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BROOM

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TRANSFORMATIONS

Kakadu and Jamaika live quietly in a remote corner of the great city. They are far off from its big noises and color symphony, and so properly scared that the thought hardly ever comes to them to go out of themselves. It is hard to describe such a marriage, to explain a contract for a bed and a table as they appear in the novels of Balzac in striking glimpses against the background of a metropolis. Kakadu is the son of a doctor who was highly regarded by many comfortable burghers and made weekly trips to the country in a buggy. His mother who had died a few years before of cancer, wrote her name, Driesel, in her maidenhood, and none dared whisper that her father had owned a tavern which bore the forbidding name of "Tivoli," a dreadful resort. Maidservants and waiters with knives would fall into great brawls with the police. All that was, as people said, "the skeleton in the family closet of the Kakadus."

Kakadu himself had inherited from his grandfather a passion for drink and several canine instincts. He remained short in stature. Over his very cradle, his parents had planned his career for the Civil Service; their plans miscarried charmingly. Kakadu always contradicted; you always got the opposite of what you expected from him. He came breathing forth opposition. Without any real grounds, people came to regard him as a sinister man. If only they knew how stupid he was. At times he showed a sense of elegance. He knew to impress his first wife with forty varieties of neckties, checkered, solid colored, striped, silken and of plain cloth. By chance Kakadu became a journalist. When he was thirty years old — and the most diverse callings might have gloried in his participation — he met with an accident. He wanted to board a street car. The people almost sat on the roof. They brimmed up out of the doorways and could be heard complaining: "Horrible! Terrible!" Kakadu, who in a more rational moment would have seen that it was impossible to get on, clambered up on the steps of the forward part. The motorman held up the car and threw him off. When he tried to get on at the rear end, someone spat with violence into his face. Kakadu raged, he raged for the first time in his life, so that the bristles stood bolt upright on his fat skin. True to

the old custom of seizing the pen when one is at a loss for what to do, he placed himself in the posture to write. He sent a very nice article to the *Kurier*. They wrote him that they agreed perfectly with his contentions, and asked him to call on the editors, since there were matters of principle at stake. Despite its patriotic name, the *Kurier* permitted itself to play the "opposition," a soft butterish opposition, to be sure, so that no one paid any attention to their attacks unless they were headed "In Protest" — but on the whole a sort of opposition. In fact, the editors trembled at their own daring. Kakadu was graciously received; they scented a kindred soul. Kakadu promised to contribute articles to the *Kurier* when something arose which was inconsistent with "open covenants." Thus did the celebrated "muse" awaken in him; his writing table became littered with manuscripts, and the files and indexes crowded each other on his shelves. Before Kakadu had assumed the monstrously important role of championing "open covenants" when he was still poor and wretched in every way, he made the acquaintance of Jamaika. He knew as yet nothing of "art" and did not even know that it belonged to the culture of a people; he knew even less what "culture" meant. However he went his own way, a typical German man-in-the-street, without bothering anyone. Jamaika came to the capital to be an actress. Before a business men's club she played the role of Romeo in hose. Someone cried out, "Bernhardt, the divine Sarah!" She received a bouquet. Since that triumphant evening, when in the feeble glow of a few lights, she had delighted the sex of some travelling salesmen, she determined to devote herself to a great ideal. And so she said categorically: "My whole life shall be offered up to art!" Indeed, she sacrificed herself; upon falling into the hands of Kakadu, she showed extraordinary emotion. He declaimed from Shakespeare; she found it bewitching. He said, that three books of his were to be printed. She trembled with delight. Shyly she said: "Great man, poet! Quicken me with your spirit!" He did quicken her, since he seduced her without ceremony. It was revealed that she still possessed her innocence . . . Once married — Kakadu became almost a fixture on the *Kurier* — Jamaika soon lost her rapturous gestures, she showed herself very talented, very calculating and of the quick slyness which all men of middle class succumb to. She reigned over Kakadu without his knowing it, for the chains did not weigh. His desire for comfort was appeased. He yawned. He felt himself extraordinarily secure. No one noticed that the balance of power had shifted. In fact, one can only describe it as an evolution in favor of the woman. The instincts of both demanded only peace, absolute peace. The atmosphere is tepid and foggy, the gestures are not the manifestations of a will, the boxing of ears is

nothing but reflex movement . . . The legs walk slowly through the rooms; for only one thing could they be aroused, at the possibility of poverty, at the possibility of being forced to work harder in order not to starve. The days followed each other, sleep mingled with awakening, life was a drugged stumbling. The afternoons on which Kakadu was not obliged to spend at the editorial office were always passed in the following manner: the windows were open, at an angle, and a heavy sun fingered the place. Jamaika went through the room, hardly knowing why, listening to the rustle of her underclothes against her flesh. Kakadu however settled himself in an armchair — he must ponder — a history of the world's literature lay in his lap. It was hard for him to grasp the visions of the past which he needed for his newspaper articles.

The cries of children rose above the narrow street, as Jamaika left the house to promenade on the meadow adjoining their house. There was a circus now on the meadow, they were already fastening the roof of the tent on the poles. The head of an elephant could be seen sticking out of his stall. Grooms led horses by. Jamaika noticed a small undersized man in good clothes who was giving orders to an attendant. When he disappeared into the circus, Jamaika waited; she only wanted to see if the man would come out again, and when he did, she went on, but so slowly, that she could easily observe everything that took place in front of the entrance to the circus. The man had seen Jamaika, he followed her, and when she turned about suddenly in order to go home, he said to her: "Pardon me, madam." She knew how to raise her eyebrows; and she observed the effect of this bit of artistry while the man was fumbling for words. He said: "May I show you the circus? Are you interested in it?" He spoke very quickly in order to keep her from making any objections. "Here you have the elephant stall. For the present only the Indian elephant, Billy, is to be seen. The female, Milly, is probably still on the railroad. They are old animals, madam, but very valuable possessions, indeed." Jamaika only laughed. She no longer found it "shocking" to converse with a gentleman whom she had not been formally introduced to. Kakadu was sitting at home reading the history of the world's literature. The name of the little man was Butterweg and it appeared that he was a frog-swallower, the greatest attraction of the circus and a celebrity among artists. Butterweg knew the manners of high society, he talked with a slight foreign accent, and spoke with enthusiasm of travels in Italy. Florence was a lovely city and full of works of art. He said "works of art" with the intonation of a connoisseur, so that it became speedily apparent to his hearer what great

knowledge he had. Jamaika felt herself transported. She kept thinking: "Charming! Charming! What an extraordinary person!" It did not take long for her to respond naively, the obstacles were slight. One felt oneself, after all, with an artist, with a kindred spirit. For Jamaika still nourished her idea of a career on the stage, her rapture for the eternal and the beautiful, for Goethe and Schiller. It was very difficult for them to part. In the sandy arena they tried to run after each other, but Jamaika tripped and fell, her nose striking the hard ground and bleeding profusely. Butterweg made a fuss about her ordered a glass of water and then sat down next to Jamaika by the rail and played the doctor. "Did you hurt yourself?" he kept asking, "You must stick the cotton way up into your nose, dear madam." He gripped Jamaika's neck and with one hand helped to direct her unhappy efforts. When Jamaika made off, he said softly, "Adieu, my dear lady." She turned very pale — "When will I have the pleasure of seeing you again?" Jamaika shrugged her shoulders, she thought of Kakadu in his armchair, it was very late and she was chiefly interested in avoiding any scenes. And so Butterweg remained standing, hat in hand, not a little perplexed. On the following day, Jamaika promenaded again in the neighborhood of the circus, this time wearing a very seductive costume, where liveried grooms went by leading horses, and the male elephant, Billy, stuck his head out of his stall. The friendship became warm, and even if at first Jamaika was not favorably disposed, Kakadu had a rival who certainly surpassed him in all manly qualities. But Jamaika was only playing. She was playing with the idea of infidelity and with Butterweg who felt himself reduced to a polite intimacy which only aroused his desires immeasurably. He fell so madly in love that he neglected his calling and on the Gala opening night of the circus fell down miserably. At the office of the *Kurier* Kakadu heard of the fiasco of the frog-swallower. He said to Jamaika: "I have tickets to the circus. If you feel like going, let us go there." Jamaika affected a complete indifference: "I have no interest whatsoever in such silliness. My household is more important to me, and" — here she went to Kakadu, gave him a meaning glance and kissed him full on the mouth — "and so is the comfort of my dear Kakadu. Nothing has thus far disturbed our tranquillity. The accursed clamor of the circus penetrates into our very bedroom!" "Right you are, little mouse," said Kakadu lightly (smacking his lips), "Let us stay at home." He had his boots taken off and buried himself in a history of the world's literature. From time to time he would try to recite, with a curiously timid face, the poets of another epoch. Jamaika was already abroad on the meadow, she threw all caution to the winds, and inquired immediately at the box-office for Butter-

weg. Butterweg appeared, very downcast, the adverse reviews in the newspapers troubled him deeply. "You may believe it or not, Jamaika, but a man who has the blood of an artist in his veins depends upon the critics. What a disgrace! What will the public think!" Jamaika declared that she had suffered the same experience when she had played great roles on the stage. They spoke of the "fluidity of art." Butterweg cited innumerable philosophers and Jamaika was stirred by consciousness of her ignorance. Then she suggested, without any sense of the consequences of her words, "How would it be, Mr. Butterweg, if you spoke to my husband personally about this matter. You know, I suppose, that he is a journalist and if you can make clear to him what is at stake, he may be able to help you a great deal." Butterweg, who scarcely believed that Jamaika meant what she was saying, stuttered, "Why—certainly, that would be fine, it is always best to be frank and open." Jamaika thought that her relations with Butterweg could be strengthened by this experiment. . . Butterweg, compelled by this plan to hazard all, drew Jamaika into a corner, and like a Saladin, like a shepherd, declared his love to be all powerful, as he fell to his knees and kissed his lady's hand. She felt the ends of his moustache tickle her hand and began to laugh very hard. He took this as a sign of assent and assuming that he was favored, wound himself tightly about her body and covered her with stormy kisses. Jamaika sank down exhausted against the walls of the tent. But she felt a very pleasant kind of exhaustion and the agitated blood flooded her breasts and choked her breathing. As she approached him again with distorted visage she lowered her head a bit and said: "I love you." Butterweg sighed. He suspected that this time the newspaper comments would be much more favorable.

II.

"Kakadu," said Jamaika, "listen. I just went by the Circus when a man accosted me and presented himself. His name was Butterweg, he was the Frog-swallower of whom you spoke the other day. I said to him: how could he dare to accost me in the street. And did he not know that he was compromising a respectable woman by such behaviour? He apologized profusely and said that he must speak to you about a very important matter and that he was afraid to approach you directly, because he had been told that you were very peculiar in your views, and so he bade me put in a word for him." Kakadu seemed flattered: "Yes, yes. But what does he want of me. He is the same man who was so widely advertised and then fell down

so badly on the opening night." "That's it exactly, my dear Kakadu. He wants to talk over the criticisms with you. He wants to explain to you his art, for he fears that he has been misunderstood." Kakadu nodded his head, shrugged his shoulders and rubbed his hands, not knowing what to say. "Yes, he can come. Nevertheless, I find it rather strange that he doesn't approach me directly if he has something to say to me. And then if he thinks he can put anything over on me, he had better know that he is mistaken. Critics cannot be bribed; and he has already shown that his performances are not praiseworthy." Jamaika went to Butterweg and told him that Kakadu had invited him to have coffee with them. But on the following day, right after lunch, when Butterweg was supposed to come, Kakadu said, "My dear Jamaika, I have been re-considering the whole matter. I should rather not have this man come to my house. It may open the door to troubles which I should rather avoid. I therefore beg you to prevent him from visiting us. And (here his voice betrayed his real emotion) when do you expect to see him again?" Jamaika's face took on an innocent expression. "I have already told you that he approached me and begged me to put in a word for him. Since that time I have not seen him, and have no further occasion to. What do you take me for? I am a respectable woman. I don't know when he will come." Kakadu grumbled: "But that is very unpleasant. I never wanted to see this comedian in my house. They ruin your character, they turn your head, and they are all asses, asses. . ." At this moment Butterweg, unconscious of what was going on, rang the bell. Jamaika went to Kakadu quickly and kissed him, saying: "There he is. Be nice to him, I beg of you. The poor man is in such a bad way. There is no need of your making his life more bitter." Kakadu sat in his armchair with the mien of a magistrate, as Butterweg entered. The history of the world's literature lay in his lap and he looked up as if he were being interrupted in his studies. "Am I intruding?" asked Butterweg anxiously. Kakadu tried to give his voice a manly depth: "I have been told by my wife that you wanted to see me on business. Can I be of service to you in any way?" Butterweg stammered something about art and criticism, and Jamaika, fearing that he might miss his mark, interrupted in loud and cheerful tones; "Oh please do not speak so learnedly! All this learning just turns a poor woman's head. You can hardly believe, my dear Mr. Butterweg, how much my husband studies. Day and night he pores over a history of the world's literature — think of it, world's literature! Dear Kakadu, dear little Kakadu! But now we shall have some coffee. Where is the maid? Everything must be ready by now." Before the might of her persuasiveness the men bowed. When Kakadu saw the steaming coffee and

the cakes he thought no longer of learned poses. Later on — Jamaika sat resting one elbow on her raised knee and smoking — the conversation reverted to artistic things. "But, Mr. Butterweg," said Kakadu seriously, "I do not quite understand how the people can be raised up to a higher level through your art." He put this question as if he were addressing a candidate. He spoke as if he had stayed up many nights over this problem. Butterweg replied: "My view is that art is art. We must accept that as our hypothesis, once for all, isn't that so? (Kakadu shook his head.) Nevertheless, I don't think we should give too much weight to that fact. I, for instance, act quite otherwise, when I perform in my art." Kakadu felt conscious of his superiority. "Naturally," he remarked, "Each man thinks differently, some more deeply and others more superficially." A controversy arose over the question of artistic inclinations. Butterweg ardently championed the idea that artists are born and not made, while Kakadu was of the opinion that practice makes perfect, that a man could become the greatest of artists by close application. Butterweg said: "As you see me now, so have I been, a frog-swallower from earliest childhood." "That is not the question," said Kakadu, "The question is whether the motives which impelled you to swallow frogs were hereditary or acquired." "I have never given that any thought. All I know is that from my earliest youth it pleased me, to — putting it politely — make my repast of frogs, and I was very easily led to make of this aptitude my life's profession. The boys who played with me cried out when they saw me swallow the animals at one gulp, but I had already tasted the true, the great sensation which was later to be mine." Kakadu, however, was worried lest Butterweg persist in error. He said: "How then could you distinguish yourself from artists like Goethe, Schiller, Geibel, Uhland? They too must have experienced this rare feeling, and yet your propensities can scarcely be compared to the performances of these geniuses. Think of *Faust*, think of the *Bride of Messina*!" "You can think what you please," said Butterweg, "but it is just as I say. I feel it in my heart and that is what counts above all. I don't know the tricks of those gentlemen, but if they have performed anything worth-while then they experienced the same feeling." Kakadu felt that he was representing culture and all that was holy to culture. "Oh!" he cried pathetically, "My dear sir (taking the history of the world's literature and lifting it reverently into the air). Oh! My dear sir! Do not speak so loud, that learned people may not laugh at you." Butterweg gave no heed to this warning. All that was sacred to him was at stake: "That doesn't matter to me at all!" Kakadu was silent, he looked at Jamaika and frowned heavily. Then Butterweg began again: "I am thinking of going very far in my calling. I shall establish relationships

between my art and politics. You don't understand me? Why, there must be more reality in my art, more relation with actual life." "I understand perfectly," said Jamaika, who was straining all the time to look very reflective. "The opinions of artists are always very interesting. Politics is the symbol for reality to you, isn't it?" "Perfect, madam. Extremely well put, I am flattered at how well I am understood by you." Kakadu's comprehension became more and more restricted. "Permit me, Jamaika, I am afraid you haven't understood Mr. Butterweg in the least. I would consider it more carefully before saying anything of the sort. Mr. Butterweg counts very much on such judgments. It is well known how much artists depend on other's opinions." Jamaika's innocence seemed to be quite perfect. "But if Mr. Butterweg himself says that I understand him? He must know best." "Mr. Butterweg is wrong. He is deceiving himself in harbouring such views." "Oho!" cried Butterweg, "not as much as that, I only deceive myself in your mind. You can never destroy that which is holy to me with all your learning. Your wife has understood me as I have been seldom understood before. Artists know a woman's soul, they know perfectly whether they are understood by a woman. I believe that the artist is the highest type of man, and when he places woman above himself in understanding, what must she then be?" Kakadu made an ironic bow: "Your arguments, my dear sir, are so convincing, that I am compelled to concede to you. You will permit me to leave you in the company of my wife, who understands you so wonderfully." He bowed again, and left the room. "That's a nice scrape," said Butterweg. "Well, I suppose we have spoiled everything now." Jamaika laughed, but she did not feel very well about it. "Oh that doesn't matter, my dear, I shall soon bring him around. Do you think he can do whatever he wants here?" Butterweg came nearer to Jamaika and before she could prevent him, took her hand and kissed it slowly. "When shall we see each other, my love?" "I shall come with Kakadu to the evening performance." "Do you think that you can persuade him to come?" "There are means!" said Jamaika—she laughed a little—"there are means which are infallible!"

III.

Jamaika had overestimated the difficulty of persuading Kakadu to come to the circus. He showed himself very willing, but he said: "I can scarcely understand why you said the circus robs us of our peace, Jamaika. Didn't you say that the clamor of the comedians penetrates to our very

bed-chamber?" "I don't remember," replied Jamaika, "and if I did, I wasn't serious. I love the horses there, and there is also an elephant named Billy." "Certainly. Certainly. You shall see your elephant." And he wanted to add, that she ought not see too much of Butterweg, but he feared a scene that might rob him of his peace. They went through the huge gate and Jamaika walked by very quickly, because the girl at the box-office greeted her. Kakadu doffed his hat, although he didn't know what it was about. Butterweg suddenly appeared from behind a partition, he greeted Jamaika, and kissed her hand. Then he said to Kakadu: "You must forgive me for my heated words. I am really of a peaceable nature." Kakadu sniffed at this. He laughed, so to speak, through his nose. "Oh, oh, my dear fellow. I don't mind that at all. Don't I know how excitable artists are?" An usher in strawberry-colored livery showed them to their seats, and as Butterweg left, Jamaika motioned to him again behind Kakadu's back. The show began with a Hungarian march. Twelve "Isabel-colored" steeds danced and reared themselves on their hind legs at command, so that the children cried out with joy and the old ladies sank deeper into their seats with faint gasps. Butterweg waited behind the entrance-curtain. Upon a wooden platform where the clowns carried on their merry antics, a number appeared, the number of Butterweg's act. Kakadu leaned one arm on the plush of the upholstery and said: "I am surprised that you do not see through the silliness of such performances. When I was young, I might have enjoyed this, but, Heavens! one grows more mature, one experiences, labors with the mind." Butterweg did not merely jump into the ring, as did the others. He sought to win the public favor through a stunt. He came in limping, he wailed dolorously, as if he were sorely wounded, and then, just when the public began to be bored, he suddenly straightened out and made a somersault almost to the roof of the tent. The people clapped furiously. Jamaika was very proud of her admirer, but Kakadu only shook his head and said: "Look at that monkey there. Consider for a moment and you will agree with me that one can't go about with such people." But Jamaika was delighted: "I believe that I am beholding a new type of man. He makes himself laughable for our entertainment. Isn't that honorable?" Now the deep tone of the bassoons was heard. The musicians danced in a mad rout about the bandstand, and everyone felt that the climax of the show was coming. Then Butterweg threw a dozen frogs into the air, spread his legs, and stooped. With open mouth he received the frogs one after another in the order in which he threw them into the air. Then when everyone feared that he would be prostrated with cramps, he ran twice around the ring, laughing and smacking his lips as if he had eaten a good

dinner. The applause brought the house down. Suddenly there was a murmur. Kakadu had to recoil in his chair; he was very white, and at the point of vomiting. A porter wanted to help him but Jamaika said: "Don't you see that he belongs to me? I shall take care of him myself." On Jamaika's arm, Kakadu got out into the fresh air, where he immediately revived. But his great sickness dated from this visit to the circus, his stomach rebelled, and his complexion became yellow and pasty. Since that evening, his legs trembled when he walked, and strangely enough, he began to grow smaller, so that any child was a full head bigger than he. He held a handkerchief to his mouth and staggered about, while Jamaika called for a taxi. Once at home she said to him: "My dear, it is no longer pleasant to go out with you anywhere. You remind me of little children, who always lose control of themselves, when they see something that upsets them." Kakadu could not think of anything to say, he lay down in bed, and felt so well in the warm covers that he gave vent to comfortable grunts. Jamaika could think only of the triumph of Butterweg, and she tried in vain to pass the time reading. She said to herself: "What a fool I am married to! Can anybody call him a man? Does he think of anything but his body and his food?" She tossed about impatiently. Her thoughts were in the circus and the sounds of the music filled her ears. She found herself before an armoire. She looked for a dress with pleasing colors, something quite distinctive. She had a robe of bright green silk, and tried it on to see if it still fitted her. She stood before a mirror, and marvelled at her beauty. "How comes it that I am married to this man, who never tells me that I am lovely and adorable?" She thought of the words of Butterweg, as he lay at her feet, a shepherd declaring his love. The house was very still, except for Kakadu's snoring. She put on a large hat, like that of the horsewoman, took her little reed walkingstick, opened the door, and was out in the free. She walked very fast, but when she reached the meadow, she saw that the lights of the circus were out. A little boy was crawling about the wagons, and Jamaika asked him if he had seen Butterweg. He told her that all of the performers were in the "Meilhac" restaurant, and offered to lead her there. When Butterweg saw Jamaika, he asked the proprietor to show them to a private room. "I observed," he said, "how I sent your husband off. Is it very serious?" Jamaika blushed. "Oh, nothing very bad, Mr. Butterweg." After a moment, she added: "Aren't you surprised at my coming here to see you?" Butterweg laughed and raised Jamaika's hand to his lips: "Dear Madam, how could it be otherwise? I know that my love has not left you cold. I adore you." Before she could prevent him, he pulled her to him and pressed his moustache to her mouth. "You dear! You dear!

I love you, do you hear? I love you!" Jamaika wept, but she wept with joy. She whispered, "My love, my most beloved, you are good to me." In the neighboring room there was loud singing. Women shrieked, and the proprietor's calm voice was drowned in the uproar. Butterweg said: "You will permit me to escort you home, will you not?" "Beloved, it is too bad, too bad, that we can never stay together long enough." Jamaika pressed closer to the man. "I am going to Paris soon. My art demands that I go to Paris. Here everyone is like (he laughed drily) Mr. Kakadu, and that doesn't help my art. I must have people about me who understand." Jamaika sobbed against his arm. "If I did not have my family here," said she, "I should follow you through the whole wide world, to the end of the railroad tracks." In the vestibule they kissed again, until Jamaika tore herself free, and ran quickly up the stairs. The next evening she was waiting for Butterweg. Kakadu was lying in bed, the doctor had ordered a few days of rest for him. "I have been thinking it over," she said to Butterweg, "if I knew of a way of going, I would go with you." "Very simple, you just get on the train." "But Kakadu can't be left alone here!" "Can't he? Well, I don't know what we can do about it in that case." Butterweg regarded Jamaika, but said nothing, and waited for her decision. Then she spoke: "I cannot leave him alone here, he made me what I am today. It is not right of me even to sit here with you, while he is sleeping at home." Butterweg indicated that in this case he would be compelled to make the trip alone. He turned his head as if to call the waiter. Jamaika, pressed, said: "I don't know how it can be done. If he should come along it would be the same thing in Paris. I could never see you without always fearing that he might break in on us." Jamaika remained lost in thought for a long time. Then she said out loud, as if she had found an infallible means. "Can't we force him? I don't love him, I love you, but if I left him behind, I would always be remorseful about him. Yes, we will force him to do everything we want." Butterweg said, "I love you, and I am ready for anything." They appointed an evening on which they would overpower Kakadu, pack him into a cab, and ride to the station. They walked through streets where the skinny little pimps smoked on the corners. She pressed her body close to him. He walked along leaning on her, his mouth wide open. Often he would rummage through his pockets as one who is accustomed to hunt in broad pantaloons for strange clownish things. Jamaika said: "You need not fear him. He is a small man, and his strength is the strength of a child. He is small in understanding, and has no pride." Butterweg replied: "Splendid, my dear. I see that you are assuring me of a grand career which shall be wholly devoted to art. I plan to link my art

with politics; clownery has become merely *baroque* in Germany. That must all be changed. It has become only a sweet and virtuous affair. Dear God! Where is the rhythm of the great warehouses? Where, the whirling stairways that whistle up through storey after storey? What statesman of today understands my art?" Out of waiters' homes came the cries of carousing vagabonds, wailing and uncanny. Butterweg laughed. He put his hands again into his vast trousers' pockets and dangled his legs like a yokel. The silhouettes of policemen swept up the street until they suddenly halted, drenched in the glow of a street lamp. "Furthermore, we must compel him to show some energy. All his life he has been unwilling to make the shortest journey. He is petty and fussy, always repeating other people's ideas as if they were his own, but he knows how to give them another appearance." "So, so!" exclaimed Butterweg, "we will get him, all right."

When the day came on which Butterweg had arranged to fetch Kakadu and Jamaika and take them to Paris, the noted journalist was spread out upon a couch. He was playing with his dog, who frisked about and barked, dove under the closets and struck about him with his little paws like a lion. Jamaika had already packed the trunk secretly; her travelling coat was ready, and now she was trying to prepare the man for the great event. He had never seemed to feel so much at home in his home. When it began to rain he said, how pleasant it was to have a tidy home. He compared the lives of artists to his own and laughed stoutly. "How can I ever get him started?" thought Jamaika to herself. "Look here, Kakadu," she said aloud, "you are doing those people an injustice when you say that they are bad because they don't live in the same security that you have. It might happen to you also, by some chance, that you should be forced to give up your home, and wander about the world like a vagabond." Kakadu's voice suddenly became very high-pitched, when he spoke he accompanied his words with nervous gestures; when he stood upright, he looked pitifully small. Jamaika could look over his head. "That will never happen, Jamaika," he said, "I should have to go mad, or some brigand would have to carry me away by force, as a gypsy kidnaps a child." Jamaika still tried to direct his attention to the possibility of such an event: "You can never tell what may come about," she said. "It is better to be prepared for everything, and as for me—I shouldn't be in the least displeased to get away from here for once and see the world, the end of the railroad tracks. For instance I have never seen Paris, and Butterweg has told me a great deal about that city—" "What does that mean—you have spoken to Butter-

weg, and never told me anything about it?" he cried. "What is going on? Who is master of this house?" Jamaika scarcely knew what to say, but suddenly she burst out, "Look here, Kakadu, perhaps I am the master of this house. Everything is possible, and sometimes things happen which could never be foretold." Kakadu lay down on the sofa, but then sprang up and regarded Jamaika: "What do you mean? Are you well? Repeat what you said before!" "I shall repeat it when we have time. Now there is no time," "You are not well, you must go to a doctor, and have your head examined. It is all the bad influence of that comedian, I warned you. Now I shall have the trouble of bringing you to your senses." At eight o'clock Jamaika met Butterweg on the steps. "I fear very much that he will give us trouble," she said. "Shan't we try to move him by kindness?" Butterweg had thrown a great cloak about him. "No! It is too far gone, now," he exclaimed. "If he will not, he will be forced. *En avant!* The train leaves in half an hour, the cab waits below." As Butterweg entered, Kakadu was promenading about his room. He spat on the carpet, and he snapped his fingers with nervous pops. "Goodday!" said Butterweg rudely, "Have you heard that you are going to travel?" "I travel? Are you mad? I shall never leave this room." "In spite of all, you will travel this very evening, with Jamaika and me to Paris." "Ah, Jamaika has betrayed me!" cried Kakadu, who suspected their connivance. "She shall regret this." Butterweg grabbed the man with little ceremony, gripped his throat, and was going to bind him, when Jamaika intervened. "Don't hurt him!" she said anxiously. Butterweg reflected for a moment, then took a little phial out of his vest-pocket, and sprayed a few drops of brown liquid into Kakadu's nose. Kakadu became will-less and apathetic, he let himself be carried into the cab without a sound. To the porter who carried the trunk, Butterweg said, "Don't make so much noise, don't you see there is a sick man here!" At the station a Red-Cross man wanted to get a litter for Kakadu, but Butterweg, who wished to save money, said that it was unnecessary. With Jamaika's help he carried Kakadu into the sleeper, a few more drops of dope were sprinkled into his nose, and he fell fast asleep and snored happily. Butterweg stuck out his chest: "Well, so much for that!" Jamaika began to weep, out of indefinable motives. "Poor man," she sobbed, "who would have thought that he would come to Paris in this way." She saw the station disappear in the mist, the last red lights shot by, and a nameless sadness filled her heart, so that for a long time she could find no peace.

RICHARD HUELSENBECK

(To be concluded)

(Translated from the German by M. J.)

POST MORTEM

I DIE

I stretch forth
Upon the lustrous satin,
In royal stiffness,
In papal dignity,
Toes outward.

I CROSS THE STYX

My finger-tips
Drawn across the surface
Of the Hateful River,
I sail, somnolent,
In an old-fashioned boat.

I FACE JUSTICE

Dripping with sin,
Making large pools
Like an umbrella,
Closed after a rain-storm,
I wait.

VERDICT

Heaven!
On the lap of Jesus!
Like a youthful bride!
O ironic Artist!
Incomparable God!

SIC TRANSIT GLORIA CHRISTI

Over the tall wooden cross
Swollen with rains
And devoured by ants,
The cool, rigid shadow
Of a nose and thumb.

INFALLIBILITY

I am the Clown
— Plastered face,
Scarlet lips —
But how should I
Juggle the Earth,
The Great Ass's bladder
Upon the tip of my false nose,
Since I have to balance myself
Upon it,
As a drunken man?

I shall become the Pope
— Inverted eyes,
Pasted palms —
I shall juggle with perfect gravity,
And infinite sanctity
Upon the rims of my false mouth,
Heaven,
The diamond-studded hoop!

PAUL ELDRIDGE



George Grosz

Periphery

GEORGE GROSZ

Mediaeval times were the period most propitious for the production of art, for then belief and existence were one. We might even say that there is something mediaeval in every genuine artist. Belief is still the foundation of the artist's existence—be it only the belief in his own election. A last vestige of sanctity is retained in the psyche of the artist.

It has been said that God exists inasmuch as he is believed in. Art too is fiction when it is not believed. The human masses have no longer any belief or merely (as it was stated in these pages four months ago) a belief in the "Mysticism of Money"; as our society has no longer a God neither can it have an art.

The artist, glorified by the history of art, is perhaps only a rudiment in this godless society. I imagine that our brutal forceful business men consider the artist, living in dreams and visions, much as they consider the flapper. Let him have his ideals and waste his heart in pale blue rapture, but where realities of life are concerned: trusts, world market, crises. —

The artist, who can impress such people seriously must be carved out of hard wood, must have their sturdiness and self control, must scrap his whole bundle of illusions.

George Grosz may be the precursor of this type.

* * *

The name of George Grosz evokes a new style of drawing. — Grosz paints too, very good pictures, of which his largest: "Germany, a Winter's Tale" is undoubtedly a remarkable production; but his artistic profile is most distinct in his drawings. — He has a style which does not derive from Cezanne or Picasso, from Munich or Hodler, or from any other of the artistic deities of to-day. His razor sharp, glass-pen hard, even line, which seems cut with an apache knife, exists independent of other art. It exists as the style of George Grosz.

The last case of this kind was Daumier. He was flaming passion, a flame dancing above a log. Sparks make revelry around his lines. Do you know how the flame gnaws the log which it will reduce to ashes? Daumier's blazing black and whites gnawed thus at the dry wood of his time—the Pear King, the "ventre legislatif", the judge, the lawyer and Robert Masaire, that Johnny-jump-up of public fraud.

There is no flame, no blaze in the line of George Grosz — rather controlled passion which does not take the liberty of running away, fire water on ice. His line is definite and exact; a work of precision like that of modern machine tools; it has the uneasy quietness of the gunman whose finger is on the trigger. It makes one think of the rigour, of the correctness of Prussian barracks, whose greatest joy is the straightest-dressed line. Each hair in a lieutenant's moustache, drawn by Grosz is pulled as straight as though Haby himself had combed it. Here is a style of flat footed impertinence, like the drawings with only one meaning, which small boys scratch on walls and outhouses. This scampish impertinence which prefers a thing, three times underlined to once suggested, this stone cutter's style of unequivocal irreverence was just what Grosz needed to oppose to the cynicism of so called civilization, the superior cynicism of an "enfant terrible," who says freely what he is and what he means. These "privy scratchings" were a discovery to Grosz just as were the cave paintings of prehistoric man and the art of the Bushman to his colleagues of the Higher Art Faculty and he made the most of his discovery. A child of the city, whose only grief seems to be that he did not grow up in the greatest of all cities—New York, he must have been charmed to show these dear people, who carry their heads with such insolent pride, what a joke they were in daring to call themselves "man and fellowman."

Many people have talked about his infantilism. A terrible infantilism! They must have a peculiar conception of childishness. His art is quite out of its diapers and conscious, as consciously organized as modern engineering. I do not wish to hurt George Grosz — to whom militarism is as wine to the Mohammedan, or swinesflesh to the Jew — when I say that his art is conceived in every line like a strategic attack. It constitutes a complete economy of means and forces, almost a Taylor system of drawing, everything calculated to produce the maximum of effectiveness.

There is a young art group called "Constructivists" who (almost romantic) rave about the beauty of engineer-made forms, of buzzing wheels, of motors, elevators, steamboats, steel hammers and propellers. Business is their god; their idol, the engineer who inevitably creates forms of marvellous vitality. But these romantic souls overlook the fact that this form creation is only a side product of the engineer's work, in most cases an involuntary accidental result, for the engineer wants to realize, most of all, the maximum effectiveness with the minimum amount of force and material. Even in this regard we find an intimate relation between the calligraphy of George Grosz and engineer created form. Grosz's art does not exist for itself alone — a draughtsman, a class fighter made of it



George Grosz

Pop and Mom

a weapon to crush the base and infamous. Grosz would like to make people active, to unite them socially and politically; drawing is to him what speech is to the agitator, or the editorial to the journalist. Painting to charm the aesthetic sense — still-lives or nudes, — is not his business. He considers it a sort of "Biedermeier" occupation. He loves the newspaper cartoonist, as he loves Nick Carter and Sherlock Holmes and the boxers and wrestlers who thrill the crowds to-day. This type of artist will live long after the easel painter has become extinct. The cartoonist is politically active. In America he represents a power of which we in Europe can have no conception and since the German press is still far from becoming Americanized in this respect Grosz must always create an organ for himself: "Bankruptcy," "Everybody his own Football," "Bloody Earnest", "The Opponent" — organs of fight, intellectual machine guns trained against capitalism and militarism.

* * *

George Grosz made his debut with a series of impressions of cities.* These have nothing of the picturesque, of Brangwyn, or of the airy impressionism of Pissarro. The boulevard with its ordered luxury and promenading idlers, represents only the surface of this witch's caldron into which the barbarism of our civilization has crushed millions of people, condemning them, in a way, to a state of primitive bestiality. Unsuccessful country school masters use this condition of affairs as the subject of their moral lectures. Hard boiled youths paddle around in the whirlpool, until one day they are seized with the desire to reveal to an astonished world the exotic continent across which thousands hurry day by day to oblivion; some of them moralize, others, made more for fact than reflection, are amused by making those jokes which seem to be as necessary to civilized man as the W. C. or the tooth brush. Grosz is one of the latter sort, and as the sensational write-up is an essential of journalism, he naturally does not try to spare people the odour emanating from this pestilential underground world.

"Elevators and lorries,
undergnawed asphalt — how singular!!
Adventurers pass, silk hat
black on slippery hair, backwards.
The many coloured profile of a syphilitic
gleams through the dark
one can live even without a nose!!!"

* Grosz-First and little Parbolics.



George Grosz

Bourgeois Charity

He thrusts his searchlight into the machinery moved by debauchery and lust for gain. Round skulls promenade along the streets with no other aim seemingly but to carry a brilliantined parting and derby hat. The stale air of obscure bars and smeary café's dulls the senses. The imitation gentleman plays the Maharaja, the pimp counts the night's income. Tired harlots prepare their nets to fish for the "client." Devout night porters and madams set the stage for casual loves. Electric signs cast sunshine on their way. Avarice and lust fight a film-battle in the soul of Mr. Mudiske out for a spree. Only the make-up is different, somewhat more suggestive, where the bill is higher. With the eyes with which a whore can x-ray the contents of a pocket book, Grosz looks through the trousers of the bourgeois and peeps under the relentlessly fixed corsets of the veterans of love (who are used to this anyway) to where faded breasts hang and other things appear . . . "But below that point it is terrible and man shall not tempt the Gods," says Schiller.

Nevertheless even his ice-cold insolence cannot suppress a certain love for this more than exotic world. Whether he sketches the bald stiff fire wall of an apartment house, or reproduces the chimneys and gasometers which are the background of these scenes, or portrays a harlot's leg with high shoe and tightly supported stocking, every line of Grosz is pervaded by an indefinable sentiment, which in spite of himself he cannot banish.

* * *

The beginning of the war. The war "the steel bath" (as it was proclaimed by servile pens trying to persuade the people drunk with phrases of its "moral renovations.") The war, an orgy of the immoral, of miserable egotism, and then that which produced the German revolution; the hypertrophy of militarism and capitalism gave Grosz a mission. There was no time now for strolling about the city. The talent for penetrating human nature which he had developed had now to be used practically; bourgeois society licking the boots of its idol, militarism, had to be put in stocks; swarms of shameless and unrestricted capitalists fastened upon the country to eat up its last grain of life — like the locusts sent by the Lord to punish the Egyptians — he had to tear the clothes from the bodies of this bunch of profiteers, usurers, and gamblers, as he had done with the street girls, to show entire their decrepitude, their lascivious perversion. Grosz stood on the side of the poor; he wanted to make his pen, machine gun and tank. He was a Spartakist and became one of the grimmest enemies of corrupt bourgeois society and one of its most violent accusers. He depicted its rashness,

voracity and dissipation — dragging fat stomachs to orgies organized by shrewd promoters, trying to arouse jaded senses by the spectacle of nude dances and other lubricities. But first of all his fight was against militarism — against that German militarism which brought misery upon a whole misled nation and which, in spite of everything, wished to tyrannize over the people and refused to leave the full manger. When cowardly murderers in uniform killed Liebknecht, Luxembourg, Eisner, he threw off all restraint. His drawing became pamphleteering. He occasionally overreaches himself. He is never afraid of being tasteless. His drawings annihilate, because they are not caricatures, they are portraits. The "Face of the Reigning Class," is the title of a series of drawings published as a pamphlet, whose circulation reached many thousands. The cover is adorned with the portrait of "The Assessor," reserve officer straight pressed, whose frozen stupidity was already known to Heine. The drawings which follow make a single heroic song, the epic of a certain kind of heroism as it appeared in Heine's lament: "Germany, a Winter's Tale" wishing "the good folk" Heaven

"guard thee from war and fame
from heroes and heroic deeds."

This is a battle which we must fight out between ourselves here in Germany. It is a battle between brothers, humanitarian Germany against class imposition of soldier-drones who, when their class privileges are endangered, defend them with brute force and villainy. It is a fight to free mankind too, which is fought here with wit and talent, and from the days, of Aristophanes it has been the tradition for artists to stand on the people's side.

* * *

Grosz is a phenomenon of his time. Is he nothing more? Will he be forgotten, in the marvellous days towards which we were so lovingly promised to be led, when one must search learned historical works for information about the subjects of his pamphlets as we now do for facts about the Spanish Inquisition and witch trials? Those who believe it is their privilege to judge the great and small artistic immortals may decide. I trust that Grosz, damned to the hell of "doctrinaire artists," will gather about him the poor sinner-souls of Callot and Breughels, of Goya and Daumier, of Swift and Heine, and start a game of football.

WESTHEIM

MORTUARY

Death is an accumulation of infirmities: hairs
fall a tooth decays and death; a spot of eczema
returns each year with spring; death hides itself
in a pimple or a sty

in a parenthesis around the lips that deepens
no longer; death is rigid being the achievement
of a pattern; death is a finished pattern of
wrinkles round the eye.

Having completed some grand work, to die . . .

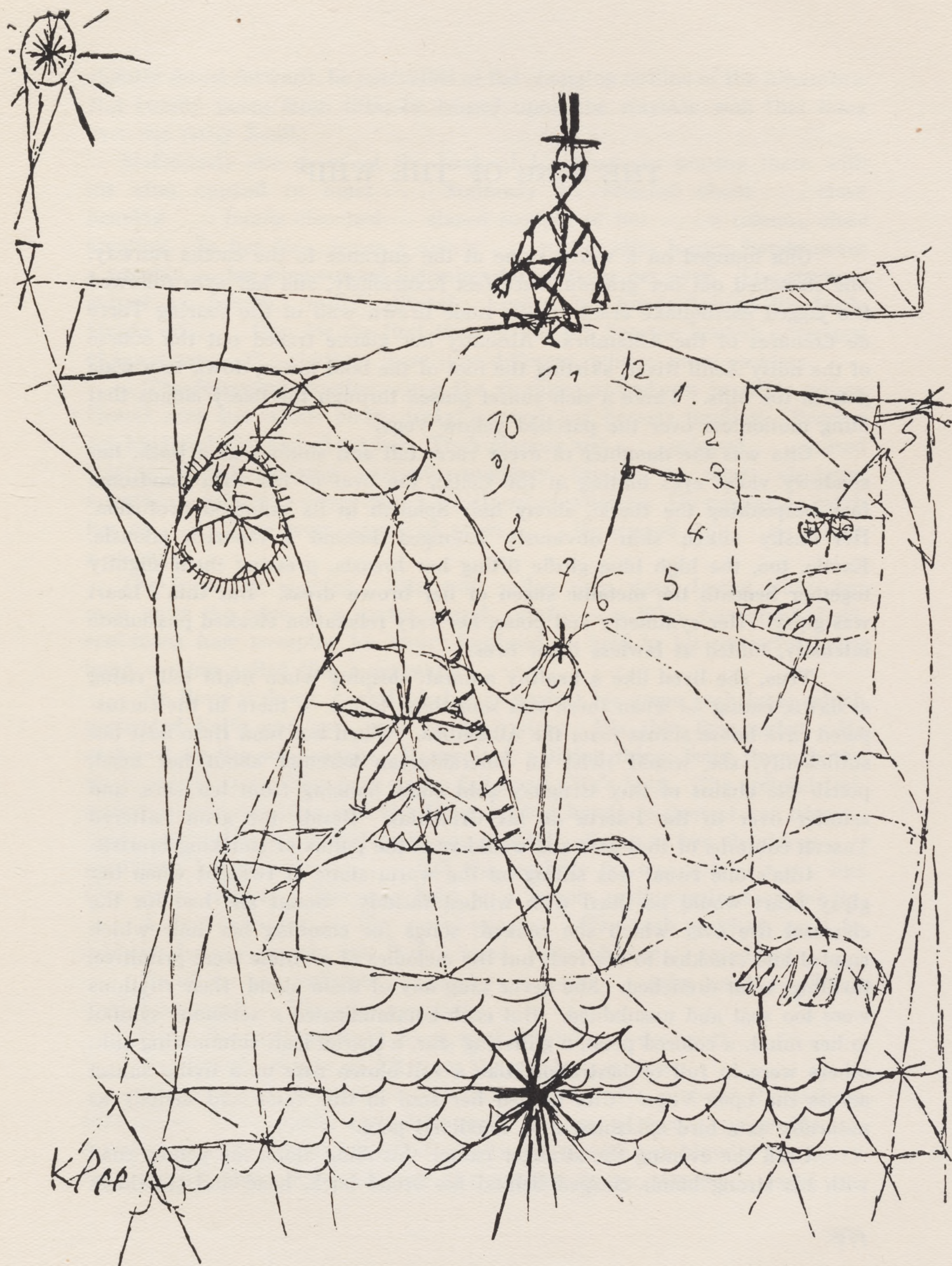
(Ideally considered death is a simple process
of exteriorization: thought builds a mausoleum
for itself; the brain is inscribed in granite
or a lie.)

Coffee at nine each morning with two lumps please
and heavy cream at nine: death is the accumulation
of such habits and we die

at the top first; toes are the last members to
turn toward the daisies

and eyes the last to stare into the sky.

MALCOLM COWLEY



Paul Klee

Suicide on the Bridge

THE SONG OF THE WHIP

Gita lounged on a warm stone at the entrance to the cactus runway. She stretched out her graceful bare feet luxuriously, and her eyes followed the jagged earthquake crack in the nude brown wall of the soaring Torre de Comares of the Alhambra. Absently her glance traced out the course of the noisy Xenil River, skirting the foot of the bold tower, down to a wide gate in the hills. There a rich sunset pulsed through the fleecy clouds that hung motionless over the parched yellow Vega.

Gita was the daughter of every race: tall and sinuous as a Goth, her shadowy violet eyes hinting at the Celtic, the oval of her firm handsome face bespeaking the Iberic, ebony hair Spanish in its untamed profusion. Her dusky silken skin obviously belonged behind a Moorish jalousie. Exotic, too, the high blue girdle lifting her breasts, pressing them slightly together beneath the metallic sheen of her brown dress. But Gita's heart was gipsy. Her symmetry and poise, her very relaxation cloaked passionate intensity, hinted at lawless inner fires.

True, she lived like a healthy animal: sleeping when night fell, rising at dawn, eating — when there was something to eat — there in the cactus-paled cave-house across from the Alhambra. When her man Rufo beat her sufficiently, she would twist an emeraldgreen kerchief about her head, polish the chains of tiny Uruguay gold coins hanging from her ears, and saunter over to the Puerta de las Granadas. Beside the grim battered Tuscan columns of that gate she would read the palms of smirking tourists.

Gita's one ritual was sitting on the warm stone at twilight when her gipsy heart would be filled with wildest melody. Songs she had for the charcoal fire over which she cooked; songs for combing her hair which rippled and crackled to her feet; but the melodies of eventide were primitive, thrilling, color-drenched. She never sang any of them aloud; their rhythms were too vast and unsubdued. But each communicated a sensuous symbol to her mind: a colored petal, a glittering star, a scarlet leaf, shimmering silk; others were in full orchestration, like a full-blown rose or a living sunset across the open Vega. Gita bathed her soul in this color and melody as naturally as a bird splashing in a woodland pool.

Until the evening the stranger came! Strolling along the yellow road with his strong hands clasped behind his broad back, head and shoulders

slightly thrust forward, he marvelled at the changing outline of the Alhambra. Not twenty paces from Gita, he leaned upon the wayside wall that hung over the noisy Xenil.

Maliciously she gazed at the back of his head, he musing there with his chin cupped in hand . . . Suddenly he wheeled about . . . chest heaving . . . hands clenched — stared straight at her . . . a solemn, close scrutiny. In her face, never a quiver . . . to her slim brown hands never a tremble — but blue-cowled lightning darted from her eyes. The stranger gulped his breath, nostrils dilated. Locked his hands behind his back. Strode off . . . Gita for the first time in her life became acutely conscious of inner song. The rhythms were now different, wilder, more reckless.

The following evening when the stranger passed, an invisible quiver flowed over her whole body, curled around her breasts tingling. Passion crackled and snapped about her. Their glances met, . . . gripped . . . flowed together: cool clasping currents suddenly fuming as when electrons mingle . . . She was swept into a whirlpool of emotion. He seemed to catch her up . . . They were wrenched apart . . . He passed on . . . no longer a stranger.

The following evening. Gita with sullen eyes stood facing Rufo, her man, near the edge of a cactus corral. Rufo — a lithe, handsome devil, coal-black hair sweeping his swart forehead — held in his powerful hairy hand a whip coiled like a serpent.

He flung it down, heeled his hands against his green sash from which protruded knife and gun, spat on his palms. His thin lips curled. He snatched up the whip again. It unrolled, a living thing: leapt through the air in a trial snap. The next stroke fell upon Gita's back. The spiteful lash curled around her ribs, and she flung up her hands to protect her breasts. Again and again it whistled and sang and fell, slicing at her shoulders . . . shredding her thin dress . . . Till the rawhide tip was scarlet . . . But Gita never winced. Her eyes held to a purple, yellow-spined cactus-fig.

A foot scraping at the corral-opening. The lash writhed back in mid-air, doubled tamely into Rufo's hand. Gita whirled — cried out.

He of the two twilights . . . stocky . . . calm . . . grim-jawed. — What does this mean? — His voice was taut.

Rufo, lips stripped back from teeth: What you do here?

— Enough of that or I'll have the gendarmes down.

Rufo's mouth twisted into his tight cheeks. He snapped the lash at Gita again. The outsider rushed forward. A spurt of dust . . . a scuffle . . . a reeling shadow. Rufo has knocked him down with one blow of his heavy fist; stepping back, drives his lash at the fallen figure. Once . . . twice . . .

three times: a poisonous bite in the man's leg . . . coiled pain around his arm . . . a livid gash in his neck. Acrid dust . . . blood . . . Gita crying out: My God, you'll kill him.

The next blow stings her upraised arm. Laughter. Laughter like the jangle of a heavy chain. Rufo striding from the corral.

Gita has fled with him — the man of the two twilights — Mario. He has taken her to Burgos in northern Spain . . . his home. He has paid the priest . . . in the little church of the Sacred Heart of our Saviour . . . thirteen gold pieces. The priest has bound the necks of Mario and Gita together with his silken brocade sash of gold. They are married.

She becomes a transformed being, living in a great house with mosaic floors and high frescoed ceilings where dancing girls spill opals and flowers over green meadows. And all her life is changed . . . strangely, unbelievably, magically changed . . . as in the wild glimmering legends of her people . . . Picturesque was her gipsy costume; but in her new high combs and long lacy mantillas, in her silk stockings and sparkling French-heeled slippers, she is beautiful, stately . . . tall as a Goth. She learns to comport herself properly, to restrain whimsies, to observe formalities. Tolerant is Mario of her mistakes, ever unruffled, explaining the need of dignity with the servants, helping her manage household affairs.

Mario, being a devout Catholic, delighted in initiating her into the intricacies of the faith, teaching her pater nosters, she mumbling over her beads with puckered nose. And the dim cool interior of the soaring Gothic cathedral with the long vanishing vistas of the nave and aisles, with its gorgeous transept, its mighty arched octagon, its lofty columned Coro, was to her more weirdly beautiful than anything ever seen, filling her with rapture, taming the songs of her heart to suave melancholy. Dreamy contentment with life flowed over her warmly. Mario gave her everything she fancied and things she hadn't the imagination to fancy.

Even so, at times she was restless . . . at other times lonely, though always she upbraided herself when these moods had passed and would try to show her affection to Mario in new and tender ways . . . And the days would again be perfect . . . crammed with contentment . . . with gorgeous fancies. Life was like an ever-expanding peacock's tail.

The weeks slipped into months . . . Uneasiness returned. Nostalgia enveloped her like a grey mist. Its coils closed about her. Now . . . occasionally . . . Mario's kindness, his patent goodness, grated. She came to dislike his customary pose of standing hands clasped behind his back; she linked it with his unwavering attempt to be just — just and tolerant on all occasions . . .

Warm, scented dusk. She, sitting in the patio before the fountain, hugging her knees . . . overwhelmingly aware of emptiness in her heart — sullen *malaise* . . . Just an instinct . . . a mood. But she recalled how, seated on the stone overlooking the Xenil, sparkling melodies had haunted her — unsung melodies with vivid exotic colors. Now . . . try as she would . . . these songs would not reawake; her heart was a stone against which the red tide of her blood beat all in vain . . . the untamed gipsy blood of her race . . .

She grew pale . . . distraught. Mario, noticing, bought her a jeweled sandalwood fan from Cairo, each rib perforated with delicate tracery . . . a carved ivory mirror from Morocco with tiny cupids gamboling about the frame. He took her to every opera and *zarzuela* by the travelling companies from Madrid and Seville. Nothing availed. Insidious lassitude ruled her. Petulancy invaded her speech.

— Why, why are you always this way? . . . That absurdly solemn voice of his; that puzzled shake of the head. — Why not visit your neighbors? They are good women; they will divert your thoughts.

Gita followed his wishes. The women of her station in Burgos were older than she, but equally cloistered behind the *rejas* that barred their windows; portly women who found idleness compatible but exacting. Their conversation touched upon servants and clothes, also with sedentary salaciousness upon the minute details of illicit love-affairs. Gita soon wearied of their company. She preferred the chatter of the servants . . . She scrubbed copper kettles with zest . . . Mario protested . . . A petulant toss of the head . . . For a whole week she went barefoot around the house — a temporary thrill . . .

Then she dressed up in all her silks, played *la gran señora*, was haughty with the servants, pampered herself with every luxury. She became devout. She went to early mass, a black veil framing the curve of her cheeks, drawn tight over her full breasts.

A cavalry officer kneels at the same prayer-bench. They are whispering their pater noster. Their hands tremble . . . touch. She drops her fan. He restores it gallantly. They smile. They are happy . . . For two months: advances . . . retreats . . . sorties . . . manoeuvres . . .

They sit alone in a deserted patio. The sky is a smooth shimmering bubble. Their pulses throb. The sky is a vast velvet petal. Their eyes shine. Their lips are tingling. The sky is a still, breathless pool.

Stars . . . stars: gold-fish swimming in a still, breathless pool.

Plash of the fountain.

Pollen-scented wind.

Perfume from the palm-frondes.

He puts his arm about her . . . At his touch nausea grips her . . . makes her shudder . . . writhe . . . She buries her sharp glistening teeth in his wrist . . .

The weeks winged past. Again she grew effusively affectionate toward Mario. She would slip into his study and passionately fling her arms about him, or, silently, lay a blade of grass on the book he was reading . . . and vanish. As always he was generous and kind.

But she wanted something. She wanted the cloud-strewn sky. She wanted the restless night stars . . . wanted them burning in her two hands. She wanted the sharp summer perfumes . . . forever and ever. She began experimenting with Mario's good nature. She tried, at last, by prank, by contrariety, to break down the wall of his placidity . . . tried even to wake him to anger. But he would merely regard her with hurt, pleading eyes . . . would stroke her luxurious black hair . . . would turn away in silence.

A Sunday morning . . . achingly beautiful. Mario wished to go to mass. She refused, watching him through half-closed eyes, long lashes veiling their fire. In silence he went alone. She smiled with pity . . . with scorn. She never set foot in the cathedral again . . .

Night. Dazzling stars overhead . . . like sparks from her mind. Glinting refulgence seeping through her pores. Pollen-cloyed air warm in her throat. All night, she sitting alone under those stars . . . in the patio . . . beside the fountain. Not till morning did she drag herself to her room, numb with cold and despair, her black hair tangled. The servant, at Mario's bidding hurried to her with mandarine brandy and coffee. Later he admonished her firmly but kindly. They returned together to the patio. With her sharp white teeth she gnawed pungent spices and queer roots, watching him . . . silently . . . steadily. He grew uncontrollably nervous . . . perplexed. He caressed her hair. She snatched herself away, laughing hysterically . . . long peals down the patio arcades . . .

In August a band of gipsies wandered into Burgos. Gita dressed in a gold silk gown, flung a flaming scarf over her shoulders and sauntered brazenly down to their encampment. All day she sat in the dust, playing *brisca* with Spanish cards, rubbing dirt on her beautiful clothes, on her stockings, scarping her shoes, eating chick-peas out of a smoked tin can . . .

The incident was bruited from the tatterdemalion outskirts of the Barrio de Vega on the other side of the river to the grim Castillo on the hill . . .

Mario is furious . . . at last. Gita laughs derisively. He lifts his hand to strike her.

Her body arches . . . quivers. Palm to palm she lays her hands against her cheeks. Her tense biceps press sensuously against her dilating breasts. Her eyes fill with flame . . . then are shadowed by the long lashes. She sways there . . .

The musical song of a flower-vender drifting over the patio-walls:

*Red roses of Castile,
Sweet as lips . . . dipped in cochineal,
Red roses of Castile.*

Plash of fountain.

Rustle of the leaves . . . mimosa leaves.

Clash of the leaves . . . huge plantain leaves . . . and elephant-ears.

Pollen . . . pungent . . . satisfying.

Mario's hand is uplifted. She sways, waiting the blow. A servant clatters across the stones. Mario's arm goes lax. He turns abruptly . . . stiffly . . . like a switch-signal. He locks himself in his room . . .

Night again. A wild storm sweeps down from the Cantabrian Sea, an autumn tempest ravishing the whole littoral. The wind leaps shrieking over the tiled roofs of Burgos. The rain rattles on wall and window; drives diagonally into the open patios.

Gita, excited: her visit to the gipsy camp . . . her scene with Mario . . . the storm. A melange of fury . . . color . . . flashing cards . . . pennies in the dust . . . a raised hand . . . shapes . . . mad flying shapes. She steals out under the arcades. She loosens her hair. It falls about her body in a full flood, crackling sparkling from the electricity surging in the charged air. The proud masculinity of the storm wraps her round. The rhythmic beat of the falling rain sweeps through her veins. The lightning cleaves her heart. The thunder tramples on her flesh.

She leaps into the patio and dances . . . dances to the strange pulsing melodies of her unleashed heart . . . dances in utter abandon to the rhythm of wind and rain — flash and swirl and dip . . . dip and swirl and flash again!

Joy and madness roar within her. She runs to the front entrance, unbolts the huge doors, darts into the street . . . out through the driving storm . . . out to the open roads and the fields . . . Flames of color flood over her in a dazzling sea of fire . . . Old songs eddy round her, cleave to her, encircling her loins, her ribs, her breasts, kindling heart and brain . . . New and wilder songs sway and shake her . . . down to the roots of her

life . . . as a lover might do . . . lift her as with winged feet on through the blackness.

She has reached Granada, overtaking the summer. Wearily she wanders along the hot simmering banks of the Xenil. The tz. z. z. k, tz. z. z. k, tz. z. z. k of hundreds of cicadas bewilders her ears. White dust, stirred up by her feet, irritates her nostrils. Around a sharp turn: the soaring brown Torre de Comares. The long jagged earthquake crack running from battlement to foundation has widened. The tower is breaking apart.

There is the warm stone . . . There is the cactus runway! . . . Tawny, dishevelled, she passes through to the cave-house. The unbolted door with its huge square nails gives to her touch. She enters. Dank chill envelopes her. Emptiness. Silence. The silence wells . . . spreads out over the moist walls and ceiling . . . thickens . . . smothers her . . .

She sinks upon a log . . . peers . . . peers . . . Familiar objects: a blackened pot, fresh ashes, kicked-off blankets. She leaps to the cupboard built in a seam of rock. She flings open the wood-latched doors . . . She takes down the black-snake whip, lets it uncoil from her hand . . . again . . . again . . . in fascinating rhythm sinuously, like a living serpent. She winds it close about her smooth neck. The loose ends strike against her hips. One of the ends she lifts . . . rolls it along her bare arm, joying in the contact of cool leather with hot skin. She coils the whip about her hand . . . goes out to the cactus corral in the white pitiless sunlight. Behind her sounds a footstep. Rufo!

Their glances snap at each other, settle balefully to burning flame — the hot violet flame of molten metal. Gita laughs . . . boldly . . . derisively . . . making of herself something beautiful to be tamed, conquered. The sound shakes through the heat, through the cactus-paling . . . Stillness . . . Breathless hush . . . Pungent heat.

— Here! — she holds out the whip.

Mechanically he takes it, watching her through the slits of his hard eyes. Calmly she walks to the opposite side of the corral, he watching the tempting sway of her hips . . . the proud slant of her shoulders . . . the scornful tilt of her head; watching the long fluid line rippling from neck to shapely ankle . . . the essence of the grace of the women of every race.

He lets the lash uncurl . . . mechanically. He whips it overhead. It snaps like a pistol. Still watching her, slowly . . . hesitatingly . . . he lifts it again . . .

It falls from his shaking fingers.

— Gita! . . . Gita! — He is running forward.

She wheels on him. The jerk of her body shakes her black hair down over her blazing eyes. — Don't touch me. Not till you use that. — Stretched to her full height, she points at the whip in the dust.

He hesitates. Sweat streams into his burning eyes.

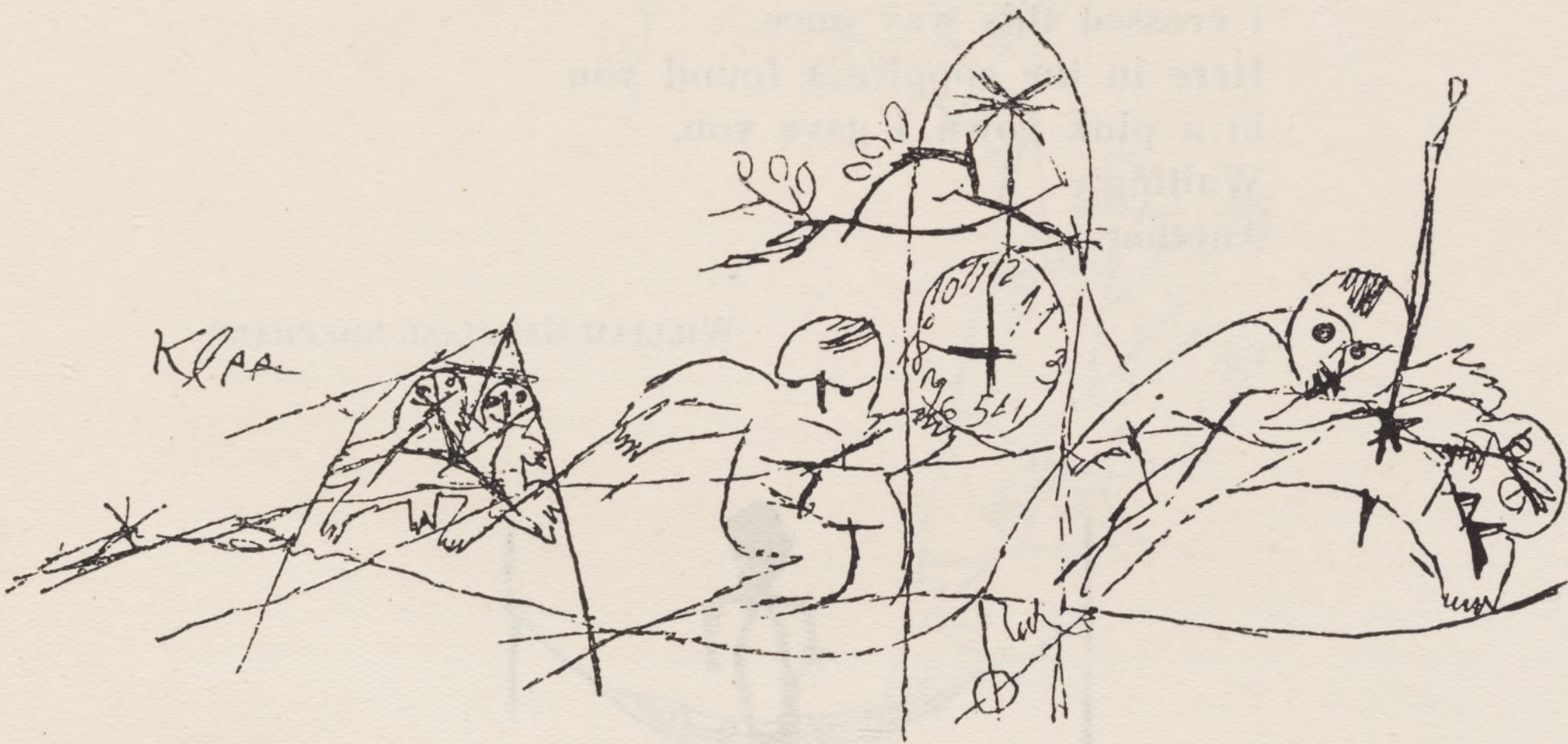
She no longer heeds him. She is staring through an opening in the cacti at the parched Vega crinkled with heat like fretted steel, like the armor of a vast fallen giant. Her heart contracts . . . crinkles up as though it too were cased in steel . . . bursts free again tumultuously.

Rufo's thin lips curl. He heels about . . . snatches up the whip . . . His great hairy hands knot . . . the veins bunch into tight cords . . .

The lash whizzes through the air. It slices through her dress, curls spitefully about her ribs . . . certain . . . relentless . . . with a rhythm of its own . . . as though Rufo were a mere automaton.

And Gita, arms crossed over her breast, makes a very beautiful savage song of the whip, a song that curls close around her heart . . . that glimmers like cloth of gold.

CARLETON BEALS



Paul Klee

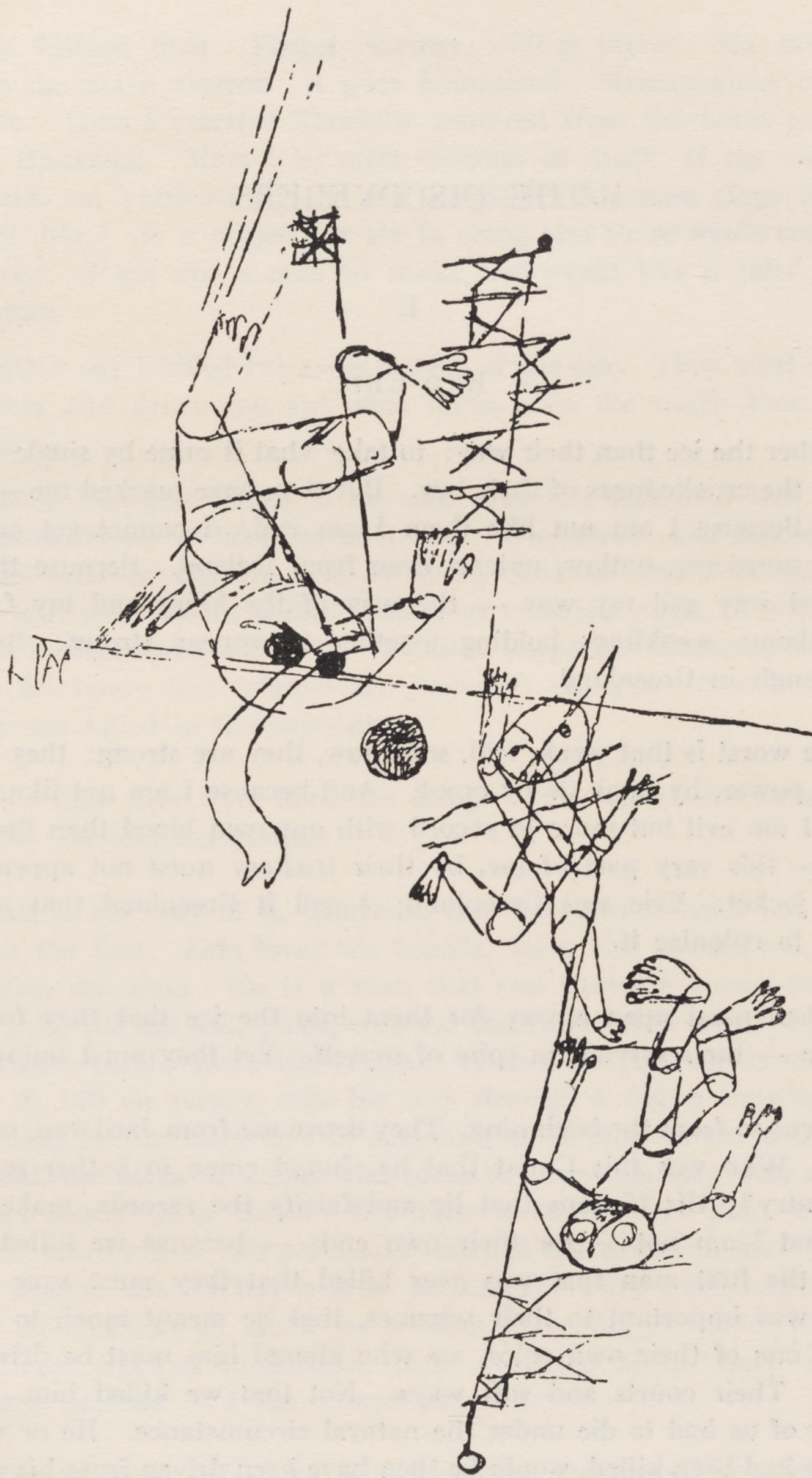
Murder

LANDSCAPE

Once, yes once I crossed this way.
The naked moon lay in the mud-hole
with her lover feasting on mud worms,
a dozen stars shamelessly bred
in a sharp horse track,
a screech owl bumped his nose in the dark
and wept and cursed,
Two dishrag clouds tried to adorn
the hideous soiled sky.
This is the way to your house,
girl once mine.
I crossed this way once.
Here in the coppice I found you
in a pink gown I gave you,
Waiting
Another.

WILLIAM GAMALIEL SHEPHARD





Paul Klee

Acrobats

THE DISCOVERERS

I.

RED ERIC

Rather the ice than their way: to take what is mine by single strength, theirs by the crookedness of their law. But they have marked me — even to myself. Because I am not like them I am evil. I cannot get my hands on it: I, murderer, outlaw, outcast even from Iceland. Because their way is the just way and my way — the way of the kings and my father — crosses them: weaklings holding together to appear strong. But I am alone though in Greenland.

The worst is that weak, still, somehow, they are strong: they in effect have the power, by hook or by crook. And because I am not like them — not that I am evil but more in accord with our own blood than they, eager to lead — this very part of me, by their trickery must not appear unless in their jacket. Eric was Greenland: I call it Greenland that men will go there to colonize it.

I then must open a way for them into the ice that they follow me even here — their servant in spite of myself. Yet they must follow.

It was so from the beginning. They drove me from Jaederen, my father and me. Who was this Christ that he should come to bother me in my own country? His bishops that lie and falsify the records, make me out to be what I am not — for their own ends — because we killed a man. Was he the first man that was ever killed that they must sour over it? That he was important to their schemes, that he meant much to them — granted: one of their own color, we who altered him must be driven from Norway. Their courts and soft ways. Not that we killed him. One or the other of us had to die under the natural circumstance. He or we. But that if we had been killed, would he then have been driven from his country? They would have made him Archbishop.

To Iceland then. Forget Norway. What there? My father dead. Land to the north cleared. A poor homestead. Manslaughter had driven me there. Then I married Thorhild, removed from the north and cleared land at Haukadal. Must I be meek because of that? If my slaves cause a landslide on Valthioff's farm and Valthioff's kinsman slays them shall I not kill him? Is it proper for me to stand and to be made small before my slaves? I am not a man to shake and sweat like a thief when the time comes.

Rather say I killed two men instead of the one. They tried me among themselves and drove me out once more. To the north then. Iceland wilderness.

There Thorgest comes to me and asks if I will lend him my outer dais-boards: ready to take me at a loss. Why else? For Eric the Red is a marked man, beyond the law, or nearly, and he who is outside the law has no law, so it would seem: from that man one steals at will — being many in the act against his one. Thorgest keeps the decorated woodpieces. I go to his house and remove my property. He gives chase and two of his sons are killed in the encounter.

This time they have done the thing. They search for us among the islands — me and my people.

This is the way of it, Thorhall, this has always been the way with me from the first. Eric loves his friends, loves bed, loves food, loves the hunt, loves his sons. He is a man that can throw a spear, take a girl, steer a ship, till the soil, plant, care for the cattle, skin a fox, sing, dance, run, wrestle, climb, swim like a seal. A man to plan an expedition and pay for it, kill an enemy, take his way through a fog, a snowstorm, read a reckoning by the stars, live in a stench, drink foul water, withstand the fierce cold, the black of winter and come to a new country with a hundred men and found them there. But they have branded me. They have separated murder into two parts and fastened the worse on me. It rides in the air around me. What is it to be killed? They have had their fling at me. Is it worse, so much worse than to be hunted about the islands, chased from Norway to Iceland, from south to north, from Iceland to Greenland, because — I am I, and remain so.

Outlaws have no friends. Murderers are run down like rabbits among the stones. Yet my ship was built, fitted, manned, given safe conduct

beyond the reefs. To Thorbiorn I owe much. And so to Greenland — after bitter days fighting the ice and rough seas. Pestilence struck us. The cattle sickened. Weeks passed. The summer nearly ended before we struck land. This is my portion. I do not call it not to my liking. Hardship lives in me. What I suffer is myself that outraces the water or the wind. But that it only should be mine, cuts deep. It is the half only. And it takes it out of my taste that the choice is theirs. I have the rough of it not because I will it but because it is all that is left, a remnant from their coatcloth. This is the gall on the meat. Let the hail beat me. It is a kind of joy I feel in such things.

Greenland then. So be it. Start over again. It turns out always the one way. A wife, her two sons and a daughter. So my life was split up. The logic of it also. This is my proof. We lived at our homestead well rid of the world. Traders visited us. Then Lief, Eric's son, sails to Norway, a thousand miles, in one carry. But on his return, Lief the Lucky, he is driven westward upon a new country, news of which he brings to Brattahlid. At the same stroke he brings me back pride and joy-in-his-deed, my deed, Eric moving up, and poison: an edict from Olaf — from my son's mouth — solid as an axe to cut me, half healed, into pieces again.

Not that it was new. Only that here in Greenland I had begun to feel that I had left the curse behind. Here through the winters, far to the west, I had begun to look toward summer when I should be whole again. My people at work, my wife beside me, the boys free from my smear growing in strength and knowledge of the sea. Here was an answer to them all: Thorstein and Lief Erickson, sons of Red Eric, murderer! Myself in the teeth of the world.

So they chopped me up. The Pope wins Olaf. Lief at court — after a thousand miles in one carry — Olaf commissions him to carry the thing back to Greenland. It grows like fire. Why not? Promise the weak strength and have the strength of a thousand weak at your bidding. Thorhild bars me, godless, from her bed. Both sons she wins to it. Lief and Thorstein both Christians. And this is what they say: Eric, son of evil, come and be forgiven. — Let her build a church and sleep in it.

With the years there began to be much talk at Brattahlid of Vinland the Good that Lief had first seen, that it should be explored. And so Karlsefni and Snorri fitted out a ship. Eric, too old to go with them,

watches the ship depart. But Eric is in the ship, with the men, Eric the bedless, the sonless. Fate has pulled him out at the holes of his eyes and flung him again to sea as the ship steers southward. Now the glass darkens as the sea takes them to the New World.

They found wild rice, they built booths and palisades. First they traded with the Skrellings, whose cheekbones were high, whose eyes wide, then fought them. Whereas Karlsefni and his men had shown white shields before, now they took red shields and displayed them. The Skrellings sprang from their canoes and they fought together. Karlsefni and Snorri were beaten. They fell back. Then it was that Freydis, Eric's natural daughter, came out from her cabin. Seeing that the men were fleeing she cried: Why do you flee from these wretches, when ye should slaughter them like cattle? Had I a weapon I would fight better than any of you.

Lagging behind the rest as they ran because of her belly, she being with child, she found a dead man in front of her. It was Snorri's son with his head cleft by a stone, his naked sword beside him. This she took up and prepared to defend herself. The Skrellings then approached her, whereupon she stripped down her shirt and slapped her breast with her bare sword. At this the Skrellings were terrified and ran down to their boats.

So, thinning out, more and more dark, it ran: Eric in Freydis' bones: Freydis now, mistress of her own ship, persuades two brothers, Helgi and Finnbogi, to sail with her again to Vinland: all to share equally the good things that might there be obtained. Lief to lend her his house there. Two ships, each to have thirty ablebodied men besides the women, but at the start Freydis violated the compact by concealing five men more. Karlsefni feared her.

Now they put out to sea, the brothers in one ship and Freydis and Karlsefni in the other, having agreed that they would sail in company. But although they were not far apart from each other the brothers arrived somewhat in advance and carried their belongings up to Lief's house. Freydis comes and does the same. The brothers withdraw and build a new house nearby. Within a month the two houses are at odds and winter comes on.

Spring. Freydis one night after long thinking, arose early from her bed and dressed herself but did not put on shoes and stockings. A heavy

dew had fallen. She took up her husband's cloak, wrapped it about her and walked in the dark to the brothers' house and up to the door, which had been only partly closed by one of the men who had gone out only a short time before. She pushed open the door and stood silently in the doorway for a time. Finnbogi was awake and said: What dost thou wish here Freydis? She answered: I wish thee to arise and go with me for I would speak with thee. — They walked to a tree which lay close by the wall of the house and seated themselves upon it. How art thou pleased here, she said. He answered that he was well pleased with the place except for the quarrel which had come up between them. They talked.

It was the brothers' boat — it seemed — she wanted, larger than her own. Finnbogi slow, thickheaded, or asleep consents to let her have it. Freydis split with anger or bad blood returns home and Finnbogi to his bed.

The woman climbed into bed and awakened her husband with her cold feet. Why so cold and wet? I have been to the brothers to buy their ship, but they refused and beat me!

Thorvard roused his men. They went to the brothers' house, took them and all their people, and slaughtered them one by one as they were brought from within. Only the women were left. These no one would kill. What? said Freydis. Hand me an axe! This done she fell upon the five women and left them dead.

In Greenland, Lief now head of the family has no heart to punish his sister as she deserves: But this I predict of them, that there is little prosperity in store for their offspring. — Hence it came to pass that no one from that time forward thought them worthy of aught but evil. Eric in his grave.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

THE KID

Mongolia — wild and joyless beast. Every rock — a beast, every lake — a beast, every butterfly seeking to sting.

Mongolians — inscrutable creatures: dressed, people say, in animal hides, looking like Chinamen, and living far from the Russians, in the desert Nor-Koy. Rumor said that they would retreat still farther, beyond China and India into blue unknown lands.

A small Kirghiz tribe(*), that had come from the Irtysh river fleeing from the Russian battle front, was now roaming in Mongolia, at some distance from a group of Russians, also fugitives. Brittle worthless characters, as everybody knows, the Kirghiz moved forward without haste. They brought their cattle along, their children, and even their sick.

The Russian fugitives, strong and healthy peasants, were being driven without mercy. They left all weaker ones behind them. Some of those died; others were killed. Their families, their property and cattle remained in the hands of the Whites. The peasants were as mad as wolves in spring. They lay in their tents hidden in a ravine, thinking of their steppes, thinking of their Irtysh river.

There were about fifty of them, with Sergey Selivanov as president. They called themselves in fact Comrade Selivanov's Partisan Detachment of the Red Guards.

They were lonesome.

When the Whites had been driving them across the mountains, the big black crags frightened them. Now that they had reached the Steppe, they were bored.

The Steppe here was like the steppe around the Irtysh river; sand, tough grass, hard metallic sky. Everything foreign, strange, uncultivated, wild.

The hardest thing was to get along without women.

All night, they told smutty soldiers' yarns, and when the torture became unbearable, they saddled their horses and went hunting after Kirghiz women.

And the Kirghiz women noticing the Russians would fall submissively on their backs.

* A Turkish tribe inhabiting Siberia.

It was disgusting to take them thus, lying motionless and with tightly closed eyes. It was like sinning with a beast.

The men were afraid of the Russians and moved out of their way far into the steppe. Whenever they saw a Russian they would brandish their rifles and bows threateningly, they would yell, but never shoot. Perhaps they did not know how.

II.

The treasurer of the Detachment, Afanasy Petrovitch Trubatchov, was tearful like a child and had the face of a child, small, red, beardless. Only his legs were long and wiry like a camel's.

When he mounted a horse, he grew stern at once. His face was drawn in and he sat there gray headed, angry, terrible.

On Whitsuntide three men, Selivanov, Afanasy Petrovitch, Drevesinin, were sent into the steppe to find good pasturage.

A wind was blowing. A heat wave was rising from the earth to the quivering sky. The bodies of man and beast were tough and heavy like stone.

Selivanov said hoarsely:

"What kind of pasturage can you expect here?"

Every one knew he was thinking of the Irtysh river.

The sparse bearded faces were silent; the hair on them looked like grass scorched by the sun; the eyes were bloodshot like a wound from a fishhook.

Only Afanasy Petrovitch said piteously:

"Wonder if there is a drought there too?"

He spoke in a tearful voice but there were no tears in his eyes. A tear was fretting the big dry eyes of the horse under him.

And so one after another the partisans went along wild-goat paths into the steppe.

The sand was glowing hot; the sand-saturated wind was clinging fast to the shoulders and head; the sweat was smarting in the body but could not make its way through the dry skin to the surface.

Towards evening, as they were passing from a hollow, Selivanov pointed south and said:

"Somebody is coming."

True. At the horizon a pink dust was rising above the sand.

"Must be Kirghiz."

They began to argue. Drevesinin said that the Kirghiz always kept at a distance and never approached Selivanov's ravine. Afanasy insisted it could be no one else. Only Kirghiz ever raised such thick dense dust.

And when the dust came rolling nearer and nearer, they all decided: "Strangers."

The horses understood from the voices of their masters that strangers were coming. They laid their ears back and fell on the ground even before any order was given.

In the ravine the gray and yellow horses' bodies looked helpless and ridiculous with their thin rod-like legs. They closed their big frightened eyes as if ashamed and were panting heavily.

Selivanov and the treasurer Afanasy Petrovitch were lying at the edge of the ravine. The treasurer was snivelling and whimpering. To allay his fear, Selivanov always kept him at his side; he seemed to enjoy and to find malicious satisfaction in that childish whimper.

Dust was sweeping nearer along the path. One could already hear the wheels knocking alternately; one could see the long black manes rolling like dust clouds in the harness.

Selivanov said, with assurance:

"Russians."

And he called Drevesinin from the ravine.

Two persons sat in a new wicker cart. One could see red bands on their hats but their faces were hidden by the dust. The red seemed to swim in yellow clouds. The muzzle of a gun emerged from the dust, a hand with a whip appeared now and then.

Drevesinin thought a while and said:

"Officers . . . on business I suppose . . . An Expedition . . ."

There was an evil twinkle in his eye.

"We'll show them what an Expedition is."

The cart carried the people fast ahead, pushed the horses forward. The dust, like a fox's tail, swept the tracks behind it.

Afanasy Petrovitch pleaded piteously:

"No, buddies, better let us take them prisoners."

"Have you no pity for your own head?"

Selivanov got angry, opened the cock of his gun, noiselessly like a button and threw back:

"Stop your bellyaching."

What made them particularly angry was, that the officers had come without convoy as if they were in countless numbers carrying certain death to the peasants.

One of the officers rose to his full stature, surveyed the steppe, but could not see well in the dust, and the wind, and the red evening, descending on the scorched grass and on the two rocks resembling horse's bodies near the ravine.

The cart and its wheels, the people and their thoughts, were submerged in the red dust.

A shot rang out.

At once the hats, knocking against each other, fell into the cart.

The reins slipped as if snapped by an unseen hand.

The horses darted forward and tried to run away. Suddenly their manes became coated with a milky foam; their powerful muscles trembled; they hung their heads and stopped.

Afanasy Petrovitch said:

"Dead."

The peasants went to look.

Dead they were. Shoulder to shoulder, they sat heads thrown backward like hoods. One of them was a woman. Hair scattered, half covered with dust — yellow and black; a soldier's blouse bulged high with a full woman's bosom.

"Queer thing," said Drevesinin, "but it is her own fault. Shouldn't have worn a man's hat. Who wants to kill women? We need them."

Afanasy Petrovitch spat.

"You skunk, boorjoy . . . you haven't . . ."

"Hold on," broke in Selivanov. "We are no robbers. We have to make an inventory of the people's property. Hand me a slip of paper."

In a Chinese wicker basket, hidden under the front seat, they found with the rest of the "people's property" a bright haired and bright eyed baby. Its little hand was clutching at the corner of a brown quilt. Still a suckling, small sized, squeaking.

Afanasy Petrovitch said with emotion:

"Well listen to it, jabbering in its own lingo."

Again there was a general expression of regret for the woman. They did not remove her clothes. The man was buried naked in the sand.

III.

Afanasy Petrovitch returned in the cart. Rocking the babe in his arms, he sang:

"Nightingale, birdie,

Canary —

Sadly singing. . ."

He recalled his village Lebiajy, his home, his cattle, his family, his children, and began to cry in a thin voice.

The baby cried too.

The fine crisp glowing sand extended far into the distance and cried also in a thin voice. The partisans with tempered faces and souls rode on their small strong Mongol horses.

Parched wormwood small and invisible, spread like sand along the path.

Sand and wormwood small and bitter.

Goat paths. Bitter sands. Mongolia — wild and joyless beast.

They examined the officer's property. Books, a box of tobacco, bright steel instruments. One of these was a four-cornered brass box with partitions set on a tripod.

The partisans examined it, weighed it in their hands.

They smelled of mutton fat. From great lonesomeness they ate too much and soiled their clothes. They had prominent cheek bones, soft thin lips, long black hair, dark complexions—real Don village types. And they all had bow-like legs and the guttural voice of the steppe.

Afanasy Petrovitch lifted the tripod with the brass top and said:

"Telescope," then half closed his eyes.

"Good telescope this. Cost heaps of millions. They saw the moon with it, fellows, and found gold deposits there. Pure like flour. Don't have to wash it even, all you need is just to pour it into sacks."

A young city-bred chap laughed aloud.

"What is he fibbing about? Put the stopper on him."

Afanasy Petrovitch got angry.

"I am fibbing, you stinking carrion? Just wait . . ."

* * *

They divided up the tobacco and gave the instrument to Afanasy Petrovitch. As treasurer he might swop it for something with the Kirghiz.

He put the instrument before the baby and said:

"Have some fun, kiddie."

But the child went on squeaking. He tried one thing, another. He broke into sweat—nothing would do, the baby went on as before.

The cooks brought dinner. There was a heavy odour of oil, porridge, *shtchee*. They pulled out of their boots wide Semipalatinsk wooden spoons. The grass under them was well worn. The ravine was deep and shady.

A mounted guard standing on duty, shouted from above:

"Hey there, I want to quit I am hungry Send up somebody. . ."

They finished eating and remembered—kid had to eat too. It never stopped squeaking.

Afanasy Petrovitch chewed up some bread, stuck the moist putty into the child's open mouth, and smacked his lips.

"PP . . pp . . here little shaver . . . have some grub, colty."

But the kid would not eat; closed its mouth and turned its head away. Running at the nose.

The peasants crowded around it. Looked at the kid over one another's shoulders. Were silent.

It was hot. Their lips and cheek bones shone with mutton fat; their shirts were unbuttoned; their feet were bare and yellow like the soil of Mongolia.

One said:

"Maybe he would eat some *shtchee*?"

Some *shtchee* was cooled off. Afanasy Petrovitch dipped his finger into it and then into the baby's mouth. The good fat *shtchee* trickled down from the child's lips on the rose shirt and the woolen quilt.

The baby would not eat.

"Why a puppy has more sense; it would lick your finger."

"Well, that's a brute, and this is a human being."

"That's right."

There was no cow's milk in the camp. They thought at first of feeding the child with mare's milk—there were mares in the camp. But the kumiss was too intoxicating, the child might fall sick.

They scattered in groups among the wagons; they spoke worriedly. Afanasy Petrovitch was running back and forth with a tattered coat on his back, with little tattered eyes in his face. He was lamenting in a thin, agitated, childish voice, as if he himself had been the child.

"Well, what shall we do about it? . . . We ought to. . . ."

Wide shouldered and powerful, they stood helpless.

"That's a woman's business."

"Of course."

"Maybe a woman would make him eat up a whole mutton?"

"Maybe."

Selivanov called an assembly meeting and said:

"We cannot let a Christian baby die like a brute. Supposing his father was a boorjoy, the kid is not to blame for it."

The peasants agreed:

"The kid has nothing to do with it."

Drevesinin burst out laughing.

"The kid will grow up all right . . . fly on the moon . . . mine gold . . ."

Nobody laughed. Afanasy Petrovitch raised his fists and shouted:

"If you aren't the craziest bitch."

He stamped his feet, threw up his hands, and suddenly uttered a piercing cry.

"A cow . . . we must get a cow for him."

All answered in a chorus:

"He'll die if we don't get a cow."

"A cow is what he needs."

"He'll burn up if there is no cow."

Afanasy Petrovitch said resolutely:

"I am going to look for a cow."

Drevesinin broke in impertinently:

"Go to the Irtysh, into Lebiajy. . ."

"I don't have to go to Irtysh, you assorted nut. I am going to the Kirghiz."

"Swop the telescope."

Afanasy Petrovitch flew at him.

Seeing, however, that they began to swear at each other inordinately, Selivanov, the chairman of the meeting said:

"That'll do."

And it was decided by vote that Drevesinin, Afanasy Petrovitch, and three others go to the Kirghiz camp to get a cow. If possible two or five—the cook's supply of meat was running rather low.

They attached rifles to their saddles, put on Kirghiz fox hats to resemble Kirghiz from the distance, and started.

"Good bye."

They wrapped the baby in the quilt and put it under a wagon. A young fellow sat watching it. To amuse himself as well as the baby he kept shooting from his Nogan revolver into the bushes.

IV.

Dreary Mongolian sands.

Russians riding over the sand. Night.

Sands exhaling heat and wormwood.

In the Kirghiz *aul*, dogs barking at wolves, at darkness.

Wolves howling in darkness at the city, at death.

Kirghiz fleeing death.

"Could we save our cattle from death?"

Green sultry darkness quivering over the sands, hardly able to retain it. Ready to fly off southward in a moment.

The *aul* exhaled the odor of dung, butter milk. Small hungry Kirghiz children sat around yellow camp fires. Dogs with bare ribs and pointed jaws pressed close to them. The tents looked like haystacks. There were a lake and reeds behind the camp.

Somebody fired a shot from the reeds into the camp fire.

"O—o—a—at. . ."

The Kirghiz left their tents at once. They screamed in fright, first singly, then all together.

"Ooy-boy . . . ooy-boy, *ak-kyzil ooroos* . . . Ooy-boy. . ."

They jumped on their horses which were kept in harness day and night. The tents, the steppe, resounded with the tramping of feet . . . The reeds echoed the cry of a wild duck.

"Ak- . . . ak . . ."

Only one Kirghiz, a grey bearded old man, fell from his horse head foremost into a kettle. He upset it, was scalded and began to wail in a deep voice. And near him a shaggy dog, its tail between its legs, was sticking timidly its hungry snout into the hot milk.

The mares were neighing softly. The sheep were running back and forth in the stable as if frightened by a wolf. . . The cows were panting heavily.

The Kirghiz women noticed the Russians and lay down submissively on the pillows.

Drevesinin laughed indecently.

"Are we stallions or what? . . . We can't always be . . ."

He quickly filled a flat bottle with milk, and, cracking his whip, drove up the cows and calves to the tents. Freed from the string, the calves fell hungrily to the udders butting them eagerly with their heads.

"Look at that hungry gang."

Drevesinin drove the cows from the camp.

Afanasy Petrovitch made another tour of the *aul* and was ready to leave when he recalled something.

"Why we need a nipple. Hey you nuts, you forgot the nipple."

And he ran into the tents to look for one. The fires in the tents were extinguished. Afanasy Petrovitch picked up a smouldering log. Choking with the smoke and scattering sparks all around him, he began to look for a nipple.

One hand held the crackling log, the other hand held a revolver.

But no nipple could be found. Covered by their clothes, the submissive Kirghiz women were lying prostrate. The children were squealing.

Afanasy Petrovitch got angry and shouted to one of the women:

"Hey, there you low down *nemakana*, give us a nipple."

The woman burst into sobs and began to unbutton first her jacket then her shirt.

"*Ni kirek . . . Al . . . Al . . .*"

At her side, a baby wrapped in rags was crying.

The Kirghiz woman bent her legs.

"*Al . . . Al . . .*"

Suddenly Afanasy Petrovitch caught her breast, squeezed it, and whistled with joy:

"Whew . . . there's a fine nipple . . ."

"*Ni kirek . . . ni . . .*"

"All right, don't be quacking. Come on."

And he dragged her after him.

He dropped the log. The tent sank into darkness.

He helped the woman into the saddle, and, feeling her breast from time to time, rushed off to Selivanov's ravine.

"I got it, pals." He said, and there were tears in his eyes.

"I got it."

V.

And then they found that in the dark unnoticed by Afanasy Petrovitch, the woman had fetched her baby along.

"Let it stay," said the peasants, "She has enough milk for the two of them. We have cows now and she is a pretty husky wench."

The Kirghiz woman was silent and grave, and fed the two babies when nobody was looking. They both lay on a rough pillow in the tent, one white, the other yellow, and both squealing in unison.

About a week or so later Afanasy Petrovitch brought the following fact to the attention of the general assembly.

"A cheater, comrades,—the wench feeds her own kid on a full breast and gives ours what's left on the bottom. I saw it myself."

The peasants came up to her tent. The babies were there, no different from any other babies. One was white, the other yellow like a ripe musk melon. But it did seem that the Russian was thinner than the Kirghiz.

Afanasy Petrovitch was in despair.

"Why, I even gave him a name, Vaska And now"

Drevesinin said:

"You certainly look punk, Vaska."

They found a stick, balanced it on a shaft so that one side should not weigh more than the other, and hung the babies one on each side to see which was the heavier.

Wrapped in rags and suspended from lassos, the babies were wailing. They had the specific odor of infants. The woman stood nearby not comprehending anything and weeping.

The peasants were all gone to their work.

"Let go." said Selivanov.

Afanasy Petrovitch removed his hand from the stick and the Russian shot up straight into the air.

"Look at the yellow brat," said Afanasy Petrovitch enraged, "he's all blown up."

He picked up a mutton skull lying on the ground and put it on the Russian child. The two sides were now in equilibrium.

"Overfed her kid by a full head, eh . . ."

"We can't be spying on her all the time."

"She's a brute."

"We have more to do than look after the kid."

All agreed:

"We can't be always looking after them."

"Well, if you look at it in a different way—she is a mother after all."

Afanasy Petrovitch stamped his feet and even screamed with rage.

"You mean to tell me that our own Russian kid is to croak for some *nemakan*? . . . Our own Vaska is to croak . . ."

They all looked at Vaska. He was lying there pale and thin.

The peasants were saddened.

Selivanov turned to Afanasy Petrovitch.

"You know . . . take that kid . . . and let him . . . God rest his soul . . . let the Kirghiz kid . . . die . . . we've done in plenty of them . . . one more won't . . ."

The peasant looked again at Vaska and disappeared.

Afanasy Petrovitch wrapped the Kirghiz baby in an old sack.

The mother whined. Afanasy Petrovitch slapped her lightly on the cheek and went into the steppe. . .

VI.

Two days later the peasants were standing on tip-toe before a tent and were peeping over one another's shoulders inside, where the woman was lying on the floor feeding the white child.

The woman was dressed in a jacket and leather shoes. Her face with eyes narrow like oat grains bore a submissive expression.

The kid was burrowing its face into her breast, padding its little hands over her jacket and kicking its feet in a funny and awkward fashion as if trying to leap.

The peasants looked on, laughing uproariously.

Afanasy Petrovitch watched them tenderly, blew his nose, and said in a drawl:

"Just watch him go to it."

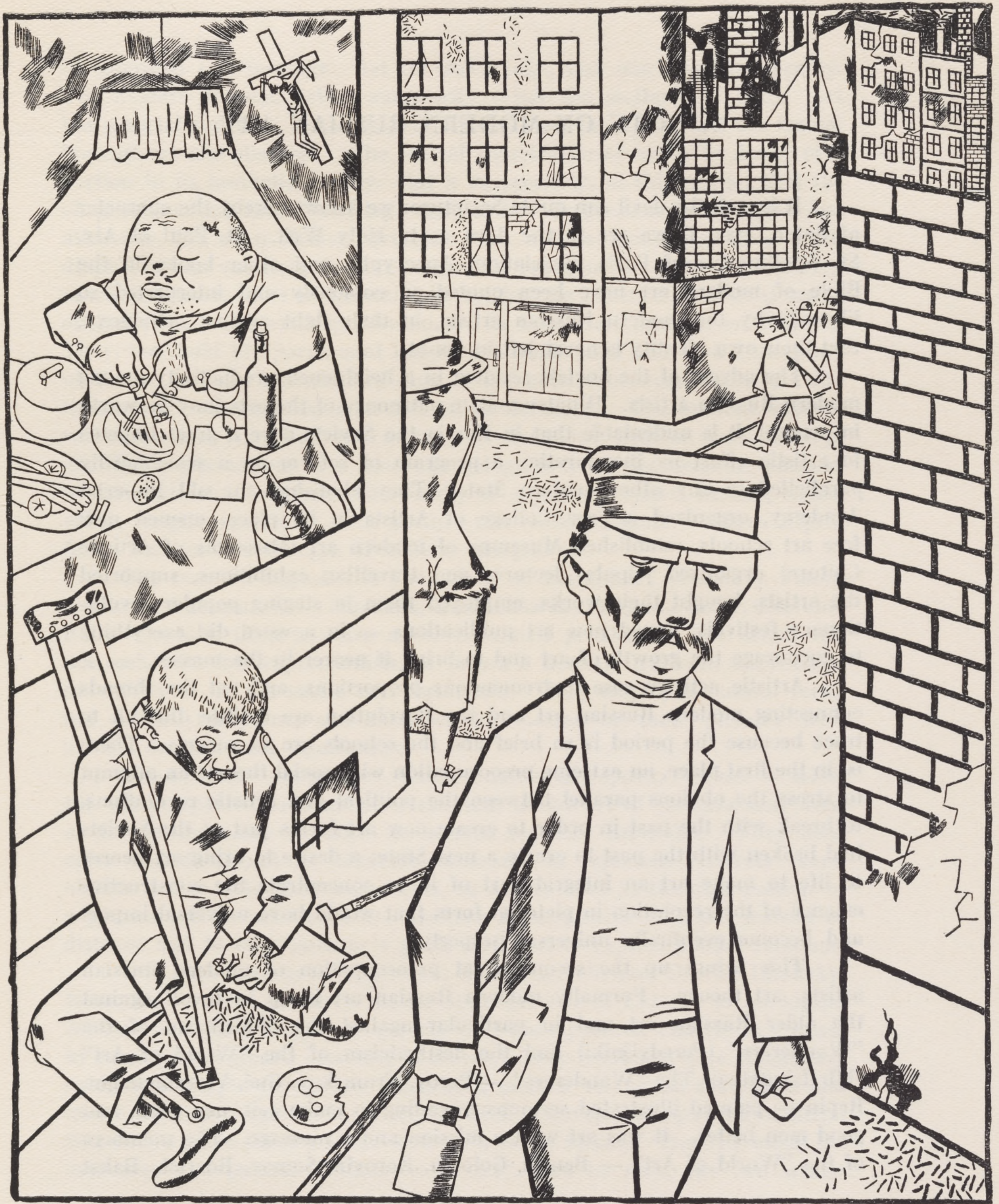
And behind the canvas tent, the ravine, the steppe, strange Mongolia stretching into unknown distances.

Mongolia, wild and joyless beast.

VSEVOLOD IVANOV

(Translated from the Russian by Louis Lozowick.)





George Grosz

Saturday Night

A NOTE ON MODERN RUSSIAN ART

It is well the devil can quote Scripture: we know thereby the character of Satan, even if we are in the dark as to Holy Writ. St. Paul of Aix, St. Apollinarius of Paris, Revelation, Apocrypha and other books in the Bible of modern art have been quoted so copiously and interpreted so liberally by the modern Russian artists, in their fight against orthodoxy, that their own identity is never left in doubt.

The advent of the Soviets resulted in a heightened productivity among modern Russian artists. Whatever state patronage of the arts may be worth in general, it is undeniable that in Russia the Soviets gave a great impetus to artistic effort by inaugurating a program of reform on a scale hardly paralleled in any other modern State. They abolished the old Imperial Academy, organized a Free College of Artists in its place, opened new free art schools, established Museums of modern art (Museums of Artistic Culture) organized popular lectures and travelling exhibitions, supported the artists, bought their works, employed them in staging popular revolutionary festivals, issued new art publications — in a word did everything to encourage the growth of art and to bring it nearer to the masses.

Artistic activity rose to tremendous proportions, and yet the threads connecting modern Russian art and the Revolution are a little difficult to trace because the period is so brief and the schools are so various. There is, in the first place, an extreme preoccupation with social theory, an attempt to stress the obvious parallel between the political and artistic revolutions, to break with the past in order to create new art forms just as the Soviets had broken with the past to create a new State; a desire to bring art nearer to life, to make art an integral part of it, to concentrate the constructive essence of the revolution in pictorial form that would have universal import and become eventually universal property.

This brings up the second great preoccupation of modern Russian artists: art theory. Formally modern Russian art is up in revolt against the older Russian art and in particular against the didacticism of the "Wanderers" (Peredvijniki) and the aestheticism of the "World of Art" (Mir Iskusstva). The "Wanderers" — Perov, Kramskoy, Gué, Vereshtchagin, Repin — painted illustrated sermons intending to make evil men good, and good men better. It was art with a mission and a message. The members of the "World of Art" — Benois, Golovin, Korovin, Somov, Roerich, Bakst

— admitted one message: Art for Art's sake, and one mission: Beauty. The modern Russian artists summarily reject the methods of both. Art has a social function, certainly, but this can best be exercised if the formal laws of art are observed. The ethical significance of art is in direct proportion to its aesthetic quality. But it is, precisely, in this respect that the older schools are found wanting. One makes disagreeable facts a little less attractive, the other makes agreeable facts a little more attractive. Both dilute life into anecdote and the method of procedure is in both cases very much the same, must of necessity be so, for the practice of both is based on imitation. The modern Russian artists base their practice on creation. They, too, hold life paramount but their attitude to it and their conception of it can be fully materialized only if the barrier between them and life is removed — if imitation as a method is abandoned. The modern Russian artists demand before all else mastery of technique, skill of workmanship, and devote themselves to a thorough going study of the elements peculiar to each art: the structure and stability of a picture; color: its hue, shade, value, weight; materials: their texture and solidity; space, volume, depth; form: balance and relation of masses and planes.

The reaction began with the "Jack of Diamonds" (Bubnovy Valet), a school of Cezannists — Mashkov, Kontchalovsky, Rojdestvensky, Lentulov Falk — which tried to solve anew Cezanne's problems. The artists did not seek, like the Impressionists, to record a fleeting, transient impression, but rather to fix the stable and permanent. They employed natural form, but ordered the planes and balanced the masses of their pictures with a view to structural significance.

The Cubists — Morgunov, Exter, Udaltzova, Popova, Pevsner — selected what appeared to them most essential in the art of Cezanne and went as far in the same direction as seemed logically inevitable. They used color and form not as elements necessary to represent concrete visual objects but as autonomous elements, as bricks used in the construction of a picture. They attempted to introduce a perspective of depth instead of distance and to set planes in a given direction to express spatial relations.

The Suprematists — Malevitch, Exter, Rodtchenko, Drevin, Lissitzky, Rosanova — tried to carry the analytic process of Cubism to its logical conclusion. They sought to get rid of what appeared chaotic in cubism by employing a greater economy of means. They combined pure elementary colors and simple elementary forms in a manner to suggest movement and create rhythm. Malevitch, the leader of the movement, carried simplification so far as to paint a black disk on a white square. Then he made the next step and painted "White on White". To be sure, the two whites

differ in hue and texture. Rodtchenko one of his ablest pupils, painted "Black on Black" (mat and glossy). Then he made the last step by painting three square canvasses in the three elementary colors, red, blue, and yellow respectively. Does that mean that art has at last reached a blind alley? Rodtchenko who passed from Suprematism to Constructivism would answer in the negative. There is a passage into the open. It is the passage leading from art to production. Art should merge with life. Autonomous art has no longer any important function to perform. But the artist has. He should devote his organizing, creative faculties to the productive industrial processes and thus relinquish his parasitic existence. Rodtchenko was true to his doctrine: he gave up the practice of art.

Not all constructivists — Medunetzky, Sternberg, Ioganson, Kliutzis, Lissitzky, Tatlin — hold the same views. Another tendency grants the legitimacy of artistic activity, although it would transform that in harmony with the demands of the new age. Art should root in the weightiest realities of our day. These are science and industry. The Constructivists, therefore, go for instruction to science and borrow an example from industry. Like science they aim at precision, order, organization; like industry they deal with concrete materials: paper, wood, coal, iron, glass. Out of these, new objects — not pictures — are created not imitative of reality but built with a structural logic to be utilized eventually, just as steam was utilized long after its discovery; — new objects that can affect society just as they are rooted in it. Hence the Constructivists consider their work strictly utilitarian. Technical processes organize dead materials; constructivist art would mold the new social personality.

There are still other versions of the Constructivist doctrine, all of them having at their core what one might call irreverently a romantic adoration of the machine. The law of contrast, perhaps. It was in the classical land of Political Economy, the Industrial Revolution, and urban centralization — it was in England that landscape painting had its rise.

Tatlin, one of the most prominent representatives of this tendency, attempted in his Monument to the Third International, to unite art and science and to create a utilitarian work. This monument comprising three stories (cube, pyramid, cylinder) rotating at different velocities (year, month, day) brings the time factor into his work. In different connection and on a smaller scale, the sculptor Gabo also introduces dynamism into his work. He seeks to establish in his sculpture an interrelation of forces rather than of masses. Gabo operates, like Archipenko, with the concave instead of the convex surface common in sculpture, and attempts to solve his novel problems in plastic glass constructions.

Archipenko holds high rank among modern Russian artists for his structural sculpture, his sculpto-painting, his work in porcelain and metal, and his excellent drawings.

The social and formal aspect are both strongly emphasized by Altman. This artist passed all stages in the evolution from "Mir Iskusstva" to the latest tendencies. He holds that the old art of the "Wanderers" and the "World of Art" as well as the new art of the Cubists and the Futurists is reactionary and out of date. The new age requires a new departure. Two ways are open to modern artists. The first is to abandon art and pass into production as Rodtchenko did; the second is to create a new art based not on merely visual forms, planes, lines, colors, but an art whose component elements are actual materials; coal, iron, steel, wood, paper. His work "Russia" embodies his theory. It is a rectangular board varnished and polished in some parts and inlaid with coal, paper, black wood in others. The materials are wrought and combined with a view of making an object which while not a picture shall yet have aesthetic value. Aesthetic value intermingled with ethical value, for the work purports to affect human consciousness by revealing to it in abstract form the powerful reality of revolution with its glorification of labor.

Sternberg, though, in general, not indifferent to social theory, confines himself in his work to pure aesthetic expression which he seeks to achieve by a simplification and conventionalization of natural form and by color and texture contrasts.

The painters Kandinsky, Filonov, and Chagal have each a well defined personality and stand somewhat aside from the general trend. They may be all termed Expressionists, for their intricate design, their intuitive method of work, and their rich often inchoate fantasy indicates kinship with the German art movement of the same name.

Critical literature is as ever abundant. At times the modern critics have a tendency to treat as axioms propositions that are doubtful even as theorems; at times they like to play the part of Apollinaire and explain the artists to themselves. On the whole however there is a healthy tendency to examine fearlessly and searchingly all standards.

Punin would have art train the apperceptive and cognitive faculties, to make man perceive the world as synthesis and thereby become master of it. Arvatov would have art be first ancillary to life, organize the human emotions and intellect, make them receptive to progressive revolutionary processes, and be finally distilled in life and absorbed by it. Brick would raise the artist to the rank of artisan and thus make him a useful member of society. ("He who does not work, neither shall he eat.") Gan would

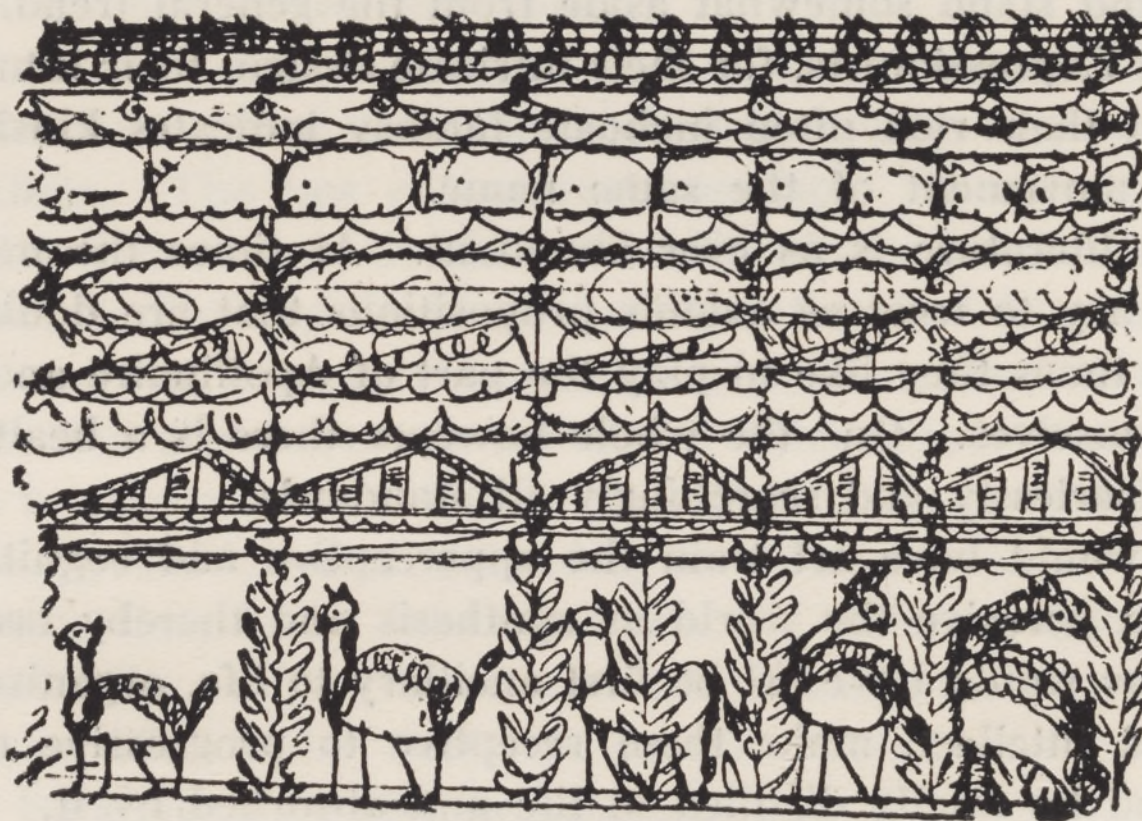
banish art from society altogether. ("We declare irreconcilable war on art.") and decree material intellectual production, the creation of socially necessary objects of use.

To one acquainted with Russian critical literature much of this sounds familiar. Pissarev, over half a century ago, drew a parallel between Pushkin and a shoemaker, much to the disadvantage of the former. Stassov advocated an art of social utility. Tolstoy's doctrine of artistic "infection" is universally familiar. Even the case of Rodtchenko finds its analogy in that of Gué who after a successful artistic career abandoned art under the influence of Tolstoy's evangelical doctrines.

In general, however, the modern Russian critics are much bolder owing to their more radical social philosophy and their leaning on the State. The Soviet Government acted on the assumption that a new art can be the work of a new man, himself the product of a new social system. Their policy was based on this assumption and they attempted to solve the art problem in a practical way — perhaps in the only practical way possible — in the way implicit in the assumption.

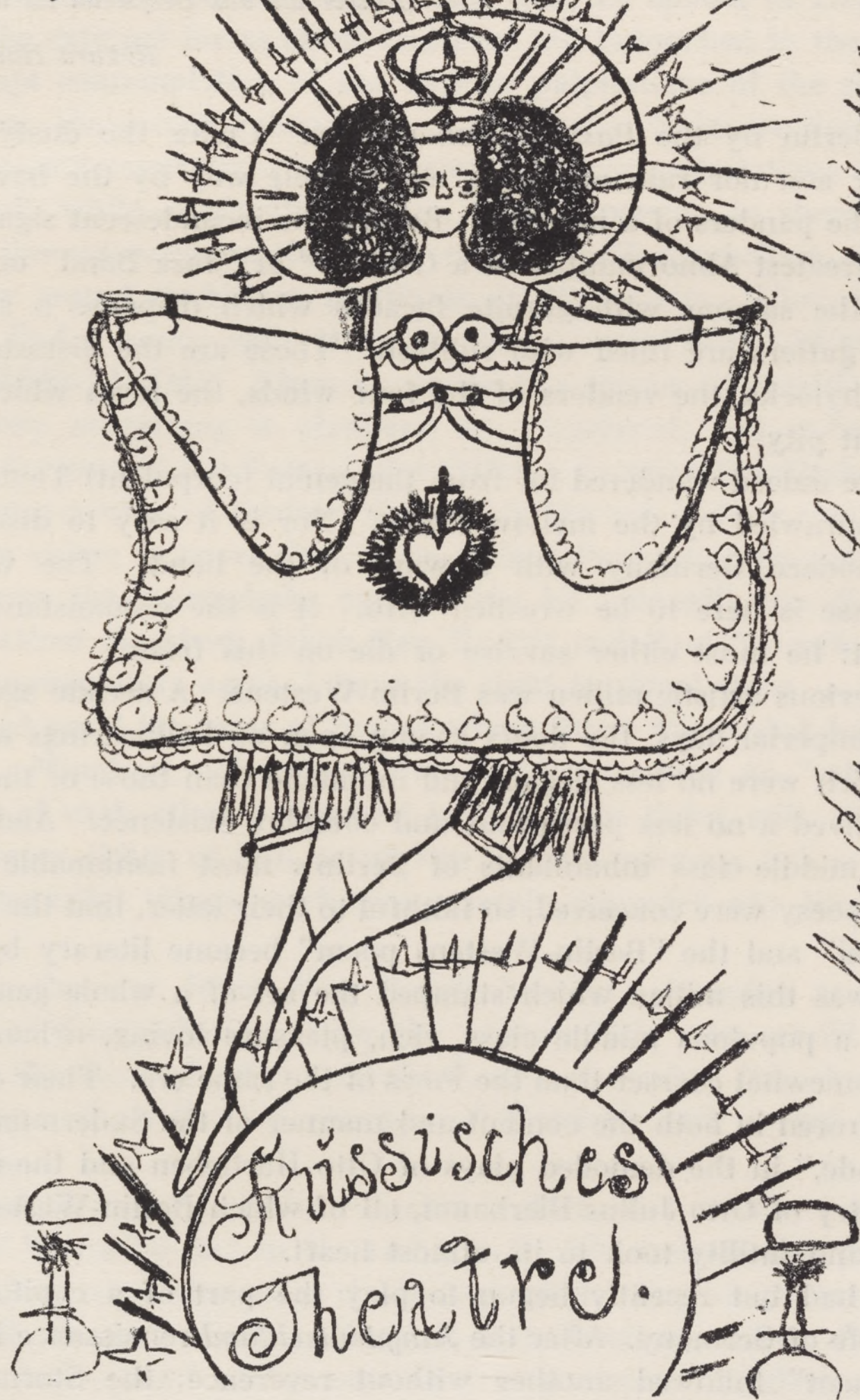
The assumption might be challenged; the policy might be criticized; that the effort is worth making is hardly open to doubt.

LOUIS LOZOWICK



Madman Drawin

Russische Frauenliebe, --
 ist im Irrmanneitern geistlich gehalten.



Maria Theresia Simon. 1. 1818.

Madman Drawing

BERLIN AND THE BUBBLING RHINE

"Grösser als das Beefsteak ist der Tod!"

Richard Huelsenbeck.

Enter Berlin by the *Passage Panoptikum*. Under the dusty arcade where neither sun nor rain can pass, elbow your way by the bawds, the tourists and the panders of a new age. Regard the incandescent signs which herald the "Greatest Abnormalities of a Century" or "Jazz Band" or American Drinks, the saloons with granite façades which dispense a synthetic nectar. The gutters are filled with rubbish. These are the distorted faces of the new Shylocks, the vendors of the four winds, the faces which Grosz draws without pity.

We have indeed wandered far from the genial (corpulent) Teuton who, lager-laden, sprawled by the mellow Rhine. Nor is it easy to dismiss the mirage of modern Germany with a wave of the hand. The world of Friedrichstrasse is here to be wrestled with. It is the nomansland of the modern artist: he must either survive or die on this front.

The previous artistic milieu was Berlin-Westens. A decade ago, in the comfortable imperial days, the doors swung open on ballbearings and gave on salons which were no less elegant and mundane than those of the Etoile; its residents lived a no less precarious and complex existence. And for the million odd middle-class inhabitants of Berlin's most fashionable quarter an art and a poesy were conceived, so faithful to their letter, that the "Berlin-Westens novel" and the "Berlin-Westens poem" became literary by-words.

What was this milieu which stamped the art of a whole generation? Nothing but a populous middle class, rich, pleasure loving, urbane, gourmand, and somewhat coarser than the Paris of the same era. Their complete vanity is mirrored in both the content and manner of the Sudermann novel, "Sodom's Ende," in the demoded plays of Otto Hartleben and the satirical-decadent poetry of Otto Julius Bierbaum, all of which Berlin-Westens in its very vanity and futility took to its utmost heart.

Berlin had but recently begun to play the part of a capitol in the intellectual life of Germany. After the *Jungdeutschland* renaissance however, one "movement" followed another without reverence; the Stormers and Stressers, Naturalists, Decadents, Symbolists, Expressionists, Dadaists . . . The Stormers and Stressers, Conrad, Bleibtreu and the Hart brothers came

crying: "Schönheit ohne Reinheit ist unvollständig;" but they soon made way for the Naturalists, Arno Holz, Hirschfeld and the younger Hauptmann; then were flung poppies, poppies, with the Decadents, Bierbaum and Hartleben; as for the Symbolists, they were as easily absorbed, although Stefan George was never as honestly admired as were the more comprehensible Richard Dehmel and Gustav Falke. Nor was the advent of Expressionism difficult: the external forms of art had been left untouched by the Symbolists in their rapt contemplation of the interior palpitations of the soul of man and nature; the proper rebound was, obviously, to ignore the interior of phenomena and concentrate on the purely external palpitations of the flesh and the soil, while overhauling idiom, form, language, in short everything related to the *expression* of the experience. A shallow rebellion. Expressionism merely served to hide a multitude of digressions. What more fitting than the Dadas come with their bushman cry: "BIRRI-BUMM! BIRRI-BUMM! BIRRI-BUMM!" Thus, we arrive at a species of guerilla warfare in art, whereby everything is ploughed up, plundered, and re-hashed. We arrive at the gate of the Passage Panoptikum fronting Friedrichstrasse.

A cross-section of modern Germany's literary history can at least be of negative value; to prove that three or four fascinating personalities, who emerge from the marmalade, can neither be "placed" nor dismissed. I speak of Alfred Mombert, Jakob Van Hoddis and Paul Scheerbart — since no two commentators agree, I have the right to signal them — who are ill remembered amid the mass of names which litters the period between 1885 and 1914. Mombert, Scheerbart, Van Hoddis compose no "school," knew even little of each other. Mombert is said to be living still, although few seem to know either of him or of Van Hoddis, whereas Scheerbart was a popular journalist whose work was scarcely conceded any literary importance.

Since the war Jakob Van Hoddis has been accepted as one of the "fathers" of Expressionism (how the curious little man would have rued this!) and the demands of a specialized class of readers have brought forth new editions of all the ten volumes of Mombert and several volumes of Scheerbart.

Alfred Mombert may be regarded in turn as a mystic, a pantheist, a disciple of Nietzsche, but in the end it is by his rhetoric that he compells. He is mystical somewhat after the fashion of the English poets of the early Seventeenth Century, Donne, Herbert, and Vaughan, whom Dr. Johnson called "metaphysical." The somewhat preposterous religious conceptions he fumbled with permit him a similar extravagance of image and thought-dissociation. In his dramatic trilogy, *Aeon*, a vast "Aeon Mythos" is pom-

pously sung; but the true *feinschmecker* of poetry will forgive him his tedious epic of a mythical superman, for the fresh and surprising qualities of his lyrics. To comprehend Mombert's departures from the literature of his compatriots it must be remembered that nearly all the novelists of his time were enslaved, either to Flaubert or to Zola, and all the poets to either Verlaine or Mallarmé.

In "Der Glühende," (1897) we are far afield from Berlin-Westens. His diction has no Gallicisms; it has rather the crude direct accent of old German fairy tales, which were certainly remarkable for their elaborate humor, naiveté, brutality and worldly wisdom. The language is extremely simple in construction, but so idiomatic that Mombert can seldom be translated adequately:

*Und vor den Leichenstein
baut man ein Bänklein
für die schwarze Familie.*

*Frühmorgens um sieben
aufziehen, die hinterblieben,
die schwarze Familie*

*Der Jung' versucht zu schwatzen,
da kriegt er in die Fratze
von der schwarzen Familie.*

*Die Tochter hebt die Röcke auf,
da kriegt sie einen Blick darauf
von der schwarzen Familie.*

*Der Sohn steht auf, geht nebenbei . . .
doch ist er gleich wieder dabei,
bei der schwarzen Familie.*

*Schleppt Wurscht herbei! schleppt Bier herbei!
Eben schlug es zehne
für die schwarze Familie.*

The sequence of the theme in this ballad is always very curious, one hunts in vain for causal relationship, and yet the rhythm prepares one for the just violence of the end: "Schleppt Wurscht herbei! schleppt Bier herbei!"

Another poem in the same vein tells of the poet being seized by four hunters and placed against a wall of rock. They search him: "Hast eine Kartoffel gestohlen, wirst erschossen!" They tear his clothes off.

"Und sie rissen mir den Rock vom Leib.

Und sie rissen mir das Hemd vom Leib."

They find nothing, until they come upon his heart, which "so softly, softly, beats" and cry:

*"Hier sitzt die Kartoffel,
die gestohlene Kartoffel!"*

*"Da wuchs ich riesengroß empor die Felswand
und war ein ganzes blutgequältes Volk."*

At times he rises to a mad aggression, he "becomes a giant towering above the wall of rock, a whole blood-choked people!" This note is rarely touched in modern poetry, the menace of:

*Helft mir auf die Rednerbühne!
Stützt! hebt!
helft! eilt!
Mein Herz glänzt überm Meer!!*

The following poem which chances to lend itself to translation is really characteristic of the *uralt* savour of Mombert at his best:

Tinkling! — Tambourines! — —
I arise from nights of dark-draped rooms —

At the window I lift the curtain.
Glittering, shimmering, the sun . . .
Below a bear dances.
Two stout and healthy boys: green coats, red caps.
Glittering, shimmering the sun . . .

The curtain falls. I press the bell.
Naked whores rush in.

"The boys die.
The bear goes hungry.
The sun gets slapped."

Poetry in the hands of Paul Scheerbart, as well, breaks from the mould into which it has been pressed by the nineteenth century and approaches the primitive motives of art. Groping as these men do, living in and yet detached from their period, they at least follow the method of no "school," they are neither symbolist nor decadent. Their moments of bathos and bad taste are redeemed by the fresh and unexpected turns they take.

Scheerbart is another "unconscious" type. Although remembered chiefly for his fantastic prose tales, his poetry, insolent, vulgar and grotesque,

seems more arresting. Within your urbane civilized German there is a vein of cruel fantasy which Scheerbart exploits. Lack of restraint hurls him to an extreme departure from representative literature; his loud chanting on the wind instruments approaches the vivid slogans of American advertisements. Here is "Indian Song:"

*Murx den Europäer!
Murx ihn;
Murx ihn! Murx ihn!
Murx ihn ab!*

Other poems are less cryptic, although equally electrifying. "Der Lachende Engel" is about "great white disks" which go soaring in heaven, with "blood-red nuts whirling upon them," and angels who go spraying vitriol and crying "Very well! Very well!"

*Wie war's doch nur?
Im Himmel schwebten
Große blanke Diskusscheiben —
Auf denen drehten sich blutrote Nüsse.
Doch alles schlug ein böser Geist entzwei.
Ein Engel lacht dazu
Und spritzt Vitriol.
Jawohl! Jawohl!*

In certain of Scheerbart's poems one finds precisely the style of archaic sculpture. The subject sits with his arm in a very awkward gesture, which is at once contrary to the laws of perspective, and mysteriously satisfying. Modern painting may have carried the gospel too far against "perspective" but we can still weep with joy at a perfect piece of distortion.

Of Jakob Van Hoddiss only one small book of verse is known, *Weltende*, containing some sixteen short poems. Van Hoddiss was known before the war by certain of the writers who later formed the Expressionist group. He is supposed to have died in a madman's cell. But the case against insane artists has failed ingloriously, and great art is no more regarded as an evidence of insanity (witness Baudelaire and Poe) than insanity as an *a priori* postulation of great art.

Van Hoddiss writes with a boundless and monstrous imagination. He is a heroic and isolated figure. He writes from great conviction and great loneliness. From the traditional point of view, every line of his few known poems is hard and ringing. The play of ideas is more frequent in him, than in Scheerbart, he is more cerebral and more luxurious. The thought is projected sharply beyond the immediate word or situation. At the world's end:

*Dem Bürger fliegt vom spitzen Kopf der Hut,
In allen Lüften hallt es wie Geschrei.
Dachdecker stürzen ab und geh'n entzwei
Und an den Küsten — liest man — steigt die Flut . . .
Der Sturm ist da, die wilden Meere hupfen
An Land, um dicke Dämme zu zerdrücken.
Die meisten Menschen haben einen Schnupfen.
Die Eisenbahnen fallen von den Brücken.*

"The burgher's hat flies from the tip of his head, cries resound in all the air, roofs plunge down and go asunder . . . most people have colds; railroads fall from the bridges." And as the world rolls to its end, "Through seven heavens the steam of tobacco and of poor sinners' fat rises in thick swaths."

*Die Wolken winden sich wie Leinentuch,
Im Himmel spür' ich gräßliche Exzesse.
Die Engel fürchten sich vor Gottes Fluch,
Und haben Zigaretten in der Fresse.
Denn Luzifer ist heute eingeladen
Und geht mit einem sicherlich zu Bett.
Durch sieben Himmel zieht in dicken Schwaden
Dampf von Tabak und Armesünder-Fett.*

Van Hoddiss in his less sombre moments is master of a lighter vein, one of superb clownery:

*Der Mond ist meine Tante
Er schmoddert durch die Nacht.
Die Sonne meine Großmama,
Hat nie an mich gedacht.*

The influence of Van Hoddiss has been far-reaching. First through the talented and ill-fated poet, Alfred Lichtenstein, (killed, Marne 1914) one of the early Expressionists. Lichtenstein was a happy satirist who adopted the grotesque manners of his predecessors, with less success. August Stramm, another Expressionist, bears resemblance to Van Hoddiss: his fantasy, and his plays with words occasionally lift him out of the mob of Expressionists. Huelsenbeck who raised the banner of Dada for a brief day in Germany has disappeared; a brilliant and provocative young man, who preferred, after displaying much indubitable talent, to emulate the vanishing act of Rimbaud. Arp sings his solitary varnished song in Switzerland, a poet without a country, no longer Alsatian or French or German. Who will now lead the dance through the *Passage Panoptikum*?

M. J.

COMMENT

Astonishing similarities will be noticed between our reproductions of widely different origin—Indian designs and the work of George Grosz, madmen's productions and the delicate drawings of Paul Klee. The primitive man and the refined propagandist, the imbecile and one of the finest sensibilities of our age — what can these personalities have in common?

I asked an old Arabian carpet weaver in Gapa to draw some patterns for me. He replied that although he had learned the figures from his father, he had long since forgotten them. However after some hesitation his hand unconsciously traced the outlines of a bird, a fish and a camel.

Our Indian drawing of a man sitting in his hammock is rather naturalistic but the "artist" did not forget to draw a hole for the empty stomach inside the body. Thus does the pen of Grosz penetrate beneath the skirts and blouses of cocottes and into the hearts of profiteers and soldiers. The method of these two artists—whether learned from their ancestors, in school or in life—is the same: empiric and conceptional. Their aim the imparting of knowledge and information to others.

The excellent book of Dr. Prinzhorn, "Plastic Production of the Insane," enabled us to reproduce some drawings by madmen of the *schizophreme* group, whose minds are cut off from the outside world and are often split into several different personalities. Their drawings are skeletons which they clothe in the flesh of their imaginations, thus concentrating them into what can be called a sort of order. Uncontrolled by and uninterested in the world's realities, the insane mind is guided only by the logic of paper and pencil or brush and colour. The two fundamental mysteries — religion and love — form, for the most part, the inspiration of their drawings: and in them memories reappear as in the drawing of the Koroo-man.

The mysticism of Paul Klee is evident in one of his latest works which Dr. Zahn calls "The Cosmic Picture Book." The egocentrism of the

philosopher separates him from the world as definitely as the illusions of the insane, and the many sides and directions of his (literarily expressed) interests may form a parallel to the divided personality of the madman. But the intentions of Klee are aesthetic while the madman creates from a pathological necessity. Both are unconscious of the antagonism which exists in the other examples. For the Indian's intention is informative like that of the Arab, who wants to draw a bird, but who knows that this figure must decorate a carpet. This struggle between the plastic and the informative exists to some extent in all art productions, unconsciously in the case of children, of primitive people or of the insane; consciously in the case of intelligent artists like George Grosz, whose work is analyzed in detail, in another part of this issue.

In the work of the mystic the diversity of empiric reality has no place, and abstract elements build up peculiarly concrete beings, while the positivist creates a new abstract unity out of all the elements of his knowledge and experience.

L. M.

★ ★ ★

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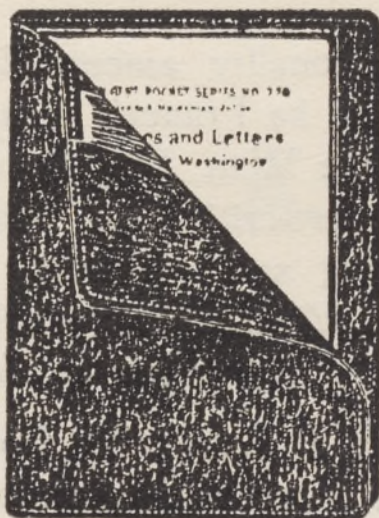
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