

DADAOTTO

Alessandro Gerelli 2:332/805.5 and a.gerelli@agonet.it

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COLLABORATORS

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WRITTEN BY	Alessandro Gerelli 2:332/805.5 and a.gerelli@agonet.it	February 12, 2023	

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* ARTICOLI / ARTICLES:

La~sindrome~di~Cronenberg
by Vittorio Curtoni

Jan~Garbarek
by Renato Rolando

Un~incubo~lungo~multi~giorni
by Vittorio Curtoni

Translating~the~worm:~irony~apropos
by Pierre Queneau

Manifesto~del~racconto~lampo
by Caio Guardigli/Michele Mengoli

* RACCONTI / STORIES:

Silvermoon dance
by Luca Pesaro

Cancer
by Kurt Nimmo

Erika
by Giulio Barros

Solo
by Massimo Canetta

Bullersten
by Robert W. Howington

Short Stories
by Vittorio Curtoni

Racconti
by Mario Franco Carbone

A fairytale for elves and clouds
by Fred Roberts

Everything inside is made of stone
by Alan Catlin

* POESIE / POETRY:

OUR GUEST OF HONOUR/IL NOSTRO OSPITE D'ONORE:

Poems
by Bob Folder

Poesie
by Rita Stilli

Parole a mare
by Luca Bianchi

Poems
by Robb Allan

Tre poesie per Lucilla
by Alessio Saltarin

Poems
by Arlene Ang

Poesie
by Renato Gionchetti

Poesie
by Andrea Barbieri

Poesie
by Andrea De Luigi

->
versione Amiga by
Alessandro~Gerelli

1.3 Alessandro Gerelli

Contribuisco alla rivista DADA preparando la versione per Amiga.

Chiunque avesse
suggerimenti
, critiche (insulti ;) , per cio` che
concerne la versione Amiga , puo` contattarmi agli indirizzi
elettronici sotto riportati.

Come avrete notato, da questo numero sono state inserite anche le
"nostre" immagini presenti nella versione "originale" di Dada sotto
WcDos; vengono visualizzate mediante il programma di pubblico dominio
P-View, che e' compatibile dal kick 1.2 e superiori.

Se avete problemi a visualizzarle, AVVERTITEMI !!!

Lunga vita ad Amiga !!!!

bye bye

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      | Alessandro Gerelli - Amiga Group Italia (Piacenza)
      |
      |  .: |
      |  .::: |      Email : a.gerelli@agonet.it
      |  .;/' :: |      : http://www.agonet.it/~a.gerelli/index.html
      |  .;/'  :: |      IRC : GirEllo on #amiga, #amigaita
      |  .:.....: |      FidoNet : CoSysOp on Techno World BBS
      |  ....  .... |      : 2:332/805.5 -- tw.agonet.it
```

1.4 Come stampare gli articoli di DADA

Forse non tutti sapranno (o forse lo sapevate gia` ??? ;) che e'
possibile anche stampare i documenti presenti in Dada (completi di
stili !!!).

Per stampare il documento visualizzato (dopo aver ovviamente

configurato correttamente la vostra stampante tramite le preferences di sistema del vostro disco di boot) basta semplicemente utilizzare il primo menu in alto a sinistra dal titolo "Progetto" o "Project" (che appare premendo e mantenendo premuto il tasto destro del mouse) e selezionare l'opzione "Stampa" o "Print" (a seconda della localizzazione)

Buon divertimento ;-)

1.5 La sindrome di Cronenberg

"LA SINDROME DI CRONENBERG"

di Vittorio Curtoni

Il tanto atteso film "Crash" di David Cronenberg e' finalmente arrivato nelle sale italiane: da meta' novembre, chiunque (almeno chiunque abbia compiuto diciotto anni) se lo puo' tranquillamente vedere. In America, invece, il film, nonostante la menzione speciale vinta a Cannes l'anno scorso, non e' uscito. In una recente intervista a un settimanale italiano, il regista diceva testualmente che il suo produttore americano "ha paura". Paura di cosa? Del fatto che il film sviluppa il teorema: incidente stradale = morte = mutilazione = eccitazione sessuale, tesi certo singolare, ma mi pare che ognuno abbia diritto ad avere i propri gusti, no?

Le traversie di questo film, gia' condannato dai moralisti di tutto il mondo ancora prima di essere distribuito, mi ispirano alcune considerazioni generali che forse, in questo momento storico, possono avere una loro importanza.

In primo luogo, quando nel 1973 l'autore inglese James Ballard pubblico' il romanzo omonimo dal quale il film e' tratto, nessuno grido' allo scandalo. Il piccolo mondo della fantascienza si scandalizzo' si', ma solo perche' Ballard con "Crash" (come con "La fiera delle atrocita'" e "L'isola di cemento") aveva scritto un libro talmente diverso, difficile e intrigante, che non si sapeva piu' in quale genere collocarlo. Tutto qui. Gli strilli moralistici non si fecero udire. Erano altri anni, questo e' vero, e quali anni; ma resta il fatto che il libro circola ancora tranquillamente e nessuno ha pensato di bruciarlo. Mentre il film ha una vita durissima. Il che, se mai ci fosse stato bisogno di una conferma, ribadisce l'idea che il vero verbo importante del giorno d'oggi e' quello cinematografico: l'immagine ha soppiantato la parola. Il libro e' un esercizio d'elite non pericoloso, e quindi non degno di reazioni massicce, perche' tanto solo pochi idioti nostalgici vi si dedicano. Ma se un film dice le stesse cose di un libro, apriti cielo! Tutti a strillare...

Secondo: il film scandalizza perche' e' diretto da un regista importante, di fama mondiale. Se lo avesse girato uno sconosciuto e fosse finito nel circuito dei film porno, nessuno avrebbe aperto bocca. E' come se esistessero, anche all'interno del cinema, due universi distinti, l'uno basso (dove tutto e' permesso perche' siamo al trash per definizione) e l'uno alto dove invece bisogna stare MOLTO attenti a quel che si fa. Bel ragionamento. E se non e' razzismo questo...

Terzo: la recente, straripante mania americana del "politically correct" sta stringendo d'assedio il mondo della cultura, forzando un po' tutti a maneggiare con le pinze i propri materiali. Il concetto incidente stradale = sesso non e' politically correct, e' troppo estremo, e quindi va censurato (anche se, come notava Cronenberg in una recente intervista televisiva, il film e' uscito in Francia da diversi mesi e non si e' rilevato alcun aumento degli incidenti stradali!). Signori, quando qualcosa che si definisce in termini di "politico" mette le mani nella cultura, siamo concitati male.

Quarta e ultima considerazione: negli anni Sessanta l'Italia ha avuto la fioritura di una cinematografia straordinaria che pero', in forza del clima politico dell'epoca, ha subito in dosi massicce le ire della censura (e ne hanno sofferto tutti, dai grandi maestri come Luchino Visconti e Federico Fellini ai piccoli artigiani dell'horror come Antonio Margheriti e Mario Bava). Negli anni Settanta, a smuovere questa situazione, a portare finalmente alla quasi totale abolizione dell'odiata censura e' stato il cinema americano, che ha dato spallate colossali al muro censorio con film come "Easy Rider", "Un uomo da marciapiede", "Conoscenza carnale" eccetera. Oggi siamo al paradosso che cio' che e' permesso in Italia e' vietato negli States... Da un lato questo mi porta a compiangere gli americani per la loro attuale, gravissima ristrettezza di vedute; dall'altro dico all'Italia: attenzione, perche' noi siamo da sempre la periferia dell'impero, e quel che succede negli States prima o poi succede anche da noi...

Qualcuno potrebbe obiettare: ma cosa ce ne frega di quel che succede nel mondo del cinema? Noi siamo telematici, noi navighiamo nel cyberspazio! Gia'. Per adesso, tutto bene. Ma se domani qualcuno decidesse che un certo sito non e' politically correct, che qualcuno ha una home page troppo colma di parolacce, che magari una poesia o un racconto pubblicati da DADA sono troppo hard, che si fa? Inutile nascondersi la realta': l'abominevole censura sta rialzando la testa. Bisogna prenderne atto e prepararsi a combattere. Io sto gia' caricando i miei cannoni telematici...

P.S.: ho appena terminato di scrivere questo editoriale, e leggo su un quotidiano italiano che a Napoli TUTTI i partiti politici, di comune accordo, hanno chiesto il sequestro di "Crash". Andiamo bene. Quando si permettera' a un adulto di pensare con la propria testa e scegliere da se' quel che

preferisce vedere al cinema? Siamo tornati all'asilo infantile?

"THE CRONENBERG SYNDROME"

by Vittorio Curtoni

The long-awaited movie "Crash", by David Cronenberg, has finally reached the Italian screens: since mid-November, anybody (at least those above eighteen years of age) can see it. In the States, instead, despite the special award won at the Cannes Festival last year, the movie has not come out. In a recent interview to an Italian magazine, the director has explicitly said that his American producer "is afraid". Afraid of what? Of the fact that the movie develops the theorem: car crash = death = mutilation = sexual excitement; surely a singular theory, but it seems to me that anybody has a right to his own tastes, or not?

The misfortunes of this movie, already damned by the moralists of the whole world even before it has been distributed, suggest to me a few reflections that could be of some small weight in this, our historical moment.

First of all, when in 1973 the English writer James Ballard published the homonymous novel on which the movie is based, nobody cried shame. Yes, the small world of science fiction was shocked, but only because "Crash" (like other Ballard's works, like "The Atrocity Exhibition" and "The Concrete Island") was such a different, difficult and intriguing book that nobody knew how it could be classified. That was all. No moralistic cries were heard. Those were different years, that's true, and how much different; but the fact remains that the novel is still in print with no problem and nobody ever proposed to burn it. While the movie has such a difficult life. Which corroborates the idea that today the truly important word is the word of the movies: the image has supplanted the written word. The book is a not dangerous, elitist pastime, so it's not worthy of huge reactions, because anyway only a few nostalgic idiots indulge in it. But if a movie says the same things as a book, heavens above! Everybody shouting...

Second: the movie is shocking because the director is a big, well known name. Should it have been directed by somebody unknown, and should it have ended up in the porn circuit, we would not have heard a word. It seems that in the movies two different universes exist, one low (where anything is permitted because, of course, we're just at trash level) and one high, where instead one has to be VERY

careful. A fine way of thinking. And if this is not racism...

Third: the recent, overflowing American mania of the "politically correct" is besieging the cultural world, forcing almost everybody to be very very prudent. The concept car crash = sex is not politically correct, is too extreme, and so it must be censored (even though, as Cronenberg pointed out in a recent tv interview, the movie has been screened in France for some months now and no increase in the rate of car crashes has been noticed!). Friends, when something that defines itself in terms of "political" lays its hand upon the culture, we're in a bad shape.

Fourth and last reflection: in the Sixties, Italy had an extraordinary flourishing of pictures masterpieces, but thanks to the political climate of the time these movies suffered a very heavy censorship (and everybody suffered, from the great masters like Luchino Visconti and Federico Fellini to the small artisans of the horror movies like Antonio Margheriti and Mario Bava). In the Seventies, the American cinema was able to change this situation, to produce at last the almost complete suppression of the very hated censorship with movies like "Easy Rider", "Midnight Cowboy", "Carnal Knowledge", etc. Today, paradoxically, what is permitted in Italy is forbidden in the States... On one hand, this makes me pity the Americans for their current, very serious narrow-mindedness; on the other hand I say to Italy, watch out, because we've always been the suburbs of the empire, and what happens in the States sooner or later will happen here too...

Somebody could object: but what do we care? It's happening in the movies world. We are telematic people, we are surfers of the cyberspace. Right. So far, so good. But what if tomorrow somebody should decide that a certain site is not politically correct, that the home page of a guy is too full of bad words, that perhaps a poem or a story published by DADA are too hard? What do we do? It's useless to hide the truth: the abominable censorship is raising its head again. We must acknowledge it and get ready to fight. I'm already loading my telematic guns...

P.S.: just after finishing this editorial, I read an Italian newspaper and saw that in Naples ALL the Italian political parties have requested the judicial attachment of "Crash". That's really good. When will a grown-up man be allowed to think with his own head and to choose by himself what he'd like to see? Are we all back to kindergarten?

1.6 Jan Garbarek

"Jan Garbarek"

by Renato Rolando

Solitamente gli eventi clou hanno un certo legame con gli agenti atmosferici: atmosfere buie e tempestose per le giornate no, soleggiate primavere quando si incontra la propria anima gemella del momento (si, lo so, sono un inguaribile romanticone). Non mi ricordo quella volta che tempo facesse: se era inverno, estate o che altro, ma quel momento segno' decisamente una svolta nei miei gusti musicali. Ero da Pino - il mio negoziante di fiducia - e come al solito lo strapazzavo per fargli tirar fuori dalla manica un "disco storico". Uno di quei dischi, per dirla in breve, che riesca a sopravvivere lo spazio di un ripetuto ascolto, che entri a far parte della classifica degli indimenticabili; dei miei rari oggetti di culto.

La caccia al disco storico e', a mio parere, piu' intrigante ed esaltante della caccia grossa; della paziente attesa, immersi nel fiume fino alla cintola, del pesciolino da 4 chili; della conquista della piu' carina ragazza della zona... beh, ora mi sono lasciato un po' trasportare. Comunque poche cose sono piu' appaganti del riuscire a trovare, tra le miriadi di dischi presenti, tra mucchi di novita', antichita', remix e stramix, un autentico, inossidabile, sempiterno disco storico. Beh, forse evadere le tasse e farla franca. Con questa premessa il lettore piu' attento pensera' che proprio quel giorno riuscì a mettere le mani sul piu' bel disco storico della mia vita. In realta' non fu cosi', ma ottenni una traccia piuttosto fresca della mia futura preda.

Il disco era di una certa cantante lappone il cui nome ora mi sfugge (1) accompagnata con un tappetino elettronico molto discreto e suggestivo. Era una cosa tipo Rosenkraft o roba del genere; ricordava il personaggio di un bellissimo film (2). Lo presi al volo, non male: con spunti minimalisti un po' meno duri del solito, molto dolce e riflessivo. Appena riuscì a raccimolare nei modi piu' vari altri soldi mi ripresentai da Pino. Assieme a lui c'era un signore estremamente informato che, in vena di esternazioni, mi recito' a memoria la discografia completa di questo Jan Garbarek. Inutile dire che me la dimenticai nel giro di qualche minuto. Ma qualcosa era rimasto, poiche' mi convinsi a comprare Raga and Saga. Un disco sulla musica indiana sacra (raga) e non (saga) con un grande virtuoso della voce, Nusrat Fate Ali Khan (3) di cui forse parlero' in un prossimo articolo; e questo Jan Garbarek che mi accompagnava i vari sitar e tamburelli niente meno che col saxofono! Venni cosi' a scoprire, illuminato da un guizzo d'acume, che questo Garbarek era un sassofonista. Ora io non amo particolarmente meditare - quando ci provo mi capita solo di scivolare o su riflessioni a sfondo sessuale o di finire a rimasticare con rammarico tutte le cazzate che ho

fatto, e a pensare con terrore a quelle che ancora mi aspettano -. Ne' mi piace particolarmente la musica indiana: molto bella inizialmente, dopo un po' con 'sto sitar mi rompo veramente (bella rima).

Ebbene questo era esattamente il giusto equilibrio tra uno spirito occidentale ed un eletto orientale. Questo sax unito alle melodie indiane era semplicemente strepitoso. La prova del nove la ebbi con mio padre, il puro. Patito di Ravi Shankara (mitico guru del sitar) mi aveva fatto apprezzamenti poco carini sull' "oscena miscela" che avrebbe creato Garbarek. Inutile dire che in capo a neppure due giorni si era comprato il disco e ne aveva regalate altre due coppie. Avevo trovato il mio disco storico.

Degno di lode anche il disco seguente, fatto assieme ad un percussionista arabo ed un suonatore di udo - una specie di mandolino - tal Anouar Brahem (4), di cui forse parlero' in un prossimo articolo, che riprendeva invece un filone tra l'arabo e l'indiano. Ma il boom, quello che lo ha portato al riconoscimento internazionale delle grandi masse, e' stato Officium. Questo tipo, il Garbarek, si e' messo a suonare il sax da solo assieme ad un coro gregoriano, non chiedetemi il nome (5). Una rivista inglese ha detto a riguardo: "Strange but it works!" E mi piacerebbe proprio che qualcuno me lo traducesse. Inglese a parte, sono brani da strapparvi la pelle. Tutto insieme rischia di essere un po' monotono - intendiamoci - ma restera' per sempre nel mio cuore. Tant'e' che, avendolo io desiderato ardentemente, il buon Garbarek venne a suonare addirittura a Torino. Arrivai in chiesa, li' dove avrebbe suonato, con 2 ore di anticipo: la coda faceva gia' il giro dell'isolato. Riuscendo con vari stratagemmi (e grazie al fatto che conosco gente della DIGOS che adora allontanare per motivi di sicurezza i sospetti) riuscii' ad entrare in chiesa senza problemi ed a prepararmi, in muto raccoglimento spirituale - tramite cannetta - allo storico evento. Una vecchietta - ma che cacchio ci facevano le vecchiette qui - mi fece notare che stavo fumando in chiesa. Me la cavai dicendole che era incenso. Fortunatamente nessun'altro oso' piu' disturbarmi. Beh, per farla breve suono' bene indubbiamente, ma un po' freddino. Come se si stesse esibendo per una rappresentazione provinciale, non diede il massimo di se', a livello di visceri voglio dire. Ci furono pero' momenti emozionanti: mentre il gruppo di voci cantava si mise a muoversi per tutta la chiesa, ed il clou si ebbe con l'ensemble che cantava dall'altare e lui che dal fondo della navata si avvicinava suonando queste linguacciate note di sax. Insomma una cosa estremamente suggestiva. Come per tutti i grandi fate attenzione pero': questo Garbarek e' molto prolifico e non tutti i suoi dischi sono all'altezza. Per i miei gusti assolutamente anti New Wave scarterei un mare di cose, tra cui: "Star", con Miroslav Vitous e PeterErsikne, ECM 1991. Una palla. Oppure "Legend of seven dreams", un po' troppo facile all'ascolto. (6)

Insomma se trovi per strada un negozio di dischi e se hai

avuto la pazienza di leggere fin qui vedi di avere la pazienza di ascoltare qualcosina.

Buona musica.

Note:

(1) La lappone cantante: Agnes Buen Garnas (col pallino sull'ultima 'a'). In realta' e' norvegese.

(2) Il disco si chiama Rosenfole, medieval songs from Norway della ECM, 1989. Il film e' "Rosencratz e Guildenstern sono morti" ed e' tratto da Shakespeare.

(3) Il disco e' "Ragas and Sagas" di Ustad Fateh Ali Khan & Musicians of Pakistan con Jan Garbarek. Sempre della ECM, 1992. Il personaggio e' pakistano, ovvero dell'india del nord; mentre il nostro qui fa di tutt'unerba della muscia indiana un fascio.

(4) Hem, il disco non sono riuscito a ritrovarlo, devo averlo prestato a qualcuno o deve averlo fatto mio fratello :)

(5) Officium, Jan Garbarek, The Hilliard Ensemble. Sempre ECM, 1994. Tra l'altro nel cofanetto c'e' una diskografia del Nostro.

(6) Il nome corretto e' "Legend of the seven seven dreams", ECM 1988.

1.7 Un incubo lungo molti giorni

"UN INCUBO LUNGO MOLTI GIORNI"

by Vittorio Curtoni

Un tempo, con un minimo di rispetto e deferenza, la grafia corrente del termine era zombies. Il che, se non altro, rendeva omaggio all'origine esotica che a queste creature spetta per diritto di nascita (meglio, di rinascita). Oggi, italianizzati nel peggiore dei sensi, sono diventati zombi, in base a uno spurio singolare, zombo, che ha persino generato il verbo zombare; coniato, inutile dirlo, dai piu' biechi artefici della piu' putrida commedia all'italiana degli anni Settanta. Il dramma e' che, almeno qui in Italia, gli zombies sono diventati troppo popolari, e si sa, quando uno ha successo, tutti cominciano ad affibbiargli nomignoli...

Non avendo mai avuto il piacere di incontrare di persona uno zombie, non so proprio come stiano le cose nella realta'; ma al cinema, lo zombie e' immediatamente

individuabile per alcune caratteristiche assai spiccate: passo pesante; sguardo vacuo; colorito terreo, quando non tendente al verdognolo o al giallastro (dipende dai registi); scarsa capacita' di eloquio; modestissimo, se non del tutto assente, senso dell'umorismo. Inutile affannarsi a raccontare barzellette a uno zombie, perche' tanto non ridera' mai; e magari, se e' delle ultime generazioni, vi mangera' pure il cervello. Razza coriacea, gli zombies.

Razza che comunque ha avuto un'esistenza molto travagliata, prima di raggiungere gli attuali fasti (stiamo sempre parlando di cinema, s'intende). "Ho camminato con uno zombie", di Jacques Tourneur (1942), prodotto dall'infaticabile e geniale Val Lewton, sorta di curioso melange a mezza strada fra dramma sentimentale ed elucubrazione fantastica, senza vere punte di horror, sembrava avere lanciato il mito nella zona degli evergreen, assieme a Dracula e Frankenstein; ma in realta', a parte una manciata di produzioni americane che in Italia non sono nemmeno state distribuite (con titoli suggestivi come "Revenge of the Zombies" o "Valley of the Zombies"), il ritorno alla grande dello zombie si ha solo nel 1968, con l'ormai celeberrima e del tutto indimenticabile "La notte dei morti viventi" di George Romero. Il fatto e' che negli anni Cinquanta e Sessanta la grande paura del cinema fantastico assume le spoglie dell'invasore alieno (o tutt'altro che alieno, come accadeva nel filone della fantapolitica); e infatti, un raro esempio di zombismo di quel periodo e' un misconosciuto film di E. L. Cahn, "Assalto dallo spazio" (1959), dove gli alieni si servono dei corpi dei morti.

George Romero, nel '68, esplose alla grande con un film girato in casa, senza troppi mezzi ma con la capacita' di creare un vero clima da incubo, estremamente crudele e convincente perche' ha tutta l'aria della realta': e "La notte dei morti viventi", che terrorizzo' mezzo mondo e sancì la fama del giovane regista, e' il primo capitolo di una trilogia poi proseguita col mediocre "Zombi" (1978) e conclusa con l'assai migliore "Il giorno degli zombi" (1985). Il passaggio dal rigoroso bianco e nero del primo titolo ai colori patinati degli altri due non ha giovato alle capacita' espressive di Romero, che in effetti con gli anni si e' spesso lasciato coinvolgere in operazioni commerciali di dubbia sostanza; ma le tre storie, prese nel loro insieme, sono un'affascinante parabola sulla violenza, sulla voglia di ribellione che cova in America tra le masse dei diseredati.

Nel primo film, il desiderio di rivalsa sociale si traduce in un cannibalismo che non arretra davanti a nulla; le indimenticabili sequenze della bambina contagiata che fa giustizia sommaria dei genitori la dicono lunga sullo stato dell'istituzione familiare e su cio' che essa rappresenta all'interno della societa' americana. In "Zombi" la metafora diventa ancora piu' trasparente: un gruppetto di uomini normali si rifugia in un grande supermarket e lo

difende coi denti (ma soprattutto con le armi), mentre branchi di morti viventi, anime evidentemente dannate dal demone del consumismo anche quando erano in vita, si aggirano in questo baraccone del capitalismo, irresistibilmente attratti dal fascino di merci che per loro non possono piu' rappresentare alcunché'. Nel terzo capitolo della saga, lo zombie-proletario, paternamente assistito dal buon dottore, comincia a recuperare le capacita' intellettuali ed emotive; ma l'intervento dell'ineliminabile casta militare provvedera', come di rito, a far naufragare tutto in una nuova tragedia.

Tecnicamente parlando, quelli di Romero non sono veri zombies, nel senso che nelle storie non si verifica il minimo intervento di riti voodoo o polveri magiche. L'aura mistica dello zombie d.o.c. scende al livello molto piu' terreno di misteriose radiazioni cosmiche, capaci di ridare vita a cadaveri freschi o gia' abbondantemente putrefatti, a ulteriore conferma della rilettura in chiave materialista del personaggio. In ogni caso, "La notte dei morti viventi" si inserisce di prepotenza nel travolgente successo del filone splatter, stabilendo almeno due canoni che continuano a fare scuola ancora oggi: la violenza esasperata di situazioni e immagini, che sostituisce al "non-visto-ma-solo-intuito" tipico ad esempio di Tourneur un "visto-in-primissimo-piano-ai-limiti-del-vomito" nutrito di sbudellamenti, squartamenti, sangue, cannibalismo; e un'iconografia facciale, gestita dai maestri degli effetti speciali, che per osmosi evade dai confini del film di zombies e si espande a buona parte dell'horror dell'ultimo ventennio. Un caso lampante e' "La casa" di Sam Raimi (1982), dove non esiste un solo vero zombie, ma quasi tutte le "creature" sembrano uscite da un film di Romero.

In pratica, con gli anni Settanta lo zombie si trasforma in via definitiva in morto vivente, e sempre piu' sanguinario e assatanato invade gli schermi in una miriade di pellicole di riporto che poco o nulla aggiungono a quanto era gia' stato detto da Romero. Mancanza di fantasia e ripetitivita' sono il tema dominante di questi film. Personalmente, sarei portato a salvare solo quelli che accentuano la componente di humor nero dilatandola fino agli estremi del grottesco surreale; e aggiudicherei la palma di migliore del mazzo a "Il ritorno dei morti viventi" di Dan O'Bannon, del 1984, cosi' macabro e improbabile da sfiorare i limiti della comica finale.

In tanta carneficina, spiccano per discrezione e suggestione di atmosfere due titoli che in Italia non hanno avuto molto successo, forse perche' oggi, come in passato, il buongusto non sempre paga. Il primo e' "Morti e sepolti", di Gary Sherman (1981), una storia crepuscolare a base di morti riportati in vita dal classico scienziato pazzo, inquietante nel proporre l'ipotesi che il morto rivitalizzato sia ignaro della propria condizione di cadavere ambulante, e agghiacciante quando ci spiega che l'autore dell'orrenda macchinazione ha deciso di sostituirsi

a Dio al puro scopo di migliorare l'estetica della specie umana.

"Il serpente e l'arcobaleno" (1988), di Wes Craven, resta a mio parere il miglior film sugli zombies (quelli veri!) che sia mai stato girato, e probabilmente e' anche il risultato piu' compiuto di un regista geniale ma discontinuo. L'azione e' ambientata ad Haiti, con voodoo e polveri "zombanti", il che conferisce alla trama una solida dimensione fantastica; ma il vero splendore del film sta nella sua capacita' di leggere il tema in chiave politica. Spingendosi ancora piu' oltre di Romero, Craven esplicita l'idea dello zombie come schiavo del potere; nel caso specifico, del potere dittatoriale di Duvalier, al cui crollo e' dedicato l'epilogo della storia. "Noi prendiamo gli amici del popolo, ci impossessiamo delle loro anime, li rendiamo mostri, e li facciamo entrare nei sogni della gente": e' questa la filosofia dei ton-ton-macoutes di Papa' Doc, come viene spiegata al giovane ricercatore americano che si e' recato ad Haiti, pagato da una multinazionale (!), per carpire il segreto della non-morte. Piu' chiaro di cosi'...

Si muore? No, si rinasce. Per entrare nei sogni degli altri, e trasformarli in incubi.

1.8 Translating the worm: irony apropos

"TRANSLATING THE WORM: IRONY APROPOS"

by Pierre Queneau

Throughout the mystery of life and love there has been a single common denominator. A nocturnal one, to be sure, but a denominator nonetheless. One suggests that we think of Bob Folder as the point where the ideal relationship meets: a ritual bonfire of simultaneous message and meaning. All of our real or purported knowledge, whether of the natural world, of the standards of right conduct, of the criteria of beauty or of the existence and attributes of a divine creator, is expressed in Folder's prepositions. He's lost his head. Actually, he's lost his poems. Left them in a bar, he did, and now they are melting into the rainforest of the andiron.

Propositions, prepositions. Is there a correlation between general personality traits and preference in modes of writing? Aristotle may have thought poetry a preparation for death, but most poets have seemed intent upon putting it to death. This bit of jargon has the virtue of suggesting simultaneously things about carelessness and inattention alone. Folder, in his first publication, appeared to be on the trail of a metaphoric appoggiatura: the calm before the

storm. With his "Sonnet For a Landlocked Numeral" and the enduring "Bacon Critters," Folder had stepped over the bounds of what Van Wyck Brooks called "The Wine of the Puritans" (London, 1908). But what, then, do Ruskin, Carlyle, Coleridge or Hegel mean to the composer of The Savage Butcher of Carnale? He cries "Give the rhyme crank a hearty foamy Calvinistic dot;" he implores us to "skate methodically." Yet the dog threw his work away.

The notion of erecting a system of cerulean anecdotes analogous to Newton's system of physical nature and of basing it on a force of association analogous to Newton's force of gravitation was one which would naturally appeal to the young and enthusiastic Folder. But he was too honest a prevaricator to cling to an initial plan when the force of his hammer led in few and different directions. He took to his heels. In short: we cannot have a legitimate explosion or an illegitimate confusion apparently undermine the entire sweep of knowledge-claims on which our Folderist and even everyday knowledge of the world around us is based.

But here we encounter a problem, as Folder well realizes. "I have untied the exponential acre of concrete dust . . ." he says, and this clearly means the past. He has untied the past, indeed. He has shattered the premonitions of irony and motif, he has turned from harmless satirizing of his mediocre contemporaries and leveled the barrel of his wit at Time itself; he has undertaken the complete translation of the masters. What matter the language? What is French to the Peloponnesians; what is English to a Baritone Saxon? For the members of the general public still able to read a written word at all, Folder has arrived as the Savior to savor the meaning of poetry at will. Assemble, all and sundry! He will tell you what it means. Hear the reckoning of Dent Fulghum: "Wiry suet burn your maids, / Ring out linens from the shades." Digest the offerings of Armchair Corso of Valhalla: ". . . don't fear the misty plate / that looks in your window. You must eat your lunch." Are these the pseudo-visionary rambles of a Yeats (Ben Bulben) or the sophist pinings of a Rilke (Archaic Torso of Apollo)? Are these the inaccessible parables of an ivory-tower prima dona? We should think not. Let any misinformed ignoramus who cannot detect the meaning of "you must eat your lunch" depart immediately. Folder has hit his mark: the kitchen. The substantive discovery on which Folder hoped to base his translations was the principle of the association of sounds. As the dying rabbit unleashes the banshee wail, so does the anapest match the banana-rest. To wit: particularly in Iron-Clad Pleasure Triscuit, the Manifesto, and My Emergency Horse Outfit, Folder makes much of the association of sounds, putting it forward as an explanation of memory, belief, causal inference, our ideas of material objects, and even as a clue to the nature of the self itself. Itself.

The epistemological question of conceptual legitimacy, the persistence of belief. Live outside the religious framework, either formal or informal. Let God be

fraudulent, let what is more be more. Attend to the argument and ignore for a bit the rhetorical flourishes: large numbers of people seem quite able to live their entire lives. One final word of warning. Folder is one of the most elegant stylists ever to write about sufficiently-dissolving problems. The ease with which his paradigms fall and the felicity with which even the most least-adduced points are made may fool the reader into supposing that nothing of any great weight could possibly be contained in such diapasonic prose. Nothing could be further from the truth! When Folder is least polemical he is most polarized. Suppose that God or fate has so nicely arranged these matters. No deeper rationale can ever be offered. Folder: to read him is a pleasure, but to understand him is a challenge.

1.9 Manifesto del racconto lampo

"MANIFESTO DEL RACCONTO LAMPO"

by Caio Guardigli / Michele Mengoli

Il racconto-lampo e' un genere letterario ben preciso, le cui spiccate qualita' di Leggerezza, Rapidita', Esattezza, Visibilita', Molteplicita', di Calviniana memoria, ne fanno un congegno narrativo ad altissima precisione, basato sulla scrittura per immagini (non descrittiva quindi). Bisogna esprimersi, quindi scrivere, per immagini, dal momento che l'immagine e' la formulazione di pensiero piu' forte che riusciamo ad avere, perche' di tipo "impressivo", cioe' capace di farsi sentire sui nostri sensi, acquistando una violenta concretezza fisica. Bisogna scrivere per immagini perche' e' cosi' che funziona il meccanismo del pensiero. I racconti-lampo sono storie. E sono poesie. E mescolati insieme questi segni e questi suoni, diventano una strana specie di pittura. Insoliti dipinti che utilizzano la tecnica della scrittura per captare un attimo nello scorrere del tempo. Intuizioni, senza inizio e senza fine.

Se cosi' e', scrivere diventa una questione di metafore, e le metafore sono una questione di immaginario dato che e' li' che si pescano e si attivano le similitudini; e l'immaginario e' l'essenza dell'uomo, la spina dorsale della sua mente, la dimensione mentale in cui egli vive. _ l'immaginario che ci regala lampi improvvisi, pure intuizioni, traiettorie luminose e ramificate che sono tracce della vita stessa: nel recepirla, osservarla e, nei limiti della sua irrazionalita', nel darle un senso. Siamo insomma al centro dell'esistenza. I Racconti lampo si possono leggere come una raccolta di brevi momenti differiti tra loro, oppure come un unico scenario di destini differenti. Idee, fuori dallo spazio e ferme nel tempo, semplicemente da intuire come intuitive sono le metafore che

vogliono simboleggiarle per mezzo di questa insolita tecnica di pittura: la scrittura per immagini.

Bisognerebbe discuterne molto, perche' leggero e veloce, il racconto-lampo e' in grado di arrivare ovunque e a chiunque, dal momento che e' perfettamente in sintonia con le nostre attuali esigenze percettive e la nostra dimensione spazio-temporale.

Autori: Caio Guardigli / Michele Mengoli
Email: guaraldi@iper.net

1.10 Silvermoon dance

"SILVERMOON DANCE"

by Luca Pesaro

- I want to be an animal again - Wender Treshold said slowly, relaxing on the body-seat. The chair quickly reacted to the shape of his back and legs, its microprocessors remoulding the pillows instantly. He studied the large office, filled with green and red plants that seemed to sprout from the floor, the walls, the ceiling itself. The air smelt and tasted of long-forgotten flowers. A gigantic window opened onto Paradise World, showing a barren landscape that suddenly became a tropical forest, about fifteen miles from the Holiday Resort.

The little man sitting behind the simil-wood desk picked up a computer printout and quickly scanned it. He was smiling, but his large brown eyes seemed to be carefully examining every square inch of Wender's body.

- Why, Mr. Treshold - he said smoothly. - We thought that might be the case. - He inhaled deeply. - You've been here less than a month ago. I guess you liked it.

Treshold nodded, brushing his green hair back. His skin felt young and tense again, after the plastic surgery he had undergone two weeks before to appease his wife's obsession with fashion. He knew his new yellow eyes and re-built muscle tissue must look impressive, especially to someone that was as short and ugly as Pinter, the man behind the desk. - Yeah, I did. And I want to be an animal again - he repeated, trying to keep his voice steady.

Pinter grinned and said something Treshold did not understand, a sub-vocal command for the computer probably. - We generally do not allow such close Mergings. The Rule has people wait at least three months before they can Merge again. But I suppose we could make an exception for you, Mr. Treshold.

Werner nodded, smiling sourly. Being one of the richest men in the galaxy had its uses. - What could I try, this time? - he asked.

- Why, you could be an Eagle, a Lion, a Bear, a Dolphin... almost anything you want really. Aside from a Wolf, of course.

- Of course - Treshold felt something shifting inside his stomach. Of course. It just could not happen. It was forbidden by law and common sense, and he knew it. He had left Earth and travelled through Hyperspace all the way to Heracles, looking for a dream that could not come true. What a fool. But still... There was something he had to do. His hand reached into one of the side pockets of his white jacket and clutched the Dose-Dispenser tightly, enjoying the feeling of the round crystal container against his palm. Sytron, at least twenty shots. And with his slightly modified dispenser he could take it all at once, if he wanted to. Somehow he felt safer knowing that, even though shooting more than a few doses could cause unpredictable side effects, or even death. Pinter was looking at him, and Treshold forced himself to speak.

- I suppose I haven't decided what to try yet. Could I look around for a couple of days, just to make up my mind?

- Naturally. Our best suite is already waiting for you. - Pinter smiled smugly.

Treshold got up and shook the man's hand, shivering at the contact with the cold and sweaty palm. Thirty seconds later he was already on the automatic pathwalk, quickly passing the large windows that let the visitors glimpse at the awesome beauty of Paradise World.

Nature was blossoming everywhere around the Holiday Center, the entire planet almost devoid of human settlement. He stared at the planet where you could enjoy the most expensive holidays in the universe, and live on a world that looked like Earth when the human race was still young. Treshold wondered idly if spaceships and artificial intelligence were worth what had been lost. If anything was worth the life of a planet that by now looked like a gigantic concrete and steel factory, its skies polluted, its air almost unbreatheable. Earth's nature was almost gone, and preserved only in places like Paradise World, scattered over the Galaxy for the amusement of The Lucky Few.

The pathwalk stopped in front of his room, and Treshold took a step forward, allowing the door's security system to scan his brain-waves in order to recognise him and let him through. He smiled, wondering how long it would take people to duplicate brain-waves as easily as they could now with physical appearances or eye-retinas. The door slowly slid out of sight and Wender stepped through.

- Close the window - he said. The room-computer

clicked obediently and the large windowpane turned pitch black, plunging the room into darkness. Treshold slowly took off his jacket, pulling the Dose-Dispenser out of the pocket, and walked to the field-bed. It was waiting for him in the center of the room, gently yielding to his weight when he finally lay down on it. Treshold smiled and lifted the Dose-Dispenser to his neck, gently caressing the cold steel trigger with his index finger. Then he slowly, deliberately pressed it, almost enjoying the thin needle's bite. Sytron spread through his body, filling his veins and arteries with a tingling sensation, a soft music that quickly became the universe.

The huge grey wolf leapt across the field and approached the forest. His name was StrangeThoughts, or that was how its peers called him when their minds intertwined in the peculiar telepathic way wolves had spoken since the beginning of time. It had amazed the human side of him at the beginning, how close the animals could be, how they could almost live each other's thoughts and emotions, but then the sensation had slowly subsidised as a part of what the world was supposed to be. Still, the sparkle of consciousness that burnt within him wondered about it, enjoying the sensation of sharing that came from the wolves' pack.

StrangeThoughts turned sharply, detecting the scent of a rabbit in the air, and started following its track. The wolf jumped over a large tree root and moved deeper into the forest, his senses spreading ahead of him, his sight peering for traces and his ears straining to perceive the faint ruffle of shifted leaves. He knew the rabbit had felt his presence, and the icy taste of the smaller animal's fear was becoming sharper and sharper.

The wolf slowed down, lowering his muzzle to the ground, and then resumed its running, unconsciously avoiding roots and undergrowth, darting past trees and jumping above a small stream.

The rabbit's smell was getting stronger and stronger as the animal started slowing down; the wolf could feel it was old and tired, while the excitement of the hunt pulsed within his skin, accelerating his heartbeat.

The forest became an ever-changing background of darker and lighter shadows, mixed with the sharp and powerful scents of hundreds of different life forms. StrangeThoughts leapt forward and glimpsed the rabbit turning around a tree and desperately hiding in the darkness.

The wolf swiftly followed it, a part of his mind almost overjoyed with the sparkling sensations that were shooting through the animal's body, wanting to scream in pleasure every time the long muscles tensed and released power for one of the surging leaps.

There it was. The rabbit had stopped and turned around transfixed, its small, frightened eyes staring

at its pursuer. StrangeThoughts knew his prey was paralysed by sheer terror, and his body shivered in anticipation as he almost stopped still, advancing one step at a time, enjoying his triumph. The rabbit did not move.

The wolf approached it, looking at his prey for a long time, almost raveling in the fear he saw in the smaller animal's limbs. Then he lunged forward, his jaws closing on the rabbit's neck with a sharp cracking of bones. The prey struggled for a couple of seconds and the hunter tasted the flavory blood on his tongue, his stomach twisting in anticipation.

The human part of his mind shouted in pleasure as through a desperate orgasm and the wolf swallowed a huge chunk of tasty meat. Then StrangeThoughts lifted his head, his whole body arching upwards, and howled at the sky.

Threshold slowly came back to his body, a part of his mind still longing for the absolute pleasures of wild life. He sighed, slowly sitting up in the dark room. The field-bed readjusted underneath him and the man opened his eyes, staring at the blackness around him. He still clutched the Dose-Dispenser in his hand.

Sytron was as enjoyable as ever, but whenever he used it he felt something missing. He would re-live the wolf's life, but it would always be through the human part of his mind that had been inside the animal. It could never be again as it was, thriving into a wild beast's perception of the world, going through the pleasure of the hunt as only a wolf could. Yes, Sytron was good, but the memories it brought back were but a shadow of what had been.

Threshold relaxed back onto the bed, wondering. Why had he come back to Paradise World? He was sure he could never be a wolf again, not for three years, at least. It was the first thing they had told him at the beginning of the holiday: he was not allowed to repeat the Merging until a long time had elapsed. Apparently when the Tesca Machine had been first experimented the people that used it too frequently, and with the same beast, developed a growing dependence until their minds could not be recalled from the animal body. They were so completely bonded to their host that they would not come back, never again.

He shuddered at the idea. Being a wolf was great, but for the rest of his days... It was just too much. The animal's perceptions were too wildly alien and distant to be accepted as the only way to live. On the other hand he could merge with another being, any one he wanted. The Tesca Machine would interact with his brain and body, carefully disconnecting his mind from all sensorial inputs, until his conscience floated in a limbus, suspended within the artificial storage-brains that were generally used during clonation processes. Then his host body would be prepared, not a younger version of himself as was done when his old body was

too rotten for tissue re-building, but, for a short time, a non-human shell.

A cloned animal would be taken, its memory and character deleted, and a Treshold 's mind installed into it, merged with the animal's instincts, perceptions and intelligence, until the human inside was only a spectator, deciding as the animal would, behaving as the animal would, the conscious part of his mind only receiving the stimuli and enjoying them. In a way it was like living in a self-made holomovie, where you just had to taste what came upon you, without having to take the responsibility for it.

And he could pick whatever animal he wished, except the wolf.

Treshold smiled, remembering his scepticism when some his friends had talked fondly about Paradise World. He could not believe what was so wonderful about being an animal. But everybody had seemed to love it, and he finally decided to try. The holiday was extremely expensive but money was not a problem to him. And boredom was.

Treshold's first few moments as a wolf had been incredibly strange, a part of him still remembering he was human and another part being completely wolfish, longing, thinking, living as any wolf would. His body had been that of StrangeThoughts, and it had felt right, as if that was the way it should always have been. And though the spark of his conscience had always remained inside him, leading the other wolves in the pack to call him StrangeThoughts, he was, for two weeks, just an animal, surrounded and almost overpowered with the feelings of life that had kept flooding his senses.

After the holiday the scepticism was gone, and Treshold only wondered why he so desperately wanted to go back to it, why his friends always had great memories of Paradise World and none of them actually felt as compelled, as desperate as he was. Maybe because none of them had ever been a wolf. Or maybe the reason was Silvermoon Dance.

He had tried to talk to his wife about it but she would not listen, as usual, worrying only about the clothes she would wear at the next sky-party on the satellite. And when he had finally told her he was going back to Paradise World she had nodded, saying. - Oh, that's that holiday place, isn't it. The one in which you tame animals... -

- You merge with them. Not tame. You actually become one, for a while at least - he had said.

She had stared outside the window. - You won't be here for the Rosses' dinner then.

Treshold had walked out then, without saying good-bye, a part of him wondering where he had lost the wonderful girl she had been only forty years before. Then again he had not expected anything better. Their relationship had become completely pointless, as most

of his life apparently. Maybe it depended on being one hundred and forty-two years old. The things that had seemed enthralling when he was younger had progressively grown more duller with every clonation and tissue re-building. His body was always young, but his mind was ageing nonetheless, and there seemed to be nothing interesting in the world anymore. Even his Company, from which he had taken so much pleasure and satisfaction through the Interplanetary Market competition had become so large as to run itself, until all he had to do was sit in a wonderful office reading reports on how much money he was making.

That way, more than twenty years before, his wife uninteresting, his job fatuous, his life pointless, he had tried drugs. They were good for a while, Coke, Booze, KRT... But habit killed the fun, as always. Later on he had moved onto travelling, exploring new worlds, visiting all possible pleasure resorts in the universe... Until he realised that the problem was within himself, that there was nothing in the world that could excite him anymore, and anyway not for a long time. Until he started regretting tissue-rebuilding and clonation. Until Paradise World had come, a firecracker in the middle of the darkest night. And in Paradise World he had met Silvermoon Dance.

Treshold left his room, asking the pathwalk to take him to the Teleporters Hall. Sleep would not come, and he felt like walking around; the fresh night air might help him thinking. His mind seemed to run in vicious circles: it was crazy to dream about being a wolf again, but there was something else...

The pathwalk stopped in front of a transparent door, and Treshold let the computer scan him and analyse his brain patterns, relaxing to make the machine's job easier. Finally the door opened: it was well past midnight and the room was empty. One of the large screens on the far wall lit up, and the computer-simulated image of a scientist appeared in front of him. A digitised voice spoke, sounding all too human.

- What may I do for you, Mr. Treshold? - the computer asked.

- I'd like to go out for a walk.

- Do you want permanent shield protection?

The man thought about it for a few seconds. No, he did not want to be in a shield all the time, cut off from the wonderful world around him. He needed to feel the grass shuffle under his feet, the fresh air wash over his face. He longed for nature's sharp scents and flavours, for the rustling noises of the wind among the trees. Better to have the computer keep a continuous check on his whereabouts, ready to step in and envelope him in a protection field if danger arose. That was how it was done with animals, the central mainframe ready to isolate and transport back one of the occupied beings as soon as its safety was hindered. - No, just keep an eye on me. - he finally said.

- And where would you like to be teleported?

- The wolves' area. - Treshold said. It had come out of him before he could think or worry about it. But it finally made sense. Smiling he realised that, even though he could not go back to being a wolf again, he could get a last glimpse of what it had felt like. He would at least be where the wolves were. And maybe Sytron...

Treshold nodded slowly, walking to the teleporter's platform. That was the reason he had come back to Paradise World, in the end. Not be a wolf again, because that was impossible. But to have a last taste of it, to try and summon some of the wolves' magic back, even if just for a scant second. Then the whole trip would have been worth it.

Maybe he could even get a chance to see her again. This time as a human being. And then the longing would pass, when he finally rationalised and reacted to her as he should. As a man to a wolf.

Checking he had taken the Dose-Dispenser with him, Treshold lifted his left hand, signalling he was ready. The world slowly receded from him, quietly merging and superimposing itself to the green grassland...

He was not in the Teleporters Hall anymore.

A small hill rose in front of him, covered in grass, and huge boulders littered the terrain mixing with sparse trees almost invisible in the pale silver moon light. Treshold started walking towards the high plane he knew waited on the top of the hill, marvelling at how the surroundings looked strangely similar and completely different to the way he had perceived them as a wolf. First there were the colours, which he could not see before. And the perspective had changed, as well. But the smells were missing, and the place seemed completely empty and devoid of life when compared to the feelings he had perceived living in the animal body.

The rational part of his brain kept marvelling at the amazing job that had been worked upon the planet. Paradise World was only slightly smaller than Earth itself, but in less than fifty years it had been perfectly terraformed with the help of accelerated growth seeds, bacteria and animals that had taken over the original species and utterly destroyed them, in a frightening and exciting display of what nature and the human mind could achieve when they worked together. Now it looked as Eden's Garden would have before the coming of man.

Treshold reached the hilltop and entered a large circle of stones where he knew the wolves gathered often. It was completely empty, and the man was strangely dismayed, even though the pack would have been a problem more than anything else, now that he was inside his body again. He slowly walked around, carefully examining the places he had known so well in his two weeks as a wolf, a part of his mind longing for

the feelings and sensations that were not there anymore.

Then he finally moved towards the center of the clearing, in the very same spot he had sat when the pack met, and lay on the ground. There was no danger, because the computer would encircle him with the force field if anything happened. Treshold bit his lip and grabbed the Dose-Dispenser that sat in his pocket, examining it in the moonlight and carefully resting it against his neck.

This was what he had come back for: one last attempt to re-live as a wolf, even if for a short time, without having to lose his humanity. His finger caressed the trigger and then quickly pressed it, five times.

He had never taken more than two doses of Sytron at a time, before, and did not know what five would do. But maybe the drug, together with a place that was so filled with wolves memories, would bring the feelings back. Just once more.

Sytron sang within his body, in his bloodstream, in his brain.

First the memories came, more powerful then ever before. He was StrangeThoughts again, in the clearing on top of the hill, with the rest of the pack. And then she came, her scent filling his mind until he thought the human part of his brain was going to turn insane with desire, until the wolf's body shook and the animal howled in pleasure and pain and fear at the strength of the feeling. The two of them just stood in front of each other, sensing each other's thoughts, riveting in the meddling of their smells, and the bond was instantly between their bodies, souls, brains.

Wolves mate for life, a part of his mind told him. Silvermoon Dance was StrangeThoughts missing half, as he was hers. Forever.

The memories meddled after that sparkling moment, and he was with her, hunting, mating, lying in the shadow, his thoughts mixing with hers completely, perfectly, until he was not sure where his limits were, and where hers started.

And he could not live without her anymore.

For a fortnight life was whole, and nothing more was to be expected. The part of him who was still Treshold was happy, satisfied, as it had never been before. And then the holiday ended, and the man went back to his own, true body. But still Silvermoon Dance haunted his days and nights.

Finally the memories receded, and consciousness came forward. Treshold felt it growing inside him, but it was not his very self that was emerging. Sytron was still strong inside him, and he was no man, yet, and no wolf, anymore. Smells were coming at him, and alien thoughts hovering at the edge of his conscience. But when he opened his eyes the colours were there, he could see them. The telepathic thoughts were

unreadable, barely outside of his reach.

And she was there.

Silvermoon Dance was staring at his lying body, her strange eyes set on him as if trying to enter his brain. Treshold slowly sat up, careful not to scare her away, but she did not move. Her muzzle was inches from his face.

Desperately he tried to understand the thoughts that were coming from her, but he just could not, not quite, not anymore. His hand reached for her and stroke her back, gently caressing the jet-black fur, lingering on the white spot between her hind legs. She snuggled closer to him, her breath warm on his cheek.

Treshold held her tightly, burying his face in her fur, trying to cling to the memories of her, of their sharing, of their bond. She was his, he was hers. And Silvermoon Dance was a wolf.

As if sensing his despair, she pulled back from him and turned around, one step after the other, receding slowly from his reach. The moon shone above them, drawing impossibly long shadows.

Treshold tried to get up, his entire body screaming with fear and despair, the loss almost too much to bear. Tears formed at the corner of his eyes. Silvermoon Dance reached the edge of the clearing and turned around slowly, one last time. For a second the man's and the wolf's eyes were locked together, and Treshold felt his body shiver. Then she was gone, vanished among the shadows. He wept for a long time, and then lay exhausted, waiting for Sytron to wear off completely. In the end, sadness creeping upon him, he found the strength to press the button which would bring him back to the Holiday Center.

Treshold lay on the surgical table, large machines looming above him. Two doctors were looking at computer screens and a third one was typing something on a keyboard. None spoke to him: they probably thought he was insane.

Convincing the Company that owned Paradise World had not been too difficult, after he had spoken to the president. First he had threatened to take Paradise World over and fire the whole staff. They knew he could do it, if he really wanted to. Then, when the president wondered aloud how could possibly avoid any serious investigation if the Final Merging actually took place, Treshold knew he had won. For half an hour they discussed whether he should wait a while longer, and maybe seek professional help. But finally calling the Network and bringing proof that Treshold's last will entrusted the company with half of his estate in case of death had been enough to wash away all their doubts. There would be so much money for them, enough to buy off any investigation and any moral consideration. Technically he would be dead as a human, after the Final Merging. But it did not matter. He had had enough of human beings.

One of the doctors lowered a black helmet over his head, and he heard the soft purring of the Tesca Machine. For an infinite time he was suspended within his own brain, until darkness came.

The large grey wolf looked at the human being in front of him, wondering how such an animal could move on those two thin legs. A part of him knew the answer, but it did not matter, not anymore. He slowly looked around, examining the strange place he had awoken to. Hundreds of new smells hit his brain, and strange noises filled his ears. Everything seemed white, unnatural, and the surface underneath its paws was too smooth, and cold. Then his sight seem to blur, and the world changed. He was somewhere else.

StrangeThoughts smelled and looked and tasted the new surroundings, recognising them. The grassland swept around him, rising towards the Gathering Place. The wolf leapt forward in powerful strides, excitement running through his body, his brain flooded with the smells and sounds and the sensation of the wind on his fur.

He reached the top of the hill, and a new, strong scent washed over him. She was there.

StrangeThoughts slowed down, the man inside him finally satisfied, understanding beyond any lingering doubts that it was right, perfectly, absolutely right. That he had had no real choice, and this was the only way it could ever be.

Silvermoon Dance appeared from behind a boulder and slowly trotted towards him, stopping when their muzzles were almost touching. He felt her thoughts, sharply, bright flashes and feelings that seemed to explode inside his brain. For a second his human side tried to translate everything into words, to record them, until he finally realised that words were wrong. Human language had no meaning, not anymore. Sentences were useless, clumsy, not able to deal with what was passing between them. Language was for men, and he let it go, knowing he would never need it again.

And then saw himself in her, the unspoken promise he carried within even when he walked as a thin, ridiculous two-legged being, the promise in those alien eyes and hands that had stroke caressed her fur.

And he saw the bond as only wolves did, unbreakable, beyond life. She had known he would come back, even before he himself did. StrangeThoughts saw her dreaming of two wolves running on the hunt, eating, mating, leaping through infinite grasslands, caring for the offspring that would come. Finally Silvermoon Dance moved underneath the night-sky, her shadow pale, her eyes glittering, her scent overpowering. Her thoughts were still in his mind, and his in hers when she jumped over a tree-root, hiding in the shadows. And then she ran away, challenging him to catch her.

The man within the wolf allowed himself one last

moment of pure, absolute joy, before receding forever, as far as he could without disappearing. Then StrangeThoughts lifted his head and howled his happiness at the universe.

1.11 Cancer

"CANCER"

by Kurt Nimmo

I'm in Florida.

My mother is in a house five miles away and she has a tumor in her brain and she is dying very slowly.

I park my father's BMW in the parking lot at a shopping center. I sit there looking out the window at the palm trees, at the blue sky with its puffy white clouds, and then I light a cigarette and get out of the car.

It's hot outside. I walk over to the stores.

I throw down the cigarette.

I go in the drugstore. I don't know why I go in the drug store but I do and the airconditioning is on high and it is suddenly cold like a freezer and there are these seniors walking around buying things like umbrellas and prescription drugs.

I think: My mother is only 56 and she is dying from cancer.

I walk over to where they have the magazines. I pick up a magazine. I don't know what magazine it is because I don't look at the cover. I simply turn the pages and think that it's too cold and that everything is weird and distant and I can't feel anything, no emotion, nothing, I think that this must be what it's like to be dead. I'm in a place where I don't know anybody and I'm dead.

I'd taken a valium from my father's prescription before I left. I can't feel it. I'd drank about half a fifth of good expensive scotch earlier in the day. It's three o'clock in the afternoon and I'm not drunk. I'm high but not drunk. I flip the pages of the magazine and I focus on a photograph of a woman--she is one of those female body builders with obscene muscles and dark brown skin. I think this is strange because she has this beautiful head with curly blond hair and nice features but it's all ruined by the ridiculous almost male looking muscled body.

I put the magazine back.

I walk around the store for a minute. I don't know what I'm doing. I'm not thinking about anything in particular.

Occasionally I flash on my mother in bed. Her head's shaved from the operation. She can't walk. She's in this bed with wheels on it in the back bedroom of my father's house. Once a day a woman from the hospice organization comes in and does things--the things my mother did before the cancer and the operation. I sleep in the room with my mother. I listen to her talk nonsense, a kind of baby talk. Cancer is slowly eating away her brain and she talks like a little girl, or a senile old woman. About fifty percent of the time she does not know who I am. Sometimes she thinks I'm her brother.

I drive along until I reach a toll bridge. I slow, reach in my pocket, and find some coins. There is a uniformed woman inside a small toll booth. She has on sunglasses and I can't tell if she is looking at me or not. She turns her head a little as I give her two quarters. She has dark hair and thin lips. Then I put the BMW in first gear and continue across the toll bridge.

I pass the cream-colored building where Burt Reynolds has a condo. My father had pointed it out a few days before. We were driving down along the Gulf. The hospice woman was at the house with my mother. As we drove past I looked for Burt Reynolds but I didn't see him. I saw a few old people walking around but not Burt Reynolds.

Now I pull up at the county park and get out of the car and walk over to the beach. I stand there in my shoes, long pants, and short sleeved shirt. It's hot. It's like the sun has something against me, against everybody. I look at the water, at the sun, at the people walking and swimming and doing nothing at three o'clock in the afternoon on a day in the middle of the week. I cross over to where water meets sand and I start walking south. I watch my feet sink into the wet sand as I walk and I think that Florida is a horrible, terrible place--the weather, the sun, the water does not make life any less meaningless and inequitable.

I notice a woman in a bikini.

It's a hot pink color and the sun makes it look like it's on fire. I stop, move away from the water, sit down in the warm sand and look at the woman in the hot pink bathing suit. She seems unaware that I am staring at her. Usually I'm careful not to stare at people but today I don't care about anything. I stare at her for a long time. I like looking at her short brown hair, the slender and graceful length of her neck, the rich brownness of her skin, the longness of her legs, the narrowness of her hips, and the cool whiteness at the bottom of her feet as she flattens herself out on a green and yellow beach towel and lets the sun lay on her.

Finally I get up, brush the sand off my pants, head back to the car.

On my way back to the car I see a dead fish.

It is big and partially rotted and it lays there in the sun with its fish mouth open and its fish eyes clouded over and slightly sunken.

Death always looks about the same.

I drive up the highway, past Burt Reynolds' condo, over the long bridge, and back to my father's house. I park his BMW in the garage. I sit in the car for a long time, in the darkness of the garage, and I don't think about much of anything. I don't concentrate on any one thing for very long.

Inside the house I can hear my father's grandfather clock ticking and the murmur of the TV. He'd bought the grandfather clock for my mother three years before. When they'd first detected the cancer. Now it counts the hours, minutes, and seconds.

My father is watching TV in the other room.

Kurt, he says. Is that you?

Yeah, I say. It's me. Has Mary gone? Mary is the hospice woman.

Yeah, he answers. She's gone...

His voice trails off, lost in the sound of the movie he's watching on HBO. I hear guns, screams, the urgent and angry sound of machinery.

I go to the liquor cabinet and bring down the good scotch--it's almost gone. Later my father will go to the drug store and buy another quart. When he does I will go in the bedroom and tap out three yellow valiums in my hand and I will take them and the pills will do nothing. Or nothing that I can ascertain through the heavy near-blindness of imported alcohol.

Maybe the valium will make me calm...

I find two ice cubes and put them in the glass with the scotch. I lightly swish the scotch around to get it cold and then I walk out in the backyard where it is hot and unbearable and something maybe like a privatized segment of hell.

I close my eyes and listen to the gulls.

1.12 Erika

"Erika"

by Giulio Barros

Sapevo di non dover bere quell'ultimo bicchiere ... tra l'altro la tequila con quel suo gusto secco e quella mistura di spezie da succhiare dal cavo del pollice non mi e' mai piaciuta. Mi sembra di ricordare che quando mi sono abbattuto sul letto era gia' buio ... non capisco se e' ancora buio o se sono io che non riesco ad aprire gli occhi; mi piace starmene sdraiato nel letto con il lenzuolo che mi accarezza le palle ad ogni movimento ... e' proprio per questo che dormo nudo ed e' anche per questo che odio le lenzuola ruvide di questo schifo di pensione.

Ho come la sensazione di un soffio caldo attorno ai coglioni e non capisco cosa mi sta' camminando sull'ucello! ... ah! Maledetto ultimo bicchiere... se almeno la testa smettesse di pesare 100 chili ... ma che cazz... cos'ho sull'ucello?! Una lumaca? ... Al diavolo ... beccati 'sto rovescio accidenti se era grosso ha perfino fatto un tonfo sul pavimento ed io mi sono pure fatto male alla mano! ... impossibile fammi dare un'occhiata! ... si, un'occhiata, semprecche' riesca ad alzarmi,... o almeno ad alzare la testa, ... o ad aprire gli occhi.... ma Porca Puttana ! se la smettessi di continuare a pensare cosi' forte? Chissa' magari la testa smetterebbe di fare tutto 'sto casino e riuscirei ad addormentarmi... magari mi risveglio domani ... tanto qua fuori sara' sempre il solito schifo!

.... ma porca merda! E' tornato il lumacone sull'ucello? Ho gl'incubi!!!... ma cosa cazz...! pensa te che roba ...Erika! ... la figlia del portiere ... altro che lumacone, questo e' un super pompino, con i controcazzi! ... vuoi vedere che era lei anche prima ed io l'ho stesa con quel manrovescio? Beh, mica male la piccola! ... certo che dopo la botta che ha preso doveva proprio averne una voglia matta per riprendere ... come e meglio di prima !!... Senti come succhiaaaa!.... Piano bimba che mi risucchi le palle! dai, dai, non fermarti! Quasi quasi le vengo in bocca ... tanto a me che mi frega ... mica la bacio io, ci pesa quel mezzo segaiolo del figlio del salumiere oh! oh! ..troppo tardi... ora si incazzera' e comincera' a sputare per dieci minuti ... e no!, non smette ... senti come continua a succhiareee! Mi sta' colando sperma e saliva fino in mezzo al buco del culo ! Ah! Ah! Ah!, non restero' mica incinto!... che cazzo di pensiero,.... beh, perche' smette? ma cosa sta' facendo? Wow! Ma senti un po' la verginella! Mmmmmh! Era trooopo tempo che non me ne capitava una con la figa cosi' stretta! ... senti che chiappe sodeeee! ... Cazzo!, mi fa venire un'altra volta, ah! Sii!

Daiiii! <AH!!>....ccidenti che roba ... era una cifra di tempo che non mi sentivo cosi' spolpato! ... non riesco nemmeno a muovere una ciglia! ma dove accidenti e' finita?! <Ehi! Dove vai? ... Torna un'attimo qui che voglio ricambiare ...>; mi fa cenno di tacere si reinfila in quel suo abitino sdrucito... accidenti che tettine, ma quanti cazzo di anni avra'? ... da quello che si vede 16, da come scopa 26! ... mi sorride ... si volta, ... si avvicina alla porta ... la apre adagio ... sbircia fuori ... mmmh mica male neanche il sedere! ... se lo vedevo prima... ...cacchio!, se la vede il padre uscire da qui cosa cazzo gli racconto, che giocavamo al dottore? ... e' gia' sgattaiolata fuori ... un ultimo sguardo, ... mi manda un bacio con la mano!, sorride e chiude la porta! ... Erika ... non capisco cosa le sia preso! ... sempre silenziosa, occhi bassi, voce appena percettibile un fuscello, ... ma a letto, cacchio!, che roba! ... aaah... La testa, ha ripreso come prima ... gia', ma prima di cosa?... non e' che me lo saro' sognato eh!? beh pero' un sogno molto veritiero, ho ancora le palle tutte bagnate di sperma ... e questo odore, e' proprio odore di figa ... figa fresca! Bho, mi sa che comincio a ricredermi sulla tequila adesso cerco di spegnere il ventilatore che mi sta' girando tra le orecchie e questa sera voglio proprio fare due chiacchiere con Erika, ... si!... due chiacchiere due chiacch..... zzh ... zzzhzzzzzh!

To be continued ...

1.13 Solo

"SOLO"

by Massimo Canetta

Una nottata tremenda. Si sveglio' tutto sudato, con un'angoscia che lo faceva tremare come se fosse stato completamente nudo ai piedi di un ghiacciaio. Era stato investito da incubi terribili. Si era svegliato parecchie volte, stringendosi nelle coperte come per cercare un abbraccio, un conforto che sapeva non esisteva affatto. Rimase a fissare il soffitto alla tenue luce della lampada che aveva lasciato accesa sul comodino dalle quattro, quando l'incubo piu' terribile l'aveva travolto come un autotreno in corsa. Respirava ancora a fatica ma riuscì a controllare il proprio respiro fino a quando si fu regolarizzato del tutto. Uno strano silenzio avvolgeva la stanza e lo infastidiva. Non sentiva i soliti rumori che provenivano dalla tangenziale, li' a due passi dalla finestra della camera da letto. "Nemmeno di domenica c'e' questa quiete." - penso' mentre si dirigeva in bagno.

Sollevo' la tapparella e guardo' fuori: il cielo era scuro, carico di nuvole ed effettivamente non si vedevano automobili, ne' camion, ne' altro sfrecciare su quella maledetta tangenziale. Si fece la barba, poi ad un certo punto spense il rasoio elettrico. Rimase immobile ad ascoltare il silenzio che riempiva la stanza da bagno.

Passato qualche secondo poso' il rasoio e ando' in cucina, accese la macchina del caffe' ed accese la televisione. Probabilmente c'erano dei problemi con l'antenna perche' non si riusciva a ricevere nemmeno un canale. Era qualche settimana che quell'antenna dava i numeri, avrebbe dovuto dirlo all'amministratore. Domani, magari. Spense il televisore e torno' in bagno. In bagno accese la radio ma ottenne lo stesso risultato della televisione. "Merda!" - esclamo' e spense l'apparecchio, riprendendo il rasoio. Riprese a farsi la barba. Quando ebbe finito si lavo' in fretta ed ando' a cambiarsi, in camera da letto. Il silenzio era assordante. Guardo' l'orologio, quasi pensando di essersi svegliato troppo presto, ma l'ora che appariva sulla sveglia, confermata poi dal suo orologio da polso, era la stessa di tutte le mattine, di tutti i maledetti giorni della settimana, di tutto l'anno.

Si sedette sul letto e guardo' la foto della moglie sul comodino. Era piu' di due anni che se ne era andata con il loro bambino di appena sei anni, che ancora non capiva perche' la mamma ed il papa' vivessero separati, ma che aveva ormai imparato a subire questo strano modo di vivere. Faceva fatica a trovare la forza di iniziare quella giornata, identica a quella precedente e, sicuramente, identica a quella che sarebbe venuta l'indomani, triste, pesante, sovraccarica di inutili responsabilita' e scadenze e totalmente priva di soddisfazioni personali. Si alzo' e apri' la finestra. Quello strano silenzio lo infastidiva terribilmente. Guardo' fuori con insistenza ma non trovo' anima viva nel cortile, cosi' come nelle strade vicine e nemmeno attraverso le finestre degli appartamenti del palazzo di fronte. Apparentemente era come tutti gli altri giorni: qualche tapparella abbassata, qualcuna sollevata. Una sola differenza lo colpì: nessuna finestra aveva una luce visibile e nessuna finestra era aperta. Scosse la testa cercando di allontanare gli strani pensieri che lo colsero all'improvviso. Gli vennero in mente le allucinanti immagini di "The Day After", degli unici esseri viventi scampati ad una guerra atomica, quelle de "I Sopravvissuti" un serial televisivo di tanti anni prima. L'unico essere vivente al mondo. Sorrise un po' a fatica e si vesti'. Ando' in cucina e si verso' il caffe'. Mentre lo sorseggiava apri' la finestra della cucina e guardo fuori anche da quella parte dell'appartamento. Il retro del cortile era disabitato, esattamente come la parte anteriore. Tutte le macchine erano parcheggiate, alcune fuori dalle righe, come sempre, alcune addirittura in mezzo alla strada: tutto come ogni giorno, ma non c'era anima viva, dannazione.

Gli venne un'idea. Poso' la tazza del caffe' ed apri' la

porta dell'ingresso. Usci' sul pianerottolo e suonò al campanello dei suoi due vicini di casa. "Senz'altro li sveglio, a quest'ora." - si disse. Non rispose nessuno e dalle porte usciva il solito e imbarazzante silenzio di quella mattina, di quella strana mattina che non riusciva a decollare per il verso giusto. Rientro' nervosamente nel suo appartamento e sbatte' la porta. Fini' in fretta il suo caffè e mentre lo posava sul tavolo, scoppio' in lacrime. Forse la tensione del sonno agitato, forse quest'angoscia del risveglio privo di esseri umani di contorno, gli fecero crollare ogni difesa. Piangeva come un bambino, singhiozzando. Poi lo sconforto si placò e decise di uscire allo scoperto. Chiuse la porta dell'appartamento e decise di recarsi al lavoro. Tutte quelle idiozie gli sarebbero senz'altro svanite strada facendo. Magari avrebbe raccontato tutto al suo collega, così si sarebbero fatti quattro risate. Probabilmente poi l'avrebbe preso in giro per tutto il mese. L'ascensore era guasto così dovette farsi i cinque piani a piedi: proprio non era la giornata giusta.

Si fermò, curioso, al terzo piano ed origliò alle porte: nessun suono fuoriusci' dagli appartamenti e l'angoscia crebbe, aumentandogli i battiti del cuore. Quando giunse al piano terreno era senza fiato, sia per lo sforzo che per la disperazione. Rimase qualche secondo appoggiato al muro dell'ingresso e sentì le lacrime tornargli nuovamente. Fece uno sforzo terribile per trattenerle ma ce la fece ed uscì in strada. Silenzio, silenzio ed ancora silenzio. Strillo', istintivamente, senza pensarci. Si vergognò per quella reazione ma nessuno pareva aver udito il suo grido selvaggio. Aumentò il passo, passo' davanti alla portineria che avrebbe dovuto essere aperta a quell'ora ed invece era chiusa; nessuno era venuto ad aprirla, quella mattina. Davanti al cancello automatico si fermò e sollevò lo sguardo verso il cielo: neanche un uccello, un aereo. Era proprio solo. Scosse nuovamente il capo per allontanare i pensieri deprimenti che l'avrebbero colpito come un bastone, facendolo crollare ancora. Arrivò alla sua automobile e vi salì. Provo' ad avviarla ma non accennò minimamente a partire.

"Cristo santo ma cosa sta succedendo?" - appoggiò le mani al volante e pensò con più insistenza al fatto che qualcosa di tremendo fosse accaduto mentre lui dormiva. Stava per scappare quando si accorse che aveva dimenticato le luci accese della macchina e quindi la batteria si era scaricata durante la notte. "Beh, e' un po' una magra consolazione." - pensò cercando di sorridere, ma l'angoscia ormai si era impadronita di lui e non lo mollava, nemmeno di fronte al più piccolo segnale di normalità. Chiuse l'automobile e si diresse verso una cabina del telefono, situata a pochi metri da dove si trovava. Introdusse la scheda telefonica ma il telefono era muto. "Ci avrei scommesso" - gridò tirando un pugno all'apparecchio. Corse fuori dalla cabina ansimando per l'agitazione. Si guardò in giro, freneticamente. "Aiuto!" - gridò, scoppiando in

lacrime. Si sedette per terra tenendosi la testa tra le mani. Ascolto' nuovamente quel tremendo silenzio che lo circondava, penso' ancora a quelle storie sulla guerra atomica, su chi sarebbe rimasto, sui topi e sugli scarafaggi, sulle malattie. Improvvisamente penso' a sua moglie e a suo figlio, a cosa gli fosse accaduto, ai suoi amici. Comincio' a tremare visibilmente. Si alzo' e corse verso il cancello del condominio. Cerco' nervosamente le chiavi ed entro'.

Corse sulle scale e giunse, senza fiato, davanti alla porta del suo appartamento. Fatico' ad infilare le chiavi nella serratura, ma alla fine ce la fece ed entro'. Si sbatte' la porta alle spalle. Intanto, dal piano terra, comincio' a materializzarsi un brusio che, lentamente, saliva per le scale. Decine di persone cominciarono ad affollare le scale; anche dai portoni del palazzo di fronte comincio' una lenta processione di uomini, donne, bambini, ogni gruppo con in testa una persona che pareva guidarli silenziosamente verso una meta precisa. Le persone sulle scale raggiunsero la porta dell'appartamento e l'uomo alla loro guida alzo' una mano per fermarli ed imporre loro il silenzio piu' assoluto. "Pronti?" - sussurro'. "Pronti!" - fu la replica, altrettanto silenziosa, dell'uomo alle sue spalle. Fece un cenno con la mano ad un altro che portava sulle spalle una grossa telecamera.

Apri' la porta ed entro' con il suo seguito. "Sorridi," - strillo' una volta entrato con l'uomo con la telecamera che filmava tutto - "sei su Candid Camera. E' stato fantastico, vero?" - la folla, fuori dall'appartamento, applaudi' fragorosamente. L'uomo tuttavia non rispose, mentre il suo corpo, pesante, oscillava, appeso al lampadario del soggiorno con il viso reso livido dal cappio che gli avvolgeva il collo. Gli occhi vitrei della morte si erano impadroniti della sua angoscia ed ora riposava, per sempre.

1.14 Bullersten

"BULLERSTEN"

by Robert W. Howington

It moved. Larry backed away. "SHIT! Did you see that?" Jonathan smirked. "Convinced, huh?" Eyes bulging, Larry nodded. "Get me the hell out of here man."

*

It had gone. "It was right here." Larry pointed. "Jonathan showed it to me." He chewed on his nails. "You better tell him it rolled off," Cindy said.

*

Jonathan raised his hand. Larry saw it and walked over. "That thing isn't there anymore! Cindy and I went to look at it." Jonathan threw down his menu and punched the booth's cushioned seat. "I wanted to videotape it. I coulda made a bundle selling the tape to a network." Larry pulled at his hair. "That thing is LOOSE!"

*

Jonathan stopped the car. "How can you see anything with those binoculars? Your hands are shaking. Give'em to me." Larry rolled up his window and locked the door. He wiped away the sweat on his forehead with his shirt sleeve. Jonathan adjusted the binoculars focus. "I don't see it. We'll have to drive around more. Sundown ain't for a hour or so." Larry sank into his seat.

*

Cindy looked at Larry with anticipation. "So?" He bowed his head. "Couldn't find it. We drove all over town. It must be hidin' someplace." "Maybe it only comes out at night?" "Maybe." "It can't hurt nobody can it?" Larry walked to the hall closet and got his .45 auto. He slapped a magazine into the gun well and pulled the slide back and released it, chambering a round. "It's not gonna hurt us, baby."

*

Tarrant County Sheriff's Detective Harold Lutz pulled the sheet away from the body. "Looks like coyotes fed on it," he said. "Not much left." "Good thing for us the guy didn't shave," said Assistant County Coroner David Dinks, "or we would've had to have had to run tests to determine the sex." Detective Lutz replaced the sheet. "What a beautiful fucking morning."

*

MAN FOUND DEAD IN FAUSTUS PARK Larry read the evening paper's top story. "This spot where the guy got murdered isn't too far from where we saw it." Jonathan sipped his coffee. "It killed him for sure." Larry tortured a toothpick. "We gotta tell the cops, man." Jonathan shook his head. "We're

gonna find it and kill it and sell the story rights to a Hollywood studio." Larry showed Jonathan his .45 auto. "Know how to use it?" "I was in the Marines, man. They taught me how to kill a man a hundred different ways." "This thing ain't no man."

*

Maria Cort closed the compact. "How do I look?" Andy

Criswell opened the Channel 7 newstruck's door and followed her down the steps. "Somewhat better than the corpse." "Smart ass." Andy smiled and handed her a microphone. "Give me a sound check," said cameraman Richard Ackles. She put the mic to her mouth and exhaled an orgasmic moan. "Cut the crap and do your job," Andy said. "You're working in Dallas/Fort Worth now. This is a major market and a long way from that pissant TV station in Lubbock. We

got you for your great body and voice. Now show us some moxie." Detective Lutz stood next to Maria. Andy held his hand in the air. "Five...four...three..." He pointed a finger at Maria. "Go!" "Tarrant County Sheriff's Deputies have found a second body here at Faustus Park. Identity of the victim is unknown, but it is believed to be the body of a female. Here with me is Detective Harold Lutz. Detective Lutz can you tell us how the victim died?" Detective Lutz cleared his throat. "We don't know at this time. An autopsy will have to be performed. Coyotes chewed up this body too." Maria, with an appalled look, said, "Is there a mad killer stalking this once peaceful park?" Detective Lutz cleared his throat again. "We don't know. The killer could be dumping the bodies here figuring the coyotes will feed on the remains and make it difficult, if not impossible, for us to solve the crime." "Do you have any clues or leads?"

Detective Lutz shook his head.

*

Larry tapped his foot on the floor. "You see the news?" Jonathan sat on the couch and opened a beer. "Yeah. So what? It's hungry. A squirrel ain't gonna satisfy its appetite. It's hunting bigger game." Larry rubbed his hands together. "We gotta call the cops, man. We can't let it kill someone else." Jonathan pulled out his wallet and showed it to Larry. "What do you see?" "Nothing." "We'll be heroes if we stop it," Jonathan said, "and this won't be empty." "We should be thinking about peoples' lives, not money." "Look," Jonathan said. "I got a plan. I know it'll work. This is the end for it."

*

Sheriff's Deputy John McCall whistled nervously. He kept a hand on the grip of his revolver and aimed a flashlight ahead. He spotted a boulder and walked over to it. He stopped there and leaned against it. He got out a cigarette, tapped it against the boulder and lit it. As he inhaled, McCall felt a sharp pain in his back. He wanted to scream, but something covered his mouth.

*

Cindy balked. "I could get killed." "Larry's got that big gun," Jonathan said. "I've got a knife and this gasoline. If anything goes after you we'll be on it like black on

burnt toast." Cindy looked to Larry for reassurance. "Come on, baby." He walked over and kissed her. "This is going to work."

*

Detective Lutz kneeled down and looked at McCall. "Poor bastard." Dinks covered the body with a blanket. "I think you should get animal control to round up those coyotes. They're eating all of the evidence." Detective Lutz phoned Tarrant County Sheriff Tom Noonan. "Sir, I want Faustus Park off limits to everybody. Three killings in three nights will have all sorts of nuts out here." "OK, Lutz," Noonan said. "I'll get some road crews to block off the entrances. The press is all over me on this case and my image is taking a beating. I'm slipping in the polls. Know what I mean?" "Yes, sir. I'll get this Mickey and Mallory wannabe."

*

Larry, Jonathan and Cindy sat still. "Someone else got it," Larry said. "We'll do our thing after the cops leave," Jonathan said. "I wonder what it feels like to die violently?" said Cindy. "That goddamned thing is going to know after we get through with it," Jonathan said. He gave Larry a high five. Cindy shook her head. "Men are so macho," she said.

*

Maria stood in front of the camera. Detective Lutz was standing next to her. Andy pointed a finger. "Go!" "Tarrant County Sheriff's Deputy John McCall was murdered as he patrolled Faustus Park last night. His body was found in the same vicinity of the other two victims. Again, coyotes fed on the corpse. Here with me is Sheriff's Detective Harold Lutz. Sir, how is the investigation going?" "We're making progress and we've got some leads I can't divulge at this time. As of now the park will be closed to the public. I guarantee you I'm going to stop this serial killer."

*

The last police car left. "Let's do it," Jonathan said. Cindy got up and wiped the dirt and leaves off of her blouse and jeans. "Go stand near that boulder," Larry said. Cindy hesitated. "I'm scared." Jonathan slapped her behind. "Get your ass out there." "Cool it, man," Larry said. "Go on, honey we're right here." Cindy walked cautiously to the boulder. She looked back at Larry and Jonathan. They gave her an "OK" sign. She looked around, but saw nothing. She paced near the boulder for several minutes. Bored, she leaned against it and looked into the bushes where Larry and Jonathan hid. They gave her a "stay right there" sign. Cindy put her hands in her pockets and dug a toe in the ground. A yawn turned into a gasp upon feeling something

touch her from behind. She quickly turned around. "What was that?" Nothing was there. She looked over at Larry and Jonathan.

They both waved frantically at her. "Get the hell out of the way!" Larry shouted. He had the gun pointed at her. She hit the ground. Larry fired. The bullet ricocheted off the boulder. Cindy crawled to them on her hands and knees. Larry fired again. Jonathan ran to the boulder and doused it with the gasoline. Before he lit a match to it the boulder rolled over him. It sucked him inside and shook violently for several seconds. The thing spit his remains out. They landed a few feet from Cindy. "Jesus, look at him!" she yelled, "He's all ate up. GODDAMN!! GET ME THE HELL OUTTA HERE!!"

*

Maria started to move out from the bushes. Detective Lutz grabbed her arm. "Where do you think you're going?" "I want to get a better look," she said. "The hell you say." Lutz pulled her close to him. Richard put new tape in the minicam. "What that thing is I don't know," Lutz said, "but its our killer. This one-man stakeout of mine has paid off." He looked at Maria. "You've got a story and I've got a killer."

*

It rolled towards them. Cindy grabbed Larry's hand. "COME ON!" They climbed into a tree. "It can't get to us up here," she said. "I can't believe this shit," he said. "That damn thing is sitting down there waiting for us." Cindy checked her pockets. "Do you have any matches?" Larry shook his head. "It's soaked with gasoline and we haven't got a match to light it with," she said. "We're fucked." "I got my gun."

*

Detective Lutz and Maria stayed put. Richard moved closer to get a better shot. "This story will make me a star," she said. "I'll be network material." Detective Lutz nodded. "Yeah, and with me solving this murder spree I'm going to be the new Sergeant."

*

Larry tapped his index finger against the gun's barrel. "The muzzle blast from the gun will produce a brief, but highly intense, fire flash. Enough to ignite the gasoline," he said. "Only I've got to get right up next to that thing in order for it to work." "You're going to shoot it?" "Not exactly. I've got to lay the gun against it's side and pull the trigger. The bullet will go flying off somewhere, but the fire flash is the key." "It'll swallow you up. Jonathan tried to light that match and look what it did to him."

"We've got no choice," he said. They hugged.

*

Detective Lutz pulled Maria to him and kissed her hard. "What's this?" she said. "A good luck kiss. I'm going out there to finish that thing off. We'll be stars, you and me." As Detective Lutz crept through the bushes, Maria kneeled next to Richard. "Make sure you get this all on tape," she said. "I don't want you missing a thing because this story will be my ticket to the network. Connie Chung's going to be kissing my ass."

*

Larry got down out of the tree and stood several feet from the boulder. He slowly inched towards it. A fallen branch cracked under his feet and he stopped. The boulder remained motionless. He continued forward. Slowly. Once within its reach he stretched out his hand with the gun. The boulder throbbed. "SHIT!" He pulled the gun back. "Get back up here with me!" Cindy begged. Larry shook his head then blew her a kiss. He took a deep breath and lunged forward, slapped the gun on the boulder's surface and pulled the trigger. The fire flash lit the gasoline. The boulder rocked and rolled in the dirt but it remained engulfed in flames. Larry got back into the tree and held Cindy tight. "I love you," she said. They kissed.

*

Maria ran to Detective Lutz. He was sprawled on the ground. The stray bullet from Larry's gun had gone through his head. She covered her eyes. "What's wrong?" Richard zoomed in on Lutz's dead-stare. "Don't tell me you've never seen brain stew before." Cindy pointed at a woman and man standing over someone. "That's the TV reporter," she said. They climbed down and Cindy walked towards the smoldering boulder but Larry pulled her away from it. "Come on," he said. "Let's go see what's happening over there." Maria met them halfway and stared hard at Larry. "You killed Detective Lutz," she said. "If you'd stayed in the tree he would've saved you and her." Maria pointed to Richard. "He's got it all on tape. A jury will decide if you're a murderer." "Murderer?" Cindy said. "He's a hero, lady. He risked his life to stop that thing. Reporters like you are always twisting the truth around."

"If it makes for a better story, sure." Maria eyed their ring fingers. "An edit here and an edit there and the tape'll show your husband shooting Lutz on purpose." Cindy stepped toward Maria and said, "You bitch," and slapped her across the jaw. Maria tumbled to the ground. She lay there a moment to collect herself then looked impatiently at Richard. "Well?" Richard put down the minicam and offered a hand. She took it and he pulled her up. She dusted off her skirt and tucked in her blouse. Larry made the gun go

around in circles around his index finger.

Maria put her hands on her hips. "Is that a threat?" Cindy stepped in front of Larry. "Fuckin' a, sister." "Come on, Maria," Richard said. "If you try to mess with this woman's husband she'll beat some more shit out of you." Maria rubbed her jaw and extended a hand to Cindy. "Forgive me?" Cindy took Maria's hand and they shook. "Sure." Maria walked passed them and stood next to the boulder. Its surface had cooled and was left blackened by the fire. She picked at it. "Must be dead. Richard get a shot of me sitting on top of it." Richard picked up the minicam and walked to the boulder. Larry and Cindy followed. Maria got a foothold on a jagged edge and pulled herself onto the top of the boulder. "It feels weird up here," she said. Richard adjusted the minicam's focus. "Okay, give me a smile." Maria gave him a frightful gape instead right before she disappeared inside the boulder. It rolled away from them. Richard raced after it with the minicam. Larry turned to Cindy. "That's why I pulled you away from it," he said. "I saw it move."

Richard stopped his chase. Larry and Cindy caught up to him. "The dust that thing's kicking up is blocking my lens," he said. "I can't breathe either." "It's headed for Burger's Lake," Larry said. "There's a trail we can take over that way." They rushed along the path and had to hold their arms up in front of them to keep small tree branches and tall weeds from whacking at their eyeballs and cheeks. Cindy got to the lake's bank first. She started crying. Larry and Richard emerged from the woods and stood next to her.

Larry took out his handkerchief and wiped her tears away. "What's wrong?" Richard said. "Down there." Cindy pointed to Maria's remains on the shoreline and ripples in the water. "It spit her out and went under." Cindy wept more. "Come on, honey." Larry put his arm around her shoulder. "It'll be all right." She shook her head. "My grandpa told me when I was a child that a great rock, Bullersten he called it, lived at the bottom of this lake and came up every 25 years or so to find humans, or animals, to feed on." Richard's forehead contorted. "What the hell?" Larry nodded. "She's not crazy. Jonathan, the guy who tried to light the match, told me the same story. He was jogging through the park a few days ago and spotted it eating a dog. He thought for sure it was Bullersten. He figured he'd get rich off of it. The damn fool only got dead."

Richard brought the minicam to his shoulder and panned the lake's surface. He turned on the boom mic and said, "This is Richard Ackles reporting for Channel 7 News. From beneath the surface of Burger's Lake came Bullersten. It satisfied its thirst for human flesh and is now resting peacefully below. In another quarter of a century, it'll be hungry again."

1.15 Short Stories

"SHORT STORIES"

by Vittorio Curtoni

"PISCIANDO IL MIO VINO"

by Vittorio Curtoni

Ero a Milano. Piazza Duomo, il cuore della citta'. Avevo appena consegnato una traduzione a un editore. E' il mio lavoro produrre e consegnare traduzioni. Il mio fulgido destino. Erano le undici e venti di mattina. Avevo un appuntamento a mezzogiorno con mia moglie, Lucia: pranzo assieme. Splendido. E dovevo pisciare. Pisciare o morire. Così entrai in questo bar della Galleria. Ordinai un caffè'. Lo bevvi. Poi chiesi al barista: "Posso usare la toilette, per favore?" Il barista mi scruto' con aria grave. "No, non puo'" disse. "Per usare la toilette deve ordinare una bottiglia di vino. Cosa preferisce? Rosso o bianco?"

"Come?" Non potevo credere alle mie orecchie. "Una bottiglia di vino per fare pipi'? Ma non ho ancora mangiato!" "Lei mi sembra il tipo che puo' mandare giu' una bottiglia prima di pranzo" disse il barista. "Comunque, non facciamo eccezioni. Nuovi regolamenti comunali. Allora? Rosso o bianco? Un rose', magari?" Sospirai. La mia vescica stava per esplodere. "Va bene. Bianco. Adesso posso avere la chiave della toilette?" Il barista si mise a ridere. "Divertente. Molto divertente. Non ha ancora pagato e vuole la chiave? Naaa." Una lunga pausa pensosa. "Cosa preferisce? Merlot? Pinot? Muller Thurgau? Ortrugo? O..." "Trebbianino" lo interruppi. Pagai una cifra folle per la bottiglia di vino, ebbi la chiave, corsi alla toilette (un buco nel terreno, probabilmente un residuo della seconda guerra mondiale), e pisciai. Aaah! Rientrai nel bar, restituii la chiave, e mi avviai alla porta. Venni fermato da un tizio robusto, in una specie di uniforme da poliziotto. "Servizio di sicurezza" disse. "Lei non ha bevuto la sua bottiglia di Trebbianino." "Ma l'ho pagata" ribattei.

"Il punto non e' questo. Lei non ha bevuto. Faccia il suo dovere." Nuovi regolamenti comunali, probabilmente. Be', in effetti io sono il tipo che puo' bersi una bottiglia prima di pranzo. E mancava ancora mezz'ora all'appuntamento con Lucia. Quando il fato e' troppo forte, il forte applica l'antica arte del piegarsi. D'altra parte, il Trebbianino mi piace. Molto. Stavo dando il dolce addio al quarto bicchiere di vino, e avevo ancora diciamo un quinto della bottiglia da uccidere, quando la mia vescica interruppe le mie cupe riflessioni sulla triste situazione della citta'.

Se mai mi ero chiesto perche' non avessi mai voluto vivere a Milano, adesso lo sapevo.

E la vescica disse: "Ti suggerisco caldamente di dare un'altra occhiata a quel buco che chiamano toilette, socio. In caso contrario, te ne pentirai amaramente, compagno." E compresi all'istante che la mia vescica aveva perfettamente ragione. Così mi alzai dal tavolo, raggiunsi il banco su gambe piuttosto salde, e chiesi la chiave. Il barista, debbo dire, era uomo di poche parole. Una qualita' che a volte so apprezzare, quando le circostanze sono giuste. "Un altro Trebbianino?" disse. "Contanti, per favore." E pagai in contanti. Non feci discussioni. Pero', essendo un traduttore, un uomo di cultura, lo guardai dritto negli occhi e dissi: "Sicuro che questa sia Milano? Che non sia Praga?" "Praga?" fece eco lui, prendendo i miei soldi. "Sarebbe a dire Kafka."

"Kafka?" Era forte sui regolamenti comunali, ma debole su altri piu' raffinati punti del nostro beneamato mondo. Era il barista perfetto. Chi vuole un barista capace di citare Kafka e incapace di preparare un Bloody Mary? Cominciavo a vedere le cose a modo suo. Sono un essere umano molto empatico. E poi ho sempre avuto questa meravigliosa tendenza a pisciare. I miei reni sono un monumento alla laurea magna cum laude in ingegneria genetica di Dio Onnipotente. Per me e' come una reazione a catena: bere e pisciare, pisciare e bere. Dopo un po' diventa un tutt'uno. Un unicum. Una visione filosofica dell'universo basata sul continuo fluire di fluidi organici. Così pisciai. E assassina la mia prima bottiglia di vino. E attaccai la seconda. Ormai era mezzogiorno. Mia moglie, probabilmente, mi stava cercando tra i piccioni di Piazza Duomo. Non mi avrebbe trovato.

Altri clienti entrarono e uscirono. Bevvero il loro caffè, il loro aperitivo, e se ne andarono. Nessuno aveva bisogno di pisciare. Tutti sapevano, senza dubbio. Lanciavano occhiate all'infelice ubriacone che sedeva da solo a un tavolo con una bottiglia di Trebbianino. Alcuni parevano dispiaciuti, altri molto divertiti. Chissà' come se la godevano. Implorare aiuto era fuori discussione. Il cipiglio della guardia della sicurezza era molto esplicito. Non sono mai stato in galera, e non sento la mancanza di questa esperienza. E la mia vescica era molto loquace, in quel giorno fatale.

Lucia mi trovo' poco dopo l'una del pomeriggio. Io ero alla quarta bottiglia di Trebbianino, e avevo una voglia micidiale di pisciare. Il che significava la bottiglia numero cinque. Avevo anche ordinato, e mangiato, un paio di panini per dare una mano allo stomaco, ma il mio cervello era piuttosto confuso. Incoerente, se volete. E avevo finito i contanti. Il barista, a quanto sembrava, era disposto ad accettare una carta di credito. Sia resa lode al cielo per i piccoli miracoli. Lucia entro' nel bar. Era una furia vivente.

"Figlio di puttana!" urlo'. "Schifoso porco traditore! Dov'eri? Dove..." Si interruppe. Mi guardo' in faccia. Io cercai di alzarmi e di andarle incontro, da buon marito fedele, ma le gambe mi tradirono. O la gravita', chi lo sa? Comunque, ricaddi goffamente sulla sedia. L'effetto Trebbianino. Lei socchiuse gli occhi. "Sei ubriaco" sibilo'. E credetemi, quando Lucia sibila potete leggere guai nei suoi occhi. "Ero sottosopra, preoccupata per te, e ti trovo qui con una bottiglia di vino!" Si avvicino'. Non avevo difese. Il mio cervello era in stato d'attesa. La mia bocca si rifiutava di aprirsi. "Ti disprezzo" sussurro'. "Sei la feccia del mondo. Sei..." Le successe qualcosa. Una piccola convulsione. Un movimento non troppo placido dei suoi fianchi. "Non ho fatto altro che cercarti, pezzo di merda. Mi sono persino dimenticata di andare alla toilette. Non muoverti. Torno subito." Raggiunse il banco. Il barista. Io levai il mio bicchiere in un brindisi. "Bemvenuta al club" pensai. O cercai di pensare. "Adesso te ne accorgerai." E se ne accorse. Ragazzi, se se ne accorse!

"PISSING MY WINE"

by Vittorio Curtoni

I was in Milano. Piazza Duomo, the very heart of the city. I had just delivered a translation to a publisher. My job, making and delivering translations. My royal destiny. It was eleven twenty in the morning. I had an appointment with my wife, Lucia, at twelve: a lunch together. Very nice. And I had to piss. It was piss or die. So I entered this bar in the Galleria. I ordered a coffee. Drank it up. Then asked the bartender: "May I use the toilet, please?"

The bartender scrutinized me gravely. "No, you can't" he said. "To use the toilet you must order a bottle of wine. What will it be? Red or white?" "What?" I couldn't believe my ears. "A bottle of wine for pissing? But I haven't lunched yet!" "You look like the kind of guy who can take a bottle of wine before lunch" said the bartender. "Anyway, we make no exceptions. New city rules. So? Red or white? A rose', perhaps?" I sighed. My bladder was on the verge of exploding. "Okay" I said. "White. Now may I have the key to the toilet?"

The bartender laughed. "That's funny. Really funny. You don't pay and you want the key? Naaa." A long, thoughtful pause. "What do you desire? Merlot? Pinot? Muller Thurgau? Ortrugo? Or..." "Trebbianino" I cut him short. I payed a crazy amount for the bottle of wine, obtained the key, ran to the toilet (a hole in the soil, probably left from World War Two), and pissed. Aaaaah! I reentered the bar, returned the key, and started for the door. I was blocked by a huge guy in a sort of police uniform. "Security Service" he said. "You didn't drink your bottle of Trebbianino." "But I paid" I said.

"This is not the matter we are discussing here" he said. "You didn't drink it. Go back and do your duty." New city rules, I supposed. Well, I am the kind of guy who can take a bottle of wine before lunch. And I still had half an hour before meeting Lucia. When fate is too strong, the strong apply the ancient art of bending. Besides, I like Trebbianino. Very much. I was saying farewell my lovely to my fourth glass of wine, and still had let's say a fifth of the bottle to kill, when my bladder interrupted my moody reflections about the sad state of city affairs. If I had ever wondered why I didn't choose to live in Milano, now I knew. And the bladder said: "My strong suggestion is that you take another look at that hole they call toilet, buddy. Or you will badly regret a decision to the contrary, comrade." And I instantly understood that my bladder was perfectly right.

So I rose up from the table, walked on rather straight legs to the bar, and asked for the key. The bartender, I must say, was a man of few words. This is a quality I sometimes appreciate, when the circumstances are right. "Another Trebbianino, then?" he said. "Cash, please." And cash it was. I didn't quarrel. But, being a translator, a man of culture, I looked him straight in the eyes and said: "Sure this is Milano? Sure it's not Prague?" "Prague?" echoed the man, taking my money. "I mean Kafka." "Kafka?" Well, he was strong on city rules, but weak on other fine points of our beloved world. He was the perfect bartender. Who wants a bartender who can quote Kafka and does not know how to mix a Bloody Mary? I was beginning to see things his way. I'm a most empathic human being.

Furthemore, I have always had this wonderful tendency to piss. My kidneys are a monument to the magna cum laude degree in genetic engineering of God Almighty. It's like a chain reaction to me: drink and piss, piss and drink. After a while, it becomes one. A whole. A philosophical vision of the universe based upon the continuous flowing of organic liquids. So I pissed. And drank to death my first bottle of white whine, and started on the second one. By now it was noon. My wife was probably looking for me among the pigeons of Piazza Duomo. She would not find me. Other customers came and went. Drank their coffees, their aperitifs, and left. Nobody had to piss. They all knew, no doubt. They cast glances to the unhappy drunkard sitting alone at a table with a bottle of Trebbianino. Some of them were sorry, others quite amused. The fun they must have had. Begging for help was out of the question. The scowl on the face of the security guard was quite explicit. I've never been to jail, and it's an experience I don't miss. And my bladder was very loquacious, that fateful day.

Lucia found me a little after one in the afternoon. I was at my fourth bottle of Trebbianino, and much in need of pissing. Which meant number five. I had also ordered, and eaten, a couple of good sandwiches to help the stomach, but

I was rather fuzzy. Incoherent, if you like. And I was out of cash. The bartender, it seemed, was willing to accept a card. Thank you heaven for small blessings. Lucia stormed into the bar. She was a living fury. "You son of a bitch!" she screamed. "You filthy disgusting traitor! Where have you been? What..." She stopped. She looked at my face. I tried to rise and meet her like the faithful husband I am, but my legs failed me. Or gravity, who knows? Anyway, I fell down clumsily on the chair. The Trebbianino effect. She narrowed her eyes. "You're drunk" she hissed. And believe me, when she hisses you can see your troubles in her irises. "I was all upset, all worried about you, and here you are with a bottle of wine!"

She approached. I had no defense. My brain was on the perennial stand-by. My mouth seemed to have closed up for the day. "I despise you" she whispered. "You're the scum of the world. You..." Something struck her. A sort of small convulsion. A not so placid movement of her hips. "I've been looking for you. You shit. I even forgot to go to the toilet. Just a minute. I'll be back." She approached the bar. The bartender. I raised my glass in a toast. "Welcome to the club" I thought. Or tried to think. "Now you'll find out." And she found out. Boy, did she find out!

"DEATH OF A PIE"

Before Rupert could say a word, somebody stopped him at the other end of the line. "Good afternoon to you, lady or gentleman, gay or lesbian" said a kind male voice. "We hope everything is going very well. And what can we do for you?"

Rupert, contrary to most characters in most stories, didn't hesitate. "It's my brother Jack. He had a stroke or something like that, we think." "Ah." The kind voice sounded very saddened. "Terrible. How's the situation?" "We were celebrating his birthday. His fortieth birthday. He fell face down on the pie." "Boy!" The voice whistled. "How's the pie?" "Dead, no doubt" replied Rupert. "What a shame. We'll immediately send an ambulance. What's your address, please?" Rupert gave the voice his Internet address. But he soon recovered.

"Okay. The ambulance will be there in fifteen minutes, hour more, hour less. And don't try mouth-to-mouth breathing on the pie. It could be very dangerous. Thank you for calling your friendly National Health Assistance Center." Rupert hang up. The children were very upset. "Uncle Jack shouldn't have done this to me" wailed little Nemo. "No decency! Couldn't he wait half an hour?" Camilla was older, and much more versed in the ways of the world. "He was an ass at thirty-nine, he's still an ass at forty" she declared. "What did you expect?"

Judas, the family teenager, had been fucking his girlfriend

Anjelica in his room. Distracted by the sudden commotion, he lost his momentum and had an unfortunate ejaculatio praecox. Anjelica didn't like it. Not at all. She planted a knee in his balls, then a fist slightly to the right. Breathless, in his underwear, Judas stumbled into the living room. "My balls!" he cried. And fell on the couch, the same couch where somebody had put Jack to lie. So he fell on Jack. Jack didn't seem to notice. In fact, he wore a silly grin on his face. "Look at him" said Mabel, Jack's wife. "He's grinning, the sonofabitch. Happy as hell for fucking up our party, eh?" "I always told you you shouldn't have married him" said Emilia, Mabel's sister. "But no, you said lesbian is wrong. It serves you right, you stupid cunt." "Stop bitching" ordered Rupert. "The guy said the ambulance will be here in fifteen minutes, hour more, hour less. What do we do in the meantime?" "Monopoly!" cried little Nemo. "Poker" said older Camilla.

They settled for a strip poker. Judas was already half naked, so his participation to the game was vetoed. Anyway, absorbed as he was in his solipstistic appreciation of the pain in his balls, he didn't give a damn. When the ambulance arrived, about fifty minutes later, Rupert, with the excuse of a fallen card, was under the table and ogling Mabel's vagina: he had always hoped the day would come when he could fuck his sister-in-law, but actually he had become a full time practitioner of masturbation, and the moment seemed full of promises. Emilia was teaching Camilla one pleasure or two of lesbism. Little Nemo had been called to help alleviate Judas's pain and was now vigorously blowing on his cousin's balls.

"How d'ya do fellas!" said the first paramedic. He looked around. "Nice afternoon, I see. And where is our beloved one?" "On the couch. Under Judas" answered Rupert. He was really pissed off at the turn of events. Fuck them! Now that he had Mabel practically naked... "Hi Judas. Nice balls you've got" said the paramedic. "A little reddened, if you want my opinion. Measles?" The second paramedic approached Rupert. "Hello mister. Nice hard on you've got." He took a look at Mabel's tits and swallowed. "Not that I don't understand... Now, what exactly is your degree of relationship to the beloved one?" "Jack is my brother. Or was, if he's dead" said Rupert. "Wonderful. Maybe you've heard of this new fantastic service offered by our caring National Health..."

The second paramedic produced from a pocket of his paramedic uniform a single sheet of paper, neatly typed. "We understand you suffered the loss of a birthday pie. We can replace it with a delicious strawberry-and-banana freshly caked pie, especially made for you. What do you say?" "Okay" said Rupert. His voice was tired. "Where's the swindle?" "Nossir." The second paramedic was really indignant. "No swindle. It's all perfectly legal. If you sign here, at the bottom, you have your pie AND at the same time give a full demonstration of your altruistic soul by

making a present to medical science in the form of the corpse of your beloved brother."

Rupert turned, took a look at the couch. Under Judas's balls, Jack was still breathing. Of course he had seen better moments, but was still breathing. "He's alive" said Rupert. "He's not a corpse." "Not yet" replied the first paramedic. "Our modern medical science will take care of this momentary accident. Nothing to worry about." "Also" said the second paramedic "we offer a special Month of Cremation deal to anybody who..." "Okay, okay" interrupted Rupert. "What the fuck. He should have been more considerate of his relatives. Give me that paper." And he signed.

"SOME SHIT IN MY BACKYARD"

Eric was shitting again in my backyard. The smell, full and aromatic, tickled my nostrils while I was reading the latest KKK newsletter. Somebody had put it in my coat pocket on the bus home. Worst things have been known to happen on buses.

As for Eric, that was the third time in one week. Well, I can take some shit, but enough is enough. I rose up, crossed the living room, entered the kitchen and opened the back window.

There he was, crouched in a semi-fetal position, arms around his knees, a sort of stupefied pleasure on his face. His dick, old and wizened, was spitting the last tears of fetid piss on my beloved weeds.

"Hei, Eric" I shouted "what do you think you're doing?" "I'm shitting" he replied. "Bad case of diarrhea." I nodded. "I know. The stink is unmistakable. I mean, why here in my backyard? This is the third time in a week." "The plumber never came" said Eric. "My water-closet is dead. What should I do? Explode?" "Not a bad idea" I informed him. "Really, this has to stop. I don't mean to..." "I saved your life" he declared, with a face full of the same shit he was so liberally shooting around in my yard. Here we go again, I thought. Same old story. It will never end.

"I saved your life" Eric repeated, growing very serious. "If only the motherfucker had pressed the trigger before I stuck that knife into his back..." He let the sentence hang in the air, along with the fumes of his shitting and pissing. Sweet aroma.

"The moterfucker" I reminded him "aimed his gun at me because I distracted him so that he wouldn't shoot YOU." "Doesn't matter. I saved your life." "You saved my life because I was trying to save YOUR life. And if you remember correctly, the motherfucker was YOUR uncle and he was in a rage because he found out that you were screwing his

daughter. Your cousin. I had never seen him before. He had no reason to be angry at me. Right?" Eric pondered. Projecting himself towards the soil, he pulled out some weeds and began cleaning his ass. Disgusting.

"My uncle" he said "was a close friend of Joey Automatic. Same personality. He could have killed ANYBODY at first sight, just for fun. Now I don't want to be disrespectful of my dear uncle. He was a good fella and all, but something here in his head..." He tapped his temple with a forefinger; and, having finished his cleaning, he began putting on his pants. We had had the same discussion a number of times. At least all the times he'd been shitting in my backyard. Useless. In a way, I loved that old man, who was already old when I was a child; in another way I could have murdered him for his uncle and for the shitting. I tried the kind approach. "I'll lend you the money for the plumber. No, wait. I'll call my plumber and send him to your home. Is that all right with you?"

He was zipping his pants. He shook his head. The shit on his face was spreading like the thirst for blood in Dracula's coffin. "I'm afraid the matter is not so simple" he said. "All of my plumbing is rotten. The water-closet is just a surface problem. When you dig deeper..." It was then that I saw the light. "In other words" I said, slowly "you like shitting in my backyard. Just to remember me that you saved my life. Just to punish me because I was trying to save your life and instead you saved mine. Is that so, old man?" He grinned. Now he was fully erect, and dressed. He had recovered his dignity. "My son, if you prefer your subjective view to the pure truth that..." "I'm not your son!" I interrupted him. I was barking. "And please, spare me the metaphysical shit. It is better than the shit that comes out of your ass, but I don't like it. Wait a minute. I'll be back."

I ran to the living room, took the newsletter from the chair, sprinted to the back window, and showed him what I had in my hand. "What's that?" he called from below. "I can't see from here." "This is the KKK newsletter. Nice reading, for a white fella." He seemed perplexed. "Now what do you mean?" "I mean, my dear old man, that you have a slight handicap. I am white, and you're black. So it goes. And I have all these KKK friends, and they take no shit from no nigger." He laughed. "I've known you all my life. You're white, okay, but you're not full of shit like..."

"YOU are full of shit" I said. "And I'm tired of seeing it in my backyard. And I could have changed my mind. It happens, you know." He got the message. At once. I've always loved Eric for his bright brain. "Okay" he said, starting back toward his home, not very far from mine. "Send your plumber. Friday morning should be all right. No need to alarm your friends, I think."

"Bye, Eric." I waved my hand. "Bye, Jonathan" he said. He

looked up at me. "By the way, thank you. I'll save a lot of money in prunes and purgatives. Do you think it's so easy getting diarrhea?"

1.16 Racconti

"RACCONTI"

by Mario Franco Carbone

"RIMBA"

Era una notte buia e tempestosa. Pioveva a dirotto, quella notte, sulla foresta pluviale dell'Amazzonia, e perfino i piranha, nei fiumi, si lamentavano dell'eccessiva umidita'. A Napoli, nel frattempo, splendeva il sole, e John Rimba, il leggendario super-soldato americano, lavava i vetri delle macchine ad un incrocio. Ad un tratto, si fermo' un'automobile con a bordo il colonnello Turtleman, ex-capo di Rimba.

-Ciao, John!- disse il colonnello -L'operazione Tempesta nel Deserto ci e' riuscita cosi' bene che stiamo pensando di fare il bis. Ci verresti, a darci una mano?- Rimba scosse il capo in segno di diniego. Turtleman rimase assai scosso da cio'. -Forse ti andrebbe una missioncina in Colombia, contro i trafficanti di droga? O magari in Afghanistan?- -No.- -Ci sarebbe una faccenduola da sistemare nel Laos...- -Niente da fare: sono stanco di ammazzamenti e sparatorie. Le lavo il parabrezza?- -No, grazie.- fece il colonnello, e riparti'.

Circa un mese dopo, John Rimba era a quello stesso incrocio, intento al solito lavoro. Si fermo' un'auto con a bordo il colonnello Turtleman: questi aveva un braccio appeso al collo, un grosso bernoccolo in fronte ed un'aria sconvolta. Rimba lo guardo' con aria interrogativa. -Stavo sorvolando l'Iraq per controllare se gli iracheni avevano distrutto tutte quelle terribili armi chimiche che quei farabutti avevano comprato da noi occidentali,- spiego' il colonnello -quando il mio elicottero e' stato abbattuto. Io sono riuscito a salvarmi, ma il mio fedele tacchino Mortimer e' stato catturato!- -Perche' aveva con se' un tacchino?- -E' un tacchino da guerra. E' stato al mio fianco in tante battaglie... e adesso, i servizi segreti mi hanno fatto sapere che Saddam Hussein intende mangiarselo per Natale! Povero Mortimer!-. Detto cio', il colonnello scoppio' in lacrime. -Ma Saddam non e' musulmano?- obietto' Rimba. -Si', ma non vuole perdere quest'occasione di fare un dispetto a noi americani.-

A questo punto, scatto' il verde, e Turtleman fu costretto a ripartire, accompagnato da un coro di clackson. Poco dopo,

ri- passo' per quell'incrocio. -Vuole che vada a liberare il tacchino?- chiese Rimba. -No.- rispose il colonnello -Tu dovresti solo scoprire dove lo tengono prigioniero e scattare delle fotografie. Poi ci ap- pelleremo all'ONU... o magari alla Protezione Animali.-

Questa volta, Rimba accettò l'incarico. Andò a Forcella e li' comprò, su una bancarella, una macchina fotografica da quattro soldi e qualche arma, giusto per difesa personale (vale a dire: tre mitra, un bel po' di bombe a mano, un lanciafiamme, un mortaio, una mezza dozzina di bazooka, una mitragliera antiaerea e, per ogni evenienza, una piccola bomba a neutroni). Prese con se' il suo fido coltellaccio (un coltellaccio enorme ed affilatissimo, che gli era stato molto utile in parecchie circostanze. Nel suo manico erano contenuti ago e filo, che gli servivano per cu- cirsi da se' le ferite) e, fatto un grosso pacco con tutto questo armamentario, andò all'aeroporto. -Niente da dichiarare?- chiese il doganiere (era lo stesso che aveva lasciato passare i pezzi del super-cannone iracheno). -Niente.- rispose Rimba. In quel momento, gli caddero a ter- ra due bombe a mano. -Cosa sono quelli?- chiese il doganiere. -Sono degli ananassi.- rispose Rimba. -Sembrano piuttosto piccoli e duri!- -Ehm... sa, sono ancora acerbi.- Il doganiere stava per lasciarlo passare, quando all'improvviso il pacco si aprì e tutte le armi caddero a terra. -Cos'e' questa roba?- chiese il doganiere, lievemente inso- spettito. -Giocattoli.- -Okay, passi pure.-

Poche ore dopo, Rimba si aggirava con circospezione per le vie di Bagdad, astutamente camuffato da arabo. Aveva con se' un dromedario, astutamente camuffato da cammello (nella falsa gobba erano nascoste le armi). Ad un tratto, si mise a giocherellare col suo micidiale coltellaccio e, involontariamente, si trancio' di netto una gamba. Il nostro eroe, pero', non si perse d'animo e, presi ago e filo dal manico del coltellaccio, in quattro e quattr'otto si riattaccò la gamba. Ancora una volta, il coltellaccio si era dimostrato utilissimo! Rimba si avvicinò al palazzo presidenziale, sorvegliato da numerosi uomini della Guardia Repubblicana. Li' vide, in un cortile, un tacchino: era Mortimer! Sbirccio' poi da una finestra del pianterreno, e vide che i malvagi cuochi del tiranno stavano già preparandosi a cucinare lo sventurato tacchino. Evidentemente, Saddam non aveva intenzione di aspettare il Natale per far giustiziare l'eroico pennuto! Non c'era tempo per far intervenire l'ONU (o la Protezione Animali). Resosi conto di cio', Rimba aprì il fuoco con tutte le armi a sua disposizione (oltre che con le mani, lui riusciva a sparare anche coi piedi, con la bocca, col naso e con le orecchie).

-Siamo fritti!- esclamarono i cuochi, tanto per rimanere in argomento culinario. In breve tempo, la Guardia Repubblicana fu sgominata ed il palazzo presidenziale fu raso al suolo. Saddam Hussein riuscì a fuggire, ma per lo spavento gli caddero i baffi. Recuperato Mortimer, Rimba lo

riporto' al colonnello Turtleman. Il tacchino fu portato in trionfo, poi venne intervistato da Peter Arnett. Qualche tempo dopo (era il Giorno del Ringraziamento) venne cucinato secondo una vecchia ricetta del Kansas... e Rimba, per premio, ne ebbe una coscia.

"LO SPAVENTEVOLE DOTTOR SIMAK"

Quella sera, Mary Davies era sola in casa. Suo marito era fuori per lavoro, e lei aveva paura. Aveva paura sia perche' la casa si trovava in un luogo molto solitario, sia perche' lei era bruna e sulla trentina, proprio il genere di donna che lo strangolatore di Boston prediligeva. La confortava un po' il fatto di trovarsi a migliaia di chilometri da Boston, ma d'altronde lo squartatore di Londra aveva gli stessi gusti in fatto di vittime, e quella casa era molto vicina a Londra. Mentre era immersa in questi tristi pensieri, la donna udi' squillare il telefono. Sollevo' la cornetta, ma senti' solo il suono di un carillon ed un respiro affannoso. Cio' la spavento' terribilmente, perche' lei aveva visto parecchi film del terrore e sapeva che, in quei film, simili telefonate erano sempre annunciatrici di orrendi delitti. Telefono' allora alla polizia, ma le fu detto che nella realta' gli assassini di solito non fanno simili scherzetti, che l'uso del carillon non e' vietato dalla legge e che anche avere l'asma non e' un reato.

Circa mezz'ora dopo, il telefono squillo' di nuovo, e Mary si affretto' a rispondere. -Ah! Ah! Ah!- sghignazzo' una voce maschile -Sono lo squartatore, e sto venendo ad ucciderti! E' inutile che cerchi di telefonare alla polizia, perche' ho tagliato i fili del telefono! Ed e' inutile che cerchi di scappare, perche' la tua casa e' gia' stata circondata dalla mia banda! Ah! Ah! Ah!- La donna passo' i quattordici minuti successivi a tremare e battere i denti, ma poi le venne in mente una cosa: -Come ha fatto a telefonarmi, se aveva tagliato i fili?- penso'. Capi' allora che l'uomo l'aveva ingannata. Cerco' di chiamare la polizia, ma nel frattempo l'assassino aveva tagliato davvero i fili del telefono.

Mary si vide perduta, ma poco dopo le venne in mente un'altra cosa: ogni squartatore che si rispetti lavora da solo, percio' non doveva esserci nessuna banda intorno alla casa. Decise quindi di uscire. Intanto, il dottor Simak, meglio noto come "lo squartatore di Londra", si aggirava intorno alla casa, aspettando che Mary uscisse. Appena apri' la porta, la donna si vide davanti l'assassino. -Chi e' lei?- chiese spaventata. -Sono il dottor Simak.- disse lui. -Meno male!- disse lei -Avevo giusto bisogno di un dottore, perche' mi sento male.- -Ma io non sono medico, sono dottore in agraria. E' in casa la signora Davies?-

In quel momento Mary noto' che l'uomo, oltre ad avere un'aria assai feroce, portava dei guanti neri ed impugnava

minacciosamente un rasoio. Capi' allora che quello era l'assassino. Egli non l'aveva riconosciuta perche', per lo spavento, i capelli di Mary erano diventati bianchi e lei dimostrava almeno vent'anni in piu' di quelli che aveva. -E' uscita.- disse lei -e adesso vado via anch'io.- -Allora uccidero' te!- disse lo squartatore, brandendo sempre piu' minacciosamente il rasoio. Per fortuna, si trattava di un rasoio elettrico. In quel momento arrivo' l'ispettore Evans di Scotland Yard, con una decina di agenti. Il dottor Simak fu immediatamente arrestato.

-Quando il sergente mi ha detto della sua telefonata, ho subito capito cosa stava accadendo.- disse l'ispettore. -Come ha fatto?- chiese Mary. -Sono anch'io un appassionato di film del terrore.- spiego' lui.

"UNA VECCHIA CASA DI CAMPAGNA" (racconto del terrore)

Perche' l'anziana signora Philips era entrata in quella vecchia casa di campagna? Lei stessa non avrebbe saputo dirlo! Ebbe appena il tempo di notare che il luogo era assai polveroso e pieno di ragnatele, poi il vento chiuse la porta e lei si trovo' al buio, dato che non era riuscita a trovare l'interruttore della luce. Intanto aveva cominciato a piovere. Un lampo illuminò la stanza, consentendo alla signora Philips di vedere un'orrenda creatura che avanzava lentamente verso di lei. La donna lancio' un grido, e subito senti' un altro grido, proveniente dal piano di sopra.

Un altro lampo rischiarò quel luogo, ed in cima alle scale apparve un uomo, che la guardava con aria feroce impugnando un rasoio insanguinato. -Chi siete?- chiese spaventata l'anziana signora Philips. -Come, chi sono? Sono tuo marito, no?- rispose lui, che era effettivamente il signor Philips -Devi aver avuto un'altra delle tue amnesie, mentre portavi a spasso il cane. Che avevi da gridare, poco fa? Mi stavo facendo la barba e mi hai fatto tagliare!- -Ho visto un ragno.- spiego' lei.

1.17 A fairytale for elves and clouds

"A FAIRYTALE FOR ELVES AND CLOUDS"

by Fred Roberts

Once upon a time there lived a cloud with a terrible sense of direction. He was always losing his way. He just couldn't blow along with the other clouds without something happening. People down below would sometimes look up at a clear, blue sky and notice a stray cloud racing swiftly across it as if trying to rejoin the rest of the clouds.

One time a dense fog rolled over the countryside and decided to stay a while. The cloud lost his way so badly that he had to wait for the fog to move on before discovering what had happened. He had drifted into a cave! And so the days and months and seasons and years passed and became a background for this lost, directionless cloud whose only strength was in losing his way.

At the same time in the Land of Elves there lived a small but very sweet girl-elf who could fly. Everyone was worried about her, not because she could fly (as most elves could fly), but because she was very good at it, so good that she had no idea how to land. She would just fly and fly and soon the whole world with its Land of Elves and all its clouds and caves would be left so far behind that it took all the magic of all the elves to bring her back again. And no one knew how to remedy this because she simply loved to fly. Once she flew so far away that it took half a year to find her, and that was only a lucky coincidence. She had flown so far past the sun that the Earth met her coming around in the other direction.

One day while the elf was busy flying and the cloud was busy losing his way, a violent storm appeared out of nowhere. It rained and hailed and thundered and lightnined while the wind blew furiously in all directions. And so it happened that the elf and the cloud collided with each other as the storm raged on and on. The elf and the cloud tumbled and whirled and spun and swirled together until the storm and the clouds and even the Earth were left far behind, not to mention the Land of Elves! Now it was black all around. Only an occasional star from somewhere distant twinkled indifferently through the darkness at them. There was nothing else to do so when they both had recovered they began talking to each other.

"Are you a cloud?" the elf asked the cloud.

"Yes, but not a very good one, I'm afraid. I always lose my way."

There was a silence broken at last by the cloud asking the elf, "Are you an elf?"

"Yes, and I have a problem, too. I can't help flying higher and higher, so high that I don't know how to come down again."

The elf and the cloud smiled at each other. A loud crash interrupted their thoughts. The cloud and the elf had collided with something hard. It was still very, very dark. Suddenly a voice all around them thundered, "Ha, ha, ha, ha! Who dares to set foot on ME, the Dark Side of the Moon!?"

"Only a simple cloud," answered the cloud in a trembling voice.

"Only a simple elf," answered the elf in her trembling voice.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! You are my prisoners now. What will you give me if I let you go?"

"I don't have anything to give you," cried the elf. "I'm just a poor, little elf who doesn't know how to land."

"I don't have anything to give you, either. I'm just a poor cloud who keeps losing his way," answered the cloud as tiny droplets of rain formed on his surface.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" laughed the voice. "I know what you can give me! I've always wanted a pair of elfin wings and a cloud's silver lining. Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Never!" said the elf. "Without my wings I can't fly!"

"Never!" said the cloud. "Without my silver lining I would be unhappy and rain all the time!"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" laughed the Dark Side of the Moon.

The elf tried to fly away and the cloud tried to drift away. But it was no use. They were held tight. And so they waited..... and waited..... and waited....., but nothing happened, so they waited some more. Finally, almost at the same time, the cloud and the elf had the same idea. They each knew now what the other was thinking because in the time they had been held prisoner together they had grown very fond of each other.

"Maybe we better give the Dark Side of the Moon what it wants," said the cloud. "If you give it your wings, you could ride on me. I would be your wings. And if I were carrying you, I wouldn't need my silver lining anymore. You would be my silver lining."

"It would be even better than before," said the elf happily. "With you holding me, I could never drift off too far, and with me to guide you, you would never lose your way again."

And so they called to the Dark Side of the Moon that it could have what it wanted. The elf gave it her wings and the cloud gave it his silver lining. The Dark Side of the Moon kept its promise and gave the elf and the cloud their freedom. The cloud carried the elf back to Earth while the elf told the cloud which way to fly. In this way they lived many a wonderful adventure with each other and flew over all the lands and seas of the world. All the while they enjoyed sweet conversations which could only take place between an elf and a cloud. And they never grew tired of each other's company. But the Dark Side of the Moon was so mad about their happiness that it never showed its face to the Earth again.

For Alexandra's birthday, May 1996

1.18 Everything inside is made of stone

"EVERYTHING INSIDE IS MADE OF STONE"

by Alan Catlin

The Doctor opened one eye and checked the room for bars. This must be the morning after, he thought. The morning after what was one of those mysteries that was better solved later, slowly.

He always felt better, no matter how comprehensive the hangover, when there were no bars on the windows following a de-bauch. He'd had a roommate in college who lived in mortal terror of waking up that way again. Once was enough for anyone in this lifetime.

The Doctor liked to eliminate the most serious options first, sort of a perverse game of Truth and Consequences with months, even years, riding on the outcome of the game. Now that the telltale sound of snoring from the other side of the unfamiliar bed had revealed the presence of a reposing alien, a serious attempt at memory was soon to be a necessity.

The Doctor hated morning amenities with a total stranger. These encounters often lead to undesirable touchy, feely encounters that could only lead to unwanted physical exercise first thing in the morning. This could be avoided, sometimes, by a discrete exit, but the Doctor disliked the idea of himself on tiptoes, searching for discarded items of clothing. Invariably, the woman would awake and a complicated, often loud misunderstanding would ensue. Better to remain inert and cultivate the hangover. Ah, Morpheus, Blessed God of Sleep, don't fail me now!

The Doctor drifted off into an uncomfortable, half waking, half sleeping dream. He was in a outdoor club that was as dark and self contained as any coffee house he could remember. Smoke of many dreams hung about the black turtle necks of the audience watching the dimly lighted stage. The tables were of rough hewn wood and black spray painted fish netting hung from where the ceiling should have been above the stage, where a single high stool stood behind a microphone all surrounded by an expanse of black ice. The Doctor felt himself at the back of the room peering through the haze, smoking something incredible harsh that gave off a greenish, yellow glow when he inhaled, a glow like the eyes of the singer with a guitar and harmonica hung about his neck. The Doctor felt a thirst like no other he could ever recall and tried vainly to attract the attention of a waitress, carrying a tray balanced on her left hand by her fingertips only, a tray laden with cold beer and beverages he was being denied. She wore a white-t-shirt that said LOVER BOY, in red letters TRY IT BUT YOU' D BETTER MEAN BUSINESS. The singer sat on the stage, looked myopically into the haze with those strange haunted eyes singing:

"Go away from my window
leave at your own chosen speed
I'm not the one you want, babe,
I'm not the one you need.
You say you're looking for someone
Who's never weak and always strong,
Someone who will protect you
and come each time you call
Someone who will die for you and more
Well, it ain't me babe, it' ain't me your
looking for babe.

The Doctor looked deep into the singers eyes and a pain hammered into his head, right between his eyes, waking him with a start.

The alien stirred beside him, rolled over and putting her arm across his chest and mumbling something like:"You, okay, Doc?"

As he expected she was naked and unfamiliar. Faking the name was always a problem so the Doctor always fell back on one of his safer generalities. Straining to remember anything as far back as last night was like recalling ancient history, requiring more skill or energy than the Doctor currently possessed.

" Someone who will close his for you
pick you up each time you fallù
-well, it ain't me babe, it ain't me
your looking for babe---"

"I'm okay, I guess, as good as I an be under the circum-stances."

"Uh uh."

"What are we calling ourselves today? And don't tell me it's Babe. "

"Babe."

"I was afraid of that."

"Don't you remember last night?"

"Vaguely."

"Just vaguely?"

"Besides the usual grunting and groaning, a vagueness, vacuity.

The rest is nothing."

"You're a real card, Doc."

"I've been told that. Many times. If I had a dollar for every time I'dve been called, Ace, I could buy an underdeveloped Latin American country and retire to the joys of running a dicta-torship."

"Don't talk, Doc. Kiss your Baby Blue."

God, the Baby Blue line! The Doctor thought that one had been retired forever. And it wasn't even original. Paraphrasing Bobby Dylan in his arty, folk stage way back into the early stages of his career when he wrote real songs about convincing subjects. You could even forgive him the nonsense songs as the whimsy of genius. No wonder he was having this awful dream. Bob Dylan songs never go away, they just come back to haunt you in nightmares. It was going to be one of those mornings.

Philosophically, the Doctor went along with the Babe's in-creasingly

insistent embraces. It was the thing of the moment, an act of necessity. Besides, it was best not to discourage them when they were randy. You never knew when the opportunity might arise again. Finding out particulars could always wait. Besides how important was it anyway? It wasn't like they were married or officially engaged, or even friends.

Later, the morning amenities taken care of, formalized as it were, The Doctor lay back in the unfamiliar bed, smoking the roach from last night's nightcap. Babe slept with her arm across his chest and head resting on his shoulder. He almost felt domestic and at peace. Closing his eyes, The Doctor was back in The Ultima Thule Cafe staring into Bobby's eyes again and feeling the pain spread all the way inside.

----Melt back into the night, babe
Everything inside is made of stone
There's nothing in here moving and
anyway I'm not alone-----

But he was alone, more alone than he could begin to imagine. So alone he could feel everyone inside the room leaving and he alone was rooted to his chair. The lights on the stage were down and there was nothing but the room walled in black ice, a faint knocking from somewhere outside, a voice saying 'Let me in, Let me in, but there was no way in and no way out in the dark.

1.19 Poems

"OUR GUEST OF HONOUR: BOB FOLDER"

a cura di Vittorio Curtoni

The renowned American poet Bob Folder, who is unknown, is 65 years of age and possesses a fantastic sexual appetite. "Bob is a very likable fellow, a democratic fellow, don't you know. Registered Republican, though, but only because his friend Will Caul ran for state legislature in '62." This, according to Pierre Queneau. All our information comes from Queneau. Bob Folder is a legend in certain poetry circles, of proportions equivalent to Paul Bunyan in American lore. Like all legends, both germain and granola, Bob Folder may be based on a real man, or simply based on a human. Either one. Certainly he existed. Who else could have written these poems? Queneau has in fact met Bob. How else could he have gotten the poems? Written on bits of tree bark and computer printout paper, which Bob kept hidden in a hollow log (along with his birth certificate, dated July 12, 1921), what we have is merely a swan dive in a vacuum, or what Folder himself calls "the price of the cannon." [sic.] Also, Bob has only been published in "Jake the Pike," and "Emergency Horse" magazines. Otherwise, like

Chaucer, his manuscript circulates.

Thanks to Curt Hopkins, Steve McQuiddy and Scott Taylor for this rare, precious informations. Anybody interested in the poetic world of Bob Folder should read the essay "Translating The Worm: Irony Apropos" by Pierre Queneau, published in this issue of DADA.

Il ben noto poeta americano Bob Folder, che e' completamente sconosciuto, ha 65 anni e possiede un formidabile appetito sessuale. "Bob e' un tipo molto simpatico, un tipo democratico, e che capperò. Pero' e' iscritto al Partito Repubblicano, ma solo perche' il suo amico Will Caul si e' presentato candidato per la legislatura di stato nel '62." Questo stando a Pierre Queneau. Tutte le informazioni in nostro possesso ci vengono da Queneau. Bob Folder e' una leggenda in alcuni circoli poetici, di proporzioni equivalenti a Paul Bunyan nel folklore americano. Come tutte le leggende, tanto etiche che etniche, quella di Bob Folder potrebbe essere basata su un vero uomo, oppure su un semplice essere umano. O l'uno o l'altro. Di certo e' esistito. Chi altri potrebbe avere scritto queste poesie? Queneau ha incontrato Bob. Se no, come sarebbe entrato in possesso delle poesie? Scritte su pezzi di quercia d'albero e su stampati di computer che Bob teneva nascosti in un ceppo d'albero cavo (assieme al suo certificato di nascita, datato 12 luglio 1921), sono tutto cio' che abbiamo: un semplice tuffo a rondine nel vuoto, ovvero cio' che lo stesso Folder chiama "il prezzo del cannone" [sic]. Inoltre, Bob e' stato pubblicato solo sulle riviste "Jake the Pike" e "Emergency Horse". Per il resto, come nel caso di Chaucer, i suoi manoscritti circolano.

Grazie a Curt Hopkins, Steve McQuiddy and Scott Taylor per queste rare, preziose informazioni. Chiunque sia interessato al mondo poetico di Bob Folder dovrebbe leggere il saggio "Translating The Worm: Irony Apropos" di Pierre Queneau pubblicato in questo stesso numero di DADA.

Hey Davy Crockett!

Eve of St. Agnes they swam the platter like a log
 Ding-dong, the poodle baron. A day-care center Thursday
 and I am standing on the back porch facing sideways
 Macreasa inside, dollop in the bean pot
 Crispy chitlinsùthey sell bananas like a freeway
 And spin a sweatshirt from plum juice and ocean
 Saddled like a midgetÆs buttocks this life of ours
 is really important and conforms to my warm insect
 Bring me forty streetsigns, fire me a gross
 of beetle sympathy and tired pancakes, to
 the rictus of my emotional heartstring ruptures
 and floods MacreasaÆs dress with our first child
 Lastly sinful like a magpie on vacation,
 How many rabbits can hide in a desk-clerkÆs hair?

holding two lizards like drumsticks or music
 clogs and clots the plain ham of our life together
 And like Jesus at the cycle-barn, and Pharaoh eating stone
 I bought a shirt with a timber locket stolen from a telephone pole
 Ruptured rubber gadgets sprinkled on my neck and
 pulled-out backbone lay down on plastic
 hairpiece dreamed especially for Mother Earth

Poemland

Scraping by by me something along the tracks,
 a gelatinous grouping in the shape of a TV personality,
 ochre eye shadow cascading grim red tie
 punt like pool-shark lampshade cookie-poodles
 paddles soap pining gimpy nuts soccer for free
 siccing the dog on the sick limpy nut vendor
 laying soaky bun blisters over the side
 Fall like a leaf from the sea.

Down By The River

Ibbly: beveled morphology and a snack tuna on cables.
 Smack me so it leaves a mark. My interior is pox-ridden
 and smooth of squeeze it reheats the dusty chops.
 One warm breast spills out of a turtle neck.
 Click shut the refrigerator door, cleaving the soy patty,
 falling limp as tissue into the freshwater mainstream squirming
 from the crinkled tube.
 Watch on the freeway the tires unravel into sparks and ha ha death:
 30 ballpeen shots to the noggin.

Sonnet For A Landlocked Numeral

The sampans rust into a slight nod
 Feel the black shine lantern boom and Bob
 Crusts against the ancient King of time
 that shines and oils down a rebar rod
 ôI want you Bob, yes, IÆll make you mineö
 Quoth she, spammed to touch the knob
 fidgeting and relaxing to black the tab and sawed
 blast like figs, leveling the garbage can
 sings spud frogs to a healing man
 he slipped and gained eight or more who ran.

Caliente

Forget lithe spleen habits in song
 decorate the garrulous limb with homicide
 can you peel lost pulpmeat so long?
 Sure I can, imam, stoney peach part
 itÆs hard to angle rods and cones and start
 pilfer petticoats scratching rheumy time
 forward to part, coalesce in King Kong
 twist me up a dooby, Cal, drink insecticide
 Hand me a poodle, I want to feel aligned
 to the Axis, split, ballpeen is fine
 Gilgamesh has lunged for the twister mat

Slap, apparently, look to nibble and long
 in my heart for a steamed milk enema lied
 ten minutes ago I touched a hamster and cried

Seminal Logic To A Belly Hole

Love lip trippingingly swan dive to
 secondary motions in chandelier skin
 ùI think of Marxism as a sexist joke on myselfù
 "Scrumpdillyishus!" quoth she chucking down my wrinkled sack
 to the delicious toad drippings of her snack,
 T-shirts stuffed with scribbles in black.
 Isaac the Cossack is the buff chick about town;
 "Nice bag of marbles, Bobby," he promised, withdrawing the baguette.
 "Nick, Nick, my Pincers of Bagwan," stealthilyù
 Hey-wann-ah, hey-wann-ah ho,
 you're the waxpaper Santa of my wandering toes.
 Alert the pirates, my desk is round

Beam Me Up, Scotty, There's No Intelligent Life On This Pantsuit

It all started when I couldn't shave the Cuban
 Instead mayonnaise plastered my gums as I smoke
 Buttering me up in the home of ex-president Truman
 Fuck the begonias, Save your land!
 He then began to sort the anal beads
 as crystal cottonballs snap!
 I stand naked from the waist down to your song
 watching 9 one-minute managers humping a bar-b-que
 Toilet poster! Toilet poster!

Love Sonnet

Kneeling in the soft carcinogens of your cellophane vase,
 I shall vacuum up your up your svelte chowder
 As Pab's mom sticks jelly to her mace
 "I am Chinese, I am, I am," says she, louder and louder.
 Your dribbling nose paste nails my heart to thine.
 "Well Doctor, it seems he's choking to death on your own patela."
 "Apply salt lick to injured area and whine
 'I'm just a turd-bird with salmonella!'"
 "Do not divorce my loaf, sell it to the birds."
 Sotto voce, sotto voce, adagio and pulsing dong
 To whet my lyre and sing pepper ear wax turds.
 sing: "Weepy weepy Love Jones, birdaloupe Bong Bong."

"Only love is capable of grating you a happy life."
 Who ate all the blistex? Is that your paring knife?

1.20 Poesie

"POESIE"

by Rita Stilli

"L' ISOLA DI CARTA"

Sorgenti di dolore,
fontane di carta ...
La sete si fa arsura
quando il fiume sfocia
nel silenzio ...
Troppo vicina - ormai - la rapida
scoscesa - per non restare -
Il remo avvinghiato alla
mia mano - mi tuffo
nella cascata d'inchiostro -
Oso restare a galla nelle mie
parole - salvagenti del pensiero -
Io - che ho imparato a nuotare
solo nel mare di sale ...
rugiada della mia anima.

GIORNI D' INCHIOSTRO

Sono trascorsi i giorni
dell'inchiostro e delle mani
scarabocchiate da dolci
fatiche ...
Ero disperata di felicità'....
E non lo sapevo .
Erano i giorni - come semi - della creazione.
Ora sono i fiori dell'invenzione.
Bugie colte nel prato della
verità'... ...
sbocciate nella primavera
dell' eternità'... ...
Ma nel mio giardino
sbocciano solo rose
già'... appassite.

L'ESERCITO DEL SOGNO

Sognare di sognare ...
come vivere ad occhi chiusi.
Dietro le palpebre solo immagini
al rallentatore.
Vincere la corsa contro il tempo
per sconfiggere la notte.
Soldati sull'attenti
i momenti stanchi
attendono il riposo ...
del Dopo.

OMBRE DI PETALI

C'è stato un tempo in cui

il sole offuscava l'ombra.
Ed io ancora non sapevo
che i petali potessero
cadere ... come a spezzare
il silenzio di un risveglio.

INCHIOSTRO E SALE

Cancello i pensieri
con l'inchiostro.
Medico le mie ferite
con il sale del pianto.

Pensieri nel vento - come vessilli
e rondini garriscono -
Le lacrime sorridono nella rugiada
e si credono immortali.

ORME D'INDIFFERENZA

Camminavo a testa bassa, per la
vergogna di rivolgere al cielo
il mio sguardo stanco e rassegnato.
Temevo d'incontrare un rimprovero
e di dover salutare l'azzurro - ovatta soffice
di una nuvola soffocante -
Ed a soffocarmi e' stata l'emozione
di calpestare le orme del mio ritorno.
Avevo lasciato - sulla strada -
il peso della mia indifferenza.

ORA ...

Ora e' l'ora!
Aspetto l'attesa - nella stanza
d'attesa -
Non ho piu' niente da fare!
Quanto tempo perso - nell'attesa -
di aver - finalmente -
tempo da perdere!

FOGLIE DI CARTA

Davanti ad una foglia di carta
s'inchina il bisturi affilato
nella mani di un analfabeta
del pensiero.

L'albero si afferra alle radici
del cielo per non affondare
nella melma di uno stagno
saturo d'inchiostro ormai

seccato.

Ed il niente - oramai -
E' gia'... ferito.

GIORNI IN SOFFITTA

Ci sono giorni colmi d'attese -come
soffitte dimenticate -
Passo il tempo a togliere
ragnatele e polvere per
ritrovare il vuoto - che un giorno -
un ragno riempi'
ed il tempo gli faceva compagnia.

ALMENO ...

Per farsi udire - mentre cade -
la pioggia ha bisogno - almeno-
di un petalo, di un filo d'erba,
di un nido, di una piuma,
di una lacrima ... su cui lasciare
il suo lamento.
Per farsi udire - la pioggia -
ha bisogno - almeno - della terra.
Per farsi udire - la pioggia -
ha bisogno- almeno - di farsi male ...
cadendo.

Per farmi udire ... mentre vivo -
io ho bisogno - almeno -
di morire ... vivendo .

SOLO

Alle pareti, solo quadri appesi,
fissati con la ruggine di chiodi
ormai gia'... spezzati.
Per terra solo orme di passi
troppe volte
ormai gia'... calpestati.
Per letto, solo un giaciglio di fiele
troppe volte
ormai gia'... ingoiato.
Per scrivere, solo foglie cadute
di autunni gia'... troppe volte
ormai trascorsi.
Per specchiarsi, solo l'ombra
di un volto, ormai sbiadito.
Per ricordarsi, solo l'oblio
di una margherita
ormai sfogliata.
Per odiare, solo pietre scalfite
da artigli di belve addomesticate

e mai domate.
Per amare, solo il battito di un cuore
ormai già'... occupato da troppo amore.
Per soffrire, solo tanto dolore
ancora tutto da assaporare.
Per vivere ... solo
queste parole ...

INGANNI

Ho finto di non aver niente
da fare ... per rendere credibile
la mia stanchezza.
Ho finto di non aver niente
da dire ... perché' si credesse
al mio assordante silenzio.

Ho finto di esistere ...
Ma la vita ci ha creduto.
Io no!!

TIRO AL SOGNO

Ho sparato al cielo.
Come bersaglio la nuvola
più' sola.
Cacciatore vigliacco
nel giardino d'ali
spezzate.

LA SCELTA

Ha scelto il mio rettangolo
di sassi - il merlo di città''... -
per imparare la geometria
dei confini.
Lato di viole in fiore
radici come fragili basi
a sostenere l'area del cielo.

Ha scelto il seme d'erba - tappeto della terra -
il merlo per la sua cena.

A masticar gramigna ed
ingoiar fiele
rimane l'anima mia.
Ha scelto per me, il merlo di città''....

TORNA L'ESTATE

Riecco l'estate
che timorosa d'esaurirsi
in una stagione

s'impossessa della vita, incatenandola
a rami d'erba.

Rieccola, a chieder acqua al venditore
di deserti.
Rieccola a comprar miraggi
e a non saper come usarli.
Rieccola, a riciclar viole e ciclamini.
Fiori che non crescono nell'assenza
del mio giardino
ma che forse - non troppo lontano da qui -
nella serra soffocante del sogno
ogni estate ritornano ad inebriare
la realta'....

Rieccomi, dunque.
In punta di piedi sono entrata
in quella serra.
Stordita da colpi di fragore
che nasce da quel dolore
di un'estate che non sa
dove andra'... a morire.

FURTI

Mi hanno derubato dei giorni
delle sere
delle notti.
Del resto che mi han lasciato
ne ho fatto mille frammenti
da gettar come coriandoli
sul carnevale beffardo
di una vita solo assaporata
ma mai ingoiata.
Digiuna di tempo
ma sazia di anni.
Golosa di vita
mi accontento di cio' che
resta di un gelato liquefatto
nell'arsura di un deserto.
Mi stringe la gola
un nodo al sapor di
cactus.

GIORNI IN PIENA

Mi attendono giorni
da lasciar scorrere.
Ma ora so che non sarò
sommersa da fiumi in piena.
Solo ruscelli da attraversare.
Ed io, che non so nuotare
ne' saltaremi accontenterò
di volare.

INGANNO

Volano tre petali
nel mio cielo.
Vi dono un'ala ...
e mi compro la fortuna.

1.21 Parole a mare

"PAROLE A MARE"

by Luca Bianchi

Sentimento ardito,
turbi la vita
sopito, rinasci dirompente e forte. Vorrei aprire il
mio cuore,
mostrarti il pensiero,
dirti come e' forte l'Amore.
Ai miei occhi dolce
lo sguardo appare;
che fare? Vincera' la tristezza o'l cuore?

A heart is a heart;
this is my rough but weak heart.
I put it in your hands,
please, dont crash it!

Desiderio,
mettere sulla propria pelle
tutta la propria essenza,
aprire l'io all'altro,
chiaro come un raggio di sole
mostrarsi, sicuro di essere capito.
Condurti sulla mia via,
mano nella mano, fino all'infinito.

Grande rabbia, collera
che sale, divampa e si sopisce.
Sensazione di derisione
che domina l'anima.
Vorrei capire e non posso,
cerco di giustificare
al contempo condanno.
Forte affanno.
Cosa successo delle mie tiepide speranze?
Confusione mentale,
malessere generale,
voglia di scappare.

Ricordi,
Amori perduti che vagano

nel deserto delle rimembranze.
Amori che ritornano,
lievi soffi misti ad amarezza,
lasciandoti attonito.
Ti chiedi cosa erano,
perche' finirono
e se mai furono.
Sei libero
e vorresti essere
nuovamente amato.

Sentire
l'Amore che scorre nelle vene,
nuovamente accesa e'
la torcia ed arde di vera fiamma.
Tiepida mano che sfiora la mia,
ed e' luce che potente rischiara
la mia vita nuovamente
e impone la vera favola.
Minima cosa la razionalita'
viene schiacciata dalla Verita'.
Cio' che sembra appena tiepido
ha gia' bruciato la realta'.

Vorrei scrivere sulla roccia
che t'amo, perche' nessuno lo possa cancellare.
Vorrei disegnare il mio amore in cielo,
in modo che il mondo intero lo possa vedere.
Il tuo sguardo dolce
incontra il mio e lo cattura,
la tua voce culla i miei pensieri
e vorrei non svegliarmi piu' da questo dolce sonno.

Sccccccciabordio d'onde lungo lo scafo
e d'improvviso lei s'infrange sulla prora,
supera la mura e ti travolge, ora!
Caldo, freddo la mente vola
e l'Onda fluisce dolce al mare.
Cerchi d'afferrrarla, ma ti sfugge tra le dita.
Dolce e irruenta ha colpito
e tu marinaio attonito non sei solo;
il flutto t'ha impregnato.
Vuoi pensare che, mentre sgorgava da limpida sorgente
e scorreva lenta nel fiume a valle, attendeva te
ed ora omofona ti segue.

Dolce come il fiume,
che scorre lento a valle.
Bella come il monte,
che alza la sua vetta al cielo.
Sei bella come il bagliore del tuono,
che squarcia la buia notte
e illumina la mia vita
di un nuova luce universale.

Ho visto
alle porte di Orione navi da guerra disintegrarsi,

fasci d'energia balenare nel vuoto,
uomini disperati combattere per la vita.
Gelide forme di caccia in formazione d'attacco
e maestosi relitti d'incrociatori imperiali
scivolare lenti verso stelle lontane
mute testimoni di cruenti scontri.
Ho visto
eroi solitari combattere contro interi pianeti, contro pianeti spenti,
e possenti flotte darsi battaglia dispensatrici di morte e di vittoria.
Uomini e macchine distrutti
da macchine e uomini contro essi armati.
Mondi soggiogati e mondi liberati.
Popoli salvati e popoli annientati.
Ho visto
navicelle espulse da navi colpite
che bruciavano nell'atmosfera di pianeti sconosciuti
e i prigionieri stanchi avviarsi al confino
Uomini vinti coperti di stracci
e i vincitori marciare sull'Impero. Rovine e gloriosi
monumenti alla Vittoria testimoni muti della storia.

Tristezza che m'assale,
rabbia e spento ardore.
L'Onda e' fuggita.
s'e' persa e' finita.
Addio giocoso rifluire
e dolce sciabordio sulla prora.
Addio sopito ardore,
la triste speranza non piu' ha dimora.
Altrove volta piu' non ascolta,
in questa notte ogni speranza e' tolta.
Come potra' il legno navigare
privo dell'Onda del mare.

Di solitario in solitario loco navigo,
fuggo la realta', odio la verita'.
M'aggrappo alla speranza poi mi piego. Mi rialzo
con affanno e allungo la mano;
la vedo sulla spiaggia e cerco d'afferrarla.
Artiglio sabbia ormai da lei lontano.
Stupido uomo che guardi il mare,
come un cristallo di quarzo lontano dal sole, oscuro vorresti
ma non puoi brillare.
Questa perfida oscurita' fa tremare, nasconde la gioia,
incatena il cuore.
La tenebra illumina solo il dolore.
Nemesi dall'altero volto arriva dolce ma severa,
fende veloce l'aria, supera il vento
la mano e' incerta ma afferra e strappa la vela.

Dolce Notte, grande Madre
che generasti piu' bella Atropo
delle tue Moire figlie.
Il suo amplesso pietoso
consola l'umano core
e di pace rende desideroso.
Grazie Notte di questa figlia

grata. Chiude la porta
dopo aver liberato la stanza.

A mare disordinati i rottami vagano,
ancor il relitto sta tra gli scogli.
La luna e il sole all'orizzonte calano.
Il naufrago solitario attonito sta a guardare,
lontano dal mondo nulla chiede, nulla
dara'; Egli non puo odiare, ma non deve amare.
L'Onda antica amica s'infrange lontana
e ad altri lidi scivola di lui ignara.
Spacca anche il cuore la tramontana.
Non piu' della gioia d'una donna si ralleggera',
non piu' lacrime versera' per il suo pianto;
solo, separato dal mondo e muto sara'.

Marinaio ricorda bene,
ella non vale,
del tuo cuore le pene.
Non ha pudore,
ne' ritegno,
ne' barlume d'amore.
Non conosce d'amicizia
la bellezza e il valore;
mente con estrema furbizia.
Usa il compagno di viaggio;
s'avvicina con dolci modi,
ma non e' vero e' piaggio.
Coglie in America nuova conquista.
Ma e' solo un gioco;
torna, e' come mai l'avesse vista.
Scende dal monte. l'hai vista.
Ed un altro e' in pista,
ma ben lunga ancor'e' la lista.

Solo in questa notte prego;
Concedimi Signore un suo sguardo.
Sul bordo del letto siedo
e mentre prego col pensiero lontano guardo. Mai ho
amato tanto!
ne' mai la pena e' valsa
d'alzare un canto,
che d'Amore e' rivalsa.
Sei tu d'altro non ne cale,
sei vera puo' bastare.
Quanto ti vorrei mostrare
cio' che nel mio cuore vale.
Nulla chiedo, non n'ho diritto,
ma s'assorto mi vedi,
siedi, guarda il mio occhio afflitto
e al cuore mio di parlare chiedi.
Ti dira' che t'ama
e che non sa sognare altro,
se non di dividersi con chi ama. Questo cuore forse
non e' scaltro. Sicuramente sinceramente ama
e non desidera nient'altro.
Mostra il mio cuore a questa dama! Solo in questa

notte Signore ti prego.

1.22 Poems

"POEMS"

by Robb Allan

CIGARETTES IN BED

i feel you breathing
slowly next to me
injury slashing like
knife wounded pride
words slamming abraded
silky skin bleeding
rhythm settling in my bones
aching for redemption
i light my last cigarette
burning torches in the night
the mattress aflame
you breathing
slowly next to me

SERIAL TRUTH

They would certainly tell me if you were lying.
The machines hooked to your skull measuring
brain waves.
They weren't able to gather the whole story
from your tainted lips.
>From your empty eyes.
I-witness a smile crossing your lips that eludes them.
They want to see it.
They want to know it intimately.
They want to feel the blood you've let running freely
through their greedy fingers.
But they can't glean the protein from the meat of
your story you stick the bone in their protruding
lobes a stark stiletto lie
You stuff the gristle down their throats
and clog their arteries with your fat
dangling the lean before them
but never divulging.
uncapitulating.
i quiver with understanding as technology
forces truths from your lips they wish
they'd never heard... they spew from your
mouth like southern baptist sermons...
"you are piss dribbling down my thighs.
drink of me. release yourself of this burden.
i walk among the people of this land and

feed on their depravity. i infect your children
with the disease of truth. you cannot stop me."

they throw you in the tank and toss the key
calling you a worthless liar. nothing but a
jeffrey dahmer copycat

while your truths continue to drown
newspapers too blind to see.

HARRY

was a produce man from the late 60's
and they say his spirit haunts the store
mary told me about how he once threw a bottle
of beer at her while she was singing quietly
in the corner by the wine
and i just laughed at her for being so conspicuously
superstitious had to be there i guess
i get a greasy feeling in the middle of a healthy
vomit now thinking of harry and how he infested
the night crew that spring the night crew
consisting of jason and i jason carrying a .45 to
ward off would be flower thieves started shooting
one night when someone tapped him on the shoulder
the music from the cd stopped and i yelled across 11
aisles jason why the fuck did you turn off the music?
i didn't you fuckin' asshole he responded so i found
myself in the office worrying over the chewed up cd
tooth marks in the plastic like a dog with a bone
feeling the cold wind blow through a closed door
someone whistling sitting on the dock of the bay
quietly in my ear as i tried to concentrate on my
work it's a wonder we didn't go insane jason even
saw a bottle of some cheap wine emptying itself
among the shelves of the feminine hygiene section
(he liked to hang out there for reasons i still can't
comprehend) i'm not one to believe in ghosts so there
has to be a logical explanation for mozart suddenly
blaring from the PA while listening to the jerky boys
jerk off some doctor in downtown manhattan
we escaped but barely mary giggling like a schoolgirl
chanting i told you so over and over and over
as she popped a healthy cd into the sound system
and walked away whistling sitting on the dock of the
bay

THIS ONE'S FOR THE VICTIM IN US ALL

the nightmare unfolds around you
it's wrapped in bright little
dahmer, gacy foil paper emblazoned
with a picture of a turd
tapered at the end just like
your life tapered at the end

with screams jetting from your
ruined body like so much gas escaping
stinking up the place...

and the clock ticks on the wall

while rem helps you lose your religion
in the backyard buried like a dog
a bone
here
a bone
there

and the second hand slithers around midnight
caressing it ever so gently

then gripping
ripping and tearing reality into
yesterday's headlines...

cut in to neat little piles of
feces for inspection as the water swirls
down the drain tapered at the end
just like your life tapered at the end

and you become
nothing but discharge

1.23 Tre poesie per Lucilla

"TRE POESIE PER LUCILLA"

by Alessio Saltarin

EPIFANIA DELLA DIADE

Ed io chi sono? Sono forse l'Alfa ed il Limite,
colui che ascolta l'Essenza del Silenzio.
Io sono la nuova Stagione e la fine dell'Inverno.
Ecco, io sono la fine del sogno, l'Omega.
(Intuisco nei tuoi lineamenti, quando da lontano ti miro,
la Verita' delle parole che 'l Vento mi suggeriva:
scorgo la tua sincera bellezza ed il radioso sorriso,
ed i tuoi occhi, che ben conoscono il sogno ma non la Vita.
E pure mi tengo lontano da tanta, sconosciuta meraviglia
poi che ho paura d'infrangerne il confine o scoprirne
il segreto. Mi basta indugiare su queste vane parole
che domani raggiungeranno i tuoi occhi e, forse, il tuo cuore.)

NON UN GIORNO D'ESTATE

(dal sonetto 18 di William Shakespeare)

La LUCe che e' causa del rinascere di natura e vita,
dei nuovi colori che con se' porta l'Estate, ora vacILLA.
Ma non posso compararti ad un giorno d'Estate:
tu sei piu' amabile e piu' temperata. I venti estivi
spazzano le selvagge praterie ed improvvise tempeste
sconvolgono le acque e la terra. Troppo caldo e' il sole
e spesso il cielo e' offuscato d'afa: il bello declina.
Ma la tua Estate eterna non disfiorerà', Lucilla,
ne' si allenteranno i nodi che stringono la tua dolcezza:
nemmeno potrà' la Morte vantarsi di averti fra le Ombre
finche' la luce della tua bellezza sincera vivrà' tra queste righe
e queste righe continueranno a dare ad essa la Vita.

LUCILLA

E' notte. Il giardino e' tutto un ansimar di lucciole.
La Luna, che timida pare da un'ininterrotta
coltre di nubi, rischiara il foglio dove scrivo.

E' notte. Si sente anche stanotte il grido
acerbo dei gufi. Non esiste che un a'ncora
di salvezza per il solitario scrittore, e tu non esisti.

E' notte. E' notte persino nella biblioteca polverosa
dello zio, dove rimarranno chiuse, sparse, queste rime.
Rimarranno: per poterci sognare un po' sopra, ad occhi aperti.

Le lucciole amano il buio del mio prato
perche' in esso risplendono meglio. Anche tu,
Lucilla, sei una piccola luce e risplendi
nell'immensita' nera del mio abisso.

1.24 Poems

"POEMS"

by Arlene Ang

transitorietà'

l'argento della luna
a mezzanotte fa l'amore strano
con le piume lasciate
sul lago dei cigni neri

ma presto si fa giorno
e sotto il sole morbido
non si riconoscono piu'

messiah

raindrops bespatter
stained-glass windows
 casting
trickles of dark light
into my sightless eyes
 running
into the depths of me
without
 touching my soul
i stand
gazing behind
 bespattered glass
in the dampness
of a deserted chapel
 awaiting
something
yet unknown to me
 something
which might never come

evanescence

snowflakes,
 swaying
 to the gusts of breath;
 winter settles
 in its sail
 towards spring,
frolic about
 in the air -
 where
 a lone set of footprints
 had flattened
 themselves
 on fallen snow,
leaving a mark
 for some lone wanderer
 to follow
 in the cold

soon lost
 beneath the steady
 downpour of frost

 a vanished effigy
 of another
 soulless ghost

hourglass

to think of time
when it is lost
between a brusque farewell

and a heart
unable to let go
that it draws out
a knife
and a breath
till sand oozes out
in thick trails of regret
falling into a glass
that is never again
quite filled

1.25 Poesie

"POESIE"

by Renato Gionchetti

Una volta
in una tazzina di caffè' al Bar Centrale
incontrai una zolletta di zucchero
Era bianca e dolce
ma il suo sguardo era triste
e gli occhi socchiusi
a trattenere una lacrima
E mentre la sua immagine
lentamente si scioglieva
mi disse
"E' stato bello averti incontrato"
Le ultime sillabe mi giunsero indistinte
e per un lungo istante
affascinato
guardai nella tazzina
Poi bevvi d'un fiato
Lo posso giurare
un caffè' così' non l'ho più' bevuto

FESTIVAL

A metà' settimana
primo pomeriggio di luglio
con la persiana rotta
e la lampada
che fa uno strano rumore
una lumaca
s'e' attaccata sul davanzale
Non conosce la differenza
fra una tromba
e un sax tenore
e ignora
che si possa ironizzare
sulla Biennale
con una sedia e due palline colorate

Se ne sta li'
chiusa nel guscio
al sole
e neanche lo sciopero della stampa
riesce a spostarla

A S.Maria di mare
la luce del tramonto
filtra fra i rami della grande quercia
e fa risplendere le ragnatele
E la quercia e' come una cappa
che isola dai rumori del mondo
e sento soltanto
forte
pulsare il tuo cuore

La brezza
ci porto' il profumo del mare
il vino fresco
ci fece sognare
il silenzio della campagna
resto' ad ascoltarci
e mentre il glicine dettava legge
un ricordo
mi fece rabbrivire

Incubo d'Aprile
primavera degli imbecilli
Sole per gli occhiali da sole
shampoo per lavaggi frequenti
polline per le riniti allergiche
All'ultimo piano
un raggio di sole
posa un riflesso azzurro
sui capelli neri

Resta qui
fuori c'e' il sole
troppa luce
Resta con me
al buio
Ti racconterò
di quando ero bambino
ti parlerò
di un sogno che ho fatto
ti canterò
una canzone che parla d'amore
Resta con me
al buio
E se avrai paura
ti terro' stretta stretta

Il ritmo era incalzante
e Palla-di Cannone
non era da meno degli altri
L'Espresso delle 21
in ritardo
cercava di recuperare
seguendo la batteria
Il solito pipistrello
metteva in fuga
un paio di persone
e il telefono
inopportuno
andava fuori tempo
Barche a mare
niente luna
il Grande Carro
e spaghetti al pomodoro
Era una serata in Fa diesis

Una mosca
s'e' posata su una mia poesia
Poesia....
diciamo versi
La mosca e' orribile
disgustosa
con le zampe pelose
e le antenne
mi fa senso
Chissa'
se pensa lo stesso
di me
e della mia poesia
Poesia....
versi!

Quel pomeriggio
sull'asfalto freddo
un cane
un bastardo
arrivo' con passo lento
Annuso' un cumulo di spazzatura
e ne fu disgustato
Si guardo' in giro con aria annoiata
e se ne ando'
sulle zampe troppo corte
di cane bastonato
Poi
non e' passo' piu' nessuno
quel pomeriggio
sull'asfalto freddo
nemmeno un cane
un bastardo
un cane bastonato

Quando moriro'
non piangete
il dolore non serve
Non mettetemi il vestito scuro e la cravatta
solo un blue jeans una polo verde
e scarpe di cuoio
Non mettetemi il rosario fra le mani
e non portate fiori sulla mia tomba
I fiori appassiscono presto
Quando moriro'
vorrei che pensaste
"Era uno sapeva sognare"

1.26 Poesie

"POESIE"

by Andrea Barbieri

Tracce di vite mai vissute svaniscono di fronte a me,
Evanescenti stelle nella notte della vita ...
Nuove malattie uccidono il passato
E spezzano mondi come onde sulla sabbia ...
Brividi come fuoco
Ridestano l'inconscio, colmo di arcana bramosia ...
E, selvaggia, rifiorisce l'orchidea della notte, ancora una volta

Sospesa, nel magico mondo del divenire,
Ombra onirica sull'arcobaleno dei sogni,
Risplende di luce fra i colori del buio,
Rosseggia scarlatta al tepore dell'alba ...
Ipocrisie immortali ne incoronano l'aurea,
Desideri dormienti volteggiano, adulatori, ai suoi piedi
E lacrime di lutti lontani piovono sulle sue spalle ...
Nuove speranze risvegliano il presente e creano il futuro,
Talismano magico che vince le paure ...
Inizia, ancora, il volteggiare spumoso delle onde ...

Idee e sostanze s'intrecciano,
sensazioni e riflessioni inghiottono paure di sconfitta,
illusioni di felicità abbracciano
ipocrite speranze di salvezza ...

Fuoco di razionalità sull'uomo,
stragi di parole senza senso sul suo piacere
e mortali lance sulla sua malvagità ...

Sulla sabbia
disegni veloci di limiti conoscitivi,
in balia della spuma marina
e del passato irrazionalmente cupo ...

Corpi fisici danzano in noi,
immateriali dipinti di irrealta' nella nostra mente,
specchi infedeli di ipocrite verita' ...

E divinita' inaccessibili
sorriscono sopra i nostri pensieri,
tra bramosie di potere
e preghiere di salvezza ...

Sono qui,
e pioggia di fuoco tintinna dentro me ...
Sono qui,
e fragranze orientali s'impadroniscono del mio corpo ...
Sono qui,
tra il fumo della sapienza e i vortici effimeri dell'ignoto ...
Sono qui,
dove spazio e tempo spariscono nell'oblio,
dove lacrime d'ingenuita' piovono, inafferrabili ...

E sono qui,
a contemplarti, o dio dell'immortale creazione,
a chiedermi cosa sei,
a guardare i tuoi occhi di stelle,
gridando senza voce nel silenzio ...

Sono qui,
e pensieri di bramosa onnipotenza
corrono impazziti nel baratro della realta',
mortalmente,
come l'impulso della vita ...

Piu' nulla,
non sei piu' nulla per me,
ora non sei che il bagliore di un sogno
che vola via sulle ali stregate dell'ipocrisia ...
Sei solo una belva che mi odia,
un serpente maledetto che trasuda sangue,
ballando maligno sui miei desideri,
nutrendomi delle piu' dolci illusioni
e avvelenandomi con le piu' affilate parole ...

Ma ora sei finita,
e' crollato il tuo idolo di pietra e di speranza
che dimorava nel sacro tempio della mia anima ...
Hanno visto la luce i miei occhi,
si sono destati dal baratro dell'oblio,
parto delirante dell'amore senza limiti ...

Quale destino, quale futuro, quali fili ?
Perche' polvere su polvere soffoca il mio cuore ?
Dove sta la Verita', dove porta la Via ?
Al sole morente o al nulla che dissolve,
alla luna senza tempo o al mare delle solitudini ?

Saro' solo con le mie domande ancora per quanto ?
Saro' solo quando calera' ancora la notte senza stelle ?

E quel giorno, ridera' il demone senza occhi nel buio ?
Quel giorno, dove scappera' la mia anima,
dove saranno queste parole,
e dove moriranno i miei sogni ?

Mi schiaccia il peso dei miei pensieri,
e la luna tramontera' sulle ali dei gabbiani
senza che una risposta spumeggi tra le onde ...
E forse cosi' moriro',
SOLO,
tra le ali oscure della notte
e le ombre infuocate dell'alba ...

Cosi' ogni cosa finira',
Calera' pesante il sipario delle nuvole,
e il cielo piangera' ...
... di nuovo ...

Ho tanta rabbia dentro me,
tu nemmeno puoi concepirla ...
Ho tanto dolore dentro me,
tu nemmeno puoi sfiorarlo con il tuo pensiero ...
Ho tanto fuoco nel mio io,
tu nemmeno lo vedi nella notte senza stelle ...

Forza, continua ad urlare,
continua la tua condanna a questa vita,
continua a vivere nel terrore di schiavo,
ma mai,
mai,
vedrai dentro i miei occhi,
mai scorgerai il fulmine della verita',
mai brillera' per te la luce della Vita,
mentre tutto intorno a te,
tutto dentro te
e' tenebre e pioggia senza luce ...

Come vorrei sognare ancora,
come vorrei poter sperare ancora,
sperare in un alba, lontana,
mille lune prima di questa ...
Come vorrei maledire quella notte,
come vorrei non avere piu' lacrime,
come vorrei bruciare i fogli dei miei ricordi,
e scappare, scappare lontano
da questo mare di falsita' e di solitudine ...
Come vorrei svegliarmi da questo incubo,
come vorrei strappare la strada del mio futuro,
e cancellare il tuo dipinto nei miei occhi ...
Come vorrei ...
Come vorrei ...

Tante voci mi parlano di te,
ma nessuna risposta si specchia nei miei occhi ...
Vorrei tanto che crollasse il tuo tempio
che ancora arde senza tregua nel mio cuore,
vorrei tanto non vedere piu'
i riflessi stellati dei miei errori
sul tuo viso e nella luce dei tuoi occhi ...
Ma e' cosi' difficile morire
e rinascere senza passato,
e' cosi' duro camminare nel buio dell'ignoto
senza stringere le tue dita ...
Forse, un giorno,
crollera' la tua idea,
crollera' in mille pezzi il nostro futuro, insieme,
e il miracolo della purificazione
bacera' la mia fronte di uomo mortale,
per poter avere ancora risposte
e poter di nuovo credere ...
Ma giu',
nel piu' profondo del mio io
e nel buio dei miei sogni,
brillera' sempre la luce di un sorriso
e il ricordo di un amore senza tempo ...

Tintinnano ancora le ali della farfalla
E dentro di esse, la liberta' ...
Magico, questo vento soffia nei miei occhi,
Portando nel suo grembo
Eterne lacrime di solitudine ...
Sogni lontanissimi
Trasfigurano speranze come sangue,
Amando la fine come la ami tu ...

Sordo, sale al cielo l'urlo del deserto
E il mondo ascolta, senza capire ...
Nessuno ti vede, nessuno sa chi sei ...
Zingaro, selvaggio,
Ama la fine come questa notte ...

Forza !!
Innalza ancora la coppa del sacrificio,
Nessuno ti vedra', nessuno di ascoltera'
E, soli, saremo io e te, nell'alba ...

Scappate,
scappate angeli dalle ali bruciate !!
Scappate,
scappate via nell'alba della nuova vita !!
La gabbia sta per riaprirsi,
le sbarre bruceranno come foglie
e la cupa armata dei miei sogni
cadrà mortale alle porte dell'assedio,
cadrà sulle mura delle lacrime e dei ricordi,
e, morente,

vedra' l'infinito sulle squame del serpente ...
Ma ora scappate,
scappate oltre le cime delle nuvole,
scappate via,
nel sole del futuro
e nelle tenebre dell'ignoto ...

Che tutto possa bruciare nelle fiamme dell'odio,
i miei ricordi, il mio passato,
le inutili speranze e le vane illusioni
e tutte le lacrime dei miei errori ...
Possa bruciare la lealta',
sulle lame dell'orgoglio e della menzogna,
possa bruciare l'amore,
sulle ali infuocate di farfalle e gabbiani ...
Possa bruciare questa vita,
la piu' folle che abbia mai conosciuto,
nelle labbra senza carne del futuro
e nel petalo assassino della storia ...
Possa il sangue del sacrificio mortale
inondare i miei occhi, colmi d'umana pioggia
e tingere di cupo infinito la mia mente,
per distinguere nella notte
le luci dell'odio
e i bagliori dell'ipocrisia ...
Che tutto possa bruciare in queste fiamme,
le mie parole e i miei pensieri,
la conoscenza e l'ignoranza,
la notte e ...
... la Verita' ...

E' tutto cosi' falso,
cosi' serenamente nelle mani del demonio,
in una stretta d'arcana ferocia
che uccide il pensiero e la ragione ...
Tutto questo mare di menzogne,
tutto questo passato d'illusioni,
tutti questi ricordi di dolci ipocrisie,
bruciano il lume mortale,
senza luce e senza fiamma,
solo dolore
e solitudine ...

Sono qui, nella sabbia,
il viaggio,
la discesa,
e' stata lunga,
piacevolmente silenziosa ...
Ma ora,
non arrivano ai miei occhi
i raggi di nessun sole,
solo tenebre e odio ...

Ti credevo diverso,

ti credevo migliore, piu' forte ...
E invece,
eccoti qui, condottiero senza spada,
poeta maledetto della notte,
inutile sangue scorre nelle tue vene
e la sconfitta sempre piu' grande
sta per schiacciarti,
furiosa,
spietata,
cieca delle tue lacrime
e sorda delle tue urla ...
Lei non si fermerà',
mai,
solo tu potrai ancora
sacrificarle il dono dei mortali,
per rimandare,
per spingere lontano,
nell'ignoto,
l'ora tremendamente sognata
della fine ...

1.27 Poesie

"POESIE"

by Andrea De Luigi

Malinconia

Il rammarico di un bacio
Mai dato, la paura di un rifiuto
In una parola mai detta,
La malinconia.....
E' un profumo che sa di stantio
Come la polvere
Su un vecchio libro.

Il camaleonte

Qualche nota e il giorno
se ne va, sul mare irrequieto
un veliero scivola sognando
di raggiungere le stelle.....
L'abbraccio caldo del riposo
scioglie le perplessita' del vivere,
s'apre la porta e la fantasia
si colora di movimento e d'anima,
mentre dietro la finestra il Sole
vorrebbe solcare il viso sofferente
con una calda mezzaluna di sorriso.
La vita.....
una passerella buia, a tratti solida

tinge le sue vesti come il camaleonte.

Un Sospiro

Voce chiamata desiderio
un battito d'ali incorona il mio sogno
nelle valli ermetiche e nei boschi animati
In un soffio d'aria fresca
chiedo ristoro agli abbracci di una Luna
benevola, ascoltando il riverbero del lago
di voce in voce, di stella in stella
I ricordi veleggiano lievi verso cime di diamante
ad uno ad uno li accarezzo, chiedendo ad un bacio
di portare a me il tuo cuore,
di una stella innamorato m'adagio
cercando l'abbraccio nei tuoi occhi sospeso.

Nessuna luce

Dubbi, incertezze,
certezze tremolanti
un miraggio nel deserto,
una sigaretta forte per placare
l'amarezza o per giustificarla.
Solo se stessi con cui discutere,
affrontare la situazione in un sogno
ad occhi aperti
e cadere in ginocchio come trafitto
al petto.
L'amore non perdona.

La dolcezza

Nulla piu' inebriante
di uno sguardo in un bacio
lascia perplessi il tramonto
al pensier del di' seguente.
Come una fronda abbraccia l'ozioso
una carezza sprofonda
nel desiderio di fermare il tempo.
Dolce e tenero ora un bacio
mi spinge Morfeo
ad immortalarlo.
