far too thick, and decided to limit the population. We have a lot of talk about that among us, but your position is so different that I'd like to know a little more about it.

"I understand that you make Motherhood the highest social service—a sacrament, really; that it is only undertaken once, by the majority of the population; that those held unfit are not allowed even that; and that to be encouraged to bear more than one child is the very highest reward and honor in the power of the state."

(She interpolated here that the nearest approach to an aristocracy they had was to come of a line of "Over Mothers"—those who had been so honored.)

"But what I do not understand, naturally, is how you prevent it. I gathered that each woman had five. You have no tyrannical husbands to hold in check—and you surely do not destroy the unborn—"

The look of ghastly horror she gave me I shall never forget. She started from her chair, pale, her eyes blazing.

"Destroy the unborn—!" she said in a hard whisper. "Do men do that in your country?"

"Men!" I began to answer, rather

hotly, and then saw the gulf before me. None of us wanted these women to think that OUR women, of whom we boasted so proudly, were in any way inferior to them. I am ashamed to say that I equivocated. I told her of certain criminal types of women—perverts, or crazy, who had been known to commit infanticide. I told her, truly enough, that there was much in our land which was open to criticism, but that I hated to dwell on our defects until they understood us and our conditions better.

And, making a wide detour, I scrambled back to my question of how they limited the population.

As for Somel, she seemed sorry, a little ashamed even, of her too clearly expressed amazement. As I look back now, knowing them better, I am more and more and more amazed as I appreciate the exquisite courtesy with which they had received over and over again statements and admissions on our part which must have revolted them to the soul.

She explained to me, with sweet seriousness, that as I had supposed, at first each woman bore five children; and that, in their eager desire to build up a nation, they had gone on in that way for a few centuries, till they were confronted with the absolute need of a limit. This fact was equally plain to all—all were equally interested.

They were now as anxious to

check their wonderful power as they had been to develop it; and for some generations gave the matter their most earnest thought and study.

"We were living on rations before we worked it out," she said. "But we did work it out. You see, before a child comes to one of us there is a period of utter exaltation—the whole being is uplifted and filled with a concentrated desire for that child. We learned to look forward to that period with the greatest caution. Often our young women, those to whom motherhood had not yet come, would voluntarily defer it. When that deep inner demand for a child began to be felt she would deliberately engage in the most active work, physical and mental; and even more important, would solace her longing by the direct care and service of the babies we already had."

She paused. Her wise sweet face grew deeply, reverently tender.

"We soon grew to see that mother-love has more than one channel of expression. I think the reason our children are so—so fully loved, by all of us, is that we never—any of us—have enough of our own."

This seemed to me infinitely pathetic, and I said so. "We have much that is bitter and hard in our life at home," I told her, "but this seems to me piteous beyond words—a whole nation of starving mothers!"

But she smiled her deep contented smile, and said I quite misunderstood.

"We each go without a certain range of personal joy," she said, "but remember—we each have a million children to love and serve—OUR children."

It was beyond me. To hear a lot of women talk about "our children"! But I suppose that is the way the ants and bees would talk—do talk, maybe.

That was what they did, anyhow.

When a woman chose to be a mother, she allowed the child-longing to grow within her till it worked its natural miracle. When she did not so choose she put the whole thing out of her mind, and fed her heart with the other babies.



## SAINT MARTIN'S FOUR WISHES

(13th Century)

trans. Ned Dubin

IN NORMANDY THERE LIVED A PEASANT  
OF WHOM IS TOLD SO QUANT AND PLEASANT  
A FABLEAU THAT I'VE A NOTION  
TO TELL YOU. SUCH WAS HIS DEVOTION  
TO SAINT MARTIN THAT HE'D INVOKE  
HIM IN ALL THINGS HE UNDERTOOK;  
WHETHER ELATED OR DEPRESSED,  
IT WAS SAINT MARTIN HE ADDRESSED;  
EVERY DAY HE CALLED ON SAINT MARTIN.  
THE PEASANT SET OUT ON A CERTAIN  
MORNING, AS WAS HIS WONT, TO PLOW.  
HE'LL NOT FORGET SAINT MARTIN NOW.  
"SAINT MARTIN!" HE CRIED OUT, "GIYYUP!"  
AND THAT'S WHEN SAINT MARTIN SHOWED UP.  
"PEASANT," HE SAID, "YOU HAVE BEEN LOYAL  
TO ME, AND NEVER START TO TOIL,  
NO MATTER WHAT YOUR TASK MAY BE,  
WITHOUT FIRST CALLING UPON ME.  
YOU HAVE WELL EARNED MY SPECIAL FAVOR.  
NOW LEAVE YOUR HARROW, DROP YOUR LABOR,  
AND GET YOU HOME WITH A LIGHT HEART,  
FOR I WILL TRULY DO MY PART  
AND HEREWITH PROMISE I WILL GRANT  
WHATEVER FOUR WISHES YOU WANT,  
BUT USE YOUR WISHES WISELY, FOR  
ONCE THEY'VE BEEN USED YOU'LL GET NO  
MORE

THE PEASANT BOWED LOW TO THE GROUND  
IN REVERENCE, THEN TURNED AROUND  
AND HURRIED HOME WALKING ON AIR.  
THERE'S TROUBLE WAITING FOR HIM THERE.  
HIS WIFE, THE ONE WHO WEARS THE PANTS,  
LIT INTO HIM: "WHAT EVIL CHANCE  
BRINGS YOU HOME NOW, OAF? DID YOU QUIT  
WORK 'CAUSE IT'S CLOUDED UP A BIT?  
YOU'VE HOURS OF DAYLIGHT LEFT FOR TILLING.  
OR IS YOUR PAUNCH IN NEED OF FILLING?  
ARE YOU AFRAID YOU'LL MISS YOUR CHOW?  
YOU'VE NEVER TAKEN TO THE PLOW,  
NO - LIFE FOR YOU IS ONE BIG LARK!  
WE MAY AS WELL SELL OFF THE STOCK  
SINCE YOU WON'T WORK THEM ANYWAY!  
SEE WHAT YOU CALL A WORKING DAY -  
YOU'RE BACK WHEN YOU HAVE SCARCELY  
GONE!"

"DON'T BE UPSET, MY LOVE, KEEP CALM,"  
THE PEASANT SAID. "OUR FORTUNE'S MADE!  
HENCEFORTH OUR BURDENS MAY BE LAID  
ASIDE, OF THAT MUCH I AM CERTAIN.  
BECAUSE I MET UP WITH SAINT MARTIN.  
HE GAVE ME FOUR WISHES TO USE  
AS I THOUGHT BEST. I'VE YET TO CHOOSE;  
I MEANT FIRST TO CONSULT WITH YOU,  
AND AS YOU ADVISE ME TO DO  
I NOW INTEND TO MAKE MY WISHES  
FOR GOLD AND SILVER, LAND AND RICHES."

WHEN SHE HEARD THIS, THE WOMAN REACHED  
TO HUG HIM AND TONED DOWN HER SPEECH.  
"HUSBAND," SHE SAID, "CAN THIS BE SO?"  
"INDEED YES, AS YOU SOON WILL KNOW."  
"MY DEAREST, SWEETEST LOVE," SAID SHE,  
"MY HEART IS YOURS ETERNALLY  
TO LOVE AND SERVE YOU HAND AND FOOT.  
YOU SHOULD REPAY ME GOOD FOR GOOD.  
I ASK YOU, PLEASE, TO LET ME HAVE  
ONE OF THE WISHES THE SAINT GAVE.  
YOU STILL WILL HAVE THE OTHER THREE,  
AND YOU WILL HAVE DONE RIGHT BY ME."  
"HUSH," HE REPLIED, "MY DARLING WIFE!  
I WOULDN'T, NO, NOT ON MY LIFE,  
FOR WOMEN ALL HAVE ADDLED BRAINS.  
WHY, YOU MIGHT ASK TO HAVE THREE SKEINS  
OF HEMP OR WOOL OR LINEN THREAD!  
I REMEMBER SAINT MARTIN SAID  
THAT I SHOULD WISELY USE MY WISHES  
AND ONLY WISH FOR SOMETHING SUCH AS  
WILL BENEFIT US EVERMORE.  
SO I INTEND TO USE ALL FOUR.  
KNOW THAT I'M MORTALLY AFRAID,  
IF I GAVE YOU ONE, THAT INSTEAD  
YOU'D WISH FOR SOMETHING THAT MIGHT DO  
UNTOLD HARM TO BOTH ME AND YOU.  
IF YOU SHOULD WISH I WAS A BEAR  
OR JACKASS, OR A GOAT OR MARE,  
I WOULD BECOME ONE ON THE SPOT.  
I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU LOVE ME: NOT  
MY WISHES, BUT SHE SAID I SHOULD

IN GOOD FAITH WITH BOTH HANDS RAISED HIGH,  
YOU'LL STAY A PEASANT TILL YOU DIE.  
I'LL NEVER WISH YOU OTHER THAN  
YOU ARE, DEARER THAN ANY MAN."

"MY DEAR," HE SAID, "LET IT BE YOURS.  
BY GOD, WHEN YOU WISH, MAKE A CHOICE  
BY WHICH YOU AND I STAND TO GAIN!"  
"I WISH," SHE SAID, "THAT, IN GOD'S NAME,  
THERE SPRING UP PENISES GALORE  
OVER YOUR BODY, AFT AND FORE!  
ON FACE, ARMS, SIDES, FROM HEAD TO FOOT,  
MAY COUNTLESS PENISES TAKE ROOT,  
AND LET THEM NOT BE LIMP OR SLACK:  
LET EACH BE FURNISHED WITH ITS SACK,  
AND LET THEM STAND STIFF AND UPRIGHT!  
NOW, WON'T YOU BE A HORNY SIGHT!"  
THEN, AS SOON AS THE WOMAN SPOKE,  
HUNDREDS OF PRICKS BEGAN TO POKE  
OUT ALL OVER. PENISES GREW  
AROUND HIS NOSE AND HIS MOUTH, TOO.  
SOME PRICKS WERE THICK, SOME OVERSIZED,  
SOME LONG, SOME SHORT, SOME CIRCUMCISED,  
CURVED PRICKS, STRAIGHT PRICKS, POINTED  
AND HARDY...

EVERY BONE IN THE PEASANT'S BODY  
WAS MIRACULOUSLY ENDOWED  
AND PRICKLED, FULLY-COCKED AND PROUD.  
YOU'VE NEVER HEARD WONDERS LIKE THESE!  
PRICKS GROW OUT OF HIS EARS, AND HE'S



AMIDST HIS FOREHEAD, STANDING TALL,  
THE MOST ENORMOUS PRICK OF ALL,  
AND RIGHT DOWN TO HIS FEET HE'S COATED  
WITH PENISES ERECT AND BLOATED.  
FROM TOE TO CROWN HE WAS BEDECKED  
WITH ANTLEERS, BLOATED AND ERECT.  
WEIGHED DOWN BY PENIS UPON PENIS,  
THE PEASANT SAID, "THIS WISH WAS HEINOUS!  
WHY GIVE ME ALL THIS FINERY?  
BETTER TO BE STILLBORN THAN BE  
WITH PRICKS SO OVERGROWN AND CLUTTERED!  
WAS EVER ANY MAN SO STUDDERED?"  
"HUSBAND," SHE SAID, "I'LL TELL YOU WHY.  
YOUR ONE PRICK COULDN'T SATISFY,  
JUST HANGING LIMPLY LIKE A FOX  
STOLE, BUT NOW I'VE A WEALTH OF COCKS!  
YOUR LOT IS LIKEWISE MUCH IMPROVED  
IN THAT, WHENEVER YOU ARE MOVED  
TO TRAVEL, YOU WON'T BE ASSESSED  
TARIFFS OR TOLLS, ALL FOR THE BEST  
I MADE MY WISH, SO DON'T RESENT IT.  
THERE'S NOT A CREATURE HALF SO SPLENDID!"  
THE PEASANT SAID, "I'M NOT AMUSED.  
THREE WISHES MORE ARE YET UNUSED.  
I WISH," THE FELLOW SAID AT ONCE,  
"THAT YOU HAD JUST AS MANY CUNTS  
ON YOU AS I HAVE PRICKS ON ME.  
MAY YOUR CUNTS POP OUT RAPIDLY!"  
AT ONCE THE CUNTS START TO ARISE.  
A PAIR APPEARS BEFORE HER EYES,

AND CUNTS ABOVE AND CUNTS BELOW.

AND CUNTS BEHIND, AND CUNTS IN FRONT,  
EVERY VARIETY OF CUNT—

BENT CUNTS, STRAIGHT CUNTS, CUNTS GRAY  
AND HOARY,

CUNTS WITHOUT HAIR, CUNTS THICK AND FURRY,  
AND VIRGIN CUNTS, NARROW AND TIGHT,  
WIDE, GAPING CUNTS, AND CUNTS MADE RIGHT,  
CUNTS LARGE AND SMALL, OVAL AND ROUND,  
DEEP CUNTS, AND CUNTS RAISED ON A MOUND,  
CUNTS ON HER HEAD, CUNTS ON HER FEET...

THE PEASANT'S JOY IS NOW COMPLETE.

"HUSBAND, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?" SAID SHE.

"WHY HAVE YOU WISHED THIS THING ON ME?"

THE GOOD MAN SAID, "ONE CUNT WON'T DO  
FOR ALL THE PRICKS I GOT FROM YOU.

DON'T BE ALARMED, FOR YOUR CONDITION

WILL LEAD TO WIDESPREAD RECOGNITION:

WHEN YOU GO WALKING, YOU'LL CONTINUE

TO BE KNOWN FOR ALL THE CUNT IN YOU."

"HUSBAND," SHE SAID, "WHAT CAN I SAY?

THAT MAKES TWO WISHES THROWN AWAY,

AND NOW YOU MUST USE ONE TO FIX

US AND REMOVE THESE CUNTS AND PRICKS.

YOU'LL STILL HAVE ONE LEFT OUT OF FOUR,

AND WE'LL BE RICH FOREVERMORE."

THE PEASANT WISHES THEREUPON

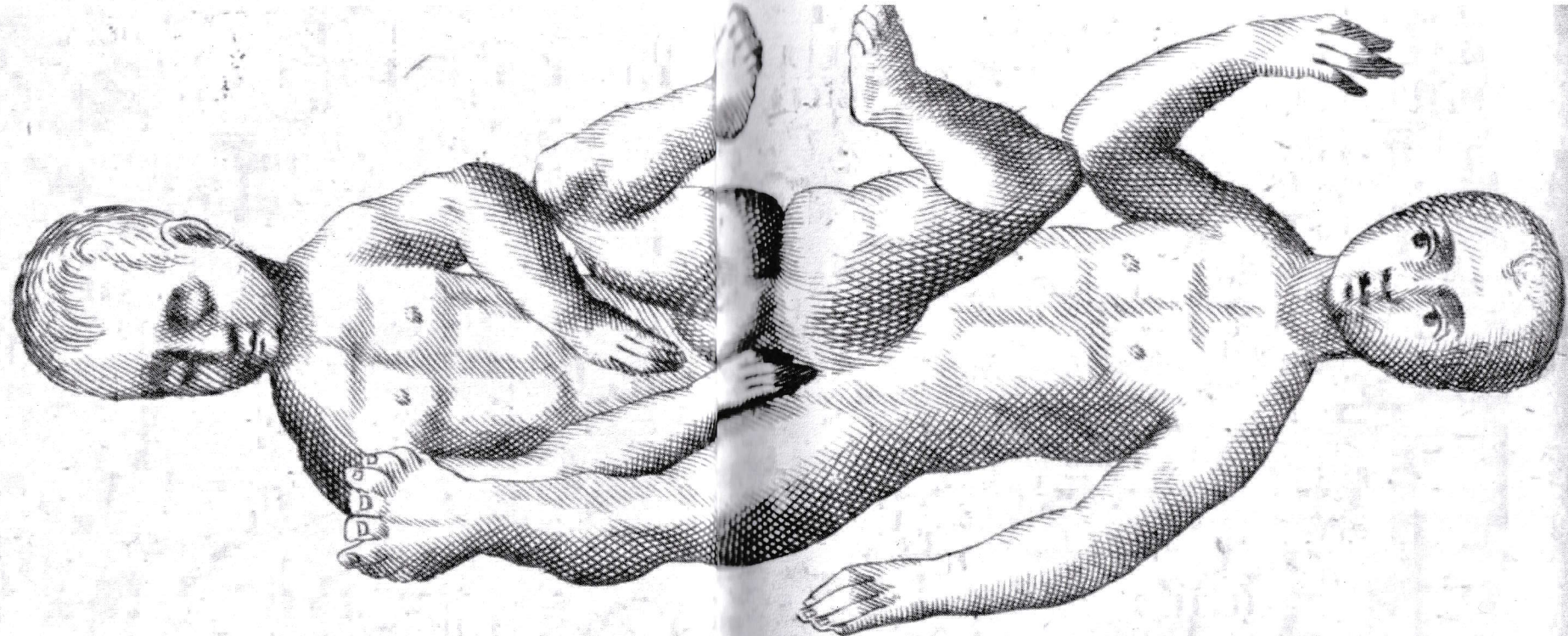
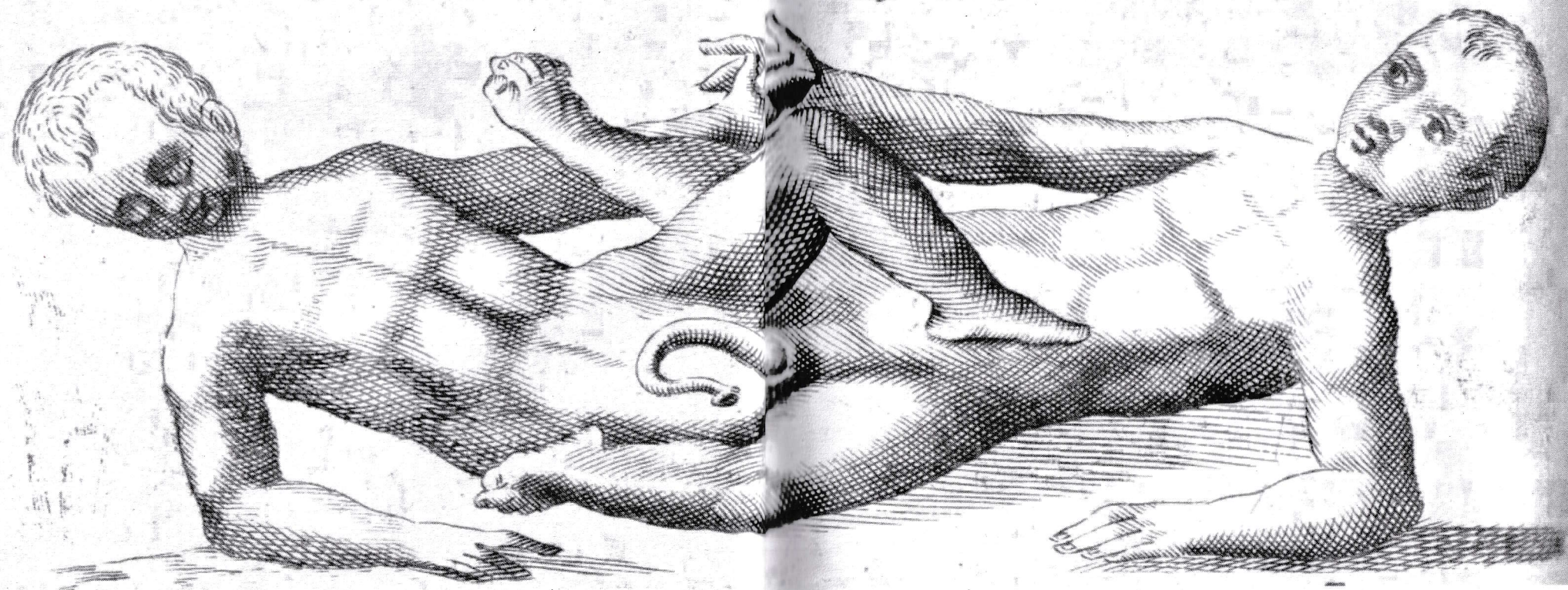
THAT ALL THEIR CUNTS AND PRICKS WERE GONE,

BUT SHE WAS ANYTHING BUT CHEERED

TO FIND HER CUNT HAD DISAPPEARED,

AND HE, TOO, HAD AN AWFUL SHOCK  
TO FIND HIMSELF WITHOUT A COCK.  
BOTH OF THEM WERE EXTREMELY WROTH:  
"HUSBAND, IT'S TIME TO MAKE THE FOURTH  
WISH WE HAVE LEFT TO US," SAID SHE;  
"ONE PRICK FOR YOU, ONE CUNT FOR ME.  
WE'LL RETURN TO OUR FORMER STATE  
NO POORER OFF, AT ANY RATE."  
HE WISHED THE WISH THAT STILL REMAINED;  
AND THUS HE NEITHER LOST NOR GAINED:  
HE GOT HIS PRICK BACK AT THE COST  
OF THE FOUR WISHES, WHICH HE LOST.







## SEE NOW THEN (2013)

Jamaica Kincaid

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It is true that my mother loved me very much, so much that I thought love was the only emotion and even the only thing that existed; I only knew love then and I was an infant up to the age of seven and could not know that love itself, though true and a stable standard, is more varied and unstable than any element or substance that rises up from the earth's core; my mother loved me and I did not know that I should love her in return; it never occurred to me that she would grow angry at me for not returning the love she gave to me; I accepted the love she gave me without a thought to her and took it for my own right to live in just the way that would please me; and then my mother became angry at me because I did not love her in return and then she became even more angry that I did not love her at all because I would not become her, I had an idea that I should become myself; it made her angry that I should have a self, a separate being that could never be known to her; she taught me to read and she was very pleased at how naturally I took to it, for she thought of reading as a climate and not everyone adapts to it; she did not know that before she taught me to read I knew how to write, she did not know that she herself was writing and that once I knew how to read I would then write about her; she wished me dead but not into eternity, she wished me dead at the end of day and that in the morning she would give birth to me again; in a small room of the public library of St. John's, Antigua, she showed me books about the making of the earth, the workings of the human digestive system, the causes of some known diseases, the lives of some European composers of classical music, the meaning of pasteurisation; I cannot remember that I was taught the alphabet, the letters A, B and C one after the other in sequence with all the others ending in the letter Z, I can only see now that those letters formed into words and that the words themselves leapt up to meet my eyes and that my eyes then fed them to my lips and so between the darkness of my impenetrable eyes and my lips that are the shape of chaos before the tyranny of order is imposed on them is where I find myself, my true self and from that I write; but I knew

how how to write before I could read, for all that I would write about had existed before my knowing how to read and transport it into words and put it down on paper, and all of the world had existed before I even knew how to speak of it, had existed before I even knew how to understand it, and in looking at it even more closely, I don't really know how to write because there is so much before me that I cannot yet read; I cannot write why I did not love my mother then when she loved me so completely; what I felt for her has no name that I can now find; I thought her love for me and her own self was one thing and that one thing was my own, completely my own, so much so that I was part of what was my own and I and my own were inseparable and so to love my mother was not known to me and so her anger directed toward me was incomprehensible to us both; my mother taught me to read, she and I at first could read together and then she and I could read separately but not be in conflict, but then, to see it now, only I would write; after she taught me to read, I caused such disruption in my mother's everyday life: I asked her for more books and she had none to give me and so she sent me to a school that I would only be allowed in and admitted to if I was five years old; I was already taller than was expected for someone my age, three and a half years old, and my mother said to me, now remember when they ask you how old say you are five, over and over again, she made me repeat that I was five and when the teacher asked me how old I was I said that I was five years of age and she believed me; it is perhaps then that I became familiar with the idea that knowing how to read could alter my circumstances, that then I came to know that the truth could be unstable while a lie is hard and dark, for it was not a lie to say that I was five when I was three and a half years old, for three and a half years old then was now, and my five-year-old self then would soon be in my now; that teacher's name was Mrs. Tanner and she was a very large woman, so large that she could not turn around quickly and we would take turns pinching her bottom, and by the time she looked to see which of us had done so we would assume a pose of innocence and she never knew which one of us had been so rude and mischievous; and it was while in Mrs. Tanner's presence that I came to develop fully my two selves, then and now, united only through seeing, and it happened in this way: Mrs. Tanner was teaching us to read from book with simple words and pictures, but since I already knew how to



read I could see things within the book that I was not meant to see; the story in the book was about a man who was a farmer and his name was Mr. Joe and he had a dog named Mr. Dan and a cat named Miss Tibbs and a cow who did not have a name, the cow was only called the cow, and he had a hen and her name was Mother Hen and she had twelve chicks, eleven of them were ordinary, golden chicks, but the twelfth one was bigger than the others and had black feathers and he had a name, it was Percy; Percy caused his mother a great deal of worry, for he always would provoke the anger of Miss Tibbs and Mr. Dan by attempting to eat their food; but his mother's greatest worry came when she saw him try to fly up to sit on the uppermost bar of the farm's fence; he tried and tried and failed and then one day succeeded but only for a moment and then he fell down and broke one of his wings and one of his legs; it was Mr. Joe who said, 'Percy the chick had a fall.' I liked that sentence then and I like that sentence now but then I had no way of making any sense of it, I could only keep it in my mind's eye, where it rested and grew in the embryo that would become my imagination; a good three and a half years later, I met Percy again but in another form; as a punishment for misbehaving in class, I was made to copy Books One and Two of Paradise Lost by John Milton and I fell in love with Lucifer, especially as he was portrayed in the illustration, standing victoriously on one foot on a charred globe, the other foot aloft, his arms flung out in that way of the victor, brandishing a sword in one of them, his head of hair thick and alive for his hair was all snakes poised to strike; I then remembered Percy and I do now know Percy.

#### **SPLICE**

SPINES OF BOOK AND READER, ASKEWN BY 45 DEGREES. READING TOGETHER IN GROUPS. BODY AT HALF ELEVATION.

#### **AUTOGRAFT**

CLAD TEXT WITH ITS DOUBLE AT THE DISTANCE OF A LINE. THAT IS, WHILE READING, SPEAK TWICE EACH LINE. IN GROUPS, ONE READER EACH HER PARAGRAPH.

#### **BRIDGE GRAFT**

SCAM THE TEXT WITHOUT MEANING; ON SOME SIGNAL, A SINGLE WORD IS SPOKEN (EACH LIKELY DIFFERENT).  
THUS, VERTICAL THE TEXT.

#### **STUB**

HYPERBOLIC FORM, GIDDY, EXPRESSES ITSELF AGAINST THE INNER SKINS. THAT IS, WHILE READING ALOUD, PLACE EARPLUGS INTO THE EARS. READING OUT LOUD & TOGETHER. PERFORM IN JOY. I

#### **SPLIT THICKNESS**

WHILE PARTNERED, THE MUTUAL, COMFORTABLE TOUCHING OF SKINS IS HAD (E.G. HOLDING HANDS, TOUCHING WRISTS, A DESIRELESS FINGER IN THE NAVEL). THUS, PRACTICE ALTERNATING BETWEEN WANTING NOTHING AND DESIRING EVERYTHING FROM TOUCH AND TEXT ALIKE.

#### **SADDLE**

TWO ROLES: READER AND LISTENER, IN PERPENDICULAR RELATION. L FINDS A SEATED POSITION WITH THE R'S HEAD LAYING IN LAP.

L PLACES HANDS ON THE VOCAL CHORDS OF THE R. HEAD STILL IN LAP, R READS ALOUD THE TEXT. REPEAT AND REPEAT. ALTERNATING ROLES IS ASKED, BUT NOT INSISTED.

#### **CROWN**

SUPPLECLUMP BODIES IN THREES. ARCHITECTING THE LEGS AT TRIANGLES. DOWNCAST DIAPHRAGM, SPEAKLOW, EYES TO EYES WHILE LISTENING.

#### **IMPLANT**

SILENT CHOOSING OF A LETTER WHOSE NOW BOLDING PRESENCE AT THE HEAD OF A WORD SPELLS THAT WORD AS "YELLOW". ALTERNATE THIS CIPHER BY READER. THUS, VERTIGOING AT MONOCHROME.

#### **BUD GRAFT**

ELBOW AND FLOOR. SPEAK ONLY WORDS POISING AT THE COLUMN'S LEFTLY PERIMETER. RETIRE OTHERWISE INTO THE SKIM OF SILENT READING. OSCILITATING AND UNTOGETHERLY.

#### **TONGUE AND WHIP**

TEXT WITHDRAWS (COYLY). READING OUT LOUD AND TOGETHER. WITH CONTESTING DILATION & QUIVERPUPILS.

#### **CLEFT GRAFT**

SITTING BACK AGAINST BACK (NOT NECESSARILY SOLITUDE) AND READING IN ONE'S HEAD; IN THE STRANGE THICK OF READING BY ONE'S SELF. PLEASE, PLEASE, LEAVE AS YOU PLEASE.



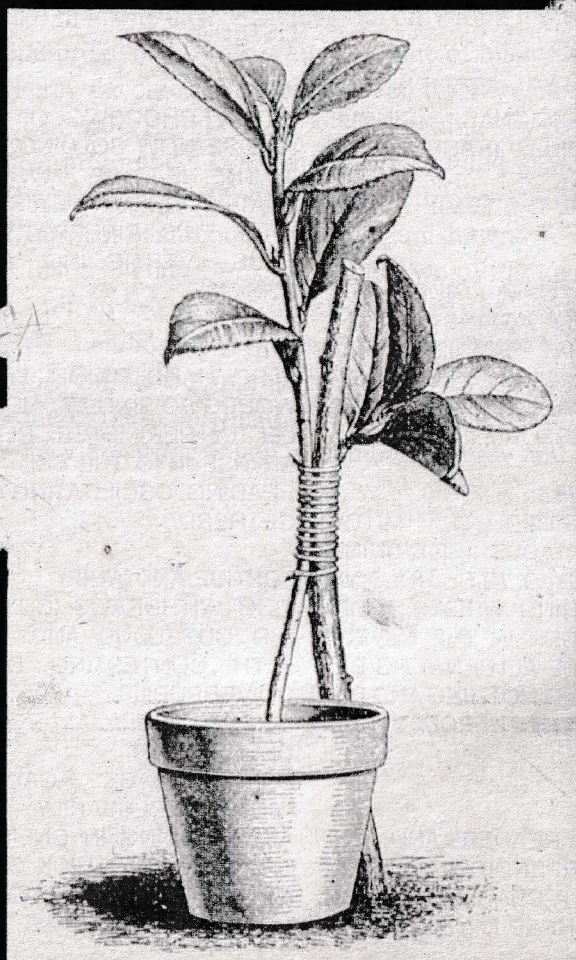


FIG. 145. GRAFTING BY AP