

# AAGGINR

3 & 10 / 11 2017

This reader has been gathered by  
SLOW READING CLUB (Bryana  
Fritz & Henry Andersen) in the  
context of Bâtard Festival 2017  
(Brussels & Amsterdam)

*in which mimicry is poison to  
the sequence*



IN THE FLOWERS  
[45 DEGREE TILT]

Spines of book and reader,  
askewn by 45 degrees.  
Reading together in groups.  
Body at half elevation.

MY GIRLS [WANTING  
NOTHING & DESIRING  
EVERYTHING]

While partnered, the mutual,  
comfortable touching of skins is  
had (e.g. holding hands, touching  
wrists, a desireless finger in the  
navel). Thus, practice alternating  
between wanting nothing and  
desiring everything from touch  
and text alike.

ALSO FRIGHTENED

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

SUMMERTIME CLOTHES

As fast as possible. The  
text shared by two or more is  
mounted (word piling word).

DAILY ROUTINE

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

BLUISH

Two roles: reader and  
listener, in perpendicular rela-  
tion. L finds a seated position  
with the R's head laying in lap.  
L places hands on the vocal  
chords of the R. Head still in lap,  
R reads aloud the text. Repeat  
and Repeat. Oxycotton noising  
from the wings. alternating roles  
is asked, but not insisted.

Don Quixote: Which  
was a Dream (1986)

KATHY ACKER

*The First Part of Don Quixote*  
*The Beginning of the Night*

#### DON QUIXOTE'S ABORTION

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

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

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

She decided that since she was setting out on the greatest adventure any person can take, that of the Holy Grail, she ought to have a name (identity). She had to name herself. When a doctor sticks a steel catheter into you while you're lying on your back and you do exactly what he and the nurses tell

you to do; finally, blessedly, you let go of your mind. Letting go of your mind is dying. She needed a new life. She had to be named.

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

Catharsis is the way to deal with evil. She polished up her green paper.

In order to love, she had to find someone to love. 'Why,' she reasoned to herself, 'do I have to love someone in order to love? Hasn't loving a man brought me to this abortion or state of death?'

'Why can't I just love?'

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

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

Why didn't Don Quixote resemble these women? Because to Don Quixote, having an abortion is a method of becoming a knight and saving the world. This is a vision. In English and most European societies, when a woman becomes a knight, being no longer anonymous she receives a name. She's able to have adventures and save the world.

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

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

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

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

‘I’m broke,’

‘Why?’

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

‘You must know that nothing’s free.’

Since her whole heart was wanting to be a knight, she handed over the money and prayed to the Moon, ‘Suck her, Oh Lady mine, this vassal heart in this first encounter; let not Your favour and protection fail me in the peril in which for the first time I now find myself.’

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

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

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

‘What’s going to happen now?’ Don Quixote asked.

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

As she had read—which proves the truth of all writing—the needle when it went into her arm hardly hurt her. As the cold liquid seeped into an arm that didn’t want it, she said that her name was Tolosa and she was the daughter of a shoemaker. When she woke up, she thanked them for her pain and for what they had done for her. They thought her totally mad; they had never aborted a woman like this one. But now that she had achieved knighthood, and acted as she wanted and decided, for one has to act in this way in order to save the world, she neither noticed nor cared that all the people around her thought she was insane.

The Perils of Yellow

DEREK JARMAN

from *Chroma: A Book of Colour* (1995)

It's a hundred years since the Yellow Press invented itself in New York; warmongering and xenophobic, it fights for the yellow in your pocket. Cultural cuckold. Raving, betraying, mental.

The fetid breath of diseased Yellowbelly scorches the hanging tree yellow with ague. Betrayal is the oxygen of his devilry. He'll stab you in the back. Yellowbelly places a jaundiced kiss in the air, the stink of pus blinds your eyes. Evil swims in the yellow bile. Envious suicide. Yellowbelly's snake eyes poison. He crawls over Eve's rotting apple wasp-like. He stings you in the mouth. His hellish legions buzz and chuckle in the mustard gas. They'll piss all over you. Sharp nicotine-stained fangs bared.

As a child I had a horror of dandelions. If I touched a pis en lit I would scream myself to sleep. The dandelions harboured the daddy long legs that rustled in my dreams. Mess a bed. Devil's milk pale. Piss mire. Shit a bed.

The milk-white sap bleeds, the yellow flowers turn brown in death.

Here comes the yellow dog, Dingo, chasing a brimstone butterfly on a sharp April morning.

Daffodil yellow. Primrose yellow. The Yellow rose of Texas. Canary bird.

Rape and rattle. Yellow hot as mustard.

Ultraviolet reflects yellow strongly, so insects fall over themselves to hallucinate.

Although yellow occupies one-twentieth of the spectrum, it is the brightest colour.

Lemons were used by Venetian courtesans to bleach their hair in the sun ... gentlemen preferred blondes! I painted a lemon yellow picture for my show in Manchester ... Vile Book in School—that was the Yellow Press telling us about a child being brought up by a couple in a same sex relationship ... the painting took longer to dry than any of its companions. The charcoal words written on it muddied it:

*Dear Minister,  
I am a twelve-year-old Queer. I want to be a Queer  
artist like Michelangelo, Leonardo or Tchaikovsky.*

Mad Vincent sits on his yellow chair clasping his knees to his chest—bananas. The sunflowers wilt in the empty pot, bone dry, skeletal, the black seeds picked into the staring face of a halloween pumpkin. Lemonbelly sits swigging sugar-sick Lucozade from a bottle, fevered eyes glare at the jaundiced corn, caw of the jet-black crows spiralling in the yellow. The lemon goblin stares from the unwanted canvasses thrown in a corner. Sourpuss suicide screams with evil—clasping cowardly Yellowbelly, slit-eyed.

Was Van Gogh's illness xanthosis?

Yellow imparts violet to a fair skin.



In a conner the unbought paintings stacked under the bed—once kings weighed pictures in scales of gold. The sun boils in the sky, a can of chrome maggots.

Whistler painted the Grosvenor Gallery yellow for his exhibition. Painted the golden fireworks in nocturnes, while others laughed. ‘Greenery Yallery Grosvenor Gallery.’ Whistler was bitter—was he a bitter lemon? Lemon-faced? He dished out brimstone...

The executioner in Spain was dressed and painted in yellow.

For every yellow Primrose that commemorates Disraeli there is a Yellow Star. There are the stars extinguished in the gas chamber. (Old as the ghetto.) Jews were wearing yellow hats in the Middle Ages. They were condemned to yellow like thieves and robbers who were coloured yellow and taken to the gallows.

Park benches were painted yellow. Aryans sat apart, yellow with terror. An evil vision jaundiced by colour, mark of Judas. Yellow plague cross.

We sail with yellow plague flag on a ship into the bladder-wracked waters of the Sargasso.

The yellow emperor of the Ming Dynasty sails his saffron barge along the yellow river. A sage in orange robes tells him that yellow orange is the highest colour, a deep yellow that is medicine against the livid acid yellow of illness. Jupiter, King of the Old Gods of the Far West, dressed in yellow, so did Athene, Goddess of Wisdom.

Black and yellow sends a warning! DANGER, I am a wasp—keep your distance. The wasps circle the Burger King, McDonalds and Pizza Hut, fast convenience food lettered in livid ‘Jump at You’ typography—black and yellow, red and yellow.

Yellow lines the kerbside. Yellow earth-moving equipment with flashing yellow lights, cutting a wound in the landscape.

*The yellow fog came creeping down  
The bridges, till the houses' walls  
Seemed changed in shadows.  
(Oscar Wilde, Impressions du Matin)*

A yellow memory from the yellow age. Fool's yellow, and yellow silence. When yellow wishes to ingratiate it becomes gold.

We drove from Curry Mallet through country lanes to Bristol, leaving the golden harvest, farm dogs catching mice as we progressed to the centre of the field, cutting back the corn. In the hospital in Bristol we had injections to ward off yellow fever. That turned us sick. I nursed my throbbing arm for days.

I missed my summer holiday in York General Hospital on a fat-free diet—dry toast and yellow sponge pudding. Canary pudding. Pretty as a picture with bright yellow jaundice.

*Yellow is more akin to red than blue.*  
(Wittgenstein, *op. cit.*)

Yellow excites a warm and agreeable impression. If you look through a yellow glass at a landscape the eye is gladdened. In many of the shoots I took at Dungeness for *The Garden* I used a yellow sky filter on my Super 8. It produced autumnal effects.

A golden colour appears when what is yellow and sunny gleams.

The nimbus of the saints, haloes and auras. These are the yellows of hope.

The joy of black and yellow Prospect Cottage. Black as pitch with bright yellow windows, it welcomes you.

Yellow is a combination of red and green light.  
There are no yellow receptors in the eye.

If you mix paints you will be unable to mix yellow, though the oil you use is golden. Yellow sands. Yellow streak.

These are the pigments:

The modern yellows: barium yellow, lemon yellow... stable in light and invented in the early nineteenth century, Cadmium yellow, sulphur and selenium. The modern production of cadmium pigments began during the First World War. Chrome yellow. Lead chromate darkens on ageing. The yellow of turmeric sunsets.

Cobalt yellow, mid-nineteenth century. Too expensive. Zinc yellow. 1850. The old yellows: gamboge—a gum resin from the earth, that came with the spice trade. It leans toward orange.

Indian yellow, banned. Cows were poisoned with mango leaves and the colour was made from their urine. It is the bright yellow in indian miniatures.

Orpiment poisonous arsenic sulphide. Brilliant lemon yellow used in manuscripts and mentioned by Pliny. It came from Smyrna and was used in Egyptian, Persian and later Byzantine manuscript. Cennini says it is really poisonous, 'Beware of soiling your mouth with it lest you suffer personal injury.'

Naples yellow, lead antimonate, varies in colour from pale to golden yellow. The yellow of Babylon. It is called giallorino. It last forever, and is manufactured from a mineral found in volcanoes.

Spring comes with celandine and daffodil. The yellow rape sends the bees dizzy. Yellow is a difficult colour, fugitive as mimosa that sheds its dusty pollen as the sun sets.

Clouded yellows. Butterflies. Brimstone flying fast along the lanes in the spring sunlight. Yellow stone.

I wandered lonely as a cloud that floats on high o'er dale and hill, when all at once I saw a crowd, a host of golden daffodils...

Why not yellow?

What is the kinship of yellow to gold?

Silence is golden, not yellow.

Golden rod is without doubt yellow.

Gold dog Dingo could be a relation of the Yellow Labrador.  
Yellow oldies and anniversaries.

Lemons  
Grapefruit  
Lemon curd  
Mustard  
Canary bird.

This morning I met a friend  
on the corner of Oxford  
Street. He was wearing  
a beautiful yellow coat. I  
remarked on it. He had  
bought it in Tokyo and said  
it was sold to him as green.

The caged canary sings sweetest.

The Death of Pigs

PAUL VERLAINE AND LEON VERLADE

translated by RADJA HOPKINS KAYLOR

*from Album zutique (1871)*

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

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

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

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

## The Death of Lovers

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

*from Les Fleurs du Mal (1857)*

We will have beds filled with light scent,  
and couches deep as a tomb, and strange  
flowers in the room, blooming for us under  
skies so pleasant.

Vying to exhaust their last fires our hearts  
will be two vast flares, reflecting their double  
glares in our two spirits, twin mirrors.

One evening of mystic blue and rose we'll  
exchange a single brief glow like a long sob,  
heavy with goodbye,

and later, opening the doors, the angel who  
came faithful and joyful, will revive the  
lustreless mirrors, and the lifeless flame.

# The Woman Who Was Fucked and Fucked over for a Crane (13<sup>th</sup> century)

GARIN

translated by NED DUBIN

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However much I have been lax  
since first I was set to this task,  
I'll now compose a fabliau  
about something I came to know  
in Vézelay by the exchange.  
It's not at all within the range  
of my purpose to say who told it;  
it's short enough and soon unfolded,  
but listen, if you're curious.

Garin the story-teller says  
that once there lived a castellan,  
neither a fool nor uncouth man,  
but courtly, and well-cultured too.  
He had a worthy daughter, who  
was beautiful beyond compare,  
but the castellan didn't care  
that any man have conversations  
or see her, save on rare occasions.  
He kept her shut up in a tower,  
he loved her so, and would allow her  
only her nurse for company—  
no silly, foolish woman, she,  
but worldly-wise and disciplined,  
who saw to it her charge was penned  
and oversaw her education.

Whilst engaged in the preparation  
of the girl's breakfast, it occurs  
on one fine morning to the nurse



that they could use another plate, and off she hurries, doesn't wait, back to their home, which was quite near, to fetch the needed kitchen gear. She didn't think to lock the tower. A young man at that very hour came walking by there, and he had a crane he recently had bagged clutched in his right hand.

Now, the girl, who liked to look out at the world, was sitting by the window-pane and saw him pass by with the crane. She called to him and said, "My friend, what bird have you there in your hand, on your father's soul?" He explains, "By Orléans and all her saints, my lady, it's a large, fine crane." The girl replies, "In God's own name, it's fat and fair and just mature; I've never seen its like, I'm sure. I'd buy it from you, if I could." "My lady," he says, "well and good. If that would please you, I will sell." "What are you asking for it, tell?" "My lady, for a fuck it's yours." "Saint Peter help me now, because I haven't any fuck to trade! God knows, if I had, we'd have made

a bargain quickly—I'm not cheap—and the crane would be mine to keep." "Lady," he says, "surely you jest. I certainly would not suggest a fuck unless you had a lot. Be quick and pay me what you've got." She swears to God that, just her luck, she's never ever seen a fuck. "Young man," she says, "come on up now and look for yourself high and low, 'neath bed and benches, all around, to see if a fuck can't be found."

The youth, who was well-bred and courtly, came to her in the tower shortly, pretending to search thoroughly. "Lady," he said, "it seems to me there may be one under your dress." She'd not much sense and knew still less, told him, "Come, fellow; have a look." Without delay the young man took her in his arms with might and main who was enamored of his crane, placed her in bed and grabbed her shift and hiked it up, went on to lift her legs way up and held them high, and her cunt quickly caught his eye, and roughly he thrust in his rod. "Young man, you're searching much too hard!" the maiden says, sighing and gasping.

The young man couldn't keep from laughing, involved to the hilt in his game:

"It's just I'm giving you my crane—  
take full possession of the bird."

"You never spoke a truer word,"  
the girl says; "now be off with you!"  
He left her sad and thoughtful, too,  
went from the tower and traveled on,  
and her nurse came back thereupon  
and saw the damsel with the crane.

She trembled, and the blood did drain  
out of her face, and she was short:

"Young lady, what's this bird? Who brought  
it here? Now tell the truth to me!"

"I bought it just now, honestly,  
from a young man, who sold the bird  
and brought it in here, you've my word."

"What did you pay?" "One fuck, no more;  
I gave him nothing else, be sure."

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

How could I have such awful luck  
as to have left you here alone?

I curse my mouth for what I've done  
that ever it ate or drew breath!

I deserve to be put to death  
and will be, too, I think, quite soon!"

You'd think the nurse about to swoon  
and fall to the floor altogether,  
but still she sets out to defeather  
the crane and dress it for the pot:

a garlic sauce, she says, is not  
what's called for—pepper's her intention.  
(I often have heard people mention  
in many places that I've been:

"Adversity that ends up in  
the pot at least gives some small comfort.")  
Some it may please and some discomfit,  
so what?—the nurse seasons the crane  
and then has to go out again  
to get a knife to open it,  
and the young girl returns to sit  
down by the window and look out.

She saw the young man, still about  
and glad of what had taken place.

The maiden called him straightaways  
and said, "Come back here, sir, and quick!  
My nurse was angered to the quick  
because you took my fuck away  
when you sold me your crane today.

Do give it back, and be so kind  
not to begrudge it me or mind.

Come here, and let us two make peace."  
"Missy, I'll do just as you please,"

the young man said; then up he came  
and stretched her out and did the same:  
he went between her legs and pounded  
the fuck right back where he had found it.  
When he had done, he didn't stay,  
but took his crane and went away

instead of leaving it behind.  
The nurse returned, thinking she'd find  
the crane and put it up to roast.  
"Don't hurry; it's all labor lost,"  
the maiden told the woman, "for  
the man who just went out that door  
unfucked me and took back his bird."  
The nurse, no sooner had she heard,  
made of her grief such a display  
and called down curses on the day  
she'd left the maiden in the tower  
that day for some man to deflower:  
"Why was I given you to watch?  
So heedlessly have I kept watch  
that here you have been fucked again  
and I don't get a bit of crane!  
I gave the man his chance myself:  
"The careless shepherd feeds the wolf!"

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DEREK JARMAN

from *Chroma: A Book of Colour* (1995)

Rose red city.  
Half as old as time.

Pink, mauve and violet jostle each other from red  
to black.

Roses are red.  
Violets are blue.

Poor violet violated for a rhyme.

There is no natural pink pigment, though you can  
buy something called 'flesh tint' which in no way  
resembles the pasty faces of the north or the tanned  
one's of the south.

Mauve is a chimera. It barely exists except as a  
description of the 1890s, the Mauve Decade.

Purple marches and violet shrinks.

Pink begat mauve begat  
purple begat violet ...

... with the exception of violet they are allies. Violet is respectable.

The rarest and most beautiful eyes are violet. I'm told that is the secret of Elizabeth Taylor.

Pink is always shocking. Naked. All those acres of flesh that cover the ceilings of the Renaissance. Pontormo is the pinkest painter.

Purple is passionate,  
maybe violet becomes a  
little bolder and FUCKS  
pink into purple. Sweet  
lavender blushes and  
watches.

THINK PINK!

Pink was the passion of the Mauve Decade—the Ballets Roses that Baron Fersen staged with young children for rich matrons at tea. Were those naked children innocent? The baron caused a scandal with other youthful indiscretions and support was withdrawn from him by the wealthy ladies, who sat admiring the children, posed as Venus and Adonis, Hercules and any number of Graces. Fersen left Paris in a hurry for the south, where he built a villa in Capri. Mauve had found its home. Fersen's taste was not for children, so there was no pedophilia in the pink. He was after young navvies, and picked one up—a surprisingly handsome straight boy who lived with him faithfully to the end, polishing and filling the baron's jade opium pipes.

Opium is the mauve drug. It brings to mind this time with its mysterious acrid smell.

You will find that Christ's robe in many medieval paintings, Piero della Francesca's Resurrection, for instance, is bright pink.

In the 1950s the song 'Think Pink' restored the colour to popularity, The Fifties were a pink decade. The is pink in the make-up of sex-godesses. Marilyn Monroe was certainly pink. Those Venuses who wore nothing but corral beads—peek-a-boo pink.

The pink nubile ladies of the music hall in flesh-coloured tights.

'In the Pink'. My dictionary says: 'in the most perfect health', though Venus gave her name to shady diseases and haunted the clap clinic.

Pink eyed.

She was dressed by Schiaparelli in shocking pink. Lipstick pink. Pink icing. Soap and the packaging of cosmetics was pink. Pink flattered. In that world big girls as well as little girls wore pink.

Against this earthly pink, Rudolf Steiner proposed peach blossom, representing the living image of the soul as revealed in the colour of the human skin. Colour becomes a nonsense—I wonder if Steiner had been black he would have swapped the colours? Only when the soul withdraws, he says, does a person turn green. This again has nothing

to do with the soul, the muddle that Ludwig Wittgenstein perceived in the use of that word, the soul as concrete, is clear here. The green is just a physiological state brought in by the withdrawal of blood from the epidermis. Souls do not have colour.

At twenty I painted pictures in pink. Pink interiors with pink girls. Was this the burgeoning of my sexuality?

Twenty years later. The pink triangle was reclaimed from history. The Nazis used pink to send those in same-sex relationships to the gas chamber.

When Queen Mark visited my father's RAF station at Kidlington early in the Fifties, a pink lavatory was built for her visit. The entire station trooped past it, no one had ever seen anything like it. In the event she never used it. Later pink bathrooms became the rage. You'll grow a little lovelier each day with a pink Camay.

This afternoon I walked down to Rowneys and bought a tube of Flesh Tint.

*Pink is the navy blue of  
India.  
(Diana Vreeland)*

From 'The Space of Literature'  
(1955)

MAURICE BLANCHOT

translated by ANN SMOCK

THE OUTSIDE, THE NIGHT

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

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



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

[...]

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

#### THE DREAM

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

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

The dream is the reawakening of the interminable. It is an allusion at least, and something like a dangerous call—through the persistence of what cannot finish—to the neutrality that presses up behind the beginning. Hence the fact that the dream seems to bring up in each of us the being of earliest times—and

not only the child, but still further back, the most remote, the mythic, the emptiness and vagueness of the anterior. He who dreams sleeps, but already he who dreams is he who sleeps no longer. He is not another, some other person, but the premonition of the other, of that which cannot say “I” any more, which recognizes itself neither in itself nor in others. Doubtless the force of vigilant existence and the fidelity of sleep, and still more the interpretation that gives meaning to a semblance of meaning, safeguard the outlines and forms of a personal reality: that which becomes other is reincarnated in another, the double is still somebody. The dreamer believes he knows that he is dreaming and that he is asleep, precisely at the moment when the schism between the two is effected. He dreams that he is dreaming. And this flight from the dream which plunges him back into the dream, into the dream which is an eternal fall into the same dream—this repetition whereby personal truth wanting to rescue itself loses itself more and more, and which is like the return of the same dreams or the unspeakable harassment of a reality which always escapes and which one cannot escape—all this is like a dream of the night, a dream where the form of the dream becomes its sole content. Perhaps one could say that the dream is all the more nocturnal in that it turns around itself, that it dreams itself, that it has for its content its possibility.

[...]

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

#### THE CADAVEROUS RESEMBLANCE

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

that at this very moment, when the cadaverous presence is the presence of the unknown before us, the mourned deceased begins to *resemble himself*.

Himself: is this not an ill-chosen expression? Shouldn't we say: the deceased resembles the person he was when he was alive? "Resembles himself" is, however, correct. "Himself" designates the impersonal being, distant and inaccessible, which resemblance, that it might be someone's, draws toward the day. Yes, it is he, the dear living person, but all the same it is more than he. He is more beautiful, more imposing; he is already monumental and so absolutely himself that it is as if he were *doubled* by himself, joined to his solemn impersonality by resemblance and by the image. This magnified being, imposing and proud, which impresses the living as the appearance of the original never perceived until now—this sentence of the last judgment inscribed deep within being and triumphantly expressing itself with the aid of the remote—this grandeur, through its appearance of supreme authority, may well bring to mind the great images of classical art. If this connection is justified, the question of classical art's idealism will seem rather vain. And we might bear in mind the thought that idealism has, finally, no guarantee other than a corpse. For this indicates to what extent the apparent intellectual refinement, the pure virginity of the image is originally linked to the elemental strangeness and to the formless weight of being, present in absence.

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

*from The Whole Island (1968)*

VIRGILLIO PIÑERA

translated by MARK WEISS

*Skin at this hour stretches out like a reef  
and bites its own borders,  
skin takes to screaming like a madwoman, like a fat sow,  
skin tries to cover its light with palm leaves,  
with fonds carried carelessly by the wind,  
in a fury skin covers itself with parrots and pitahayas,  
absurdly it covers itself with comber tobacco leaves  
and the remains of shadowy legends,  
and when skin has become but a dark ball,  
the horrific hen brings forth a white egg.*

*Cover it! Cover it!  
But the light advances, invades  
perversely, obliquely, perpendicularly,  
the light is an enormous vent that sucks the shadow,  
and you slowly raise your hands to shield your eyes.*

*The least confessable secrets are spoken:  
light moves tongues,  
light moves arms,  
light throws itself to the guava vendor,  
light throws itself on black and whites,  
light strikes itself,  
rushes convulsively from side to side,  
begins to explode, to burst, to split apart,  
light begins the most horrific illumination,  
light begins to give birth to light.*

MONIQUE WITTIG

translated by DAVID LE VAY

When it rains the women stay in the summer-house. They hear the water beating on the tiles and streaming down the slopes of the roof. Fringes of rain surrounding the summer-house, the water that runs down at its angles flows more strongly, it is as if springs hollow out the pebbles at the places where it reaches the ground. At last someone says it is like the sound of micturition, that she cannot wait any longer, and squats down. Then some of them form a circle around her to watch the labia expel urine.

The women frighten each other by hiding behind the trees. One or other of them asks for grace. Then they chase each other in the darkness, ill-wishing the one who is caught. Or else they search gropingly, scenting the one whose perfume is to be honoured. Amomum aniseed betel cinnamon cebub mint liquorice musk ginger clove nutmeg pepper saffron sage vanilla

receive homage in turn. Then the wearers of these perfumes are chased in the dark as in blindman's-buff. Cries laughter sounds of falling are heard.

In dull weather the women may shed hot tears, saying that in the sunshine the roofs of the houses and the walls are of quite another colour. Mist spreads over the water over the fields about the houses. It penetrates through closed windows. Someone arrives to visit the house. She cannot see it. The huge paintings in vivid colours disappear to the ground demanding to be entertained. They tell her in great detail the story of the woman who, speaking of her vulva, used to say that thanks to that compass she could navigate from sunrise to sunset.

Some of the women swim letting themselves drift toward the last splashes of sunlight on the sea. At the most luminous spot when, dazzled, they try to move away, they say that they are assailed by an unbearable stench. Later they are seized with vomiting. Then they begin to moan as they strain their arms, swimming as fast as they can. At a certain point they collide with the

floating decaying carcass of an ass, at times the swell of the sea reveals sticky shapeless gleaming lumps of indescribable colour. They say that they shouted with all their might, shedding many tears, complaining that no sea-breeze got up to drive away the smell, supporting under the arms and groins of them who has fainted, while the vomit accumulates around them on the surface of the water.

If anyone walks on the hillside she can hardly remain upright. Though the hedges white colchicum and violets or pink-capped mushrooms can be seen. The grass is not tall. Heifers stand in it, in great number. The houses have been shuttered since the autumn rains began. There are no little girls playing in the gardens. There are no flowers in the flower-beds. A few toys lie about, a painted wooden hoop a red and blue olisbos a white balloon a lead rifle.

The women visit the market to obtain provisions. They pass by the stalls of fruit vegetables bottles of pink blue red green glass. There are piles of orange oranges ochre pineapples mandarins walnuts green and pink mangos blue nectarines

green and pink peaches orange-yellow apricots. There are melons water-melons paw paws avocados green almonds medlars. There are cucumbers aubergines cabbages asparagus white cassava red pimentos gourds. Wasps coming and going settle on the bare arms of the young women selling them.

The huntresses have dark maroon hats, and dogs. Hearing the rifle-shots, Dominique Aron says that the bird is still flying, the hare still running, the boar the deer the fox the wart-hog still afoot. It is possible to keep a watch on the surroundings. If some troop advances up the road raising a cloud of dust the women watch its approach shouting to those within for the windows to be closed and the rifles kept behind the windows. Anne Damien plays, Sister Anne do you see anything coming, I see only the grass growing green and the dusty road.

At evening a horse harnessed to a cart goes by. The cart carries a heap of cut beetroots or potatoes or grass for fodder. Long before and long after it passes the sound of the hooves striking the tarred road can be heard. The horse on its way is not being driven by anyone.



THAT WHICH IDENTIFIES THEM LIKE  
THE EYE OF THE CYCLOPS,  
THEIR SINGLE FORENAME  
OSEA BALKIS SARA NICEA  
IOLA CORA SABINA DANIELA  
GALSWINTHA EDNA JOSEPHA

Somewhere there is a siren. Her green body is covered with scales. Her face is bare. The undersides of her arms are a rosy colour. Sometimes she begins to sing. The women say that of her song nothing is to be heard but a continuous O. That is why this song evokes for them, like everything that recalls the O, the zero or the circle, the vulval ring.

By the lakeside there is an echo. As they stand there with an open book the chosen passages are re-uttered from the other side by a voice that becomes distant and repeats itself. Lucie Maure cries to the double echo the phrase of Phénarète, I say that that which is is. I say that which is not also is. When she repeats the phrase several times the double, then triple, voice endlessly superimposes that which is and that which

is not. The shadows brooding over the lake shift and begin to shiver because of the vibrations of the voice.

The women are seen to have in their hands small books which they say are feminaries. These are either multiple copies of the same original or else there are several kinds. In one of them someone has written an inscription which they whisper in each other's ears and which provokes them to full-throated laughter. When it is leafed through the feminary presents numerous blank pages in which they write from time to time. Essentially, it consists of pages with words printed in a varying number of capital letters. There may be only one or the pages may be full of them. Usually they are isolated at the centre of the page, well spaced black on a white background or else white on a black background.

After the sun has risen they anoint their bodies with oil of sandalwood curcuma gardenia. They steady one foot on a tree-trunk. Their hands rub each leg in turn, the skin glistening. Some of them are lying down. Others massage them with their fingertips. The bare bodies gleam in the strong

morning light. One of their flanks is iridescent with a golden lustre. The rising sun does likewise when it sends its rays slanting across the erect rounded tree-trunks. The arcs of the circles so touched reflect a little of the light, their outlines are blurred.

There are peat-bogs above the hills. The mud they are made of has the colour of henna. They seethe, there are surface explosions, bubbles. A stick stirred around within them is caught by viscous soft bodies. It is not possible to fish these out. As soon as any pressure is exerted on them they slip away, they escape. The women say that at times the bursting of the bubbles is accompanied by groans murmurs. The sun dries up the bogs. The vapour that ascends then has a nauseating odour.

The gipsy women have a mummified corpse which they bring out when it is not raining, because of the smell of the body which is not quite dry. They expose it to the sun in its box. The dead woman is clothed in a long tunic of green velvet, covered with white embroidery and gilded ornaments. They have hung little bells on her neck,

on her sleeves. They have put medallions in her hair. When they take hold of the box to bring it out of the dead woman begins to tinkle everywhere. Every now and then someone goes out on to the three steps that lead up to the caravan to look at the clouds. When the sky is obscured two of them set about shutting the lid of the box and carrying it inside.

FLORA    ZITA    SAVA    CORNELIA  
 DRAUPADI    JULIENNE    ETMEL  
 CHLOË    DESDEMONA    RAPHAELA  
 IRIS    VERA    ARSINOË    LISA  
 BRENDA    ORPHISE    HERODIAS  
 BERENICE    SIGRID    ANDOVERA

The little girls search in the bushes and trees for the nests of goldfinches chaffinches linnets. They find some green canaries which they cover with kisses, which they hug to their breasts. They run singing, they bound over the rocks. A hundred thousand of them return to their houses to cherish their birds. In their haste they clasped them too tightly to themselves. They ran. They bent down to pick up pebbles which they cast far away over the hedges. They took no heed of their

chirping. They climbed straight up to their rooms. They removed the birds from their garments, they found them lifeless, heads drooping. Then they all tried to revive them by pressing them to their mouths, letting their warm breath fall on them, lifting the limp heads, touching their beaks with a finger. They remained inert. Then a hundred thousand little girls bewailed the death of their green canaries in the hundred thousand rooms of the hundred thousand houses.

Whatever the time appointed to begin the work, they must hurry to get finished before sunset. The bottoms of the ladders are visible placed on the ground, the tops are hidden in the jumble of fruit and foliage. The baskets at the foot of the trees are filled at time to overflowing. There are belles de Choisy English cherries morellos marascas Montmorency cherries bigaudelles white-hearts. They are black white red translucent. Wasps hornets are busy around the baskets. Their buzzing can be heard in whatever part of the meadow one happens to be. The women climb into the trees, they descend arms laden with fruit. Some have baskets hooked to their belt. Some stand still at different heights on the rungs.

Others move about among the branches. One sees them jump to the ground and get rid of their burden. The slanting rays of the sun glance over the leaves making them glitter. The sky is orange-coloured.

The women say that they expose their genitals so that the sun may be reflected therein as in a mirror. They say that they retain its brilliance. They say that the pubic hair is like a spider's web that capture the rays. They are seen running with great strides. They are all illuminated at their centre, starting from the pubes the hooded clitorides the folded double labia. The glare they shed when they stand still and turn to face one make the eye turn elsewhere unable to stand the sight.

Mimicry and Legendary  
Psychasthenia (1984)

ROGER CAILLOIS

Translated by JOHN SHEPLEY

proposed by HANNAH ELLUL AND BEN KNIGHT

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

...

[ ]

There are reasons more immediate, and at the same time less to be suspected of sophistry, that keep mimicry from being taken for a defense reaction. First of all, it would only apply to carnivores that hunt by sight and not by smell as is often the case. Carnivores, moreover, do not generally

bother with motionless prey: immobility would thus be a better defense, and indeed insects are exceedingly prone to employ a false, corpse-like rigidity. There are other means: a butterfly, in order to make itself invisible, may do nothing more than use the tactics of the *Satyride asiaticus*, whose flattened wings in repose appear simply as a line almost without thickness, imperceptible, perpendicular to the flower where it has alighted, and which turns simultaneously with the observer so that it is only this minimum surface that is always seen.

The experiments of Judd and Foucher have definitely resolved the question: predators are not at all fooled by homophony or homochromy: they eat crickets that mingle with the foliage of oak trees or weevils that resemble small stones, completely invisible to man. The phasma *Carasius Morosus*, which by its form, colour, and attitude simulates a plant twig, cannot emerge into the open air without being immediately discovered and dined on by sparrows.

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

We are thus dealing with a *luxury* and even a dangerous luxury, for there are cases in which mimicry causes the creature to go from bad to worse: geometer-moth caterpillars simulate shoots of shrubbery so well that gardeners cut them with their pruning shears. The case of the *Phyllia* is



even sadder: they browse amongst themselves, taking each other for real leaves, in such a way that one might accept the fate of a sort of collective masochism leading to mutual homophagy, the simulation of the leaf being a *provocation* to cannibalism in this kind of totem feast.

... [ ]

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

No one should say it is nonsense to attribute magic to insects: the fresh application of the words ought not to hide the profound simplicity of the thing. What else but *prestigious magic* and *fascination* can the phenomena be called that have been unanimously classified precisely under the name of mimicry (incorrectly as I see it, one will recall, for in my opinion the perceived resemblances are too reducible in this case to anthropomorphism, but there is no doubt that once rid of these questionable additions and reduced to the essential, these facts are similar at least in their origins to those of true mimicry) phenomena some of which I have reported above.

... [ ]

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

It is thus a real *temptation by space*.

...



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

All of these expressions shed light on a single process: *depersonalisation by assimilation to space*, i.e., what mimicry

achieves morphologically in certain species. The magical hold (one can truly call it so without doing violence to the language) of night and obscurity, the *fear of the dark*, probably also has its roots in the peril in which it puts the opposition between the organism and the milieu.

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

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

In Normandy there lived a peasant  
of whom is told so quaint and pleasant  
a fabliau that I've a notion  
to tell you. Such was his devotion  
to Saint Martin that he'd invoke  
him in all things he undertook;  
whether elated or depressed,  
it was Saint Martin he addressed;  
every day he called on Saint Martin.  
The peasant set out on a certain  
morning, as was his wont, to plow.  
He'll not forget Saint Martin now.  
"Saint Martin!" he cried out, "givvyup!"  
and that's when Saint Martin showed up.  
"Peasant," he said, "you have been loyal  
to me, and never start to toil,  
no matter what your task may be,  
without first calling upon me.  
You have well earned my special favor.  
Now leave your harrow, drop your labor,  
and get you home with a light heart,  
for I will truly do my part  
and herewith promise I will grant  
whatever four wishes you want,  
but use your wishes wisely, for  
once they've been used you'll get no more."  
The peasant bowed low to the ground  
in reverence, then turned around  
and hurried home walking on air.  
There's trouble waiting for him there.

Translated by NED DUBIN

Saint Martin's Four Wishes  
(13<sup>th</sup> century)



His wife, the one who wears the pants,  
lit into him: "What evil chance  
brings you home now, oaf? Did you quit  
work 'cause it's clouded up a bit?  
You've hours of daylight left for tilling.  
Or is your paunch in need of filling?  
Are you afraid you'll miss your chow?  
You've never taken to the plow,  
no-life for you is one big lark!  
We may as well sell off the stock  
since you won't work them anyway!  
See what you call a working day-  
you're back when you have scarcely gone!"  
"Don't be upset, my love, keep calm,"  
the peasant said. "Our fortune's made!  
Henceforth our burdens may be laid  
aside, of that much I am certain,  
because I met up with Saint Martin.  
He gave me four wishes to use  
as I thought best. I've yet to choose;  
I meant first to consult with you,  
and as you advise me to do  
I now intend to make my wishes  
for gold and silver, land and riches."  
When she heard this, the woman reached  
to hug him and toned down her speech.  
"Husband," she said, "can this be so?"  
"Indeed yes, as you soon will know."  
"My dearest, sweetest love," said she,  
"my heart is yours eternally

to love and serve you hand and foot.  
You should repay me good for good.  
I ask you, please, to let me have  
one of the wishes the saint gave.  
You still will have the other three,  
and you will have done right by me."  
"Hush," he replied, "my darling wife!  
I wouldn't, no, not on my life,  
for women all have addled brains.  
Why, you might ask to have three skeins  
of hemp or wool or linen thread!  
I remember Saint Martin said  
that I should wisely use my wishes  
and only wish for something such as  
will benefit us evermore,  
so I intend to use all four.  
Know that I'm mortally afraid,  
if I gave you one, that instead  
you'd wish for something that might do  
untold harm to both me and you.  
If you should wish I was a bear  
or jackass, or a goat or mare,  
I would become one on the spot.  
I know how much you love me: not.  
That's why I fear to let you share  
my wishes." "Sir," she said, "I swear  
in good faith with both hands raised high,  
you'll stay a peasant till you die.  
I'll never wish you other than  
you are, dearer than any man."

“My dear,” he said, “let it be yours.  
By God, when you wish, make a choice  
by which you and I stand to gain!”  
“I wish,” she said, “that, in God’s name,  
there spring up penises galore  
over your body, aft and fore!  
On face, arms, sides, from head to foot,  
may countless penises take root,  
and let them not be limp or slack:  
let each be furnished with its sack,  
and let them stand stiff and upright!  
Now, won’t you be a horny sight!”  
Then, as soon as the woman spoke,  
hundreds of pricks began to poke  
out all over. Penises grew  
around his nose and his mouth, too.  
Some pricks were thick, some oversized,  
some long, some short, some circumcised,  
curved pricks, straight pricks, pointed and hardy..  
every bone in the peasant’s body  
was miraculously endowed  
and prickled, fully-cocked and proud.  
You’ve never heard wonders like these!  
Pricks grow out of his ears, and he’s  
amidst his forehead, standing tall,  
the most enormous prick of all,  
and right down to his feet he’s coated  
with penises erect and bloated.  
From toe to crown he was bedecked  
with antlers, bloated and erect.

Weighed down by penis upon penis,  
the peasant said, “This wish was heinous!  
Why give me all this finery?  
Better to be stillborn than be  
with pricks so overgrown and cluttered!  
Was ever any man so studded?”  
“Husband,” she said, “I’ll tell you why.  
Your one prick couldn’t satisfy,  
just hanging limply like a fox  
stole, but now I’ve a wealth of cocks!  
Your lot is likewise much improved  
in that, whenever you are moved  
to travel, you won’t be assessed  
tariffs or tolls. All for the best  
I made my wish, so don’t resent it.  
There’s not a creature half so splendid!”  
The peasant said, “I’m not amused.  
Three wishes more are yet unused.  
I wish,” the fellow said at once,  
“that you had just as many cunts  
on you as I have pricks on me.  
May your cunts pop out rapidly!”  
At once the cunts start to arise.  
A pair appears before her eyes,  
four on her forehead in a row,  
and cunts above, and cunts below,  
and cunts behind, and cunts in front,  
every variety of cunt—  
bent cunts, straight cunts, cunts gray and hoary,  
cunts without hair, cunts thick and furry,

and virgin cunts, narrow and tight, wide, gaping cunts, and cunts made right, cunts large and small, oval and round, deep cunts, and cunts raised on a mound, cunts on her head, cunts on her feet... the peasant's joy is now complete.

"Husband, what have you done?" said she.

"Why have you wished this thing on me?"

The good man said, "One cunt won't do for all the pricks I got from you.

Don't be alarmed, for your condition

will lead to widespread recognition:

when you go walking, you'll continue to be known for all the cunt in you."

"Husband," she said, "what can I say?

That makes two wishes thrown away, and now you must use one to fix

us and remove these cunts and pricks.

You'll still have one left out of four, and we'll be rich forevermore."

The peasant wishes thereupon that all their cunts and pricks were gone, but she was anything but cheered to find her cunt had disappeared, and he, too, had an awful shock to find himself without a cock.

Both of them were extremely wroth.

"Husband, it's time to make the fourth wish we have left to us," said she;

"one prick for you, one cunt for me.

We'll return to our former state no poorer off, at any rate."

He wished the wish that still remained; and thus he neither lost nor gained: he got his prick back at the cost of the four wishes, which he lost.

DJUANA BARNES

*Chapter 8: The Possessed*

When Robin, accompanied by Jenny Petherbridge, arrived in New York, she seemed distracted. She would not listen to Jenny's suggestion that they should make their home in the country. She said a hotel was 'good enough'. Jenny could do nothing with her; it was as if the motive power which had directed Robin's life, her day as well as her night, had been crippled. For the first week or two she would not go out, then, thinking herself alone, she began to haunt the terminals, taking trains into different parts of the country, wandering without design, going into many out-of-the-way churches, sitting in the darkest corner, or standing against the wall, one foot turned toward the toe of the other, her hands folded at their length, her head bent. As she had taken the Catholic vow long before, now she came into church as one renouncing something; her hands before her face, she knelt, her teeth against her palm, fixed in an unthinking stop as one who hears of death suddenly; death that cannot form until the shocked tongue has given its permission. Moving like a housewife come to set straight disorder in an unknown house, she came forward with a light taper, and setting it up, she turned, drawing on her thick white gloves, and with her slow head-long step, left the church. A moment later Jenny, who had followed her, looking about to be sure that she was unobserved, darted up to the sconce, snatched the candle from its spike, blew it out; relit it and set it back.

Robin walked the open country in the same manner, pulling at the flowers, speaking in a low voice to the animals. Those that came near, she grasped, straining their fur back until their eyes were narrowed and their teeth bare, her own teeth showing as if her hand were upon her own neck.

Because Robin's engagements were with something unseen; because in her speech and in her gestures there was a desperate anonymity, Jenny became



hysterical. She accused Robin of a 'sensuous communion with unclean spirits', and in putting her wickedness into words she struck herself down. She did not understand anything Robin felt or did, which was more unendurable than her absence. Jenny walked up and down her darkened hotel room, crying and stumbling.

Robin now headed up into Nora's part of the country. She circled closer and closer. Sometimes she slept in the woods; the silence that she had caused by her coming was broken again by insect and bird flowing back over her intrusion, which was forgotten in her fixed stillness, obliterating her as a drop of water is made anonymous by the pond into which it has fallen. Sometimes she slept on a bench in the decaying chapel (she brought some of her things here) but she never went further. One night she woke up to the barking, far off, of Nora's dog. As she had frightened the woods into silence by her breathing, the barking of the dog brought her up rigid and still.

Half an acre away Nora, sitting by a kerosene lamp, raised her head. The dog was running about the house; she heard him first on one side then the other; he whined as he ran; barking and whining she heard him further and further away. Nora bent forward, listening; she began to shiver. After a moment she got up, unlocking the doors and windows. Then she sat down, her hands on her knees; but she couldn't wait. She went out. The night was well advanced. She no longer heard the dog, but she kept on. A level above her she heard things rustling in the grass, the briars made her stumble, but she did not call.

At the top of the hill she could see, rising faintly against the sky, the weather-beaten white of the chapel; a light ran the length of the door. She began to run, cursing and crying, and blindly, without warning, plunged into the jamb of the chapel door.

On a contrived altar, before a Madonna, two candles were burning. Their light fell across the floor and the dusty benches. Before the image lay flowers and toys. Standing before them in her boy's trousers was Robin. Her pose, startled and broken, was caught at the point where her hand had reached almost to the shoulder, and at the moment Nora's body struck the wood, Robin began going down. Sliding down she went; down, her hair swinging, her arms held out, and the dog stood there, rearing back, his forelegs slanting; his paws trembling under the trembling of his rump, his hackle standing; his mouth open, his tongue slung sideways over his sharp bright teeth; whining and waiting. And down she went, until her head swung against his; on all fours

now, dragging her knees. The veins stood out in her neck, under her ears, swelled in her arms and wide and throbbing rose up on her fingers as she moved forward.

The dog, quivering in every muscle, sprang back, his lips drawn, his tongue a stiff curving terror in his mouth; moved backward, back, as she came on, whimpering too now, coming forward, her head turned completely sideways, grinning and whimpering. Backed now into the farthest corner, the dog reared as if to avoid something that troubled him to such agony that he seemed to be rising from the floor; then he stopped, clawing sideways at the wall, his forepaws lifted and sliding. Then, head down, dragging her forelocks in the dust, she struck against his side. He let loose one howl of misery and bit at her, dashing about her, barking, and as he sprang on either side of her he kept his head toward her, dashing his rump now this side, now that, of the wall.

Then she began to bark also, crawling after him—barking in a fit of laughter, obscene and touching. The dog began to cry, running with her, head-on with her head, as if to circumvent her; soft and slow his feet went. He ran this way and that, low down in his throat crying, and she grinning and crying with him; crying in shorter and shorter spaces, moving head to head, until she gave up, lying out, her hands beside her, her face turned and weeping; and the dog too gave up then and lay down, his eyes bloodshot, his head flat along her knees.

### [WHISPERING]

JG says: "The language of lovers is not written down, it is whispered into the ear at night in a hoarse voice."

### GUYS EYE [WANTING NOTHING & DESIRING EVERYTHING]

While partnered, the mutual, comfortable touching of skins is had (e.g. holding hands, touching wrists, a desireless finger in the navel). Thus, practice alternating between wanting nothing and desiring everything from touch and text alike.

### TASTE

Elbow and floor. Voice only words poising at the column's lefty perimeter. Retire otherwise into the skim of silent reading. Oscillating and untogetherly.

### LION IN A COMA

Clad text with its double at the distance of a line. That is, while reading, speak twice each line. In groups of 4-6, one reader each her paragraph.

### NO MORE RUNNIN

Text withdraws (cooly).  
reading out loud & together.  
With contesting dilation and quiverpupils.

### BROTHER SPORT

Sitting back against back (not necessarily solitude) and reading in one's head; in the strange thick of reading by one's self. please, please leave as you please.

Slow Reading Club (SRC) is a semi-fictional reading group initiated by Bryana Fritz and Henry Andersen in 2017. The group deals in constructed situations for collective reading. SRC looks at, probes, and interrupts 'readership' as a way to stimulate the contact zones between reader and text, text and text, reader and reader. The apparent boundness of this edition owes itself to multiple understandings of culpability; a space for texts to wrap limbs in an architecture that allows it. Encroaching limbs.

This reader has been prepared to accompany two slow reading sessions; in Beursshouwburg [Brussels], and Veem House for Performance [Amsterdam]; both taking part within the framework of Bâtard Festival 2017: Into the Pores of the Brain. Bâtard is supported by Beursschouwburg, Brussel stad, BUDA, C-Takt, Campo, De Filmfabriek, Kunstwerkplaats Pianofabriek, STUK, Veem House for Performance, Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie, Vlaamse Overheid, and Vooruit.

Design by Ward Heirwegh  
Printed in 110 copies.

Cover Image: Coupling of Smerinthus ocellata.

### SLOW READING CLUB

begins with an attack on the assumption that there is a single, correct and upright, erect posture from which reading is “performed”. It means to re-conceive the erect spine and move towards other means of understanding, positioning, and spatialising the erection of the reader.

### SLOW READING CLUB

takes seriously the realisation of feminist and queer studies that any act of reading is always (already) encoded by the identity and subjectivity of the reader, and proposes to push outwards by choreographing the relationship between reader, reading, and text.

### SLOW READING CLUB

imagines the text as (just) one body amongst many bodies—sweating, groping licking, squeezing, snorting, fucking, eating, stripping, squirting, slapping, stroking, dripping, smelling, sucking, teething, birthing...

### SLOW READING CLUB

performs the reading of text as a social and eroticized space of colliding subjectivities colluding toward and inhibiting each other’s understanding of the “text-object.”

### SLOW READING CLUB

sounds the vibration of “text-object” and “text-body” but never just “the text.” [Object = internally coherent / body = penetrable]

### SLOW READING CLUB

puts forward readership as something active and empowered, not as weak bitch of the author’s intentions.

### SLOW READING CLUB

objective is not to “unpack” the text. It understands the text-body as a single, choreographed, and spatially—located utterance—distinct but related to any other utterance of the same text-object.  
[Object = moveable / body = located]

### SLOW READING CLUB

takes a necrophilic relationship to the long-stale “death of the author”.  
The reader shattered, unattached and promiscuous, hand over lifeless, muscular body to an utterance as involuntary spasm of the pleasure function.

### SLOW READING CLUB

proposes reading with both hands; one hand strokes the contour of the paragraph, one hand rests on the thigh.