

July Fifth 2019

Readers, Digress

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*from the bestselling novel
by Oscar Wilde*

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*Slow Reading Club is a SEMI-FICTIONAL reading
group founded by Bryana Fritz and Henry Andersen. This
Reader was gathered for a session at Showroom MAMA
on July 5 as part of the exhibition 'Smeared States'.*

**THE
NEEDED
KITCHEN
GEAR**

"Wretch that I am.
Woe's me. A fuck?"

SLOW READING CLUB (SRC) IS A SEMI-FICTIONAL READING GROUP INITIATED BY BRYANA FRITZ & HENRY ANDERSEN IN 2017. THE GROUP DEALS IN CONSTRUCTED SITUATIONS FOR COLLECTIVE READING. SRC LOOKS AT PROBES, AND INTERRUPTS 'READERSHIP' AS A WAY TO STIMULATE THE CONTACT ZONES BETWEEN READER AND TEXT; TEXT AND TEXT, READER AND READER. THE APPARENT BOUNDNESS OF THIS READER OWES ITSELF TO MULTIPLE UNDERSTANDINGS OF CULPABILITY; A SPACE FOR TEXTS TO WRAP LIMBS IN AN ARCHITECTURE THAT PERMITS IT. ENCROACHING LIMBS.

THIS READER HAS BEEN GATHERED TO ACCOMPANY A SESSION AT SHOWROOM MAMA ON JULY 5, 2019 AS PART OF THE EXHIBITION 'SMEARED STATES' CURATED BY LILA ATHANASIADOU. PRINTED IN EDITION OF 50

DON QUIXOTE, WHICH WAS A DREAM (1986)

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 'Hackneyed', 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 'Hackneyed', 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 nighthood 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.

4.

MIMICRY AND LEGENDARY PSYCHASTHENIA (1984)

Roger Caillios
trans. by John Shepley

From whatever side one approaches things, the ultimate problem turns out in the final analysis to be that of *distinction*: distinctions between the real and the imaginary, between waking and sleeping, between ignorance and knowledge, etc. - all of them, in short, distinctions in which valid consideration must demonstrate a keen awareness and demand for resolution. Among distinctions, there is assuredly none more clear-cut than that between the organism and its surroundings; at least there is none in which the tangible experience of separation is more immediate. So it is worthwhile to observe the condition as pathology (the word here having only a statistical meaning) - i.e., all the facts that come under the heading of mimicry.

[...]

There are reasons more immediate, and at the same time less to be suspected of sophistry, that keep mimicry from being taken for a defense reaction. First of all, it would only apply to carnivores that hunt by sight and not by smell as is often the case. Carnivores, moreover, do not generally bother with motionless prey: immobility would thus be a better defense, and indeed insects are exceedingly prone to employ a false, corpse-like rigidity. There are other means: a butterfly, in order to make itself invisible, may do nothing more than use the tactics of the *Satyrde asiatique*, whose flattened wings in repose appear simply as a line almost without thickness, imperceptible, perpendicular to the flower where it has alighted, and which turns simultaneously with the observer so that it is only this minimum surface that is always seen.

The experiments of Judd and Foucher have definitely resolved the question: predators are not at all fooled by homophony or homochromy: they eat crickets that mingle with the foliage of oak trees or weevils that resemble small stones, completely invisible to man. The phasma *Carra-*

5.

sius Morosus, which by its form, colour, and attitude simulates a plant twig, cannot emerge into the open air without being immediately discovered and dined on by sparrows.

Generally speaking, one finds many remains of mimetic insects in the stomachs of predators. So it should come as no surprise that such insects sometimes have other and more effective ways of protecting themselves. Conversely, some species that are inedible, and would thus have nothing to fear, are also mimetic. It therefore seems that one ought to conclude with Cuénot that this is an "epiphenomenon" whose "defensive utility appears to be nul." Delage and Goldsmith had already pointed out in the *Kallima* an "exaggeration of precautions."

We are thus dealing with a luxury and even a dangerous *luxury*, for there are cases in which mimicry causes the creature to go from bad to worse: geometer-moth caterpillars simulate shoots of shrubbery so well that gardeners cut them with their pruning shears. The case of the *Phyllia* is even sadder: they browse amongst themselves, taking each other for real leaves, in such a way that one might accept the fate of a sort of collective masochism leading to mutual homophagy; the simulation of the leaf being a *provocation* to cannibalism in this kind of totem feast.

[...]

This tendency, whose universality thus becomes difficult to deny, may have been the determining force responsible for the present morphology of mimetic insects, at a time when their organisms were more plastic than they are today, as one must suppose in any case given the fact of transformation. Mimicry would thus be accurately defined as *an incantation fixed at its culminating point* and having caught the sorcerer in his own trap.

No one should say it is nonsense to attribute magic to insects: the fresh application of the words ought not to hide the profound simplicity of the thing. What else but *prestigious magic* and *fascination* can the phenomena be called that have been unanimously classified precisely under

the name of mimicry (incorrectly as I see it, one will recall, for in my opinion the perceived resemblances are too reducible in this case to anthropomorphism, but there is no doubt that once rid of these questionable additions and reduced to the essential, these facts are similar at least in their origins to those of true mimicry) phenomena some of which I have reported above.

[...]

Recourse to the magical tendency in the search for the similar can only, however, be an initial approximation, and it is advisable to take account of it in its turn. The search for the similar would seem to be a means, if not an intermediate stage. Indeed the end would appear to be an *assimilation to the surroundings*. Here instinct completes morphology: the *Kallima* places itself symmetrically on a real leaf, the appendage on its hind wings in the place that a real petiole would occupy; the *Oxydia* alights at right angles to the end of a branch because the arrangement of the spot representing the middle veining requires it; the *Cloelia*, Brazilian butterflies, position themselves in a row on small stalks in such a way to represent bell flowers, in the manner of a sprig of lily of the valley, for example.

It is thus a real *temptation by space*.

[...]

I know where I am, but I do not feel as though I'm at the spot where I find myself. To [those schizophrenic subjects] space seems to be a devouring force. Space pursues them, encircles them, digests them in a gigantic phagocytosis. It ends by replacing them. Then the body separates itself from thought, the individual breaks the boundary of his skin and occupies the other side of his senses. He tries to look at *himself from any point whatever* in space. He feels himself becoming space, *dark space where things cannot be put*. He is similar, nor similar to something, but just *similar*. And he invents spaces of which he is "the convulsive possession."

All of these expressions shed light on a single process: *depersonalisation by assimilation to space*, i.e., what mimicry achieves morphologically in certain species. The magical hold (one can truly call it so without doing violence to the language) of night and obscurity, the *fear of the dark*, probably also has its roots in the peril in which it puts the opposition between the organism and the milieu.

Minkowski's analyses are invaluable here: darkness is not the mere absence of light; there is something positive about it. While light space is eliminated by the materiality of objects, darkness is "filled," it touches the individual directly, envelops him, penetrates him, and even passes through him: hence "the ego is *permeable* for darkness while it is not so for light"; the feeling of mystery that one experiences at night would not come from anything else. Minkowski likewise comes to speak of *dark space* and almost a lack of distinction between the milieu and the organism: "Dark space envelops me on all sides and penetrates me much deeper than light space, the distinction between inside and outside and consequently the sense organs as well, insofar as they are designed for external perception, here play only a totally modest role."

The assimilation to space is necessarily accompanied by a decline in the feeling of personality and life. It should be noted in any case that in mimetic species the phenomenon is never carried out except in a *single direction*: the animal mimics the plant, leaf, flower, or thorn, and dissembles or ceases to perform its function in relation to others. *Life takes a step backward*.

THE DEATH OF PIGS
from ALBUM ZUTIQUE (1871)
 Paul Verlaine and Léon Valade
 trans. Radja Hopkins Kaylor

We will sniff in the pissers,
 We will eat pussy from out the sinks,
 And we will lick the household water
 At the risk of getting tickets.

Treading at will to the last modesty
 We will suck the least beautiful old men,
 And stuffing our noses in asses
 We will inhale the candour of the bobos.

On an evening full of cum and cosmetics,
 We will go into an antique brothel
 Shoot a few long and anxious loads.

And the madam opening the doors
 Will sweep - bleary angel -
 The extinct sperm and dead rules.

CLAIRVOYANT JOURNAL (1974)

Hannah Weiner

GO FOR A SAMADHI
feel different

1st CHAKRA
BEGIN
BEGIN WITH ME

Hoorary GET OUT is a JOE musical not an order COME SOON NO I PASS
NO *pass the paper wine* YOU HAVE ORDERS *fix the page* WRONG BAR
Too late u met Michael at the Tin Palace PARTY free pass OMIT to La Mama
good night Bernadette BEGIN Going backwards: QUARTER TO TEN:
see GO OUT WHERE YOU TRY SOBOSSEKS FIRST. *agent London*
ACTION. *don't hesitate* MISS TIN PALACE SEE MICHAEL GO WORDS
He knows an agent WOW *get linoleum* TALK TO MARJORIE see Joe, hello to
Bob *conscious person* at NO
NOW SINGLE DONUTS eat the glazing NO DOUBLEDAY POPULAR
SO ELSE WOWIE DRUNK *leave more space* *don't underline that's an*
order SO WHAT

serious now *don't hesitate* tonight followed all wrong go to bed
no periods orders go to bed glad to get out is New York *don't repeat 3 months*
don't sit down *don't perspire* *don't do it* leave get it *get it at door money*
mother's word *be careful drunk also* HERE where? *bed alright* *don't per-*
spire hear shout NO *don't explain* GO TOMORROW *Explain the interference*
money? it stops you from bed doing what the other words tell you omit DONT GO
BE A FOOL It's 7 1ST CHAKRA see clock DON'T EXPLAIN THE CHAK-
RAS NOW RHYS KNOWS FOUR GO TO BERNADETTE'S it's 7 WOW
BEGIN Going to Phil Glass concert POPULAR WIFE GO TOMORROW
Tomorrow is Joe's musical and a party DONT GO BOTH This is silly
2 MOS *don't comment yourself* SO HUMBLE ENOUGH Rosemary is
back in town. Read THINK Einstein's definition of thinking *Bernadette doing*
No more periods? *pre thought thinking* SO AM I says the refrigerator in the pink bulb GET OUT
Change the bulb Bernadette's MAYER EXPERIMENTS this book is mind con-
trolled the WALK Bernadette language *ex communicate her words* *so through it*
goes through The way I QUOTE to destroy a word is to change its *litters* *too*
heavy Systematically derange the SIS I MUST DO IT *cut it short* SLOW
I QUOTE Pick any word at random let mind play around until ideas pass *try this*
with so SO WITH RHYS it's CHARMING'S word He *believe through*
yourself SAW ME YOUR NOVEL CUT IT SHORT PLEASE PASS THE PAGE
10.

SAVE YOUR BREATH

To Phil's concert GLASS
buy another *4 enough* *special glass* *do alright* saw VERY IMPORTANT OK with a

NO *don't be sorry* went out *don't lie* says the wall that's the *negative* BIG NO
FROM JON's shoulder *tres no* DIDEROT SORRY COUNTING *Diversion*
QUOTE make a pattern of repetitions MARRY SO *alright* SORRY WRITE in
every person & tense Funny, thought HE was Satchidananda's idea and
SCREAM he HE FOR A REASON *pipe down* typing DOUBLEDAY JOHN
What's the matter call Jackson this PERFECT SCREAM lists, puzzles NO GOOD
dictionaries, too much quote NO FUNS NO state the facts REMARKABLE
GOOD FOR YOU READ JULY HUMBLE ENOUGH *take her out* COMMENT
of the book or to dinner? RELAX *protein 31 too tired* *not funny* *one a week* DO
OU OUT *Jackson please breakd* *o* *open the Code you won't be happy* book
to Seemed to, be *don't erase* *Jackson that's funny* quote Has, Have see
Bernadette good for you take Jackson out EAT *one moment* *get yourself upset*
Every appearance of try again, open code RADIO book to SEEMED TO,
EVERY APPEARANCE OF Shall I take you both in tow? unquote WOW
RAYMOND I have a pilot on board ONE MORE CODE JanUary Every
month *be happy* ONE MORE BREAKDOWN *code poem* I QUOTE ME
Broken up, has having FOR YOU *precious* CUT IT SHORT *repetition* *don't*
omit p3 Experiment with OK plagiarism in any form that occurs to Jackson
OPENING 4THE CENTER *Nijole* YOU DO Attempt to eliminate all connota-
tion *eliminate still quoting page* DO THAT PRONOUN THIS AFTER *eliminate*
the message GOOD WORK *talk about word as message, information story*
La Monte word as order *just command* unit of speech Word as instruction
YOU MUST REPEAT SAY NOW You know *petticoat ding a ling* that's
enough quote OPEN NIOLE At Phil's concert, concentrating, eyes closed, felt a
presence ASTRAL over whose shoulder *compliments save a page* *complete* saw
dark green astral image *too late please count* lean over and count *wisper "time"*
don't understand timing that's all OPEN EYES, no one *children please count 123*
was there PHIL'S GRASS absolutely VERY IMPORTANT GLASS SCHE-
DULE Tonight another concert POWERFUL comes in Bernadette go ahead
right write at finish the page at 85 degree angle to the typewriter I SEE
COLORS SEE ONE MORE I LOVE YOU Messages on forehead in colors
of Glass PHIL shirt all reverse *too long* Why didn't call *Nijole* learn that almost
everything that comes from PEOPLE is a *spank* reverse CANCEL appears over
reverse

THE SPACE OF LITERATURE (1955)

Maurice Blanchot

trans. Ann Smock

* * *

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. Novallis 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 tri-umphantly 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.

A LITTLE LAD IN PARIS

Continental

Before the end of the year, Basil Hallward was a critically acclaimed artist living in Paris; he had displayed his portrait of a beautiful lad, Dorian Gray, per request of his dearest friend, and sometimes enemy, Lord Henry Wotton, along with beautifully detailed and colorful landscapes at an art show in the early summer, and won the hearts of everyone almost instantly. The people of Paris were practically throwing money at him. Dukes and princes bidded on and begged Basil Hallward for the portrait of Dorian Gray – he had politely informed them that the portrait was not for sale, and directed them to his other works – and ladies and duchesses hounded him for a masterpiece of their own likeness.

With the unsuspected fortune that his new found “fame” (if one would call it that) brought him, Basil bought a beautiful studio in a more secluded, rural area of France, outside of Paris, with emerald-green rolling hills, and a massive garden tended to by two gardeners. The windows and doors were always open in the following summer, and he spent a great deal of time, when he wasn’t painting, sketching and smoking cigars on a divan in the summer air. He kept one valet and one maid, paid them exceptionally well, and treated them even better. They felt like family to him, and he thought of them as such.

He kept a little lad for himself in Paris, as well, a pretty little thing of 27 years, of Danish origin, with pale blonde hair and the warmest, darkest blue eyes he’d ever seen. He was pale and thin and graceful, well dressed and of a royal bloodline; his name was from Shakespearean Denmark and it rolled off the tongue like poetry. Henry once commented that he looked a little like Dorian Gray, but Basil saw no such thing; his little lad in Paris was everything to him now.

Basil Hallward loved him deeply, just as the boy loved him; they’d been drawn together at the art show where Basil had had his big break. The Danish lad of such high status admiring his art – admiring the artist, actually, the lad would later confess – was what drew the patrons to him. He had loved him from the minute he spoke to him, with his deep, gentle voice, and his even gentler nature.

16.

Now he sat in his sunlit studio, reclining on the divan, with a nice, but not expensive cigarette between his lips, sketching the little lad that sat on his lap, not as an accessory, but as a necessity. The lad stroked his hair continuously, like a worry stone, and kissed his forehead and cheeks and neck every now and then, as if to remind Basil that he was there, that he loved him. A little opal ring glittered on the lad’s left ring finger; they were wed from the moment their lips had first met, he had said once in the garden, dreamily, but Basil bought a ring anyhow, for, as much as he loved his secrets, he wanted the ladies of France to know his boy’s heart was with another.

The lad took the cigarette out of his mouth and replaced it with his own, his dainty fingers caressing the line of Basil’s jaw as he kissed him deeply.

Basil smiled, quite dreamily, as he pulled away from those rose petal lips.

“Will you sit still now, Hamlet?”

The lad sat back on his lap and looked at what Basil was sketching: his likeness holding a skull in his hands, as if he were studying it with morbid curiosity.

“Alas, poor Yorick!” he cried, watching with delight how Basil Hallward threw his head back in that odd way that used to make his friends at Oxford laugh.

“Alas, poor Yorick!”

ROSES AND TURPENTINE

Ruis

“Remind me again why I am sitting here”, he murmured, shaking his head slightly. “Can’t you just, you know, take a photo?” He had been ignored by his friend entirely for the last hour, so instead he’d been absorbed in a music book, occasionally tapping incomprehensible rhythms on the armrest of his chair, a counterpoint to the quiet scratch of brush on canvas. The air smelled of roses and turpentine, and Dorian was growing bored. His voice grew louder and more animated. “It’s not

17.

as if I need a life sized portrait of myself, so if you are not going to use this as part of your graduation project anyway, I don't see why..."

"Hm?" Until now, a hypothetical observer standing in the doorway, observing the scene, might not even have noticed the second young man in the room. Basil had been working quietly, concentrating on his work. Even when he looked up, he seemed to blend in with the background, with his easel, with the canvas on which he was painting something not immediately visible from the entrance. "As I told you before, it's personal. A photo can change, be filtered, be blurred. This will not."

Dorian shrugged. "Suit yourself", he said. "I don't have to understand it. There's nothing wrong with those landscapes, of course. I like them. Love them, even. But really, if you absolutely have to work now, on a summer day like this, you should be working on something for your grade, not... this." While he was speaking, the movement of the paintbrush with its hypnotizing sound slightly slowed but never stopped, and Dorian had the unsettling feeling Basil was not even really looking at him in that moment, was just seeing him as another object of art. He frowned. "I told you. I don't want that picture anyway. So why are you still painting? Art for the sake of art? Now this guy here", Dorian exclaimed, waving his music book in the air, "has some extraordinary ideas about art as well."

Basil had to squint to recognize the writing on the title. He sighed when he read the name Stockhausen. That at least explained why earlier he had not been able to decipher the notation in that book, squiggles and sharp lines and colored dots instead of the music notes he was used to – not that he was an expert on those, of course. "So that's what you are working on now?", he asked instead of answering. "No matter what I think of that noise people insist on calling music, I really don't think I can agree with him on the matter of art. Let me guess – Henry suggested this as the topic of your thesis? He really is a bad influence on you. You should have stuck to Schumann, I would have been happy to lend you the sheets. But anyway, you sat perfectly still today, and I'm almost finished with the painting. Do you want to look?"

Laughing, Dorian got up and walked over to the canvas. An invisible observer might have noticed Basil's blush when Dorian put his hand on Basil's shoulder, might have heard Dorian's sharp intake of breath

when he looked at the picture – but certainly, they'd clearly observe the contrast between those two, would have judged Dorian extraordinarily handsome, beautiful even, and Basil perfectly ordinary if not actually plain. Still, Basil looked quite content while Dorian contemplated the canvas.

Motionless, Dorian stood there, quiet for a longer time than Basil was used to from his friend. When he finally spoke, it was unexpected. "I hate it", he said. He was not thinking of how his words might hurt Basil. Rather, for the first time, he became aware of something all the world's photo filters had been able to hide from him, that he looked like this, right now, on this day of June, and would never be quite the same. Already, he was ten minutes older than the face looking back at him from the canvas. He remembered something Henry had told him in seminar the other day, of youth and only living once while the flowers outside the atelier would bloom again next summer... And it only hit home right then. It was unacceptable and horrified him profusely. "Is that really what I look like to you?"

When he answered, Basil did not look at him at all. "I've often enough told you how beautiful you are. You never seemed to mind." He swallowed. "You can't mean to tell me this picture doesn't look good. I know it does. It might be my best work so far, and you think it's bad?" Again, there was silence, this time not even broken by brushstrokes, until quietly, bitterly, Dorian started to laugh.

"Oh, it's beautiful, all right. I love it, and maybe it's even a part of myself you're showing. Or rather yourself? Isn't that the problem? Hasn't that always been your problem, Basil? You see something beautiful and you love it. All the paintings and sculptures and installations, so what am I to you? Another beautiful thing? Sometimes I believe you would prefer me as something in a museum, a beautiful and cold and dead thing. Would you love me then? If I were like this picture, timeless and forever beautiful? Oh, now I know why you're handing in those landscapes. You're a great painter, but you are a coward, Basil, and maybe you always were."

Sighing, Basil began to rummage around until finally, between his pencils and brushes and paint tubes, he found what he'd been looking for: his palette knife, the one he usually just used for backgrounds

because it was not suited to detailed and delicate work. "A coward, you say?" And with that, unhesitating, he slashed the canvas. "Here. I would not want a mere painting, a bit of canvas and paint, to come between us, so... It's yours now. You can frame it if you want. Maybe it's even better than before like this, according to your standards." Almost relieved, Dorian grinned at Basil. "You're right", he said. "It's art now, when it wasn't before. Wouldn't have thought you a Stockhausen fan, though."

DORIAN GRAY'S NEW HOUSE

dt8b0t

What a view- Paris is as beautiful as Dorian had heard. The window of the mansion on a hill by Paris was filled with a sight almost as perfect as it's current viewer. Strangely enough, even though he'd come there to "monitor" the renovation of his new house multiple hours ago, he hadn't looked out the window even once up to that moment. He was enjoying himself so far- the builders were muscular and sweaty, just the way he liked them. Though he must admit, the hunt wasn't very amusing that day- they were all generic, easy prey. Dorian licked his beautiful upper lip as he thought of the excitement unique prey brings to the chase.

He looked back inside, shaking off his thoughts. He was just starting to plan how he would ravage his fourth of the day, when he came in: tall and mysterious, his body language composed and suspecting, yet arrogant, his eyes revealing intelligence while his face is covered by a mask that Dorian's experienced eyes recognize as hand made. The architect's voice and way of speaking revealed experience in singing as he ordered builders around; the grace of his movements as he directed them showed the dexterity of an artist or musician, maybe even both. The picturesque teen's mouth began to water- unique prey indeed. He seemed to be an intellectual: Dorian could not wait to melt his brain into goo.

Dorian had to wait until the job on his house was done- a second thought had told him it'd be problematic if the architect in charge of the entire renovation would get too attached. Something about human emotions and heartbreak or whatever.

But the awaited day had finally come- the job was finished, and Dorian generously threw a party for his employees (he's kind and beautiful.

ful. Just kidding. He's only beautiful.). While ignoring the flirting of the eleven employees he'd gotten to know more closely, he hosted as perfectly as he does anything else, while giving extra attention to a certain mystery-boy.

After multiple hours, the workers finally went home- even the persistent flirtatious ones, and the ones who'd stay by the food table until a) there won't be any food left or b) they'd be removed by force.

The prey turned to leave with the late workers. "Wait, architect? Do you have a bit more time this evening?"

The man stopped walking and turned around to see a young beauty sitting on the couch, leaning on it's side. The teen smiled warmly and patted the seat beside him, making his body language as welcoming as possible.

"Yes, I think so... why?" the stranger said as he walked up to the couch. He sat down a bit farther from Dorian than he was supposed to, wearing an mistrusting expression.

Dorian didn't let it faze him. "Well, first of all, you never told me your name."

"It's Erik."

"Erik~ so you're an architect for a living? How long have you worked with this agency?" Dorian shifted on the sofa to face him.

"Not long. I've... had a few changes in my life recently." He didn't seem happy to think about it.

"These thoughts don't seem to make you happy..." Erik chuckled bitterly. "Maybe you could do without thinking for the evening?"

"What do you m-" but Dorian was already on his knees on the sofa, closing the distance between them, and putting a hand on Erik's chest- "m-mean?"

Dorian leaned over his prey and whispered in his ear, knowing the feeling of his breath on the other man's neck would be driving him mad. "I'm sure you already know."

The man beneath him gasped. Dorian looked into his eyes, who were shining so desperately that Dorian's ego grew even larger than its average everyday size.

Then, suddenly, the prey closed his eyes and seemed to shake off the feeling. He slipped from the couch and stood up, leaving the hunter to fall gracelessly on the sofa, having rested his weight on this idiotic bastard.

Dorian was burning with frustration. He was so close! And this little.

Fucking. Idiot.

There are knives in his kitchen. 'Erik' wouldn't be his first.

He took a deep breath and ended his second-long almost-tantrum. He turned to his prey while putting on an innocent, hurt expression. "What happened? Do you dislike me?"

"No it's not you it's... I'm..." he looked away from Dorian. "It's too good to be true. People... don't want me."

"And is that a reason to break my heart?"

The architect looked back at him in surprise.

"Would you withhold yourself from me for the way some other people have treated you?"

"Well I, um, I..."

Dorian stepped off of the couch in a subtly sexy way, so subtle you'd think it's unintentional.

"Oh, loosen up, you. Won't you like a bit of fun?" He winked seductively, knowing he'd already won.

A pause, and the architect slowly leaned above him, and touched his short, flawless nose with the big bump in his mask where the nose would be. Dorian kissed his prey, then moved his lips to skim their way to his cheekbones, through the neck's side and onto the nape of his neck, where he gave Erik a long, soft kiss. All the while, the other man's hands were tightening their bodies together, first with gentle, fragile caution and then with utter desperation. Something about the way these hands were working throughout his torso gave him the feeling that they pet lovingly as well as they can choke in bloodlust, much like his own. Dorian started sucking on the nape of the architect's neck, and then realized something: They were in his home. What if the man would want to stay? What if he started to clean the house and imply commitment? Oh no, they can't do it here...!!

Dorian stopped to look into his victim's eyes with a playful expression.

"I want to show you a place."

22.

The teen tried to think up a place for them to be while taking the architect by the hand and going out of the house. He didn't quite know the area, but the trees over there looked like part of a forest. Luckily, they were. It was a bit strange, how willingly this man followed Dorian - an almost-complete stranger - to what could be a perfect murder. From experience, he could get away with it if he wanted to. On the other hand, the dick had always ruled over the brain.

In the depth of the forest, only seen by the birds and only judged by the faraway stars, a pure-faced sinner forced his prize's back to a tree and kissed the breath out of his lungs. In seconds, the century-old-teen's shirt was already on the ground, and hands were going through his hair, all over his skin. Dorian started a thorough research beneath the clothes of his mystery man, from the chest downwards. Then 'Erik' pulled his hands from Dorian, quickly unbuttoned his shirt and continued his previous task - that is, mashing the bodies together like there's no tomorrow. The teen wondered what instrument the man plays, and how well he must play it, with that dexterity and speed which he's showing tiny bits of. He could think of a certain flute he'd like him to play, but he already has other plans for this man. Dorian moved his mouth from the architect's, whether because kissing upwards for so long started hurting his neck, or because he wanted a closer look on what the open shirt revealed. His lips moved around the body in front of him in a downward course as straight as him, that is to say, often going sideways and with occasional circles. The musician weakened his pressure on Dorian's skin and was now gently petting everywhere from the young man's belt line to the tips of his hair, softly and lovingly, not leaving a millimeter untouched. The teen slipped a hand beneath Erik's underwear and held his ass. He couldn't tell what was more delightful: the firm roundness in his hand or the loud gasp above him. Either way, it was clear who was going to be top tonight :).

The morning after, Dorian woke up to see the man beside him still sleeping. He was slightly worried the man would have difficulty sitting in the near future. Just kidding. He didn't care. He quickly and quietly put on his clothes - he had decades of practice avoiding consequences - and was turning to leave, when he noticed the one thing yesterday's one was still wearing. A special little white mask. This prey took a while to cap-

23.

ture, and yet, he knew so little about him. Looking at him now, he seems to be at his late twenties to early thirties. But Dorian didn't quite care about the man's age or his life story- he was curious about his mysterious, white, hand- made mask.

Dorian could, technically, care less about the man's privacy, but only if he detested the concept of him keeping his privacy, and hated privacy in general. The teen gingerly removed the mask off of the sleeping face in front of him, and looked at it in the morning light seeping through the leaves.

Only it wasn't quite a face. It was a horrible, twisted, agonizing sight, and it was somewhat stuck to a head, but Dorian couldn't quite call it a face. Yet it was staring at him, eyes closed but bone peering, surrounded by scars and veins and things that were supposed to be skin, should have been skin, all where they weren't supposed to be, together presenting something utterly non-human.

It was as if his own soul was looking at him, reminding him of the horrors he had left in his trail.

Dorian put the mask back gently, not to wake the sleeping man. He put the strap back as it were before. He walked to his house, not glancing half a glance behind him. When he entered, he locked the door.

BLOOD AND GUTS IN HIGH SCHOOL (1978)

Kathy Acker

Janey's all alone in her room. She's learning Persian slowly:

this peasant
that peasant
good peasant

(Note the endings here:)

a better peasant
this peasant is better
than that one.
the best peasant

(or:)

a better peasant
the best peasant

(the word (good) is deviant:)

the best peasant of
this democracy.
this peasant is the
best of all.

(is not) (more) (room) (one)

this is the only room,

Janey wrote,
(Is not) (other) (a thing) (chair) there is only a chair.

(there's no word for "cot".)

THIS SEX WHICH IS NOT ONE (1977)

Luce Irigaray

trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke

Janey is a peasant.
Janey is expensive,
but cheap.
the peasant is the street.
language
to get rid of language

The Looking Glass, from the Other Side

Alice's eyes are blue. And red. She opened them while going through the mirror. Except for that, she still seems to be exempt from violence. She lives alone, in her house. She prefers it that way, her mother says. She only goes out to play her role as mistress. Schoolmistress, naturally. Where unalterable facts are written down whatever the weather. In white and black, or black and white, depending on whether they're put on the blackboard or in the notebook. Without color changes, in any case. Those are saved for the times when Alice is alone. Behind the screen of representation. In the house or garden.

But just when it's time for the story to begin, begin again, "it's autumn." That moment when things are still not completely congealed, dead. It ought to be seized so that something can happen. But everything is forgotten: the "measuring instruments," the "coat," the "case," and especially the "glasses." "How can anyone live without all that?" Up to now, that's what has controlled the limits of properties, distinguished outside from inside, differentiated what was looked on with approval from what wasn't. Made it possible to appreciate, to recognise the value of everything. To fit in with it, as needed.

There they are, all lost, without their familiar reference points. What's the difference between a friend and no friend? A virgin and a whore? Your wife and the woman you love? The one you desire and the one you make love with? One woman and another woman? The one who owns the house and the one who uses it for her pleasure, the one you meet there for pleasure? In which house and with which woman does—did—will love happen? And when is it time for love, anyway? Time for work? How can the stakes in love and work be sorted out? Does "surveying" have anything to do with desire, or not? Can pleasure be measured, bounded, triangulated, or not? Besides, "it's autumn," the colors are changing. Turning red. Though not for long.

No doubt this is the moment Alice ought to seize. Now is the time for her to come on stage herself. With her violet, violated eyes. Blue and red. Eyes

(Translate into English:)

I listened to the smouldering ship's engines that were carrying me alone, and relaxed. I shouldn't have. I should have grabbed a buoy and jumped overboard; flagged down a passing tramp to carry me straight back to the Athens Hilton and the airport.

1. Is there a black head here?
2. Yes Mrs (Janey), it's near.
3. This head isn't Janey's. (Lit. This head isn't the property of Janey.)

that recognise the right side, the wrong side, and the other side: the blur of deformation; the black or white of a loss of identity. Eyes always expecting appearances to alter, expecting that one will turn into the other, is already the other. But Alice is at school. She'll come back for tea, which she always takes by herself. At least that's what her mother claims. And she's the only one who seems to know who Alice is.

So at four o'clock sharp, the surveyor goes into her house. And since a surveyor needs a pretext to go into someone's house, especially a lady's, he's carrying a basket of vegetables. From Lucien. Penetrating into "her" place under cover of somebody else's name, clothes, love. For the time being, that doesn't seem to bother him. He opens the door; she's making a phone call. To her fiancé. Once again he slips in between them, the two of them. Into the breach that's bringing a woman and a man closer together, today at four o'clock. Since the relationship between Lucien and Alice lies in the zone of the "not yet." Or "never." Past and future both seem subject to quite a few risks. "That's what love is, maybe?" And his intervention cuts back across some other in-betweens: mother-Alice, Lucien-Gladys, Alice-her friend ("She already has a friend, one's enough"), tall-short (surveyors). To mention only what we've already seen.

Does his intervention succeed? Or does he begin to harbour a vague suspicion that she is not simply herself? He looks for a light. To hide his confusion, fill the ambiguity. Distract her by smoking. She doesn't see the lighter, even though it's right in front of her; instead she calls him into the first bedroom where there must be a light. His familiarity with the house dispels the anxiety. He goes upstairs. She invites him to enjoy her, as he likes. They separate in the garden. On of them has forgotten "her" glasses by the telephone, the other "his" cap on the bed. The "light" has changed places.

He goes back to the place where he works. She disappears into nature. Is it Saturday or Sunday? Is it time for surveying or love? He's confused. There's only one thing to do: pick a fight with a "cop." The desire is compelling enough to make him leave at once.

No more about cops, at least for the time being. He finds himself (they find each other) near the garden. A man in love and a man in love with a woman who lives in the house. The first asks the second or rather the second asks the first, if he can go (back) and see the woman he loves. He is beginning to be frightened, and begs to be allowed . . . Afterward.

Good (common or proper) sense—any sense of propriety or property—escapes Lucien. He gives things out, sets them in motion, without counting. Cap, vegetables, consent. Are they his? Do they belong to the others? To his wife? To somebody else? As for what is his, it comes back to him in the dance. Which does not prevent him from allowing others to take it. Elsewhere.

So he comes (back) in. It's teatime. She . . . She? She who? Who's she? She (is) an other . . . looking for a light. Where's a light? Upstairs, in the bedroom, the surveyor the tall one, points out cheerfully. Pleased at last to come across a specific unquestionable, verifiable fact. Pleased that he can prove it (himself) using $a + b$, or $1 + 1$, that is, an element that repeats itself, one that stays the same and yet produces a displacement in the sum; pleased that it's a matter of a series, of a sequence. In short, of a story. Might as well say it's true. That he had already been there. That he . . . ? That she? Was? Wasn't? She.

For the vegetables no longer prove anything. "I must have eaten them." "I" who? Only the "light" is left. But it isn't there to shore up the argument. And even if it were, no trace of what has happened would remain. As for attesting that the light has moved from here to there, or stating that its current whereabouts are known, or naming Alice's room as the only place it can be found, these are all just claims that depend on "magic."

Alice has never liked occultism. Not that the implausible surprises her. She knows more than anyone about fabulous, fantastic, unbelievable things . . . But she's always seen what she talks about. She's observed all the marvels first-hand. She's been "in wonderland." She hasn't simply imagined, "intuited." Induced, perhaps? Moreover, from a distance. And across partitions? Going through the looking glass, that's something else again.

Besides, there are no traces of such an adventure in that gentleman's eyes. It's a matter of nuances. So if it's urgent for him to get out of the house at once. He won't? Then she's the one who'll leave, who'll desert it. The out-of-doors is an extraordinary refuge. Especially in this season, with all its colors. He too goes into the garden. Right up close. So one no longer has the right to be alone? Where is one to go? If the house and the garden are open to all comers. Omniscient surveyors, for example. It's imperative to hurry and invent a pretext they can't get too. Curl up somewhere protected from their scheming eyes, from their inquiries. From their penetration. Where?

**THE WOMAN WHO WAS FUCKED AND
FUCKED OVER FOR A CRANE** (13th century)

Garin

trans. Ned Dubin

30. HOWEVER MUCH I HAVE BEEN LAX
SINCE FIRST I WAS SET TO THIS TASK,
I'LL NOW COMPOSE A FABLIAU
ABOUT SOMETHING I CAME TO KNOW
IN VÉZELAY BY THE EXCHANGE.
IT'S NOT AT ALL WITHIN THE RANGE
OF MY PURPOSE TO SAY WHO TOLD IT;
IT'S SHORT ENOUGH AND SOON UNFOLDED,
BUT LISTEN, IF YOU'RE CURIOUS.

GARIN THE STORY-TELLER SAYS
THAT ONCE THERE LIVED A CASTELLAN,
NEITHER A FOOL NOR UNCOUTH MAN,
BUT COURTLY, AND WELL-CULTURED TOO.
HE HAD A WORTHY DAUGHTER, WHO
WAS BEAUTIFUL BEYOND COMPARE,
BUT THE CASTELLAN DIDN'T CARE
THAT ANY MAN HAVE CONVERSATIONS
OR SEE HER, SAVE ON RARE OCCASIONS.
HE KEPT HER SHUT UP IN A TOWER,
HE LOVED HER SO, AND WOULD ALLOW HER
ONLY HER NURSE FOR COMPANY—

NO SILLY, FOOLISH WOMAN, SHE,
BUT WORLDLY-WISE AND DISCIPLINED,
WHO SAW TO IT HER CHARGE WAS PENNED
AND OVERSAW HER EDUCATION.

31. WHILST ENGAGED IN THE PREPARATION
OF THE GIRL'S BREAKFAST, IT OCCURS
ON ONE FINE MORNING TO THE NURSE
THAT THEY COULD USE ANOTHER PLATE,
AND OFF SHE HURRIES, DOESN'T WAIT,
BACK TO THEIR HOME, WHICH WAS QUITE
NEAR,
TO FETCH THE NEEDED KITCHEN GEAR.
SHE DIDN'T THINK TO LOCK THE TOWER.
A YOUNG MAN AT THAT VERY HOUR
CAME WALKING BY THERE, AND HE HAD
A CRANE HE RECENTLY HAD BAGGED
CLUTCHED IN HIS RIGHT HAND.

NOW, THE GIRL,
WHO LIKED TO LOOK OUT AT THE WORLD,
WAS SITTING BY THE WINDOW-PANE
AND SAW HIM PASS BY WITH THE CRANE.
SHE CALLED TO HIM AND SAID,
"MY FRIEND, WHAT BIRD HAVE YOU THERE IN
YOUR HAND,
ON YOUR FATHER'S SOUL?" HE EXPLAINS,
"BY ORLÉANS AND ALL HER SAINTS,
MY LADY, IT'S A LARGE, FINE CRANE."

THE GIRL REPLIES, "IN GOD'S OWN NAME,
IT'S FAT AND FAIR AND JUST MATURE;
I'VE NEVER SEEN ITS LIKE, I'M SURE.
I'D BUY IT FROM YOU, IF I COULD."
"MY LADY," HE SAYS, "WELL AND GOOD.
IF THAT WOULD PLEASE YOU, I WILL SELL."
"WHAT ARE YOU ASKING FOR IT, TELL?"
"MY LADY, FOR A FUCK IT'S YOURS."
"SAINT PETER HELP ME NOW, BECAUSE
I HAVEN'T ANY FUCK TO TRADE!
GOD KNOWS, IF I HAD, WE'D HAVE MADE
A BARGAIN QUICKLY—I'M NOT CHEAP—
AND THE CRANE WOULD BE MINE TO KEEP."
"LADY," HE SAYS, "SURELY YOU JEST.
I CERTAINLY WOULD NOT SUGGEST
A FUCK UNLESS YOU HAD A LOT.
BE QUICK AND PAY ME WHAT YOU'VE GOT."
SHE SWEARS TO GOD THAT, JUST HER LUCK,
SHE'S NEVER EVER SEEN A FUCK.
"YOUNG MAN," SHE SAYS, "COME ON UP NOW
AND LOOK FOR YOURSELF HIGH AND LOW,
'NEATH BED AND BENCHES, ALL AROUND,
TO SEE IF A FUCK CAN'T BE FOUND."

THE YOUTH, WHO WAS WELL-BRED AND
COURTLY,

CAME TO HER IN THE TOWER SHORTLY,
PRETENDING TO SEARCH THOROUGHLY.
"LADY," HE SAID, "IT SEEMS TO ME

THERE MAY BE ONE UNDER YOUR DRESS."
SHE'D NOT MUCH SENSE AND KNEW STILL
LESS,
TOLD HIM, "COME, FELLOW; HAVE A LOOK."
WITHOUT DELAY THE YOUNG MAN TOOK
HER IN HIS ARMS WITH MIGHT AND MAIN
WHO WAS ENAMORED OF HIS CRANE,
PLACED HER IN BED AND GRABBED HER SHIFT
AND HIKED IT UP, WENT ON TO LIFT
HER LEGS WAY UP AND HELD THEM HIGH,
AND HER CUNT QUICKLY CAUGHT HIS EYE,
AND ROUGHLY HE THRUST IN HIS ROD.
"YOUNG MAN, YOU'RE SEARCHING MUCH TOO
HARD!"

THE MAIDEN SAYS, SIGHING AND GASPING.
THE YOUNG MAN COULDN'T KEEP FROM
LAUGHING,
INVOLVED TO THE HILT IN HIS GAME:
"IT'S JUST I'M GIVING YOU MY CRANE—
TAKE FULL POSSESSION OF THE BIRD."
"YOU NEVER SPOKE A TRUER WORD,"
THE GIRL SAYS; "NOW BE OFF WITH YOU!"
HE LEFT HER SAD AND THOUGHTFUL, TOO,
WENT FROM THE TOWER AND TRAVELED ON,
AND HER NURSE CAME BACK THEREUPON
AND SAW THE DAMSEL WITH THE CRANE.
SHE TREMBLED, AND THE BLOOD DID DRAIN
OUT OF HER FACE, AND SHE WAS SHORT:

"YOUNG LADY, WHAT'S THIS BIRD? WHO
BROUGHT
IT HERE? NOW TELL THE TRUTH TO ME!"
"I BOUGHT IT JUST NOW, HONESTLY,
FROM A YOUNG MAN, WHO SOLD THE BIRD
AND BROUGHT IT IN HERE, YOU'VE MY WORD."
"WHAT DID YOU PAY?" "ONE FUCK, NO MORE;
I GAVE HIM NOTHING ELSE, BE SURE."
"WRETCH THAT I AM! WOE'S ME! A FUCK?
HOW COULD I HAVE SUCH AWFUL LUCK
AS TO HAVE LEFT YOU HERE ALONE?
I CURSE MY MOUTH FOR WHAT I'VE DONE
THAT EVER IT ATE OR DREW BREATH!
32. I DESERVE TO BE PUT TO DEATH
AND WILL BE, TOO, I THINK, QUITE SOON!"
YOU'D THINK THE NURSE ABOUT TO SWOON
AND FALL TO THE FLOOR ALTOGETHER,
BUT STILL SHE SETS OUT TO DEFEATHER
THE CRANE AND DRESS IT FOR THE POT:
A GARLIC SAUCE, SHE SAYS, IS NOT
WHAT'S CALLED FOR—PEPPER'S HER INTEN-
TION.

(I OFTEN HAVE HEARD PEOPLE MENTION
IN MANY PLACES THAT I'VE BEEN:
"ADVERSITY THAT ENDS UP IN
THE POT AT LEAST GIVES SOME SMALL COM-
FORT.")
SOME IT MAY PLEASE AND SOME DISCOMFIT,
SO WHAT?—THE NURSE SEASONS THE CRANE

AND THEN HAS TO GO OUT AGAIN
TO GET A KNIFE TO OPEN IT,
AND THE YOUNG GIRL RETURNS TO SIT
DOWN BY THE WINDOW AND LOOK OUT.

SHE SAW THE YOUNG MAN, STILL ABOUT
AND GLAD OF WHAT HAD TAKEN PLACE.
THE MAIDEN CALLED HIM STRAIGHTAWAYS
AND SAID, "COME BACK HERE, SIR, AND QUICK!
MY NURSE WAS ANGERED TO THE QUICK
BECAUSE YOU TOOK MY FUCK AWAY
WHEN YOU SOLD ME YOUR CRANE TODAY.
DO GIVE IT BACK, AND BE SO KIND
NOT TO BEGRUDGE IT ME OR MIND.
COME HERE, AND LET US TWO MAKE PEACE."

33. "MISSY, I'LL DO JUST AS YOU PLEASE,"
THE YOUNG MAN SAID; THEN UP HE CAME
AND STRETCHED HER OUT AND DID THE SAME:
HE WENT BETWEEN HER LEGS AND POUNDED
THE FUCK RIGHT BACK WHERE HE HAD FOUND
IT.

WHEN HE HAD DONE, HE DIDN'T STAY,
BUT TOOK HIS CRANE AND WENT AWAY
INSTEAD OF LEAVING IT BEHIND.
THE NURSE RETURNED, THINKING SHE'D FIND
THE CRANE AND PUT IT UP TO ROAST.
"DON'T HURRY; IT'S ALL LABOR LOST,"
THE MAIDEN TOLD THE WOMAN, "FOR
THE MAN WHO JUST WENT OUT THAT DOOR

UNFUCKED ME AND TOOK BACK HIS BIRD."
THE NURSE, NO SOONER HAD SHE HEARD,
MADE OF HER GRIEF SUCH A DISPLAY
AND CALLED DOWN CURSES ON THE DAY
SHE'D LEFT THE MAIDEN IN THE TOWER
THAT DAY FOR SOME MAN TO DEFLOWER:
"WHY WAS I GIVEN YOU TO WATCH?
SO HEEDLESSLY HAVE I KEPT WATCH
THAT HERE YOU HAVE BEEN FUCKED AGAIN
AND I DON'T GET A BIT OF CRANE!
I GAVE THE MAN HIS CHANCE MYSELF:
"THE CARELESS SHEPHERD FEEDS THE
WOLF!"

DIANA AT HER BATH (1980)

Pierre Klossowski

trans. Steven Sarterelli

...*Nec nos videamus labra Dianae*...

"Indeed, Madame, there is no proof that you yourself aren't the Father of the Gods: did he not assume your sweet countenance to persuade the most faithful of your companions? Only a moment ago I saw you holding Callisto in your arms. Only a moment ago, I said—for, don't you know, we can evoke that scene at any time if not forever. But if the divine can thus exchange its fearsome forms for more agreeable ones, and thereby lead the souls of its worshippers to their destruction, would I not have just cause to suspect. . . . " These last words, barely formed, remained at the back of his throat; already the horns were sprouting from his forehead, already his nose and his jaw were growing long; talk became useless for him; his eyes reflected a joy which, however innocent it still might feel, intermingled with animal terror; and then this terror became imbued with the shame of the bathing goddess, and all that was virginal in this shame turned into an eagerness to flee, to seek refuge in the goddess's fleece; a dying man, wanting to explain himself further, to excuse himself politely, dutifully; but then the decent pose he had assumed, one foot placed slightly in front of the other on the tufts of grass, suddenly became the unseemly tribute of a beast rearing up on its hind legs, offering itself, its member enormous, menacing the deity with its offering. Did Diana herself thus hope to create cause for astonishment, with her act of metamorphosis? With one hand she had just cast water in his face, but as she was pronouncing the sentence, already she was withdrawing the other hand from the space between her thighs, and whether as of that moment she had initiated Actaeon, or having already initiated him thus admitted him to her final rite, or whether, lastly, she thus put an end to her theophany, by this very gesture she uncovered her vermilion vulva, uncovered her secret lips. Actaeon sees those hellish lips open at the very moment that the spray of water streams over his eyes, blinds him and stands up. His thought finds its fulfilment in the horns sprouting from his forehead,

and the shock of such a realisation drives him forward; his arms having become legs, his hands cloven hooves, he's not even surprised to see them resting, in the twinkling of an eye, on the divine shoulders, his whole furry belly quivering against the dazzling skin of the goddess's dripping flanks; and then suddenly the quivering is Diana's own at the moment a man dares to touch her, Diana's quivering when her hand that she knows to be as murderous as it is beautiful, grasps a lascivious beast by the snout and feels the tongue stroking her palm, the waters rolled by the stag-man's stamping feet and the movements of the goddess's long legs closing together and spreading apart, the horned creature panting, the unarmed huntress moaning—she howls through the voices of her nymphs, and laughs in her howling. He knocks her down in his neophyte animal clumsiness, she wriggles away, slips and he falls back down on her and in her: Ah! To be so close to the goal, yet so far. . . . And the pall of silence thwarting his need to speak sets him on fire.

But Diana's trick is never to complete the metamorphosis entirely, to leave him still with some part of his person: Actaeon's legs, torso and head are now those of a stag, but while his right arm is no longer but a furry leg and his hand but a cloven hoof, his left arm and hand remain intact, and in this lacuna lies a hesitation on the part of the goddess, and a kind of challenge: how far will his impulse, still dominated by his vision, venture to go while a beastly ardor invades him? The goddess in her nonchalance goes so far as to leave him his hunter's tunic, which floats over his stag-man's limbs, while his hunting-horn, slung across his chest, swings back and forth, striking the thighs of the bathing goddess; in this state his front foot, formerly his right hand, sliding from the goddess's shoulder and along her back, which is turned to him in resistance, tries to lean against her hip and, winding round the flank in little starts and passing over the belly, seeks in vain to reach the pubis, while she, with eyes lowered and a smile lightly curling her tight lips, tolerates it for a moment; and, indeed, with his still intact left hand he grabs, in terror, the breast that he cannot prevent himself from caressing; she, turning right about but as though watching him from the corner of her eye, raises her arm, uncovering the armpit into which he then pokes his muzzle avidly but with a frightened eagerness, his tongue at last licking her nipple; and in the most splendid body she has yet assumed, Diana shudders . . .

OBLIQUE FUNCTION... Spines of book and reader, askewn by 45 degrees. Reading together in groups. Body at half elevation.
(45° Tilt)

TWICING 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.

VERTICAL Scam the text without meaning; on some signal, a single word is spoken (each likely different). Thus, vertical the text.

EARPLUGS 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.

TRIANGLES Suppleclump bodies in threes. Architecting the legs at triangles. Downcast diaphragm, speaklow, eyes to eyes while listening.

SKIN ON SKIN 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.

WHITE NOISE 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. Oxyecotton noising from the wings. Alternating roles is asked, but not insisted.

MONOCHROME Silent choosing of a letter whose now bolding presence at the head of a word spells that word as "yellow". Alternate the cipher by reader. Thus, vertigoing at monochrome.
(Yellow)

STROBE Text withdraws (cooly). Reading out loud and together. With contesting dilation and quiverpupils.

BACK TO BACK 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.



