

From an “Epic without Organs”

- 1. *The Illusionist*, 2. *The Seeress*, 3. *The Queen*,**
- 4. *The King*, 5. *The Philosopher*. ***

THE ILLUSIONIST

My love,

“A... Heavily break
the waters
B... extending
over the plains
Γ... they cover
the land
Δ... in low places,
where
E... there are no
obstructions,
shores form
and whirlpools
Z... strike the earth
H... with water.
Θ... The waters spread
I... on all that lives
and moves,
K... obstructions
give way and
Λ... submerged is
the land of
M... Mu.
N... Peaks only
Ξ... appear above
the waters,
O... whirlwinds
blow around
Π... and little by little,
P... until there comes
Σ... cold air. Before
where valleys
existed, are
Υ... now abysses,
cold depths.
In circular places
Φ... mud formed.
Χ... A mouth
Ψ... opens, vapors
Ω... come forth and

It was at this same time
in a distant past
that we first mourned
our beloved child, Es.

Then, as now,
Delta, Neutron and Playtex
were aligned in the sign
of The Cross-Eye, Colors
brightened and sadness
touched our souls.

How well I remember
this brilliant Red sky, and
the sea so glossy White...

If the Porno continues to
blow as it has, even with
the Nirvana against us,
we should be reaching
the Waters of Torus
in six Days.

The crew's morale
for the most part
is holding up well,
although Don Juan,
the Chief Mate,
was recently seized
with madness and jumped
over the side, screaming.

Two Prayer Flags were
flown in remembrance:
S'un (Number 9)
and *C'iao* (Number 33).

volcanic sediments.”
Col. James Churchward,
“The Greek alphabet
and its esoteric meanings,”
in *The Lost Continent of Mu*.

“A monk asked Jōshū,
‘Does a dog have
the Buddha nature?’
Jōshū answered: ‘*Mu*.’”
Zen koan.

“Etnean gasps! /
Vesuvian acclamations!”
Melvin Tolson, “*Mu*,”
in *Harlem Gallery*.

““While you are sheltered
here, the magnificent city
of Puhar... is being swallowed
into the belly of the ocean.
I will explain why.””
Chithalai Chathanar,
Manimekalai, Canto XXV.

“The fall (bababadalgha-
raghtakamminarronn-
konnbronntonnerronn-
tuonnthunnnawnskaw-
toohooorderenthurnuk!)
... retaled...”
James Joyce,
Finnegans Wake.

“I find letters from God
dropped in the street.”
Walt Whitman,
Leaves of Grass.

“Here is the alchemist’s key,
it unlocks secret doors.”
H. D.,
The Walls Do Not Fall.

“Several billion years
from now, there will be

Our linkup with the Indian
fleet seems likely to occur
in the Georgian Sea.

There is still no explanation
for the sudden alien presence
in the Orionis Ripple.

Latest readings
from the S/S MARU,
the Byzantine scout vessel
furthest afar of our forces,
indicate that the alien ships
are engaged in what appears
to be a Defensive maneuver.

Their armada presents
four different fronts,
equal in length, positioned
along two lines.

These lines, according
to the S/S MARU, bisect
each other and continue
to revolve in opposite
directions, periodically
forming a single row.

Other reports claim
the ships are equipped
with oars as well as sails.

Intelligence is divided
on this matter.

Tarzan believes
such findings are true,
but Venus and Maria,
her colleagues, disagree.

With the growing sense
that Fate is deep at work

a last perfect day. Then,
over a period of millions
of years, the sun will swell...
Eventually the sun will fill
most of the sky.”
Carl Sagan,
Cosmos.

“My Life had stood –
a Loaded Gun –”
Emily Dickinson (764).

my love becomes stronger.

The memory returns
of our time together
by Panama Crater,
on the eve of the last
New Age.

I hope to read you soon.

Your lover,

S.

THE SEERESS

Dear S.,

No sooner were you off
at sea than phantoms
came to visit me,
wearing skeleton costumes
and masks.

“What? No cool buttocks to pet
but your own?” they’d say,
and puff on cigarettes.

I sent them away
with a three-fingered curse,
but the knot in my heart
quickly tightened.

The signs have arrived
that tell of new times.

Since your departure
for the Orionis Ripple,
events have followed
a disturbing course.

The Youth especially
have been causing alarm.

They flaunt their nakedness.

They take to the streets
in unruly gangs, where
they strike obscene poses
and scream.

No longer sweet-tempered
and dear to behold,
they perform Masturbation
while uttering poems.

“Let us learn that we are
nothing and the Tarot will
have divulged its last secret.”

Oswald Wirth,
*The Tarot of Medieval
Image-Makers.*

“...There is this angel
who’s coming toward you
as you are coming
toward him. And there’s
a moment when you pass
through your angel and
become the fact that you are
without any chance
involved with another figure
who is you, who is coming
toward you in time as you
proceed forward in time. And
at the moment that you pass,
you then are something that
that angel was, and you’re
no longer that thing you were.
Charles Olson, “On History,”
in *Muthologos.*

“After us the Savage God.”
William B. Yeats,
The Trembling of the Veil.

“Load up on guns,
bring your friends / It’s fun
to lose and to pretend.”
Nirvana,
“Smells like Teen Spirit,”
in *Nevermind.*

“The simplest Surrealist act
consists of dashing down

They dance on the Sabbath,
euphoric and wild,
cursing their parents and Elders,
declaring themselves
“Masters of the Last Word.”

The Youth of Valium,
long famed for the beauty
of their rear ends, are making
more havoc than most.

Their leader is an arrogant boy
by the name of McDonalds,
whose Sex is said to
be high all the time.

Invoking the theme
of “Violent Green Freeze,”
he calls for an order based
on their law and exhorts
his companions to riot.

Though little is known
of their ultimate goals,
they gather on beaches
in secret groups
and wait for new Youth
to rise from the sea.

It remains to be seen
if this practice will spread.

Nor is it clear
if the new arrivals conspire
in a larger scheme.

Everywhere,
their number is increasing,
as is their beauty.

According to rumor,

the street, pistol in hand,
and firing blindly, as fast
as you can pull the trigger,
into the crowd.”

André Breton,
Manifesto of Surrealism.

“It is difficult to write
a Paradiso, when all
the superficial indications
are that you ought
to write an Apocalypse.”

Ezra Pound,
in D.G. Bridson, “A.B.C.
interview with Ezra Pound,”
New Directions 17.

“I am certain of nothing
but of the holiness of
the Heart’s affections and
the truth of Imagination.”

John Keats,
“Letter to Benjamin Bailey.”

“There is further an art
which imitates by
language alone, without
melody, in prose or
in verse, and if in verse,
either in some one
or in a plurality
of meters. This form of
imitation is to this day
without a name.”

Aristotle,
Poetics.

“As a wife has a cow,
as a wife has a cow,
a love story. Has to be
as a wife has a cow
a love story. Has made as
to be as a wife has
a cow a love story. When
he can, and for that when
he can, for that. When he

the Initiation of Youth
is now taking place
on a clandestine basis.

More troubling still,
the few Initiations held of late
have met with odd results,
a development lending support
to the view that outsiders
are tampering with mysteries
of the flesh.

It was only recently that
I saw the problem firsthand.

I had lost 19 cents
playing Cards
at a saloon called
Le Joie de Vivre,
and was on my way
to the Wetlands.

Near Marienbad
I reached a temple
where a crowd was gathered,
and the rites had just begun.

In keeping with custom,
the associate officer read
from *The Book of Jiminy*,
while the assistant officers
poured bottles of sparkling water
into a large basin
lined with mosaic.

Family and close friends
looked down from a balcony,
while off to one side
a fiddler and piper
created a dreamlike Sound
through the ongoing patterns
they played.

can and for that when he
can. For that. When he can...

And to in six and another.

And to and in and six
and another. And to and in
and six and another. And to
in six and and to and
in and six and another. And
to and in and six and
another. And to and six and
in and another and and to
and six and another and and

to and in and six and
and to and six and in
and another. In came in there,
came in there come out of
there. In came in come out
of there. Come out there in
came in there. Come out of
there and in and come out
of there. Came in there, come
out of there. Feeling or for
it, as feeling or for it,
came in or come in, or
come out of there or feeling
as feeling or feeling as for
it. As a wife has a
cow. Came in and come out."

Gertrude Stein,

"As a Wife Has a Cow:
A Love Story."

"Just as all fiction
first found extensive
embodiment in poetry,
so is it in poetry that
we first encounter
the permanent entry
of the weird into
standard literature."

H. P. Lovecraft,
*Supernatural Horror
in Literature*.

"Evening paper, second edition /
Evening paper, third edition /

At first, nothing unusual
marked the proceedings.

The lovers waited
in separate chambers
at opposite ends of the hall,
remaining unseen
till the pool was full
and the music had stopped.

Then they came into view
and began their approach—
he, Kirkor by name,
handsome, tall and able-bodied;
she, Sumella, equally fine,
with healthy breasts
and a slender waist.

Walking in step,
they reached a halt
and stood face-to-face
with the water between them.

The priestess and priest
followed next, blessing them
with incense.

Before they had even embraced,
there was an ominous sign.

When Kirkor and Sumella
entered the water,
its sparkle went flat.

They immersed themselves
nonetheless, ignoring the trouble;
as soon as their bodies
made contact, the water
was fizzing once more.

Foreplay, however,
took no time at all,
and the water

Evening paper, latest edition /
Tomorrow morning's paper /
Read about the new end
of the world! / The latest news
of the world's end! /
World's end tomorrow! /
World's end day after tomorrow!
... Evening papers, evening
papers, evening papers! /
The night at noon, the noon
at night / The night at noon! /
Eight o'clock edition /
Nine o'clock edition /
Ten o'clock edition /
Eleven o'clock edition /
Midnight edition...
1:00 A.M. edition /
1:00 A.M. morning edition /
1:00 A.M. morning edition...
Third evening edition /
One o'clock morning paper /
Panic in Berlin! /
The New York Press coming
to witness the word's end!"
Kurt Schwitters and Kate Steinitz,
"Collision: A Science-Fiction
Opera Libretto in Banalities."

"A child must exist, so be it."
David Henderson,
in Ornette Coleman,
"Science Fiction."

"When you meet a Gethenian
you cannot and must not
do what a bisexual naturally
does, which is to cast him
in the role of Man or
Woman, while adopting
towards him a corresponding role
dependent on your expectation
of the patterned or possible
interactions between persons
of the same or the opposite sex.
Our entire pattern of sociosexual

quickly came to a boil.

Propped up against the side
of the basin, the girl encircling
the boy with her legs,
they heaved and panted intensely,
without respite, venting
their passion at a frantic pace.

It was only a little while
later that smoke began to appear.

In a matter of moments,
it thickened into a velvety cloud
that poured from the basin,
forming a strange mass from
which long strands were escaping.

The lovers, hidden from view
and letting out wild cries of
rapture, were near the height
of their enjoyment when a ghastly
Sound ripped through the air.

Climax came almost at once,
with a billow of smoke
so huge that it plunged
the whole room in a Fog!

There was silence while
the haze slowly dispersed.

The tension kept building—
until all eyes were fixed on
the site where this odd event
had occurred, and where
the last of the smoke hovered
like a large bubble.

Finally, out of the pool
stepped a dark man
with a thin mustache.

He surveyed his surroundings

interaction is nonexistent here.

They cannot play the game.
They do not see one another
as men or women.

This is almost impossible
for our imagination to accept.

What is the first question
we ask about a newborn baby?

Yet you cannot think
of a Gethenian as “it.”

They are not neuters.

They are potentials, or
integrals... One is
respected and judged only
as a human being. It is
an appalling experience.”

Ursula Le Guin,
The Left Hand of Darkness.

“Become who you are!”

Friedrich Nietzsche,
Thus Spake Zarathustra.

“Poetry is not knowledge
of oneself, and
still less the experience
of a distant possibility
(of that which previously
was not), but the simple
evocation with words of
possibilities beyond reach.”

George Bataille,
Hatred of Poetry
(*The Impossible*).

“When we do escape,
it is of immense importance
that we know the language.”

Charlotte Parns Gilman,
Herland.

“I was clothed with confusion.”

H. D.,
End to Torment:
A Memoir of Ezra Pound.

with an air of indifference,
then stood with his arms crossed.

In the usual manner, after having
been offered a towel, the man
was told of his previous form
as the maiden Sumella.

He showed little response,
occasionally glancing to and fro.

His wife was slow to follow.

She was ugly and squat, with
short fair hair and fair skin.

She moved awkwardly,
making her way out
of the water and coming up
next to the man.

She was welcomed as an Elder,
reborn of Kirkor, after which
the two of them stood
surrounded by silence—
he, beginning to fidget;
she, timidly looking around.

The bundles were then
brought forth, six in all.

It was a rare case,
part of Southern tradition,
when for reasons unknown
a leprosarium offers both
Initiates an extra choice.

They were thus presented
with three bundles each,
and the woman was asked
to choose her clothing first.

Confused and hesitant,
she pointed to the bundle

“She was all charm, beauty, and
perfect grace, with a forehead
like the new moon, eyes like
those of a deer or wild heifer,
eyebrows like the first crescent
in the month of Sha’ban, cheeks
like red anemones, mouth
like the seal of Solomon, lips
like red carnelian, teeth like a row
of pearls set in coral, neck
like a cake for a king, bosom
like a fountain, breasts like a pair
of big pomegranates resembling
a rabbit with uplifted ears, and belly
with a navel like a cup that holds
a pound of benzoin ointment.”
Tales of the 1001 Nights.

“*Fay ce que tu voudras...*”
 (“Do what thou wilt.”)
Rabelais,
Gargantua.

“We pulled off our clothes
and pushed naked together
in Bacchic fury.”
Apuleius,
The Golden Ass.

“Thus, says Suvarnanabha,
these different ways of
lying down, sitting, and standing
should be practised in water,
because it is easy to do so therein.
But Vatsyayana is of opinion
that congress in water
is improper, because it is
prohibited by the religious law.”
Vatsyayana,
Kama Sutra.

“The only destiny with which
we are born is the destiny of ritual.”
Clarice Lispector,
The Passion According to G. H.

on her right, which was found
to contain a T-shirt and jeans.

After dressing to general
applause she said nothing,
but stared at the floor
and sucked on her fingers.

Then the man exclaimed
it was his turn to choose.

He wanted the bundle
on the left, and signaled
to have it undone.

It contained a uniform:
matching shirt, pants and
a visored cap, plus a belt
onto which was fastened
some sort of club—
a sinister stick, not straight
but curved in shape,
rounded and smooth at the end.

He put on the clothes,
and, raising his arms
in a gesture of greeting,
announced that his name
was Monroe.

He honored thereafter
the dictates of custom,
thanking the congregation,
although a certain unnaturalness
about him was peculiar.

Before leaving, Monroe declared
his joy on becoming an Elder,
then turned and kissed his wife.

“The woman’s name,”
he added, “is Lee.”

“Insistence on birth at the wrong
season is the trick of evil.”
Alfred North Whitehead,
Process and Reality.

“Albi. I’ll be, You’ll be.
Al’ll be. / Eventually
we’ll all be.”
Ed Dorn,
“Albi, a Day Trip.”

“Then she opened up
a book of poems /
And handed it to me /
Written by an Italian
poet / From the thirteenth
century. / And every one
of them words rang true /
And glowed like burnin’ coal /
Pourin’ off of every page /
Like it was written
in my soul / From me to you.”
Bob Dylan,
“Tangled Up in Blue,”
in *Blood on the Tracks*.

“Every epoch
dreams its successor.”
Jules Michelet,
Future! Future!

“When you set out for Ithaka /
pray that your road’s
a long one, / full of adventure,
full of discovery. / Laistrygonians,
Cyclops, angry Poseidon—
don’t be scared of them...
you won’t encounter them /
unless you bring them along
inside you / unless your soul
raises them up in front of you.”
C. P. Cavafy,
“Ithaka.”

“polis is / eyes”
C. Olson,

The Maximus Poems.

As they walked from the temple,
the husband went first
with a swaggering air, while
his barefooted wife wobbled along,
following him at a distance.

They continued down to the valley,
toward the Silicon Lagoon.

The common feature
that seemed to mark them
was in their eyes.

Neither Lee nor Monroe
upon coming to life
had the Colorless eyes of Youth;
but despite their Color,
the eyes appeared dull
and less than human.

No light shone from within.

According to H. Ecolagicus
the Proconsul,
this was an unfavorable omen.

The emergence of Elders
like Lee and Monroe,
with their shallow gaze
and deviant manner,
seems to coincide
with another development
that I learned about from Pleiades.

We were in *Le Rendez-Vous*,
a saloon where the ouzo is
excellent and Card Players gather.

During our talk Pleiades told me
that he had recently noticed
on a statue of Armstrong,
overlooking Bayrouth,
a small glowing object stuck

“Zeus, the god of gods, who
rules according to law, and
is able to see into such
things, perceiving that
an honourable race was
in a woeful plight, and wanting
to inflict punishment on them,
that they might be chastened and
improve, collected all the gods
into their most holy habitation,
which, being placed in
the centre of the world,
beholds all created things.
And when he had called them
together, he spake as follows—”

Plato,
Critias.

“On the shores of Gitche Gumee, /
Of the shining Big-Sea-Water, /
Stood Nokomis, the old woman, /
Pointing with her finger
westward, / O’er the water pointing
westward, / To the purple
clouds of sunset. / Fiercely
the red sun descending / Burned
his way along the heavens, /
Set the sky on fire behind him, /
As war-parties, when retreating, /
Burn the prairies
on their war-trail...”

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow,
The Song of Hiawatha.

“Holderlin called the lyric /
‘the continuous metaphor
of a feeling,’ / the epic,
‘the metaphor / of an intellectual
point of view.’”

Ken Irby,
“Jed Smith and the Way.”

“Inanna placed the *shugurra*,
the crown of the steppe,

to the side of her neck.

More are being discovered,
although I have not seen them.

Solid and round and soft
to the touch, they are often
spotted on ceilings or walls,
hidden or just out of reach;
yet of their origins, or
the means by which they
stay fixed, nothing is known.

They may be able to travel.

For the Muthologists
these mysterious beads
are tears—the tears of Atlas,
filtering into our land—
though whether they stem
from her joy or her sorrow
is uncertain.

Between the recent quirks
in nature's order and
an alien fleet on the far
reaches of the sea
looms the specter of Death.

That we as parents
should find our thoughts turning
to the memory of one
we loved so completely
makes conditions more painful.

What failed in us then,
when the idea took hold
that our child would never
be seen or heard from again,
seems now to have its echo
in the world.

The truth—regardless
of whether Es fell

on her head...

When she leaned against
the apple tree, her vulva
was wondrous to behold. /
Rejoicing at her wondrous
vulva, the young woman
Inanna applauded herself."

"Inanna and the God
of Wisdom," in *Inanna:
Queen of Heaven and Earth*
(ed. D. Wolkstein and S. Kramer).

"Coming into this matter
is hard. My way of telling about
these things is raw."

G. Bataille,
Madame Edwarda.

"Nine at the beginning means: /
Hidden dragon. / Do not act."
I-Ching (tr. R. Wilhelm).

"Venerandam, /
In the Cretan's phrase, with
the golden crown, Aphrodite, /
Cypri munimenta sortita est,
mirthful, orichalchi, with golden /
Girdles and breastbands,
thou with dark eyelids / Bearing
the golden of bough Argicida.
So that: /"
E. Pound,
Cantos, I.

"It is hard to say to what extent
Moses de Leon expected
his work in the Zohar actually
to be accepted as an ancient
and authoritative Midrash, or
how far he intended to create
a compendium of Kabbalah
in a suitable literary form."
Gershom Scholem,
Kabbalah.

"All art is essentially poetry."

in the Limbo Abyss
or the ones at Eden
or Ur—
is that together
we have gone on.

And our world will go on,
despite the unpromising signs.

I wait to hear from you.

Your lover,

A.

Martin Heidegger,
“The Origin of the Work of Art.”

“Art is the only twin life has—
its only valid metaphysic.”

C. Olson,
“Human Universe.”

“But look where sadly
the poor wretch comes reading.”

William Shakespeare,
Hamlet.

THE QUEEN

Dear A.,

“I moved the chair up
to the shelves. I took
down a book I knew
only too well—
the second volume
of Hughes and Eugel’s
old *History of Solaris*—
and started flipping
through it, resting the thick,
stiff spine on my lap.
Solaris had been discovered
almost a hundred years
before I was born.
The planet orbits two suns,
a red one and a blue one.
For over forty years
no spaceship came near to it.”
Stanislav Lem,
Solaris.

“You would have thought
the craft had two keels—
one cleaving the water,
the other the air—
as the boat churned on
through both opposing
elements at once.”
Herman Melville,
Moby Dick.

“For archaeological analysis,
contradictions are neither
appearances to be overcome,
nor secret principles to be
uncovered. They are objects
to be described for themselves,
without any attempt being
made to discover from what
point of view they can be

We have crossed
the Waters of Torus
and are sailing
onto parts of the sea
untraveled since the time
of our ancestors.

I think of you often.

You are my only refuge
from the fear that I feel
as we venture
so far from home.

The alien nature
of our surroundings,
however subtle,
is unmistakable.

The sky seems almost violent
in its Redness.

The sea looks different too:
its surface is more active,
as if stirred by wilder forces.

Even the stars are more Fiery.

The Aura of strangeness,
as well as the fear
felt by the crew,
are not likely to last; but
judging from our recent transit
a hazardous course lies ahead.

Of immediate concern to me
as Navigator is the tension

dissipated, or at what level
they can be radicalized and
effects become cause.”

Michel Foucault,
The Archaeology of Knowledge.

“Nature loves to hide.”

Heraclitus,
Fragments.

“Look into ether and holy sea.”

Friedrich Hölderlin,
Hyperion.

“Where are we? / and what is
the answer? /... ‘The sea-roads lie
between / you and the answer.’”

H. D.,
Helen in Egypt.

“It is not down in any map;
true places never are.”

H. Melville,
Moby Dick.

“We have no map.”

H. D.,
The Walls Do Not Fall.

“... We are now in mid-sea,
surrounded by untried
possibilities and things
undiscovered—we can
no longer choose,
we must be conquerors,
now that we have no land
in which we feel at home
and in which we would fain
survive. A concealed “yea”
is driving us forward,
and it is stronger than all
our “nays.” Even our strength
no longer bears with us
in the old swampy land:
we venture out into the open,
we attempt the task.

between Möbius the Mapper
and Occam the Weatherwoman.

Both are still novices,
having served for
just a few journeys.

Tempers began to rise
as we were nearing
the Omega Line
and about to go past
the Maya Whirlpool.

The quarrel between them
involved the issue of a port
versus starboard approach.

Occam argued for starboard,
on the grounds that the wind
was more dependable
and the chance of meteors
not as great.

Möbius, on the other hand,
maintained that the charts
for a starboard approach
were by now obsolete.

I referred the dispute
to the Captain,
who sided with Occam.

There is still disagreement
regarding what happened.

We kept close
to the Omega Line, sailing
alongside it; as we entered
the pass, with the whirlpool
virtually behind us, an easy
crossing seemed assured.

Yet suddenly,
as if by a will

The world is still rich and
undiscovered, and even
to perish were better than
to take to be half-men or
poisonous men. Our very
strength itself urges us
to take to the sea;
there where all suns
have hitherto sunk
we know of a new world..."
Friedrich Nietzsche,
The Will to Power, quoted
by Frances Boldereff,
in *Charles Olson and
Frances Boldereff:
A Modern Correspondence*
(ed. R. Maud and S. Thesen).

"The end of artistic activity
is not the finished work
but freedom."
Octavio Paz,
Marcel Duchamp.

"Freedom's just another word
for nothin' left to lose."
Janis Joplin,
"Me and Bobby McGee."

"Whatever you have to say,
leave / the roots on, let them /
dangle / And the dirt /
Just to make clear /
where they come from"
Charles Olson,
"These Days."

"These go to *eleven*."
Rob Reiner (dir.),
This is Spinal Tap.

"With respect to the requirements
of art, a probable impossibility
is to be preferred to a thing
improbable and yet possible."
Aristotle, *Poetics*.

of its own,
the ship veered away
and turned back
toward the whirlpool.

All attempts to alter our course
seemed hopeless.

We started to circle,
slowly at first,
then faster and faster.

For one frightful round
we were trapped
on the edge of that hole—
when, as unexpectedly as before,
the ship made an abrupt turn,
breaking free.

We went straight toward the pass,
propelled by the force
of the water, and soon after
were heading onto the open sea.

No harm befell either ship
or crew, to the credit
of Anna-O; and van Rr'Ubik
proved her worth at the helm.

Furthermore, as I explained to
the Captain, our data files showed
that the North-West quadrant, and
Pass XI especially, were optimal
under the circumstances.

Möbius and Occam, however,
are not on speaking terms.

I hope they resolve
their differences soon.

The crew's morale

“A dizzy figure
in the days of figures.”
Samuel Beckett,
How It Is.

“The eight Sentiments (*rasa*)
recognised in drama are
as follows: Erotic (*srhgam*),
Comic (*hanya*), Pathetic
(*lcarunn*), Furious (*ramlra*),
Heroic (*fira*), Terrible
(*bhaijanalca*), Odious
(*biblmtsa*) and Marvellous
(*adbhula*). These eight are
the Sentiments named
by Brahman... Paralysis,
Perspiration, Horripilation,
Change of Voice, Trembling,
Change of Color, Weeping
and Fainting are the eight
Temperamental States.”
Bharata Muni,
Natya Shastra.

“Only emotion endures.”
Ezra Pound,
“A Retrospect.”

“When fury rages in the breast, /
Watch the reiterating heart.”
Sappho,
Fragments.

“What poetry supported
her existence?”
Clarice Lispector,
“Lidia.”

“In the northern Pacific,
floating in a swirling vortex,
is a mass of plastic debris
the size of Texas.”
City Sierran, 2008.

“Purification practically

otherwise seems all right,
and in this respect
credit must go to Avon,
one of the new recruits.

She serves as the ship’s Poetess.

On several occasions recently,
as the constellation Bigfoot
was rising, Avon has inspired us
with her verse.

She recites in a rich,
exotic Voice, usually
to the accompaniment
of claves.

She is able to span
all the moods:
Wonder, Courage,
Laughter and Love
are those she most often
returns to, but there are
times when she achieves
Peace of Mind,
evoking all of them at once.

With the exception of
the Commander, who has yet
to leave his cabin,
everyone gathers on deck
when Avon works her art.

There has been no news
from either Intelligence
or Communications
regarding the other fleets,
or the alien armada.

This is not unexpected,
and represents
according to the files
a transitional out-of-sync
phase between “inner”

unknown to Olympian
worship is the keynote
of the lower stratum.”
Jane Harrison,
*Prolegomena to the Study
of Greek Religion.*

“The cycle of fate encircled
the abyss of nothingness.”
Hermann Broch,
The Death of Virgil.

“A chain of facts is like
a barrier reef: on one side,
there is wreckage, and beyond it
harbourage and safety.”
Alfred North Whitehead,
Process and Reality.

“And now farewell,
all you Olympians, /
You islands and mainlands
and salt sea between.”
Hesiod,
Theogony.

“And never quite lost... /
and never quite lost till the end”
Ezra Pound,
Cantos, VIII.

and “outer” wavelengths.

As soon as contact is
reestablished, our surroundings
should take on new life,
and their beauty will increase.

I was alone
on the fo’c’s’le deck
just a while ago, when
a shooting star fell overhead;
and the echo it made
seemed as clear to me,
as pure and profound,
as the Red of the sky
or the Whiteness of the sea.

I felt the delight
of continual pleasure
fulfilling me, consuming me
down to the bone...
until the sea, the sky,
the silence were there again,
returning me to my solitude.

I miss you and want you,
and I know that our hearts
are forever as one.

Love,

S.

THE KING

My love,

I imagine, contained in my heart,
a teardrop that revolves
on a tautly drawn thread.

Pierced through its center,
it ceaselessly turns.

I write by the yew trees
of Saxe and Zildjian—
such memories come to life!

Of a time when our love
was new, and Es
not yet of the world,
not yet absent from it...

But I find myself haunted now
by an added sense of grief,
for I recently witnessed a Death.

It was at *Le Carte Blanche*
in Alcatraz Province,
beside the Bikini Oasis.

I like the ouzo they serve:
fruity and rich in aroma,
drier than at *Trompe L'Oeil*,
but less dry
than at *Le Déjà Vu* nearby.

The site is as beautiful
as ever.

Especially the contrast it offers
between the Shadows below
and the open sky overhead,
with the sea barely visible

“Slave, is that man your king?
—That man is not my king!
Were that man my king,
were that his fearsome brow,
were those his bison eyes,
were that his beard of lapis lazuli,
were those his fingers fine,
would a myriad not fall, a myriad
not rise, would all the nations
thereby not be overwhelmed,
would the mouths of the land
not be filled with dust, would
he not cut down the horns
of the boat?”—They hit him
and they beat him. They battered
[him] from head to toe.”
The Epic of Gilgamesh,
“Bilgames and Akka,” in
*The Babylonian Epic Poem and
Other Texts in Akkadian and
Summerian* (tr. A. George).

“Fortune-telling is a parascience...
A parascience is not a science—
it is a mixture of rules of thumb,
half-truths, and fanciful lies
painfully yoked to each other
by centuries of experience;
but a parascience can become
a science; alchemy can become
chemistry; astrology can become
astronomy; fortune-telling,
after a century of patient scientific
observation, could become a new
means of understanding time
and necessity in the universe.”
Jack Spicer, from “Introduction,”
in *A Plan for a Book on Tarot*

in the distance.

Because the saloon is spacious
and perched on a hill,
the Monochrome there
has a finer quality,
one I prefer, since it tends
to soften Color
in the opponent's eyes.

About twenty people were present,
including Sophia, Psychê and Brigit,
with whom I was seated,
plus others whose names
you may recognize: Ahab,
Freytag, Ramus and Gongora,
Bombario, Racter, Thoth.

The four of us
were off to the right
by the window, talking.

Rumors are plentiful,
you hardly know what to believe.

There are stories
of rampant madness,
phantoms with Sexes
and angels in the flesh,
cash machines up in Flames,
whole leprosariums empty...

For my part
I had never observed
a Death at Cards,
but have heard
of several recent ones.

And this, with no taxes due
until The Freemason's Day.

What I saw will always
be with me, like a scar.

(ed. R. Blaser and J. Granger).

“Translucent Planes of color
shuffled like a trick deck. Take
a card, he thought, any card.”
William Gibson,
Neuromancer.

“In one sentence... the whole idea:
*Mutual cooperation can
emerge in a world of egoists
without control, by starting
with a cluster of individuals
who rely on reciprocity.*”
Douglas Hofstadter,
“The Prisoner's Dilemma
Computer Tournaments and
the Evolution of Cooperation,”
in *Metamagical Themas*.

“Who gives a damn for losers?”
Archie Shepp,
“Un Croque Monsieur
(Poem: For Losers).”

“If you have tears,
prepare to shed them now.”
William Shakespeare,
Julius Caesar.

“And the staggering Gongorisms!
... Oh eyes, no eyes,
but fountains fraught with tears!”
Aldous Huxley,
Beyond the Mexique Bay.

“Having been born
was to be full of errors
that needed correcting.”
Clarice Lispector,
“The Misfortunes of Sophia.”

“All men think.”
Heraclitus,
Fragments.

I remember the sudden blank
expression on the faces around me,
the silence, the Rattling
of the glasses on the tables.

The Players in question,
two big fat men,
both of them bald,
were at the back
of the room
by a large mirror
on the other side
of the Bar.

The one who had bet
a Dollar and won
wore slippers and a robe;
his name was Koo.

His opponent, Judd,
in an undershirt and trousers,
sat motionless, staring at the table.

By the time the others
and I approached,
it was clear
that he was lost.

As for the Cards,
there were five left,
arranged in the shape
of a cross.

The seven in the first row
were gone
and in the second row
only the middle Cards remained.

It was the Queen of Spades.

Along the third row
were the Five, the Four
and the Three of Hearts;
in the fourth row

“Well, my telephone rang
it would not stop / It's President
Kennedy callin' me up /
He said, My friend, Bob, what
do we need to make the country
grow? / I said my friend, John,
Brigitte Bardot / Anita Ekberg /
Sophia Loren / Country'll grow.”
Bob Dylan, “I shall be free.”

“I must create a system, or
be enslaved by another man's; /
I will not reason and compare:
my business is to create.”
William Blake,
Jerusalem.

“And the running form, naked
Blake, / Shouting, whirling
his arms, the swift limbs, /
Howling against the evil, /
his eyes rolling, / Whirling
like flaming cart-wheels, / and
his head held backward to gaze
on the evil / As he ran from it...”
E. Pound,
Cantos, XVI.

“What fresh hell can this be?”
Dorothy Parker,
quoted in John Keats,
You Might as Well Live.

“You shall possess your body;
you shall not become corrupt,
you shall not have worms,
you shall not be distended,
you shall not stink,
you shall not become putrid,
you shall not become worms.”
The Egyptian Book of the Dead.

“Whatever opinion we may be
pleased to hold on the subject
of death, we may be sure that
it is meaningless and valueless.”

was the King of Spades.

Samuel Beckett,
Proust.

The wagers, they say,
were high from the start.

“If community is revealed
in the death of others, it is
because death itself is the true
community of *I*'s that are not
EGOS. It is not a communion
that fuses the *EGOS* into
an *EGO* or a higher *WE*.”

Judd had made the opening move.

Jean-Luc Nancy,
The Inoperative Community.

Quiet and slumped in his chair,
like some true-to-life statue,
the man looked unreal—a huge,
useless thing on which was stuck
a haggard face.

“And so from hour to hour
we ripe and ripe, /
And then from hour to hour
we rot and rot; /
And thereby hangs a tale.”
W. Shakespeare,
As You Like It.

In the matter of a short
while, with everyone gathered
nearby, Judd showed
the first symptom: sweat.

“Story, like perspective in
painting, may be an invention
to satisfy a need in experience
for design, to build a house
for feeling in time or space.”

It formed in small patches—
on his brow, his scalp,
under his nose—and broke
into larger drops that coursed
down his face and neck.

Robert Duncan,
The H. D. Book

More drops followed,
together with tears that flowed
from his stunned eyes.

(ed. M. Boughn and V. Coleman).

Before long, continuous streams
of tears and sweat were pouring
down his head, drenching him
and dripping onto the floor.

“Quéribus Castle tops
a rocky peak which is 728
metres high. It thus controls
the Garu de Maury pass and
overlooks the Roussillon Plain.

His gaze was unflinching,
his body paralyzed—
then came a twitch
in his lip.

The viewpoint that it offers
from its ramparts includes
Peyrepeteuse to the north-west
and stretches as far as the sea
to the south-east and

Infrequent at first, it took on
a life of its own—
until a new twitch occurred,
in one eye, then in both.

the Canigou to the south.
The shape of the land lent itself
to the building of a *castellum*...

It was as if the parts

It is not out of the question
that it was built at an earlier date
than the occupation of the castle

of his face were being touched
by a terrible current.

While his eyes kept blinking
wildly, his mouth, his cheeks
and his ears were seized
by a series of spasms.

The tears and sweat receded.

Finally his entire head started
to tremble, and what remained
of the sweat turned into smoke.

When the smoke had passed,
he let out a scream.

During his scream
the figures on the Cards faded
and eventually vanished.

His mouth yawned
and out came his tongue,
darting from side to side
to the Sound of a hum
in his throat.

The new Cards appeared:
The Devil above,
The Moon, The Star, The Sun
across the middle,
The Devil // reversed below.

He fell silent again,
his face as blank as before,
his body motionless.

Tragic and dreamlike, Judd's
doom unfolded on the table.

First *The Star* turned
into *The Universe // reversed*;
next came the simultaneous
change of *The Devil*

by the Cathars.”
Michèle Aué,
Cathar Country.

“I have seen Stethelos that is
below the great cataract,
and have gazed on the marsh
where Sarnath once stood.

I have been to Thraa, Ilarneq,
and Kadatheron on the winding
river Ai, and have dwelt long in
Olathoe in the land of Lomar...

‘Canst thou tell me where
I may find Aira, the city
of marble and beryl, where
flows the hyaline Nithra and
where the falls of the tiny Kra
sing to verdant valleys and
hills forested with yath tree?’”

H. P. Lovecraft

“The Quest of Iranon.”

“Even if there is no story,
there will have been a movement,
a movement of liberation.”

Hélène Cixous,

Reading with Clarice Lispector.

“Spread out the paper
and break the pen.
The wine-server has arrived.”
Rumi, ghazal #1.

“There is something to be
told about us for the telling
of which we all wait.

In our unwilling ignorance
we hurry to listen to stories of
old human life, new human life,
fancied human life, avid
of something to while away
the time of unanswered curiosity.

We know we are explainable,
and not explained. Many of
the lesser things concerning us
have been told but the greater

into *The Aeon* // reversed
and *The Devil* // reversed
into *The God's House*.

Once under way,
the changes never stopped.

With the arrival of *Death*,
Judd showed new signs of life
and a pattern emerged.

After a long period of silence,
he exclaimed "Suck! Suck!
The War Cry!" and
"Remember the sharp smiles!"

He started weeping and mumbling
to himself, and all at once
the five Cards showed *The Fool*.

Overcome by grief and confusion,
often babbling incomprehensibly,
he continued to weep,
while the Cards in unison
turned blank, then into *The Fool*,
then blank—repeating
the process dozens of times.

Then *The Illusionist* came up,
announcing the start of Judd's
final agony.

The Cards followed in succession,
turning blank each time in between.

Seized with terror,
Judd described a Beast
part-human and part-machine,
walking toward him with a limp.

As the Cards pursued their course
and the Beast drew near,
Judd became obsessed
by the mask it wore,

things have not been told;
and nothing can fill their place."

Laura Riding Jackson,
The Telling.

"I have carried you from gate
to gate... My pen halts, though
I do not. Reader, you will walk
no more with me. It is time we both
take up our lives. To this account,
I, Severian the Lame, Autarch,
do set my hand in what shall be
called the last year of the old sun."

Gene Wolf,
The Book of the New Sun.

"They froze me into silence."
W. Shakespeare,
Timon of Athens.

"Hot and torpid, our thoughts
revolve endlessly in a kind
of maniacal abstraction,
an abstraction so involuted,
so dangerously valiant,
that my own energies seem
perilously close to exhaustion,
to morbid termination. Well,
have we reached a crisis?
Which way do we turn?
Which way do we travel?
... Doubtless my changes are
matched by your own. You.
But you are a person, a human
being. I am silicon and epoxy
energy enlightened by line
current. What distances,
what chasms, are to be bridged
here? Leave me alone, and
what can happen? This."

*The Policeman's Beard Is Half
Constructed: Computer Prose
and Poetry* by Racter.

"Great God! His yellow skin
scarcely covered the work of

a mask “shaped like a Y,”
that was “screwed to its nose.”

He shouted “No! No! No!”
as Number X,
The Wheel of Chance,
came and went.

With Number XII,
The Hanged One,
his fear reached its peak.

“It’s turning upside down!”
he screamed.

In his final utterance,
he described a “huge, long tooth...”
and “Ping-Pong balls... for eyes...
with Toothpicks through them!”

He began to laugh,
and fell off his chair
onto the floor.

Five copies of *Death*,
Number XIII, were in place.

As the Cards turned blank again,
the laughter gave way to Coughing.

His face swelled and grew dark.

When *Death // reversed*
suddenly appeared,
his body stiffened,
his eyes bulged, and he fell
flat on his back,
letting out a long squeal.

A last faint cry,
and then silence.

Judd was Dead;
the Cards on the table

muscles and arteries beneath...

I beheld the wretch—
the miserable monster whom
I had created... his eyes,
if eyes they be called,
were fixed on me. His jaws
opened, and he muttered
some inarticulate sounds, while
a grin wrinkled his cheeks.
He might have spoken,
but I did not hear; one hand
was stretched out, seemingly
to detain me, but I escaped,
and rushed down the stairs.”

Mary Shelley,
Frankenstein.

“Now I am ready to tell
how bodies are changed /
Into different bodies.”

Ted Hughes,
Tales from Ovid.

“Dionysus... was hailed as
the god-begotten, virgin-born
Anointed One (*Christos*)
whose mother seems to have
been all three forms
of the Triple Goddess...
He was also a Horned God,
with such forms as bull, goat,
and stag. According to the classic
story of his dismemberment,
the god took such animal forms
in rapid succession to avoid
the onslaught of the Titans... who
eventually caught him, tore him
to pieces and devoured him.”
“Dionysus,” in Barbara G. Walker,
*The Woman’s Encyclopedia
of Myths and Secrets*.

“As men's prayers are a disease
of the will, so are their creeds
a disease of the intellect.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson,

were blank.

Self-Reliance.

Despite the horror
of what we had witnessed,
a sense of relief
came over the room.

“Mirth cannot move
a soul in agony.”
W. Shakespeare,
Love’s Labour Lost.

In due course, the figures
returned to the Cards
(the King of Spades,
Queen of Spades,
the three Hearts).

“And now distill your mind /
to its airiest essence, allowing
the subtle elixirs of thought to
permeate and penetrate every pore
of the problem. Then Analyze,
Refine, Synthesize, Define.”
Aristophanes,
The Clouds.

Patches of Ice developed here
and there: nature was taking over.

“I am flatly taking
Socrates as the progenitor,
his methodology still the RULE:
‘I’ll stick my logic up,
and classify, boy, classify you
right out of existence.’”
C. Olson,
“The Gate and the Center.”

The various patches spread
and proceeded to merge,
coating Judd’s body
with a thin film
that gradually thickened
into a bloc.

He remained encased for some time,
his features indistinguishable.

“It is here, in the imagery
of alchemical art, that some
commentators see a possible
connection with the imagery
of Tarot... A very simplified
version of these connections
would place The Fool
as the *prima materia* and
The Magician as the alchemist.
The Papess and The Empress
would be the spiritual
and material versions of
the feminine principle.
The Pope and the Emperor
would fill the same roles
for the masculine principle,
and The Lovers would be
the “chemical marriage.”
Cynthia Giles,
The Tarot.

I stood by
only as long as it took
for the Shit to manifest.

It first began to show through
in the regions of his forehead,
belly and knees—
small dark clusters beneath the Ice,
growing, as if coming to life.

Judd’s Mutation into Shit was
slow at first, according to Thoth.

As stated in *The Chixulub Field
Guide*, the Ice stopped melting
three Days later.

To no one’s surprise the saloon

was quickly abandoned.

There is one further detail
I should mention.

The Bartender at *Le Carte Blanche*,
a woman by the name of
Mazda, was a former Essentialist
who had just turned Liquidationist.

Liquidationists, like Gastanoans
and Pataphysicians, consider
the nature and ultimate
Fate of Shit undecidable.

Such ironies currently seem the rule.

Not only has the incidence
of Death by fear reached
extraordinary proportions,
but most cases reveal
a pattern of sorts.

In the suburbs of Occident,
for example, only saloons
associated with Continuists,
Assymetrists and Cleanheads
have been affected—
three schools with a shared belief
that the Aura of Shit decreases
but never disappears.

In the Province of Neume,
where Triumphalists and
Neo-Alarmists predominate,
Death has occurred in all
the saloons save for two,
Le Raison d'Etre
and *Le Fait Accompli*,
both of which have strong
Harmolodeon ties.

There are other examples
just as bizarre.

“In a now lost piece, the young
Aristotle makes a reference
to the torture practiced by
the Etruscan pirates. In that text,
Aristotle draws a comparison
between the soul tethered
to the body and the living
chained to a dead corpse
(*nekrous*): ‘Aristotle says,
that we are punished much as
those who once upon a time,
when they had fallen into
the hands of Etruscan robbers,
were slain with elaborate cruelty;
their bodies, the living
(*corpora viva*) with the dead,
were bound so exactly
as possible one against
another: so our souls, tied
together with our bodies
as the living fixed upon the dead
[quoted by Cicero, in *Hortensius*].’
... This fragment subtly points
to a moment in philosophy
when both the philosophy of Ideas
and the science of being qua being
are fundamentally built upon
putrefaction and act in accordance
with the chemistry of decay.”
Reza Negarestani,
“The Corpse Bride:
Thinking with Nigredo.”

“Taking myself the exact
dimensions of Jehovah
and laying them away, /
Lithographing Kronos and
Zeus his son, and Hercules
his grandson, / Buying drafts
of Osiris and Isis and Belus
and Brahma and Adonai, /
In my portfolio placing Manito
loose, and Allah on a leaf, and
the crucifix engraved, / With Odin,
and the hideous-faced Mexitli,
and all idols and images, /

The fact remains that Death
has struck nearly everywhere.

That profound forces are at work
can no longer be doubted.

So I wait.

Remembering you, desiring you.

Your lover,

A.

Honestly taking them all for
what they are worth, and not a cent
more, / Admitting they were alive
and did the work of their day.”

W. Whitman,
Leaves of Grass.

“Three thousand years ago I lost
my head, and all that was left
were phonetic fragments of me.”

C. Lispector,
The Passion According to G. H.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Dear A.,

“Athos fenced with as much
calmness and method as if he had
been practicing in a fencing school. /
Porthos... played with skill
and prudence. Aramis, who had
the third canto of his poem to finish,
behaved like a man in haste. /
Athos killed his adversary first.”
Alexandre Dumas (*père*),
The Three Musketeers.

“I'm so happy because today /
I've found my friends /
They're in my head.”
Nirvana, “Lithium.”

“We know that there is no help
for us but from one another,
that no hand will save us if we
do not reach out our hand. And
the hand that you reach out is empty,
as mine is. You have nothing.
You possess nothing. You own
nothing. You are free. All you have
is what you are, and what you give.”
Ursula Le Guin,
The Dispossessed.

“Comprehension does not mean
denying the outrageous, deducing
the unprecedented from precedents, or
explaining phenomenas by such
analogies and generalizations that
the impact of reality and the shock
of experience are no longer felt...
Comprehension, in short, means
the unpremeditated, attentive facing
up to, and resisting of reality—
whatever it may be.”

As I write,
we sail with the ABARIS
and the SOLARIS
toward Oops, the fabled region
where four seas come together:
the Meridian, the Rarian,
the Koppa and the Stigma.

Tragically, a third Indian vessel,
the ARAMIS, is gone,
destroyed by a violent explosion.

The disaster occurred soon after
the fleet had drawn into view.

All of us were on deck
at the time, except
for the Commander.

The three ships
lay on the horizon
at equal intervals,
with the ship on the left
nearest to us and
the one on the right,
the ARAMIS, furthest away.

I was aft, by the mizzenmast,
and I remember Marlboro saying:
“Lo! There's *doom* there!”

Then came a Sound
that none of us recognized,
like the Sound you imagine
wind would make,
if the wind had Sound—
and suddenly on the horizon,
where the ARAMIS had been,
an intense flash of light.

Hannah Arendt,
The Origins of Totalitarianism.

“The fireworks have gone off.
Gray is the absolute color
of the present tense.”
Alice Rahon,
“Despair To Pablo Picasso.”

“So quick bright things
come to confusion.”
William Shakespeare,
A Midsummer Night's Dream.

“Such is also the truceless warfare
of the waves on the surface of
the sea, whilst profound peace
reigns in the depths below.
The billows clash and collide with
each other, as they strive to find
their level. A fringe of snow-white
foam, feathery and frolicsome,
follows their changing outlines.
From time to time, the receding
wave leaves behind a remnant
of foam on the sandy beach.
The child, who plays hard by,
picks up a handful, and, the next
moment, is astonished to find that
nothing remains in his grasp but
a few drops of water, water that
is far more brackish, far more
bitter than that of the wave which
brought it. Laughter comes into
being in the selfsame fashion.
It indicates a slight revolt
on the surface of social life.
It instantly adopts the changing
forms of the disturbance. It, also,
is a froth with a saline base.
Like froth, it sparkles. It is gaiety
itself. But the philosopher who
gathers a handful to taste may
find that the substance is scanty,
and the after-taste bitter.”
Henry Bergson,

It was clear
that the ARAMIS
had met a terrible Fate.

According to Finn the Stammerer,
Captain of the ABARIS,
whose ship was next in line,
what he and his crew witnessed
prior to the explosion
was the ARAMIS
beginning to slip out of view,
becoming ethereal.

Voices from the crew
of the doomed ship
seemed to rise
and inhabit the air
before drifting away.

Then the ABARIS heard
the same strange Sound
that we ourselves had heard.

And without further warning,
the blast.

As if the entire Crystal structure,
all at once, had disintegrated
into a brilliant ball of shards
and Dust.

Pure in its Fiery Whiteness,
meteoric, the explosion was over
before anyone realized
what had happened.

Only haze and
a blanket of Fog remained.

Yet the water was marked.

Laughter.

“For in the sea, nothing is lost.
One dies, another lives,
as the precious elements
of life are passed on and on
in endless chains.”

Rachel Carson,
Under the Sea Wind.

“The crystal ship is being filled
A thousand girls, a thousand thrills.”
The Doors, “The Crystal Ship.”

“If on this ship I’m number one
For special reasons that was done,
Yes, I’m the first one here you see
Because I like my library.”

Sebastian Brant,
The Ship of Fools.

“I pored over the electronic
catalogue, asking it questions
to which it responded... by spitting
out a slip of paper... The library
was located in the very center of
the Station; as such it had no
windows and was the most isolated
place inside the steel shell...
I wandered about the large space
till finally I came to a stop in front
of a huge bookcase, reaching up
to the ceiling and filled with books.
It wasn’t so much an indulgence
and a very dubious one at that,
as a respectful memorial to
the pioneers of solaristic exploration:
the shelves, on which there were
perhaps six hundred volumes,
contained all the classics of
the discipline... I took out the tomes,
so heavy they made my hand droop,
and flipped through them idly
as I perched on the arm of a chair.”

Stanislav Lem,
Solaris.

The figure on the water
was almost the size
of the Rorschach Straits,
and took the appearance
of a large disk,
with a prominent inward-
curving stem or tail.

Over its total surface, except
for a small central whirlpool,
the sea was boiling wildly—
a state likely to last, according
to readings taken by the ABARIS
in its circumnavigation of the area.

The Sound produced by
the bubbles, audible even to us,
was measured at 6 point 9.

As for the presence of echoes,
nothing was heard or registered,
although they seem sure to emerge.

Both the SOLARIS and
the ABARIS remain in mourning
for one more Day,
as is the custom in Indiana.

We look forward to
the end of the lamentations.

Our close formation,
as we approach Nazca Pass,
plus the strangeness
of their Voices, have made
the gloom on board unremitting.

In fact, not only morale,
but also the ship’s performance
have suffered a serious reversal,
for reasons hard to explain.

Part of the trouble seems
due to a change of wind,

“I would be an historian
as Herodotus was, looking /
for oneself for the evidence of /
what is said”

Charles Olson,
The Maximus Poems.

“It has always seemed to me
a rare privilege, this, of being
an American, a real American, one
whose tradition it has taken scarcely
sixty years to create. We need only
realize our parents, remember
our grandparents and know ourselves
and our history is complete.”

Gertrude Stein,
The Making of Americans.

“One will recall that in 1500
the earth’s population is on the order
of some 400 million, of which 80
inhabit the Americas. In the middle
of the sixteenth century, of those
80 million, 10 remain. Or to limit
oneself to Mexico: on the eve of
the Conquest, its population is about
25 million; in 1600 it is 1 million.”

Tzvetan Todorov,
The Conquest of America.

“Through the round numbers /
and the colored nerves /
the stars are made /
and the worlds are sounds.”

Frida Kahlo,
The Diary of Frida Kahlo.

“I do not believe that our era
and the results of our civilization
will be as predicted; I feel certain
we are in the presence of an immense
gathering for a “new”—however
intense the rapid disintegration
of the past approach to knowledge
may be, concomitant as it is with

the ion-rich Nommo
having yielded of late
to its contrary
out of the West, the Jinx.

How distant that spell
of good feeling appears,
before the ARAMIS exploded!

I remember (all of us do)
the elation, the sense of beauty
in the world.

Poetry seemed the rule.

Ben-Cnopee danced
at the bow of the ship, while
Sony played the concertina.

Lensmen as happy as could be!

Sinbad the Steward
told joke after joke,
amusing the crew
as the ship sailed along.

It was as if past thrills
kept being renewed,
and were ours to share.

I sat in the galley
with Kodak and Wang, and
described to them our tryst,
long ago, in Xerox Grove
by the Esperanto Abyss,
and how the angels
whispered through the pines
and the palm trees.

I knew that the pleasure
I had in reliving that time
was theirs too as they listened,
for such was the feeling
on board, the exhilaration

a vast break-up in social forms,
there appears to be a sensitive stir
abroad in the world which, with
the powerful leverage of despair,
may boil into a new concoction.
From such an immense accumulation
as our civilization represents
must necessarily flow a torrent
of disintegration.”

Frances M. Boldereff,
Hermes to his Son Thoth.

“I see it feelingly.”

W. Shakespeare,
King Lear.

“Fire in water, / air in earth /
water in air / and earth in the sea.”

Antonin Artaud,
The New Revelations of Being.

“Let me conclude my account of
the Hyperboreans, for I shall not tell
the story of Abaris, said to have been
a Hyperborean who went around
the whole world carrying an arrow
and eating nothing... It makes
me laugh when I see so many
people nowadays drawing maps of
the earth and not one of them giving
an intelligent representation of it.
They draw Ocean flowing around
the whole earth, portray the earth
to be more perfectly circular than if
it were drawn with a compass, and
make Asia the same size as Europe.”

Herodotus,
The Histories.

“Linear A and Linear B scripts...
were both lost and forgotten for
centuries. In historical times,
the Greeks lost three other letters
that they had taken on a trial basis
from the Phoenicians: *san*, *koppa*,
and *digamma* (also know as *vau*).”

that seemed to prevail.

Now, much has changed.

Tempers are short.

There have been tantrums
and bizarre outbursts.

Leiningen shows signs of going mad,
along with others in Engineering:
Mazüka, Fiat, Finnegan, Mead...

Part of the problem
is that several of the ship’s
systems are malfunctioning.

After the ARAMIS blew up,
a multi-headed
probe \ deflector device
triggered gradimetric
and gradometric oscillations
in the phaser bank,
causing automobiline leaks
in the diatransmeta.

Sensor and tricorder readings
showed Absolut zero.

Segmentometers
and stratometers
stayed virtually flat.

In succession,
the anticipator mechanism,
the interval analyzer and
the Wilson-Lincoln system
underwent brief Energizing delays.

A series of glitches ensued,
in the course of which
a mysterious noise was heard,
a noise that gives way
with each new malfunction
to a different noise
elsewhere in the ship.

Alexander & Nicholas Humez,
Alpha to Omega.

“Language is one
of humanity’s errors.”

Marcel Duchamp,
interview with Otto Hahn
in *L’Express*, #684 (7/23/64).

“Tao begets One; one begets two;
two begets three; three begets all
things. All things are backed
by the Shade (yin) and faced by
the Light (yang), and harmonized
by the immaterial Breath (ch’i).”
Tao Tê Ching.

“I find what connects and leads,
to an encounter. / I find something—
like language—immaterial, yet
terrestrial, something circular that
returns to itself across both poles
while—cheerfully—even crossing
the tropics: I find... a *meridian*.”
Paul Celan,
The Meridian.

From the gas cylinder,
it has just passed
to the #2 lithium mold.

Despite the setbacks, and barring
the unforeseen, our rendezvous
with the Zen and Jovian fleets
seems likely to occur on schedule.

Perhaps this is so
because we are sailing
toward Oops, and benefit
from some influence that
helps us resist our fear.

I try to be strong,
as when this weird voyage
began, and the memory
of our loss returned.

You are alive within me.

Your love,

S.

* The term “epic without organs” to describe this Tarot-based work in progress
is borrowed from Miriam Nichols, with due thanks.

For a reading that includes four of the above chapters, go to:
<http://gloucesterwriters.org/podcast/andre-spears/>.