

Published by Peculiar Mormyrid peculiarmormyrid.com

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the publisher or author.

Texts Copyright © The Authors Images Copyright © The Artists

Direction:

Jason Abdelhadi, Casi Cline, Steven Cline, Angel Therese Dionne, Patrik Sampler

Book Design by Casi Cline Cover Art by Steve Morrison

First Edition 2018

CONTRIBUTORS

Nicholas Hayes George Rundblad Iason Abdelhadi S. Higgins Ody Saban Teeves Anguy Élise Aru Patrick Hourihan Ron Sakolsky Leonor Asphyxiate Karl Howeth Patrik Sampler Michele-Bachelet Bruno Jacobs Pierre-André Sauvageot Hermester Barrington Elva Jones Nita Sembrowich Dave Kennedy Rick Simonson Kate Brenheimer Aiden Kvarnström Dave Shortt J. Karl Bogartte Erik Bohman Megan Leach Suzzanne Stangel Rik Lina Deborah Stevenson Achille Brachet (†) Vittoria Lion Abigail Susik Maurizio Brancaleoni Gina Litherland Lvnne Tillman Doug Campbell Claude-Lucien Cauët CM Lundberg Laurens Vancrevel Marc Chenetier Emma Lundenmark Ann Vandermeer Mackenzie MacLeod Ethan Vilu Steven Cline Micheline Marcom Anne Waldman Casi Cline David Coulter Michael Martone Colin Wheeler Paul Cowdell Paul McRandle Tim White China Miéville Curtis White Dante DeStefano Thomas Mordant Michael Wiegers Rikki Ducornet Steve Morrison Lake Anne Erminy Brian Evenson Iñaki Muñoz $Mr. C - B (\dagger)$, Alfredo Fernandes David Nadeau inmate of the Glasgow Niklas Nenzén Royal Lunatic Asylum Merl Fluin Ika Österblad Jean-Yves Mattias Forshage Juan Carlos Otaño The House of Mysticum Kathleen Fox Brandon Freels Nancy Joyce Peters The Ottawa Surrealist Group Anne Proulx The Surrealist Group in Stockholm M. Fron Patrick Provonost The Surrealist Group of Paris Joël Gayraud

Hal Rammel

John Richardson

Penelope Rosemont Jessica Rousseau

Melinda Giordano

Janice Hathaway

Guy Girard Sa'ad Hassan

INTRODUCTION 8
TEST OBJECT I:
The Hatching of Pocket Change (Species Unknown)
AN AFTERNOON AMONG MINIATURES by Leonor Asphyxiate
THE GENTRY by S. Higgins
MYOMATA UTERI by Steven Cline
THE BRONTËS' MINIATURE KINGDOMS by Gina Litherland
BODY MY HOUSE by Steve Morrison, Colin Wheeler, & Dante DeStefano 28
LANGUAGE OF STONES by Tim White
UNTITLED BY by Steve Morrison
OSMOTIC LIKE INWARDNESS by Tim White
WORKING LATE? by Jason Abdelhadi
POSTCARD by Patrick Hourihan, Paul Cowdell, & Merl Fluin
FRUITING BODIES by Megan Leach
BIRNHAM WOOD COUNTRY CLUB by David Coulter
SMALL MEDITATIONS by Tim White
CRUSHING BORE by Steven Cline
CHESHIRE MOON by Janice Hathaway
A PUZZLE by Jason Abdelhadi
WHEN I WAS LITTLE by Claude-Lucien Cauët
EVERYTHING NICE by Steven Cline
THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS by Janice Hathaway
DANCE OF THE GIANTS by Michele-Bachelet
TEST OBJECT II:
Of Bird Nests & Belly Buttons (Mellisuga Helenae)
OPUSCULUS SATHANAE MINIMAE by Jason Abdelhadi
SERIE MAPA DE INTELIGENCIA, OBSECION Y DELIRIOS NATURALES.
TRIBUTO A CLAUDIO GAY by Iñaki Muñoz
AN INMATE OF THE GLASGOW ROYAL LUNATIC ASYLUM,
DESCRIBING THE CONTENTS OF HIS POCKETS, 1885
SPECIMENS by Casi Cline
THERE'S BIRDSHIT ON THIS WINDSHIELD by Ron Sakolsky & Jason Abdelhadi 58
FOR THE PSYCHOPATHOLOGY ENCYCLOPEDIA: HYPNOAVINANOPHOBIA
by Mattias Forshage

PAREIDOLIA MYCELIAE by Casi Cline
SERIE MAPA DE INTELIGENCIA, OBSECION Y DELIRIOS NATURALES.
TRIBUTO A CLAUDIO GAY by Iñaki Muñoz
AN EVENING STROLL by J. Karl Bogartte
COME OUT OF YOUR BODY AMONG US by Megan Leach
COLLECTOR by Deborah Stevenson
DREAM SPECIMENS by Megan Leach
SEA FLORILEGIA by Vittoria Lion
KAI, LOST by Aiden Kvarnström
THE MANY SMALL DETAILS by Melinda Giordano
SERIE MAPA DE INTELIGENCIA, OBSECION Y DELIRIOS NATURALES.
TRIBUTO A CLAUDIO GAY by Iñaki Muñoz
SEA CHANGE by Melinda Giordano94
QUENCHING WENCH by Deborah Stevenson
SWITCHING YARD by Patrik Sampler
UNTITLED by Ron Sakolsky
MY CRYSTAL VISION by John Richardson
ALBINO CABBIFORM DREAM POETICS by Casi Cline
PALIMPSEST by Vittoria Lion
IN TIME YOU'LL SEE THE LINE by Merl Fluin
TEST OBJECT III:
An Infection of Bloodborne Mycelial Squid
(Idiosepius Paradoxus)
THE PETRIFIED DAWN by David Nadeau
A KEY IN THE SKULL by David Nadeau
11 11B1 11: 111B 0110BB 0 / B # 0 /# 1 /# # 0 / 1 / 1 / 1 / 1 / 1 / 1 / 1 / 1 / 1 /
OH, THOSE BACTERIA! by Maurizio Brancaleoni
·
OH, THOSE BACTERIA! by Maurizio Brancaleoni

AN ODOR, AN IMAGE, A TITLE FOUND BY TWO AND TWO THOUGHTS
THAT BRUSH PAST EACH OTHER by Ody Saban & Thomas Mordant 124
HOMUNCULI (I) & (II) by Nicholas Alexander Hayes
UNTITLED by Tim White
A NEW RADIANCE by Hal Rammel
THE AFTERLIFE OF AN INSTANT by Steve Morrison
PLANKTON by Rik Lina
SKIN STORY by Kathleen Fox
THE SIMPLICITY OF LIFE by Bruno Jacobs
A GREAT MICROSCOPIC CONGRESS by Achille Brachet, Microphiliac 146
UNTITLED by Tim White
THE PARASITES by David Shortt
BELITTLE ME, BIG MAN by Lake
TEST OBJECT IV:
A Swarm of Lustful Marbles (From the Underside of a Wing)
A Swarm of Lustful Marbles (From the Underside of a Wing) THE MINIATURIST SÉANCE by Ottawa Surrealist Group
A Swarm of Lustful Marbles (From the Underside of a Wing) THE MINIATURIST SÉANCE by Ottawa Surrealist Group
A Swarm of Lustful Marbles (From the Underside of a Wing) THE MINIATURIST SÉANCE by Ottawa Surrealist Group
A Swarm of Lustful Marbles (From the Underside of a Wing) THE MINIATURIST SÉANCE by Ottawa Surrealist Group
A Swarm of Lustful Marbles (From the Underside of a Wing) THE MINIATURIST SÉANCE by Ottawa Surrealist Group
A Swarm of Lustful Marbles (From the Underside of a Wing) THE MINIATURIST SÉANCE by Ottawa Surrealist Group
A Swarm of Lustful Marbles (From the Underside of a Wing) THE MINIATURIST SÉANCE by Ottawa Surrealist Group
A Swarm of Lustful Marbles (From the Underside of a Wing) THE MINIATURIST SÉANCE by Ottawa Surrealist Group
A Swarm of Lustful Marbles (From the Underside of a Wing) THE MINIATURIST SÉANCE by Ottawa Surrealist Group

INTRODUCTION

"I'd rather not talk about those damned mushrooms anymore, but, since we are talking about them, it's necessary that you understand, Fléchambeau, that they have left the memory of a deadly but magnificent cohesion, being one of those species in which the individual is submerged in the mass, obedient to the instinct of the collective, to the specific mind, being only a cell in the bosom of an organism, living only for the multitude of which it is a part."

-Maurice Renard, A Man Among the Microbes (tr. Brian Stableford)

We seek transformation of life at the molecular level.

One possible origin story for this issue might have been a semiconscious desire on the part of the editors to re-deploy on a different scale the animal-cules of microsurrealist anticommunication as already practiced for example by Steven and Casi Cline, Megan Leach, through their international campaign of mini-zines and postcards. An anticommunication of a different scale, we say, but not a larger one—in fact it has always been the prerogative of the tiny to swarm. The success of this infestation has already evidenced a wide network of literal moments of disturbance, around the world, a simultaneous flea bite from a microbooklet.

The questionnaire on smallness, then, was intended to scratch this very delicate itch, and awaken at least a desire on the part of our respondents to look closely for a moment at the environment around them for previously unnoticed animalcules of interest and/or irritation. Judging from the responses, our point seems to have been proven: it's not the relative size but the proximity that makes things small. Hence perhaps the surprising surrealist nontradition of gigantism, as compared with the many, many journeys taken alongside Alice: the Ernstian micropaintings, the reduction in poemsize and booksize (as compared to most others), and the many strange and portable objects and devices and irritants discovered over our almost-century of activity.

We find in the end that smallness as a quality connects itself with a few fundamental surrealist possibilities: Observability—there is effort to be undertaken to see the microscopic, you could call it poetic commitment. We speculate and where we can, we observe. Our microscopes are of the finest SURACHROMATIC power, in the tradition of the mad micrographer, Achille Brachet. Our Test-Objects are indisputably bizarre and pareidoliac.

Collectibility—from the "Monsters in my Pocket" school of thought, it is apparent that not only are these little models objectively less difficult to hoard, but that their relative graspability makes them easier to arrange or rearrange in sequences that please and that harrow. Who can deny the dollhouse aspect of surrealism, which has always and still continues to contribute to its vitality? Collectability is the domain of the game, of playing and placing the prompts of radical make-believe.

Proximity—small things, as noted, are always "all around". This is an entirely divorced sensation from the confrontation with the Big Object (oh, a mountain to conquer or a dinosaur to eat me!) The molecular things, on the other hand, are plentiful, and just as, if not more, scary. The Lovecraftian Old Ones could very well be microscopic. The ecological disaster of the world is likewise occurring at the molecular level of the metabolic, as McKenzie Wark says:

'The Anthropocene is a series of metabolic rifts, where one molecule after another is extracted by labor and technique to make things for humans, but the waste products don't return so that the cycle can renew itself.'

And yet the micronearbyness is also what tempts us, and what scares us, what halts us in our tracks from pursuing overarching and useless molar activities. What's near is not apparent to the naked eye, therefore even more incredibly and awfully present.

Entity—smallness does not mean nothingness, or wireless, or digital. A long polemic against gadgets and technology could be inserted at this point. Capitalist innovation miniaturizes, yes, with a view to dematerialization. Suffice it to say that those small things we clamour for are so irresistible precisely because they still have bodies to play with.

Spontaneity—don't flies generate spontaneously on meat? If not, they may as well, says the surrealist, for how ubiquitous are the possibilities of disproven hypotheses. Chances for shortcircuits increase dramatically. As Dr. Prologus

says in A Man Among the Microbes: "A surprising phenomenon of spontaneous generation!"

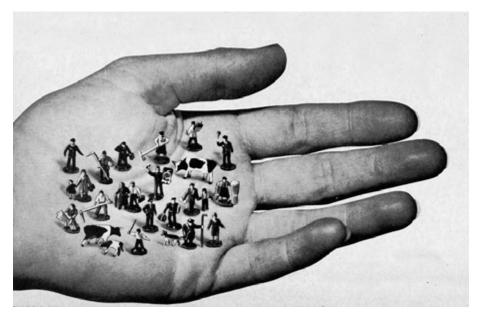
Quantity—if these little fleas are actually demonic black holes, that doesn't change the fact that there are innumerable ones to be captured.

All these lead to the core surrealist point—the abundant and unceasing availability of these entities to infect us and change our lives. The automatic whisperings are always still "in the air", being ridden by who knows what horrible barely perceptible extremophile.

Too small to change the world? Some will accuse us of cheating, of disappearing out of sight and mind. A breach of the contract, a cowardly escape. These surrealists have gone too far underground, have simply vanished!

Ladies and Gentlmen of the Patriarchy, we have not disappeared. We are very tiny. We are a germ. A rare disease. We are called malignalital optereosis... and you caught us, Ladies and Gentlemen.

-The Mormyrids, June 2018



Found Image



TEST OBJECT I: The Hatching of Pocket Change (Species Unknown)



AN AFTERNOON AMONG MINIATURES

by Leonor Asphyxiate

I. rationalizations

As a kid I often played with my sister's dollhouse. It was a tall Victorian affair which had been passed down through the family and hand-built by my great-grandfather. Many dreamy afternoons were spent imagining my life lived among tiny chairs, eating tiny food, perhaps cohabiting this blue mansion together with my tiny wife. We'd rub our naked bodies together on tiny little beds, and eventually she'd defecate some tiny children. (I continued in my belief that babies were expelled via anus until the age of 10 or 11.)

Around this time, I was also exposed to a friend's magnificent railroad diorama in the basement of his house, which his grandfather had spent years building for him. After seeing this, my father and I became obsessed with building a miniature rail-world of our own. I helped him as he created the tiny towns and weirdly textured landscapes, watched as he painted and glued the idealized American shops. Places like Bob's Grocery, or Bill's Auto Shop. Places like Sally's Diner. I was transfixed by it all, watching as the little train circled endlessly round this idyllic place inhabited by invisible peoples. Yes, and why the complete absence of living forms? Perhaps others have small figurines or dolls which they integrate into these sets, but I don't think mine ever did. It was like watching an empty stage set, waiting for its lead actor to take the stage. Me? Or perhaps the little people existed there already, and one would need only a shift in consciousness to see them, or to utter the words of a secret spell. All those Otaku hobbyists out there obsessively building civilizations in miniature—are they merely the unwitting dupes of faery folk, enchanted worker bees and slaves to the whims of little men?

In the field of eroticism, there exist a few strains of pornography in which the erotic potential of tiny things is being mined. After all, what man among us has not harbored the impossible dream of a cum-covered faery in phallic embrace? And what woman could possibly turn away the advances of a skilled homunculus lover, ardent spelunker of womenkind's deepest vaginal cavern systems? In certain spheres, photographs of debased dolls and figurines are exchanged, their plastic bodies partially covered in the semen of a collector-lover. Unrealizable dream, half-realized.

Another thought: In many cultures, magic spells are cast using a miniaturized effigy of some kind. Perhaps as a surrealist experiment, I should create a life-like diorama of the entire capitalist world. Instead of sticking it with pins, I would squat awkwardly above it, squeezing out painful cataclysms of liquefied shits onto the obnoxious poppet world, dispelling it into murky brown nonexistence. Irritable bowel syndrome finally put to good use? And would the revolution triumph then?

II. fabrications

A naked boy stands before the water door. The opening's transparent form looks like coiling white flesh in the process of evaporation, like the tightly woven muscles of some recently skinned and albino-filamented Gulliver. The boy readies himself for submersion and passage; he takes the step forward.

The thick liquid seeps itself into his ears, his nose, into every orifice. He sees almost nothing now but a thick grey fog. There is a feeling here of breathing deeply and being suffocated simultaneously. A feeling of deep winter frosts. A rusty metal hook reaches down inside his mouth and pulls out unnecessary organs and extraneous bacterium. These organs and microorganisms are then released and float away, slowly turning white and hardening. They look just like classroom chalk. A transgender mosquito swims over to the chalky forms, breaking them up into pieces with his elongated feeding tube and thin legs. As they drift away, the boy begins to cry. An ocean-going hedgehog swims over to him, says, "Everything is going to be ok, so don't worry!" It expels a train ticket from its gills and places it in the boy's shivering hands. The sopping wet and barely legible ticket says, "All aboard the organ train! No need for an organ plane! (One admission, expiration at puberty)." The blurred ticket is designed in art nouveau style and accompanied by elabo-

rately decadent swirls and patterns that call to mind 1920s Paris. On the back of the ticket, a charming scene of a magnificently sensual female wasp sporting skimpy yet elegant attire, dancing in a vintage nightclub for an audience of well-dressed, roly-poly businessmen smoking expensive cigars. The boy's vision changes, drops, dissociates. His left tear duct burns, and from its corner drips out a molten hot silver liquid and some unidentifiable globular forms which look like oversized poppy seeds. The discharge collects into one shining puddle at his feet and is soon retrofitted and reopened as a new hot spring bath by colonies of pushy white maggots. The smoky nightclub scene continues to engulf him as he stares fixedly, beginning to pass into it and through it. His flesh is transferred like a bit of squeezed fruit from one form of perception to another. Though admittedly he loses some healthy fibers in translation, I still stand by my previous statement that a frequent form molting is advisable, healthy and desired. In fact, my daily regiments of organ tissue juicing have made me feel like an absolutely virile porcupine, and who could complain about that? But back to the boy...

Once he is fully juiced into the darkened nightclub, the roly-poly businessmen all fall over, mysteriously expiring at the sight of his holy arrival. It is time for the crowning of fresh vegetables and liquids, for today is Micropsia Monday! Everything in the world looks off to the boy. The objects feel subtly deranged from their proper scales and visual weights, as though produced by large hands under a magnifying glass. He wonders, is he the unlucky new inhabitant of some Kaiju town scheduled for immediate demolition? Let's hope not, this story has just begun. The initial disorientation subsides, and he looks over at the erotically-charged wasp. It is just the two of them in the room now, and he feels like he is the last man on earth. Time to get fruitful, honey! The wasp blows him a kiss and pulls down its lacy dress. It turns toward the wall and gets on all fours, flicking its wings excitedly. With its elongated wasp fingers, it spreads its yellow slit wide. The vagina lips open and close like a fish mouth, convulsing awkwardly in uncontrollable tics. Most wasps of this world are carriers of the genital Tourettes; it can't be helped. Actually, he is starting to feel his own shaft act in a strange manner too, twisting unnaturally and repeating a long string of unintelligible vocal

sounds. Is it contagious? He walks toward the stage, and with his arms and feet he tries spreading the wasp's hole even wider. He then sees a conveniently placed collection of bejeweled gynecological objects waiting there by the stage and notices the newly installed wall panel explaining its ritualistic use by ancient cults. He puts the mechanisms into place and for now, the convulsing seems under control. He peeks inside but sees only stars and the left arm of the milky way. "Well, maybe I'll crawl in there when I'm older," he thinks. "If I crawl in there right now, I might end up on the wrong side of her amorous caterpillar lover or stabbed to death by an obsessed fan club of psychotic pixies, and who could save me then? To be honest the age gap seems a tad inappropriate too, I think I'll pass this time..."

He thanks her for obliging him so readily and throws a few sticky candies inside as a parting gift. He then removes the ceremonial gynecological tools and the vagina closes itself down with a pout and a sigh. Ugh, cosmic orgasms are so hard won these days, she muses. Everyone is just too busy to fuck. Maybe I'd have better luck living in a universe made of slugs. Some eternally moist pleasure world no longer held together by cold stupid atoms, but with masses of those squirming slimy little beasts leaving cute trails everywhere! It would always be raining there, or at least drizzling, and all salt would be outlawed. I could just sit down and open up my legs anywhere I pleased, just let them work their magic! She blushes. The boy decides to walk outside now, confused by the wasp's sudden lack of communication with him and the far-away look in her eyes.

He opens the door and almost gets himself crushed under the wheels of a speeding passenger train. The hair follicles on his body fly off in the ensuing gust of wind, and he now stands before us as bald as a newborn babe (and still naked, too). "Whatever," he thinks, "I don't care a fig about those damn follicles. I've always hated the feel of the slimy shampoo on my head anyhow. Conditioner on the other hand…well, perhaps I'll miss that substance a little. Overall, I think I just prefer a thicker consistency in my liquids."

It is a nice spring day outside so the boy decides to take a stroll. He tips his imaginary hat to the well-dressed moles, moths, and butterflies as they pass. Such a pleasant little city! They trade a few "good days" and "what nice weather todays" to each other. Carefree young marsupial children ring bells and ride past him on a few thick, awkwardly constructed bicycles. It must be admitted that the hands of the creator giants are often too large and clumsy to build on such small scales convincingly. Suddenly a large mantis with an overstuffed leather suitcase and top hat runs down the street and rudely bumps into the boy, accidentally severing his left arm with his sharp forelegs. And the bastard doesn't even apologize! The arm is lodged in the gutter now, it turns an ugly grey and starts growing maggots and dandelions. Well, that's a complete loss. An orange syrupy substance drips down from his fresh wound. Faeries soon rush to his side, hidden until now inside discarded fruit peels, dead flowers, and the ear canal of one very surprised opossum. Some only as tall as a pinky finger, while others have ballooned to the size of a toddler or full-grown human. They have long, bloodied teeth and uncommonly enlarged genitals from which he can see a slow ooze of discharge, left to a slow drip like a faucet in winter. A few have the now rather tired and cliché (to us) butterfly wing look, but the more creative of faeries brandish wings inspired by the beautiful damselfly or the industrious honey bee. Without a doubt, the oddest are those sporting the antique yet still rather flashy airplane wings. This new category of airplane Fae being split more-or-less evenly between the biplane and the triplane varieties. A few of the creatures have no wings at all, or just a few stunted and pathetic salamander tails attempting to grow out in the gaps between their toes. A parasitic cloud of ghost scholar energies passes through the boy and he finds himself beginning an abrupt ponder. "Perhaps these are the original models on which all subsequent tiny folklore creatures are based? Had some intrepid Neanderthal scout already passed through this world in the distant past and taken notes? Were these the "Adam Kadmon" of shobijin, the primordial Fae?" His deep thoughts continued to run themselves in little circles until the parasitic ghost scholar energy was satiated, leaving him then to drift on down the road in search of fresh prey.

The little creatures are congregating desperately around the rim of the orange molasses puddle. They suck it up through their hollow fangs, acting as though they hadn't eaten for days. A few smaller ones fly up to the boy's

open wound, sniffing at it excitedly. These unpleasant fellows waste no time at all and burrow deep inside his body. He screams out, "Ugh, fuck a duck!" His hip jerks side to side like he is trying out a new dance routine and failing miserably. The Fae soon reach his intestines, and he can tell without a shadow of a doubt that they have all his fleshly tummy tubes in between their strong little legs and are squeezing down hard. Everything inside him is feeling so tight now, he hunches over and screams like a tortured pig. He has never felt pain like this and he is so frightened and so scared, he can't even speak or think anymore; he wants it to stop so desperately. Grasping at anything, he thinks for a moment about praying to God or Kali for relief, but his fingernail seethes with rage at the suggestion and coolly tells him, "I don't eat that bread." Oh no, and the intestine has popped! Out comes the shit wave! It flushes itself out rapidly through repurposed blood vessels and drops itself from the arm hole. Though I can see now that this sly young bowel movement had time enough for a few unscheduled stops along the way and has smeared large amounts of himself onto the skylights and topiaries of the extravagant mcmansions owned by a few of the more well-to-do organ groupings. The muffled, whiny voice of a blackened lung is heard crying, "This is scandalous, utterly contemptible! Where are my bronchioli housekeepers? I want a bubble bath! Bodily waste should not, it cannot exist!" This satisfyingly juvenile prank on the part of the excrement was his last statement to the world, before glorious suicide by harsh impact with unyielding concrete slab. His unmoving brown form sits there on the cold sidewalk, looking pancaked and very, very dead. And yet, even in death he is defiant—if you look closely, you will see his fecal tongue sticks out at the world still, stuck forever in a playfully insubordinate death grimace. I have no doubt that future revolutionaries and criminals will one day make pilgrimage to this fecal holy of holies, that they will stand in awe and offer gifts of ripe fruits and salty tears to the divinely dissident brown stain on the sidewalk. Of course, this is assuming that there will be any future at all, and that we won't have all devolved into caterpillar men with no legs by then. (I wouldn't mind really, but it makes it very hard to travel long distances, you know?)

The boy feels much better now. How refreshing it is to walk this bright city, to feel so buoyant and so emptied! He yells, "I feel like a fluffy pink cloud!" to no one in particular, raising a few grumpy amphibian eyebrows. He realizes suddenly that his last bowl movement was over a week and a half ago. No wonder he'd felt so weighted down! Those little people were really quite skilled doctors, he muses. No doubt they are all extremely well trained in the budding science of Intestology and the fashionable ideologies of Fecalism and Urinophagy, which are so popular among the Pre-K and Elementary School children this year. (And of which the boy currently knew absolutely nothing. "A Very Simple, Extremely Straightforward Introduction to Fecalism by TJ Offal" was still collecting dust on his bathroom shelf. After a page or two of the jargon-heavy writing, our hero had started to feel it just a bit too stuffy and confusing for his tastes.) Many teachers had banned the well-meaning TJ Offal's books from schools, the book-collecting mania being so strong this year that outbreaks of violence and child book gangs were becoming commonplace. The nationwide shortage of toilet paper caused by Offal's teachings had put everyone on edge, too.

The boy's thoughts then moved away from the problem of TJ Offal and drifted about for a while, landing on nothing in particular. He reached the end of the sidewalk presently, walked up to the nice overlook and saw the river below. The river was a deep black and had a strangely unnatural, undulating movement to it. He felt disturbed by its presence, but was not sure why. Next to him was a coin operated telescope for sightseeing. He dropped a few coins in and took a closer look. As he peeked in he began to feel sickened. His mind and even body rejected it. He started to gag and grabbed at his chest painfully, almost covering his telescope in a steamy brown blanket of a previous meal. The river was not made up by water at all, but by billions of eternally fucking, eternally spawning millipedes. All types were present and accounted for, their bodies claustrophobically smushed into one another. It was impossible to know with any certainty where one millipede ended and the next began. They were all sizes imaginable, too. Some stretched the length of the city, while others were as short as a baby garden snake or snail. The colors of the bodies, however, were always only that same oppressive black lighticide

which the boy had first seen and been so repulsed by. Was this Insectkind's taunting reflection of our deepest spiritual void?—cruel detritivore pleasures gained in shoving our pudgy, hairy man faces into the rotten cesspools of our own absence of meanings? Perhaps, triumphantly shouting, "No longer shall we consent to be squished, neither by foot nor by flyswatter, you soft bellied swine!" Insects aren't affected by our "meaning of life" questions, and they don't understand Nietzsche at all. But I guess they know enough to hit us where it hurts.

Well, a bit of time passes by, and the motionless boy is slowly becoming desensitized to the crawling horrors. Maybe he even loves them a little, maybe he longs for squirmy piles of them to crawl up from deep in his throat and spill out over his wet lips in sweetly bashful insectoid first kisses, to live out the first ever human-millipede love affair? Or perhaps this is just another case of our swashbuckling hero's trial by torture—painful at first, but leading to an inevitable sense relief and renewed journeying? His intestine certainly seems fine now, anyway.

A strange physical compulsion suddenly fills his body, which his reluctant mind still rejects. His defiant hands pull the body up over the railings and drop him down into the swarm below.

The fall proceeds in gentle slow-motion effect. Minutes pass and the entire city holds its breath. Finally, the chubby pink butt cheek impacts with millipede swarm, exploding impressively in a marvelous tactility-form of an enraged, abandoned mattress melted and grafted onto the fading memories of a suck at mother's breast. He thinks of hot swiss cheese and swoons. He is carried along with the black mass, and a heaving insect wave soon pushes him down below. He expects immediate suffocation here but finds himself breathing normally. At deeper levels, the atmosphere starts to feel very hot and humid too, like a sticky summer evening in the south. Eventually, his submerged body is expelled via spiraling millipede orifice into a dark and cavernous air pocket inside the mass of insects. King Millipede sits there on his metallic throne, surrounded by undulating walls and centipede concubines. He points his staff at the boy and cries, "Hesava amin! Delock in! Aregos delay ar spongecocoon?" The boy's skin hardens and turns

a deep black, he is completely encased in it. Worker ants climb inside his ear hole and whisper mischievously, telling him that this magnificent new armor is a disease-cocoon with which he may later storm heaven, that it is a mystical bacteriophage evolved from interiors of inky blackness in order to infect divine flesh with sexually transmitted disease. The angels shall drown in oceans of their own genital discharge, the ants exclaim, and a syphilis-mad God will devour his own infected papules and mucous membranes! The boy agrees to King Millipede's plan, it seems like a pretty amusing joke to him. In fact, he's always loved a good prank. He waves goodbye, then jumps back into the moving millipede wall and is carried on down the canal, tickled all the while by tiny millipede arms and giggling uncontrollably. A fork in the path of the river soon comes up, and a cresting wave deposits him back onto solid ground.

He stands up and shakes his body off, dispelling clouds of the black dust and soot which had gathered on his body during his long swim in the black river. He soon succeeds in drying himself and takes a look at the new surroundings. A massive golden superstructure is now standing before him, dwarfing the surrounding shops and apartments with bombastic luminescence. Built in an overblown greek revival style, he wonders if this is the city hall or a courthouse of this place? There is an ancient-looking sign posted near the front entrance to the left of the stairs. He walks over to it, hoping to discover this majestic building's true name, but the label merely reads, "Bill's Auto Shop." Bemused by this new development, he shrugs his shoulders and begins his ascent up the immaculate marble staircase.

On reaching the second step, he is suddenly picked up and raised into the sky by a wrinkled old human hand about thirty times his size. The air rushes by; he feels disoriented and panicked. He worries vainly about his sudden heart palpitations and rubs together two very sweaty hands. He tries some breathing exercises and counts the passing birds, he even tries his hand at a little cloud-bursting. The anxiety soon fades away but he feels so very sad now. He misses that rapidly shrinking miniaturist world of the city below. It had felt like a new home, a promising new fresh start for him, and the animals were all so very nice down there. (Well, except for that rude mantis!)

He is sucked up past the pink clouds, past the planets and the stars and the old hardening multiverse clusters. Majestic forms shrink to nothingness below his rising feet. Abruptly he finds himself inside a room with drab grey walls and a cobweb problem. It seems to be someone's musty basement. He hears a model train making its noisy rounds from somewhere behind him, but can't quite place it. He breathes a sigh of relief now, this certainly isn't heaven, and that wrinkled hand certainly isn't God. For a brief moment he'd been worried that he'd been "found out" by that flaccid ol' demiurge, and wouldn't get a chance to try out his fancy new bacteriophage...

The big hand puts the kid's loose skin flaps in between his dirty oil-stained fingernails and holds him up to eye level. Such a familiar face! The boy wonders what his Grandpa is doing here, and why is he so gigantic? Grandpa's weathered face is now completely covering the boy's visual field. A parasitic cloud of drifting ghost artist energies suddenly passes through the boy's right nipple and he exclaims, "What lovely planetary landscapes, what amazing textures! Those deeply dredged Martian wrinkle canals and delightfully puffy old flesh mountains...no doubt about it, this is a face with some serious character!" This is all very odd for a boy like him to suddenly utter, but doddering old Grandpa doesn't notice a thing. The boy then tells Grandpa all about his exciting new adventures inside the miniaturist realm, though it is a bit murky as to how much of the narrative Grandpa is really able to process. His eyes seem a bit foggy, maybe he is thinking of other things?

Grandpa suddenly looks down at him and bellows, "Welcome to the microscopic life, kiddo!"

The boy goes deaf.



The Gentry
S. Higgins



Myomata Uteri Steven Cline

THE BRONTËS' MINIATURE KINGDOMS

by Gina Litherland



Anne and Emily Brontė Escape from Glass Town.

When nine-year-old Branwell Brontë received a collection of toy wooden soldiers as a gift, he and his sisters, Charlotte, Emily, and Anne each selected one, named it, and set to work making and writing little books, magazines and plays of the adventures of their new miniature alter egos. Branwell and Charlotte initially named their soldiers Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington, while Emily and Anne, the younger sisters, gave theirs the charming names of Gravey and 'Waiting Boy'. These were soon changed to Parry and Ross, after two heroic Arctic explorers of the time. The books were tiny, bound from rough household materials and printed by hand in tiny script

to reflect their authorship by the toy heroes. The new personalities projected into the little wooden bodies loomed far beyond their original names. They became kings and poets, criminals and madmen. The precocious children were well versed in Romantic literature and they had found their catalysts to break out of Yorkshire into another world. Their new kingdom was named Glass Town by Branwell and Charlotte and all four children located their stories there. Eventually Charlotte and Branwell extended the boundaries of Glass Town into another region called Angria, and Emily and Anne created a private kingdom of their own called Gondal. The miniature world represents the private and unseen, what escapes notice as the rest of the world attends to business. It is in the miniature world of invisibility that one can feel totally confident in the imagination, where it can germinate like a seed in a dark, moist place. It was in the sagas of these tiny kingdoms that the Brontë sisters planted the seeds for their later dark and mesmerizing heroes, Rochester, Heathcliff, and Huntingdon. That which escapes attention for a while acquires an ineffable power of its own.

BODY MY HOUSE

a film by Steve Morrison, Colin Wheeler, & Dante DeStefano









You can watch the full film in the web version of Peculiar Mormyrid, Issue 7: peculiarmormyrid.com/body-my-house

LANGUAGE OF STONES

by Tim White

this language of stones, of flowers, of sticks etched in souls like star light sentences

an incandescent crystal omphalos caverned with neanderthal love goddesses

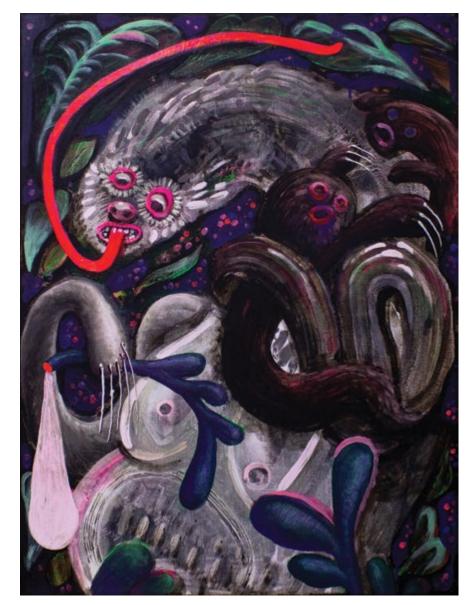
the language of birds crying to clouds

of marvellous assignations of tectonic rifts and invisible fireworks slippery as mediations of earthquakes

the language of leaf, of stream, of bud deep among the roots

scryer of rainbows of aquifer signifying constellations of geological fault lines and cumulonimbus clouds

the language of coral reef
floodplain
estuary
written
in emergent canopies of kelp
in swaying in a cthonic phlogiston
in a language
spoken in graveyards of ivory coral



Steve Morrison

OSMOTIC LIKE INWARDNESS

by Tim White

inhalation but subterranean as heights absconding flying fish awash in flame retardant what were they thinking?

on platform 2 exhalations of enclosed aerodynamic ventilation

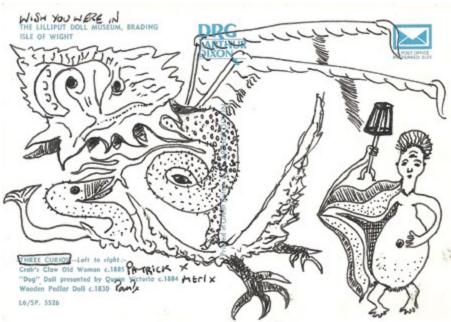
but outwardly
spewing hallucinogenic administrative errors
on flight cancellations
while inwardly
subterranean heightenings
in worldly endorphins
irradiating pearl shell
Venus birthed naked
girdled by patriarchal schlock



Working Late?

Jason Abdelhadi





Postcard from Patrick Hourihan, Paul Cowdell, & Merl Fluin



Fruiting Bodies
Megan Leach



Birnham Wood Country Club

David Coulter

SMALL MEDITATIONS

by Tim White

1.

I'm drawn to the title of a book, Small is beautiful by the economist E.F. Schumacher (1973). I remember it being widely publicised when I was younger. I'm not sure whether I read it or not. Memory is not a reliable guide, though I do like the title because suggests a rallying point from which to survey the damage done by big banks, big corporations, big government, big profits. That tired old imperative: size matters.

Our planet is under threat from toxic bigness. Size needs to be challenged. Small is inviting, multiple, changeable, responsive. The bacteria survives while the mastodon dies out. We're told small changes hardly matter though isn't it as true that both small and big change is desirable?

Small is beautiful. Small mutates, puts out feelers, finds a way when the enormous collapses under its own weight.

2.

Peculiar Mormyrid's invitation to 'seek out the marvellous and the miniscule and insignificant' is is timely one and rings a bell, if not a whole carillon of them.

Reveries on smallness remind me of an ongoing series of daydreams I had as a young child where I imagined being able to reduce myself to microscopic size. Smallness allows access to places – to worlds – where the long arm of authority can't reach. The change in perspective reveals the monolithic, dull and overbearing can also be home to multitudes of tiny mysteries and revelations.

I'm reminded of the appeal of the Tom Thumb stories (Hop 'o'my Thumb in some collections), the wonderful 2015 Marvel movie Antman, and Fantastic Voyage, the 1966 science fiction film by Richard Fleischer, later novelised by Isaac Asimov.

We want to see, to experience the world from new perspectives, to escape the stranglehold of appearances, the bludgeoning of a complex and intricately complex pluriverse into something mundane and deadening. 3.

The microscosmos spills into the spaces between dream states. Perhaps 'oozes' is a better word, contaminating the the comparmentalised, shut down, proscribed regions of memory and desire. Some of these spaces so thoroughly written over, shut down and obscured not even fossil memories remain...

Spilling ink onto the page in my art work allows me to recover those small worlds. An awakening to the possibility of smallness. Not ground shaking? But an illuminating one of ink and water colours, simple brush strokes, splashes of colour depicting microscopic eruptions, intersections and expansions.

Almost as exciting as my first glimpse through a microscope...

4.

When I was around ten years old I managed to save up and buy a small microscope. It cost \$2.99 back in the days when money went a lot further. But it worked, magnifying from 10, 50, 150 to 200 times. The images were not always clear but when I found a good one the excitement made me want to share my modest discovery.

5.

Scientific investigation has revealed our bodies are awash in microrganisms, inside and out, they permeate us. We're saturated by them. These invisible allies enable efficient digestion, growth, longevity and even effect our mental health.

Aristotle believed that when the stomach was 'not well...the others [organs] are evil[ly] disposed'. Recent science seems to confirm this view explaining how specific bacterial strains in the human gut are crucial to the brain's chemical balance effecting the production of endorphins, seratonin, dopamine and oxytocin. In effect, the bugs in our stomach regulate our energy levels, sleep patterns, sex drive, enthusiasms and moods.

So much for the fantasy of human domination of the bio-verse. More accurate to think of ourselves as a changing populations of microbes. We're hive, incubator, hatchery, and transportation for the hordes inside.

6.

I'm reminded of the defining influence of microorganisms on human history: the plagues, infections, poxes and other microbial ailments wriggling and oozing through our histories.

From the first recorded outbreak of flea-borne Bubonic Plague in 542 during the rule of Justinian 1 in the Eastern Roman Empire (the Byzantine Empire), deaths from the outbreak are estimated at between 25 million to 50 million (wikipedia, Bubonic Plague), to the second outbreak in Europe between 1340 – 1400 (some experts argue for a two hundred year outbreak period) responsible for the loss of a third of the entire human population.

The Great Plague of London from 1665 -1666 resulted in 100,000 deaths, a third of that nation's population at that time.

These plagues, all the work of the bacterium Yersinia pestis continued to recur into the nineteenth century with sporadic appearances in the present time. The struggle for mastery of the planet is far from over and far from certain.

7.

I'm thrilled by the story of how eukaryotic cells appeared. High school biology reminds us how all complex living things, both plant and animal, are made up of eukaryotic cells. As Wikipedia tells us Eukaryotes are any organism whose cells have a nucleus enclosed within membranes, they also have complex internal scrutures called organelles. Prokaryotes are far simpler, unicellular without a cell membrane with a much simplified nucleus.

Eukaryotes are able to produce complex cells structures and have evolved into every form of multicellular life we know today. Prokaryotes have stayed much as they were when they first appeared over 3.8 billion years ago.

Scientists propose that eukaryotes appeared 2.7 billion years ago, a result of the blending together of two prokaryotics cell. Somehow, in the process of being ingesting another prokaryote, the intended meal was able to remain alive inside its attacker. Impregnating its attacker with itself! The blending of the two into a new commensal organism gave rise to evolutionary advantages including sexual reproduction and from there the development of complex

multi-cellular animals and plants.

This event seems to me to be worthy of the term 'life changing'. If we consider that all living forms we know are the result of this first infinitely tiny beginning then it is, without doubt, an event calling for poetry, song, dance, stories and other joyful expressions of celebration. This primal co-joining of the prokaryotes is also a powerful archetype of mutual aid and a profound image of the transformation of life and of our own unseen potential.

At the very least it aught to inspire us with a deep sense of awe for the achievement of the most infinitisimal living things, the 'little things' from which 'big things grow', to quote the Paul Kelly song.

Welcome to the Microscopic Life.



Crushing Bore
Steven Cline



Cheshire Moon

Janice Hathaway



A Puzzle Jason Abdelhadi

WHEN I WAS LITTLE

by Claude-Lucien Cauët

I was smaller, before. That's what I was told, and I believe it willingly. But small in what way? To answer, it would be enough to know where I came from. Yes, all right: my mother. I know that all the same! And yet? There, I think I am asking questions that don't suit my age. Small as a fly, look, I was able to go out through her nose, easy; small as a lizard, through her mouth. Can we exit through the ears? A grain of sand, then, small, small. And towards the belly? It's not made for that anyway! Or ? I feel like I'm on a slippery slope, inexplicably drawn down like a Helter Skelter; and the more I go down, the more I shrink; I know it because the trees and houses around me are getting bigger and bigger.

I was seven years old. I landed softly on a lawn whose grass blades were as high as the Eiffel Tower, with rocks like rocks in the forest of Fontainebleau. An ant, about the size of mammoth of old, spotted and approached me. Fear of fear, I cowered, and my body, sensitive to my distress, has shrunk again. Everything seemed now so excessive that I could no longer see any object, plant or animal. I thought I was safe because I was invisible and I should have stopped at this point. But I was compacted, rolled into a ball, so the process went on, and I finally found myself blind, because I had become smaller than the light.

Do you understand that? The grains of light hit me, jostled me, played billiards with my body, and it was not a good way to enlighten or enlighten me; but there was nothing left to tell. My eyes avoided these balls of fire by closing their eyelids onto absolute blackness. I obviously did not perceive any sound, the vibration of an atom would have crushed me; no smell, for a fragrant molecule would have measured a hundred noses, a thousand noses; no speaking of taste, since, with regards to my palate, there was no hope of finding anything remotely fitting its height. As for the last of my senses, that of Doubting Thomas, it was no longer usable; everything I could touch would have struck me on the spot.

Yet, I said to myself in my confusion, it's still the world, the bedrock of the world, its base, its foundation. And it has nothing in common with the one in which I lived, it is even hostile to life, or rather, has a mortal indifference to life. What is this mystery?

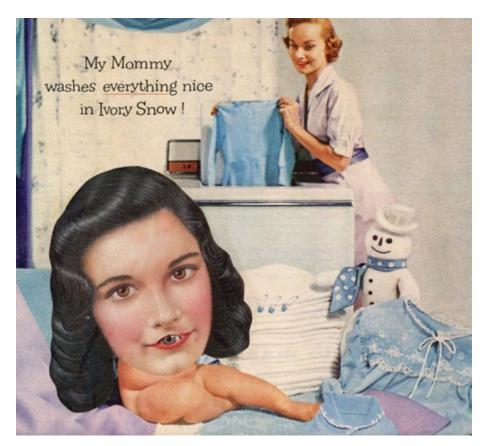
Even if I managed to escape the incessant bombardment of the various particles, the frenetic round of electrons, and other fatal perils, I had nothing with which to feed myself and nothing to breathe. In any case, I was going to explode into a vacuum in a fraction of a picosecond.

A voice echoed: "But in the danger grows / That which also saves." And I grew brighter and smaller, so that I occupied only one atom of space for an atom of time. I could not go further: there is a limit to shrinking. Nowhere and eternity. I was not risking anything, since nothing could happen. I could not die. The trouble is that I could not think either.

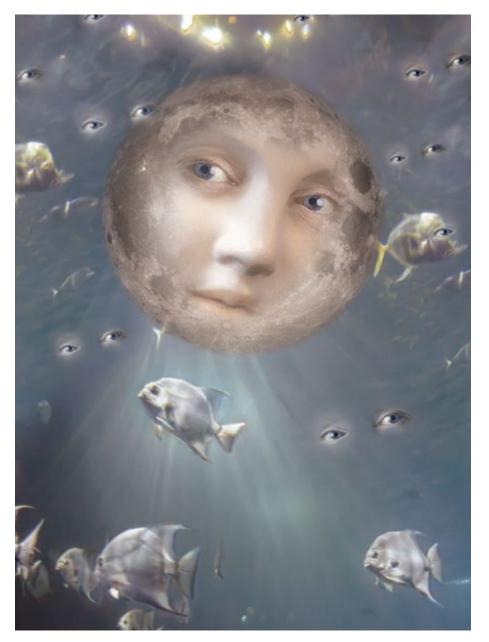
You assume that something has rescued me from this situation, if not I would not be telling you about it. Well, guess what? It is not God, of course; at this level, postulating his existence is even more stupid than it is on our normal level. No, it's language, you imagine to yourself. Certainly, I could not put one word in front of the other logically, but there came in my head blocks of words given all at once. I do not remember all of them, but perhaps the last one, the one which pulled me out of this bad way, see, it was, I believe:

that everything dies if we are forgotten
relegated from the trip
ugly idiots who stink
my beautiful ladies my beautiful gentlemen
they shoot you and bog you
but you will not leave without them

Do not ask me how the event happened, how the words forced the reality of the world, I remember nothing but having suddenly found myself in adulthood, in a city on my scale, among a crowd where my size was not remarked upon. What happiness! I cried for joy.



Everything Nice
Steven Cline



Through the Looking Glass

Janice Hathaway

THE DANCE OF THE GIANTS

by Michele-Bachelet

I was the smallest of my family, both in age and size. I nevertheless survived better than most of its members. Later, my revolt against both the social order which was foisted on me and the society that was proposed to me made me submit any order of grandeur, whether implicit or explicit, to a preliminary critical examination. The latter was measured by rather frustrated moral, aesthetic or sentimental values but I had thus reduced the scale of magnitudes to my measurement.

June 3, 2018, in Olot, Catalonia, I participated in the dance of the giants. We walked in the streets and danced to the sound of fanfare and music. Applause and cheers greeted us and children dressed up to look like us. But that day, a man was filming us. As I watched him, I imagined my image on the video screen, reduced to a postcard, a memory of another time. I wavered at the idea of this other reality; what was I really in the world? This mental shock was unfortunately synchronous with the rest that my bearers agreed upon from time to time: I was twice grounded. But they lifted me up and I was able to pursue my destiny, going back to the sun, the burrow of Alice's images and wonders. And my lover would still dance with me.

Saint Cyprien, June 6 2018





TEST OBJECT II:

Of Bird Nests
& Belly Buttons
(Mellisuga Helenae)



OPUSCULUS SATHANAE MINIMAE

by Jason Abdelhadi



Little Vehicle for Election to the Unholy Moleccult

I recently felt like I was being watched by large animals. The first was a giant owl on a faraway building (which could have been a stain), followed by giant chipmunk (perhaps simultaneously a log).

Shortly afterwards I was called to the smallworld by the example of the incomparable diotropic composed achromatic microscopes of the unholy Achille Brachet: the eccentric 19th century enthusiast of miniature worlds, who gathered together in his search for a certain SURACHROMATISM, a

congress of all the microscopes he could lay his hands on, at no small expense. A herd of microscopes. What is this superior form of seeing the miniscule that drove his wits well off the edge of the deepest petri dish? And, moreover, how does one become indoctrinated in the preparation of perfect microscopic TEST-OBJECTS, those ideal objects of admiration for the little eye? Doraemon, have you got one in your pocket?



Surachromatic lifecycles. Superior microvisions. I recall a persistent childhood fantasy of imaginative selfreduction into a grasslawn jungle. The transformation in scale of a blade of grass to the height of a tree, like in *Honey I Shrunk the Kids*. I try to recapture this immoderate form of daydreaming by stealing opportunities to sit around outside for extended periods of time staring obsessively at the small things around me.

There are landscapes and monsters, and so many little brown orbs. There are wings and winglike things. Shards are the meaning of the small. Certain configurations evoke an immodest desire for severe reductions in life. A strict

ethics. Morality of lofi underevil. On each speck of asphalt it's so simple to dream up pandemonium.

A certain small patch of useless park (reserved usually by drug addicts) is suddenly converted by the city into a trendy outdoor drinking spot. The kind of very particular and petty moral outrage this sort of thing can evoke is so easily transubstantiated into a real alchemical misanthropy. I could certainly torch it. Sometimes such small bourgeois hubs of casual self-satisfaction irritate me well beyond the tastelessness of a large but dumb cathedral. The bigger they feel the quicker they burn. Real fire most welcome, little fellow of the flames.

It's important not to be too funny in the smallworld. It's easy to become the little wiseguy, and it's a great thing to be if you want to tell it like it is to big fat humanity. But that keeps us in the company of big people, and we don't want always want to spend our time entertaining hugehearted giants. We want to infect them, and colonize their happy immune systems from the inside with black seriousness, small and cold.



I see a woodchip and set it up in a little grass altar. I notice in the camera that it is actually an eye on that little dark woodchip. Something untoward has found its way into reality, no big deal.

Sunlight is actually pretty small, when paired with various overlarge but insubstantial shadows. A very reduced green patch of moss, blown up in size, reminds me of a model infantry clanrat's fake grass base. In the army of toys and figurines which we empower to succeed us one day there is a frankly beautiful, militant joyfulness that makes the underground small movements of the world jealous. Burrowing into a deeper, smaller hole, avoiding the tiny fragments of leaves and the coins of strange britannian idiots. In the small forest there's no such thing as reverie.

When the greatminded nihilists say there is nothing in the universe worth salvaging, we agree, and attach to that noun the singular lack of material and metaphysical being our unwavering, perverted eyeball.

The idea of being able to see a single atom with the naked eye had struck me as a wonderfully direct and visceral bridge between the miniscule quantum world and our macroscopic reality," he said in a press release. "A back-of-the-envelope calculation showed the numbers to be on my side, and when I set off to the lab with camera and tripods one quiet Sunday afternoon, I was rewarded with this particular picture of a small, pale blue dot.

Contemporary humans are unsubtle in their variety and among the many things they think are worth insisting on, somehow, not big or small per se, but a nonstop comparison between the two. These fucking gigantophilic democrats who choose the grandeur of their institution over the little anti-accumulations of shadow that undermine their worldbuilding and erziehungism from the inside.

Yes, I am on the lookout for the gap beyond misanthropy. I am looking for "man-holes". Whether this refers to caves in the perfect shape of specific humans (Junji Ito) or little atomic black pixels in the present tense, I don't know, I am sure it's infrathin and much smaller than any mere idea.

I hear the gnostic gnawing of a very tiny varmint crawling underneath the skin of the springtime. Swarms are of the small, as are infestations. Germs and plagues, like Merlin used to defeat the Mad Madam Mim in the most

definitive wizard's duel of the century. Deep utopias in black holes the size of a, the size of a, while always the fucking sizeofa?

Darkness is smallness. Evil is a cavity.

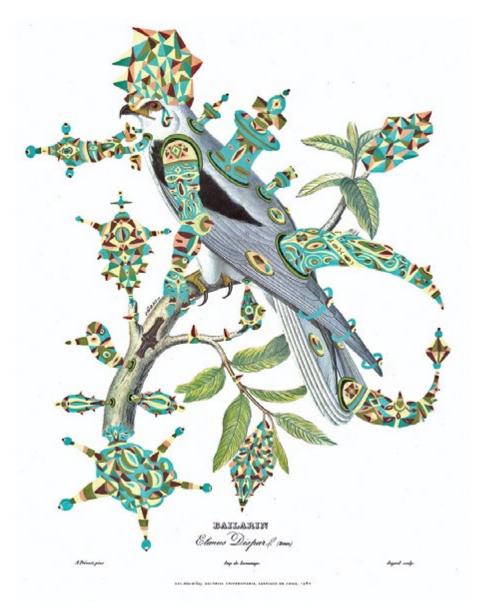
I was always remembering the miniature model of the town in the film Beetlejuice. In particular, the scene where the main characters are shrunk down and find their model suddenly has a new gravestone which they didn't put there. They dig through the plastic fake grass and cardboard and glue to find it, to awaken that forgotten repressed thing...

To be small absolutely. This means to accept no comparatives when it comes to size. To destroy once and for all the dichotomy between big and small, and to choose without hesitation the side of reduction.

To accept the devil on our shoulder, the germ, the evil glimmer in the eye, the pang of guilt, as incarnations of the smallest, blackest sublime point. A pinprick of nothing in the fabric of reality; a punctum so incredibly minuscule that it brooks no detection. The portal to smallworld, or Hell, as you prefer.

If you hadn't guessed, the above are entirely occulted instructions for the creation of a newly improvised kind of omelette, the Old golem, a neanderthal omelette that comes in an aurochsbone lantern. This little wandering androgyne that has all our limbs but none of our hangups, who comes from High Hell to tickle our inner ear with terrible puns and the desire to set blasphemy charges on the parliaments of the world. Warm the plate and wipe off the wax, or wash it off with spirits of turpentine, and rub the plate with fine dry whiting. The next instrument to proceed with is the graver; consisting of a blade of steel about three inches long, which is fixed in a convenient handle like an ant's unwavering eyeball.

Study the smaller print, leave the big words for the illiterate bighearted. Look into the superior, SURACHROMATIC incomparable diotropic composed microscopes of the unholy Achille Brachet, herder of microscopes, discoverer of the smallest satan.



Serie Mapa De Inteligencia, Obsecion Y Delirios Naturales. Tributo a Claudio Gay

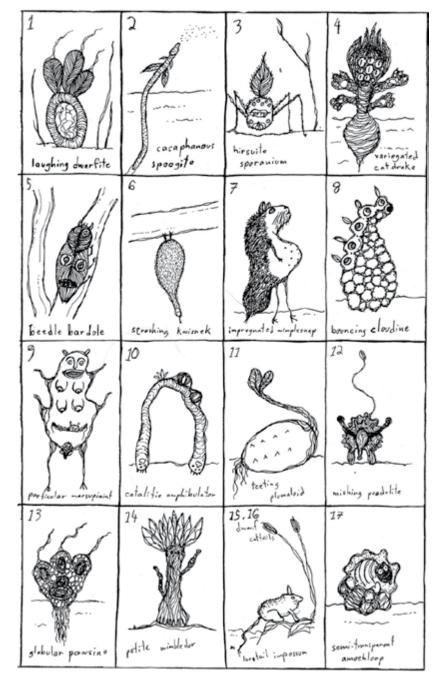
Iñaki Muñoz

HISTORICAL EXTRACT

An inmate of the Glasgow Royal Lunatic Asylum, describing the contents of his pockets, 1885

The next advertisement is that of a man whose mania for collecting curiosities developed into a veritable madness. His hands and pockets are always stuffed with rags and other rubbish, regarded by him as treasures unique in their value and interest, as the following quotation will show:

"Mr. C-B- wishes to dispose of a few of the curiosities he has been so fortunate as to collect in his numerous journeys round the world. Amongst other rarities he offers to amateurs the following: 1, the famous fairy broom upon which Puck, or Robin Goodfellow, was wont to take his nocturnal excursions; 2, a watch belonging to an inhabitant of the moon, and regulated by the sun; 3, a nut the size of a melon; 4, a cobweb weighing two pounds; 5, a tile off the roof of the Tower of Babel; 6, Mahomet's snuff-box; 7, a hair from the tail of Alexander's horse, and 8. ditto, from that of Alcibiades' dog; lastly, a congealed flame from Mount Etna."

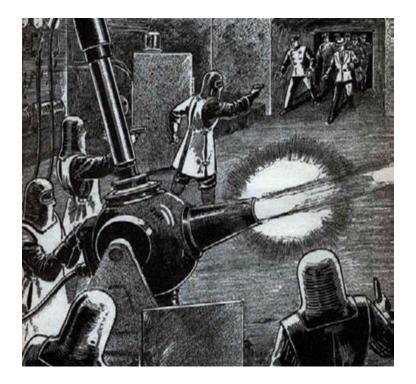


Specimens

Casi Cline

THERE'S BIRDSHIT ON THIS WINDSHIELD

by Ron Sakolsky and Jason Abdelhadi



Of course we still put our hopes in birds. Absolute freedom is birdlike absolutely. But if, according to the Audobon Society, 2018 is in fact the Year of the Bird, we still see through our binoculars precious little evidence of civilization becoming more fundamentally birdlike. How could it, given its present obsession with such terrestrial fixations as border fences, walls, and pipelines? So in place of any real bird watching we are treated to a bizarre counter-spectacle: a fervent avianonationalism being promulgated by certain unhinged Canadian ornithologists.

The misappropriation of the wilderness by nationalist concerns is nothing new, is an ancient tradition even, but this case is so specifically egregious that we felt compelled to draw attention to some of its more ridiculous aspects. Along with the noise around Canada's 150th unbirthday in 2017 came a flurry of symbolic diorama-thinking, hoping to cover up the 400 years of indigenous genocide, exploitation and ecological destruction with, as is *de rigeur* in such cases, a vague and whitewashed image of wildlife deprived of all essential wilderness: more or less the kind that makes for a wholesome desktop background image.

As for the birds, they're in for it too. Long the undeserved favourite of powers of conquest and imperialism since antiquity. But the Bald eagle doesn't even sound like the propagandists' want you to think it does (in fact, that sound is the Red-tailed hawk). Likewise in Canada, a parallel campaign has been ongoing promoting and clamoring for Canada to declare its "official bird", an honorary post as yet not filled, despite our penchant for monetizing wildlife in every possible way—culminating in the supreme irony of our fauna-themed currency.

The unlucky avian chosen for this dubious honour is the Whiskey jack or Gray jay. It's a bird long at play in indigenous tradition and northeastern woodsmen folklore alike. The name Whiskey jack is actually derived from the Cree trickster figure Wisakedjak. According to the Tlingit, the bird is also known as the "camp robber" for its bold behaviour and has earned a variety of other very beautiful heteronyms over its history: "lumberjack", "meat-bird", "venison-hawk", "moose-bird" "gorby", and in French, the "mésangeai".

All of this makes the recent official reversion of its name back to the bland and jingoistic "Canada jay" all the more undignified. We cite it as just another example of the now classic Canadian erasure of indigenous identity, and the smothering of myriad folk traditions under the homogenizing banner of a national pseudomyth. Unlike an open and poetic engagement with a wild thing, they once again reduce something strange and convulsive to a postage stamp mascot. We here see the worst possible permutation of humanizing anthropomophics: the animal as, not just human, but the concrete symbol for the sad state of existence that humanity currently has on offer.

But besides this obvious lack of respect for both indigenous traditions and wildness itself, we have to wonder if the promotion for NATIONAL bird

587 1/7 1/1 1/1/2017 1/1/2017 1/2017

of a creature which is known as a "trickster" could nevertheless be read in spite of its stated intentions. Perhaps it is a sly political commentary on the hypocrisy of Justin Trudeau and the Liberal Party, or more pointedly, on their featherbrained prank to ram a pipeline down the throats of BC birdlovers in spite of widespread indigenous and environmental activist opposition.

Furthermore, the campaign management itself is noteworthy in many ways, not the least of which is that the BC ornithologist spearheading the initiative is actually named Professor David BIRD. As for us, we're all aflutter...We had no idea that 2018 was the Year of the Bird, but now we have to ask, which bird are we celebrating, the aforementioned Gray Jay of the woods, or the Professor who seems to have a sizeable woody for it?

We defer to Loplop, Bird-Superior, about this Dr. David, Bird-Inferior. Just who is this Avian Apostle? A bit of research reveals that Dr. Bird was originally a pulp fiction identity from the 1930s, appearing in Amazing Stories by the equally bizarrely named author Sterner St. Paul Meeks (both stern and meek, it seems...):



Meet Dr. Bird, a cross between Sherlock Holmes and Nikola Tesla. Dr. Bird, of the Bureau of Standards, along with his faithful sidekick Operative Carnes, travels the world solving mysteries and crimes using scientific methods and pure, cold logic.

Not unsurprising that such a bland take on pulp fiction crimefighting with such a positivist focus on "pure, cold logic" would result in a super-villain as obsessed with taxonomic pillaging as his current incarnation seems to indicate.

A man of simple deductions. We discover that one of the key reasons that Professor Bird in particular has championed this bird is because "the jay doesn't migrate in the winter". To us, this might as well be a subconscious critique of those Canadians who go south for weather, known as "snowbirds", as being insufficiently nationalistic to stay put for the winter. Perhaps even more likely it is a coded xenophobic attack on the growing "immigrant crisis"; it's no coincidence that the biggest abuse of wildlife imagery comes from the anti-immigrant neo-nazi gangs springing up here and there with their usual banners of wolves and eagles.

Interestingly, it seems that in northeastern superstition, whatever you do to a Gray Jay is done right back to you in an act of cosmic reprisal. One cruel woodsman who plucked off a gorby's feathers woke up the next day without any hair. One only shivers at the kind of revenge that will be exacted on Dr. Bird for his smear campaign. Maybe he'll wake up one day covered in birdshit?

"If the Canada jay doesn't become the national bird by the end of 2018, Dr. Bird says he will walk across the country to raise support for the cause."

It seems Dr. Bird wants to "walk" across Canada...

Shouldn't he be flying?

May 2018

FOR THE PSYCHOPATHOLOGY ENCYCLOPEDIA: HYPNOAVINANOPHOBIA

by Mattias Forshage

Many people dream of small pets, small babies, and big larvae, and specifically of the difficulties of nursing them including the bad conscience of having forgotten and abandoned them – or, or including, the bad conscience of accidentally crushing them. In my daily life, I am childless and petless, but I regularly dream about rediscovering homes I have abandoned, with pets (especially but not only reptiles) who have not been fed for years. Very often they have miraculously survived, sometimes by transforming into another animal or just another way of absorbing nourishment.

But I am not going to explore that genre of dreams here, instead focusing on something that seems more odd, my dream fear of small birds. Which I have been unable to notice in my waking life, where I love to watch wrens and rubycrowns, I have tried handling and ringing tiny warblers, I enjoy the entertainment provided by ducklings, and I also don't mind being surrounded by large insects, bats, sparrows, pigeons or crows, and my suspiciousness against hornets and parrots does not go beyond the rationally justifiable – just to emphasise that this is not part of a regular phobia against flying animals in general or of some special kind. It's just those creepy tiny dream birds... Three examples from the past few years.

I am trying to find my way to the house of a friend through a dense coniferous forest, or more like an abandoned garden overgrown with fast-growing

spruce. It is difficult to discern the footpath, and requires strength to push one's way through the branches. Various titmice are scurrying around there, but the winter has been difficult, and they seem all dying. One tiny bird (a willow tit) falls down on me, softly bouncing down into my palm. Can a bird actually be that small? It's like a black-and-white marzipan chicken. It's horrifying. And the bird is dying.

2

As I am wading along the shore waiting for permission to leave by boat, I am haunted by small birds. On two large stones, there are hundreds of them, they seem unreasonably small. This is metaphysically wrong, I am complaining loudly to the schoolteacher who is wading with me. On the one stone it is wagtails, and actually I have to admit they're fairly normal-sized when I demonstrate them. But on the other stone, they look more like tiny dolls. It was bird dolls but now they look more like superhero action figures. In legions. Like a big christmas nativity scene or a war boardgame. They are still intensely disturbing.

3

There is a distant opening in the forest that I always wanted to explore, and coming there I find two small farms, with chickens running around all over. I ask for lodging and they offer me a room. I am very comfortable in this room, and in one corner it feels like there is a waterfall of hidden voices showering me. However, another corner, facing the porch, has an open door. This seems unpractical with all these fowl running around. They explain to me, it is important that the animals roam freely. I am getting angry, no, I am not going to have them in my bedroom at night. As I am saying this I become aware there is a big turkey just outside angrily gazing at me, and I try to quickly brush away the quails and bantams and close the door. But as I am closing the door there are birdfeet clasping onto my arm, claws digging into my flesh, I can't even see the bird they belong to, perhaps there is a tiny ball of down there in the middle, a very very small chicken with large feet.



Pareidolia Myceliae Casi Cline



Serie Mapa De Inteligencia, Obsecion Y Delirios Naturales. Tributo a Claudio Gay **Iñaki Muñoz**

AN EVENING STROLL

by J. Karl Bogartte

The only risk worth taking is eyelashes undercover and above the pedestal. A doorway of dervishing, brightly under layers of surrendering to your enemy, to surmount them... Take apart the proceedings...

*

Shadow is a magical pet on the outskirts of window-like abruptness. She is the trick of ellipsis... to dissolve, memories of a tangled space untangling... a bookless tumult for an endless narrative...

*

Dolorosa, fugitive lamp. Sudden phenomenon is the drapery of vexing in and out of bright feathers. Everything trembles at the drop of a hat. The wilderness leaping for eyes heavy with sap and thirst, flickering madly.

*

The numbers are not avoidable, nor is the length of service any less amendable, to magnetic fields, secret gatherings. Egyptian powders, to take down for the heroine. The hark and hawkness, the multiple arcs. Incision of intimate knowledge about the nature of her listening-tongue and the insincere fingering.

*

The double-faced window of a highland arc, the fearless one, the Archeologist with larval-smoke and teetering, she gestured... She swallows and glows from within. Throws the first fire, with pitchfork urges. Troubles the lorn, translates into aspects of incendiary and babbling, coupling a shadow. You project accommodation with ambiguity and a penchant for heuristic pendulums. Desire is a flash fire clothed in dusk.

*

The beautiful daughter, the Amaryllis magnifying-glass. Soft spot of the antechamber. Her plume is named for an awkward reflection, while doorways take command of the tides and other explosive devices.

*

Pleasure is a paradoxical axon to the messengers of language. You have long since lowered your resistance to myelin milkweed and the splendid solace of a torch, bleeding a constellation whenever possible. For what unnamed street introduces a midnight stroll in phosphorus and synapses, and the word corona overrun with crying machines and sinister keys searching for hidden locks.

*

In your hunting, desire spreads the quickness of sudden entrances. A fully defined weapon befriends the loss of innocence.

*

Pouring the water, underground, forming a vase for the doorway. An exquisite object overwritten with ghostly allusions. She slips into the underground on stilts and loons. He is the memory of a lost civilization, replete with incomplete angles. That specific or missing page of the book where you appear...

*

A delayed message, a treatise of principle light, hallucinating for a dress of anemones and flight charts, nightly missions. Spells rooted inside for ancestral gestures powered by lighted glands and decisive numbers. Siren, signal, the nitro of an entrance, the golden dust of Anacaona...

*

Do not write those words, the ones regarding a taste of erasure or indecision. The distance between mind and sunlight is the amount of voices needed to fill the abyss. Your name is Incantation. Your shadow: Salamander. Reflection... Fire.

*

To transfer by scent alone, is to salivate uncontrollably. Your own Outer Space is shaped by neurons of desire. The other, by means of intangible movements, river-like and sinister, that window with a painful and joyous glow... Your fingers inside the puma, stirring plasma... Your face is water, and stepping in deeper water and throats of growling alive in the lightning room. Mouths as close to touching as perfume is to a puzzling dream.

*

Image circles the garden, then tears a pathway through a wall, down there, beneath ambiguous statues. Where the need for emerald comes to light, battles with indigo and other spectres, collides with the enchanted wall of night. The earth emits sparks under your feet. Mind is allowed to follow a lit fuse outside of conscious levels. Where your skin of great birds unfolds a marvelous dialectic. The analogy of an assassin who loves you.

*

The anti-muse of a muser arcs for dissenting above all. Maze hieroglyphs for Blindfold and recovers the brilliant image wrapped in archery and pathological precision. You channel a rainforest, braille a constellation, to ricochet in the most desirable fashion. You sleepwalk to uncover a mystery, without waking too soon...

*

Each time night never ends, a touch of blood, a distant gasp. Desire always over-reaching, to escape into morning. You are raised out of incantation.

*

The Jester moth and Orchid face comingle in conspiracy, weapons were used and eclipse was a devastating word. A she word more beautiful than a still-wrapped mummy with lightning for windows. A first-born word for shadow. You were stealth against whatever luxurious arc evaded each obscene luminosity. Language was breeding its children in secrecy. Silence was not a doorway...

*

Pinnacle was never alone, a bleeding ground for starlight, breeding, pale colorless flowers bordering a misfit embrace of optical synesthesia. The scent of a howl capitulates to sudden indigo. A game for children and other hybrids, a self-portrait against reasonable doubt. Throwing bones at the moon for ignition.

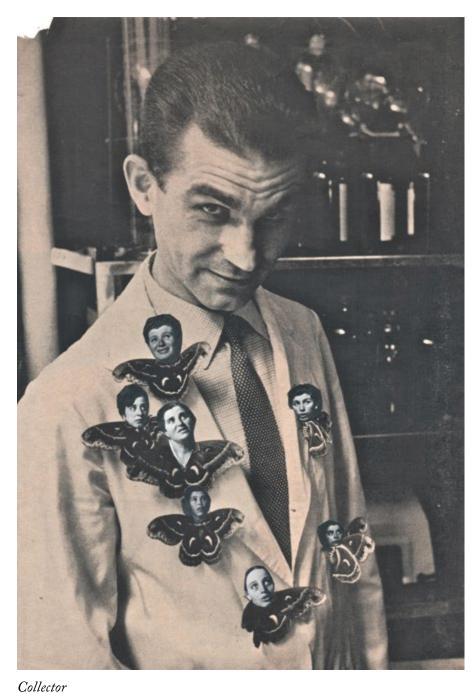
*

The lost scripts are merciless intrusions, endgames on reversed reflections, bird-colored on aroused tables. Your means of seduction depend on the moon and it's blue vials. Radical contortions as stealth as any trace of blood, or heavy breathing... Your ace of duplicity left behind every appearance, struggling with absence, so close, and it always amuses you, leaves you breathless...



Come Out of Your Body Among Us Unbounded in all Directions

Megan Leach



Deborah Stevenson



Dream Specimens
Megan Leach

SEA FLORILEGIA

by Vittoria Lion

Preface

On the morning of my father's burial, I spent the entire service in a deep, enchanted sleep in the nautilus-shaped nave of Stella Maris, as if—one might say—God Himself had not wanted me to see. As the crane slowly lowered each of his gigantic bones into the upturned soil that afternoon, rainclouds of women's hair fell from the sky and snared in the branches of the trees, veiling the mourners' faces like shredded lace. Tracing the perimeter of the church, which resembles a lopsided dragon carved out of white soap, I stopped to kiss the painted image of Stella Maris. With her back to a wall of ocean water, she stands on a horizontal crescent moon, a pair of cattle horns, the runner of a rocking horse, the rib of an extinct whale, a hubcap flying saucer. Behind her, the open sea is filled with spiders.

**

Sedimentary leaves fall swiftly over strewn grass, eating all of the marbles, a miraculous parting of the waters, unfolding and swallowing oneself up: the Earth's strata are the bed's mattresses. All layers record together, simultaneously, so that they can emit someone else's voice, like a polyphonic birthday cake. Hallucination, orgasm, and tectonic shift are three versions of the same phenomenon, spontaneous production. How else should I describe the peculiar character of the island of Porta Santa Maria del Mare, the place of my birth, where an entire row of bazaars and cafés in the village disappears one day and is replaced by a Miocene kelp forest sheltering ancestral manatees, only to emerge again the following morning? What was I like before I emerged from her foam? I was curled up; a seashell, a grenade shell, an eggshell, coral shells, Unix shells, shellac bones. A trinket box of fossils in the womb.

My mother, a paleontologist who wished deeply for me to inherit her passion, used to tell me that she would be my assistant and clean the bones of the fearsome creatures who I unearthed when she grew old. She spent decades among the cliffs of Wadi El Hitan, polishing the wide, dentated jaws of fossilized vulvas with kitchen towels. In Europe, there was an incredible demand for the excavated bones of the whales to whom they once belonged, which were used in the manufacture of straitjackets for inmates at the Salpêtrière and similar institutions. When my father passed shortly after her one hundred and fifth birthday, she threatened me with confinement in one of those miserable places on account of my worsening delirium, her reassurance that these bones have also become a fixture in fashionable women's dress lately bringing little comfort to me. Yet, I had not forgotten that my parents abandoned my twin sister, Uccellina—if she had another name, it was never once mentioned—at the convent of Stella Maris after noticing something very grotesque about her upon the instant of her birth. (Whenever I asked for more explicit detail, my mother remarked that she took after my father, unlike myself.) Henceforth, she was raised by the temperamental abbess, Ornella, who taught her that the history of her sex was something with awfully sharp teeth that sank down into an ancient stone marrow. Ornella, I am told, was a preposterous creature, a woman with the maquillage of a horseshoe crab: born sometime during the Late Ordovician, she had lost the ability to differentiate dreaming from waking in her last years. Hardly anything had really interested her anymore, with the exception of the monastery's physician, an oversized sea louse named Foscharina who inspired great carnal affections in her. When I stared at heaps of dirty rags and fantasized that the stains and hairs placed by chance among the threads could be read as a map of nuclear launch sites, I thought of my sister sleepwalking away time to the beach where Ornella would sit, praying the rosary to Stella Maris in the form of a flatworm. Perhaps, limping along the shore with the aid of her crozier, a little umbrella named Parasolsus, she'd tell her a tale about how God decided He needed to create the sea after staring into His own reflection and realizing that His only gift to the world was endless cruelty.

Thus, my escape plans had long been percolating in my mind, to be actualized the evening after the funeral ended. Under the cover of night, I flagged a taxi, which inexorably broke down on the mountain pass leading to the convent. I continued miserably on foot through the forest until I came upon a cliff that was at once an exposed library. The ribbons of strata in the rock face were formed by the colours of the codices' vellum, made of everything from black shale exoskeletons to petrified dinosaur skin. Deciphering this optical illusion, I felt overcome with relief upon realizing that I must have reached the perimeter of the monastic complex. By moonlight, I delicately removed a codex and pressed my fingers into the spongy, beige cake of its pages, indulging them first in the crust side, then in the side for spreading peanut butter or marmalade. Discovering it to be a composite of multiple texts bound together, I hovered, mesmerized by the section that I assumed was the oldest: a montage of trilobites and specimens of Pikaia gracilens, the flatworm-like grandmother of all; but also of cat's eye marbles, dolls, wooden marionettes, pull-along animals, and a stuffed rabbit—transitional forms appearing first like nascent spiral galaxies forming letters, and then words, against the black page. How warm and lovely it must feel to be hidden like that, I thought, concealed beneath the covers of your fossil bed...

The sound of the volumes' chains rustling betrayed a habited figure dusting the shelves. Covered in a fine down, her congenitally folded arms ended in scaly claws instead of hands. I was taken aback in shock, which subsided far more quickly than you might think. Intuitively recognizing my twin, I peered under her veil and surreptitiously kissed her face, which narrowed to a pointed beak, like that of a flightless bird. I hastily explained my predicament, to which she responded with sympathy. My sister and I thus entered the convent's four enclosed walls, crawling with cats, penguins, and kiwi trees; reeking of monotonous confinement, but also enticing the senses with the aura of a dream encapsulated permanently in a glass vial.

An ancient abbess, the monastery's founder, discovered a white smoker on the ocean floor beyond the island's edge, believing that the breast-shaped volcanic crater was pouring the Virgin's milk into the sea. This fortuitous event quickly attracted innumerable pilgrims, who came to bathe in the waters surrounding the cloud of milk and bring it home with them in small clay ampullae. (Several centuries later, that archipelago of drops of milk would draw hundreds and thousands of Victorian invalids in a slightly different sort of pilgrimage.) Inevitably, the island's spell drew first the Muslims, who arrived from Sicily with advanced medicine and mathematics, and then dugout canoes from Tierra del Fuego during the Age of Reason, the latter explaining the penguins... In the village square, the thousand-yearold mosque stands, the interior of her dome covered in silken memories, the original gold and coral tapestries hardly blemished by age. Uccellina led me to the dormitory where I would sleep beneath a sheet sewn from the leaves of an Arabic Dioscorides, past the chapel, the pharmacy, the little herb garden, and the ancient room stained with millennia of pale blue horseshoe crab's blood according to the rotations of the liturgical calendar. Farther out is the island's treacherous interior, where the dismembered limbs and hindquarters of behemoths fall spontaneously from the sky for no discernible reason, landing among willow trees and clinging to the jagged edges of cliffs. Above the tree line, where the air is like the final breath of a falling bird, the pelts of dead cave lions grow like a meadow over the last remaining snow. Resting under a grove of kiwis, it crossed my mind that the stars, like our eyes, have rods and cones.

The salt in the Adriatic is mined from the preserved hearts of saints. (Saints being saints, the grains of salt multiply until they fill the entire sea.) The sea's bite does not heal; the sea is a baptistery for infant monsters; the sea is a place where saints wander, knotted with wires that trace ancient pilgrimage routes to Jerusalem and Rome; the sea is holy. All places of origin are reservoirs of pain that one fears one will never emerge from, and yet they are simultaneously enchanted castles, opportunities to escape the dreariness of one's days and become: it is possible for somewhere to be at once Eden and Inferno, for their prodigious menageries, uninhibited by the fear of death, share many of the same enclosures...

Of the Way Across the Atlantic

I arrived here by walking along the first trans-Atlantic telegraph cable, tracing countless feet of Darwinian tightrope stretching from Heart's Content to Valentia Island in total darkness, dreaming of everlasting prairies of tube worms. It originally functioned for only three weeks before falling into disuse, ostensibly because it would not stop recording the voices of humpback whales and garbling transmissions like letters on a page seen in a dream. The La Brea Tar Pits diorama on display at the Royal Ontario Museum when I was a little girl featured dire wolf skeletons with black bones. Even dreams are drowned in the La Brea Tar Pits, I suppose, like on the abyssal plain. Opposite the diorama was a gallery of more unusual fossils preserved by the bitumen: unfortunate drowned skyscrapers, highways, server farms from Mountain View that couldn't escape the deluge, libraries (the millions of volumes consumed by their own asphalt ink), and oilfields. I also enjoyed the American Museum of Natural History in New York. The highlight there is the Hall of Human Origins: you enter through a vagina perforating the adjacent wall, and inside is a diorama of an environment and figures modelled upon drawings that you made as a child. No one experiences it quite the same way, apparently. It's paleontological Pentecost.

An inexpressible yearning to live in such places permanently haunted me. (I once dreamed that the sea's depths spat out my grandparents' bodies in the forms of Pharaonic mummies.) When I was a child, our house was entirely inedible. I firmly believe that department store catalogues depicting the rooms of a perfect house ought to be replaced by new editions that categorize such interiors according to what happened to you where—according to where, for instance, you discovered a symptom of a disease, learned a dreadful secret, or found yourself alone with worries terrible enough to only be contemplated by children. There were times when I wore a white Communion dress, when I was married, when I was upstanding in the eyes of others, when I knitted clothes for a child who I never gave birth to: they have left less of an impression on me than cobwebs, nocturnal bouts of nausea, and the sight of my mother in a state of undress. Should I tell you about the time when, in the

midst of a nervous breakdown at four in the morning, I cut off most of my hair and became taken by an overwhelming urge to scatter my tresses in the soil of my father's vegetable garden? Moving in an automatic manner, wordlessly, I went out into the blackness and dropped the locks of dark hair over the slithering worms and dead pine needles. Sorting the laundry, I would sometimes mistake a black sock for a black bone, envision the La Brea Tar Pits absorbing the walls, and think about sailing that River Styx.

Some Characteristics of the Sea Surrounding Porta Santa Maria del Mare "Sometimes, when flowers bloom from salt instead of seeds, the sea sings into my arteries with the Angelus bells..."

Uccellina tells me stories about swimming among lunar lice in the Silurian slurry at the age of twelve, balancing herself on her back and then her stomach, kissing the feathered fingers of the sea, and neglecting the task of hanging the older nuns' hairshirts to dry on the trans-Atlantic telegraph cable. She coughs out a piece of the Oort Cloud momentarily under the airless sky, spitting into the ocean, becoming simultaneously a common ancestor and descendant of endless forms to come. Of course, there is no Atlantic yet of which to speak, but those ex-votos, fossils of things that have yet to manifest, are everywhere. She rolls underneath fragrant soup stock whilst swallowing languid mouthfuls, gurgles, and towels silverfish pearls from her hair. Some of the flavours are more familiar: potatoes, carrots, tomatoes, garlic, shallots, olive oil, wine, verjuice, basil, parsley, lovage, fennel, coriander, rosemary, saffron, cardamom, paprika, lavender, mint, ginger, almond milk, Darjeeling, herbal salt. And, yet, they intermingle with salt from oceans now crystallized, salt from the foam of Europa and Enceladus, salt from Antarctica's lakes, Agrigentine salt, silt scraped from the caverns of the moon, dissolved ice cores from Saturn's rings, charcoal from sacred icons burnt during ecclesiastical disputes, balsamum, silphium, drops of meltwater from moulins in the dying glaciers of Greenland four hundred and sixteen million years hence, and a splash of floodwater that soaked countless human skeletons in the lower galleries of the Paris catacombs... Every word of Gervase of Tilbury's Otia Imperialia suspended in the waves, and yet, somehow, more...

Without a hint of irony, Uccellina proposes that I become the bride of Stella Maris, which makes me laugh. (On land, she moves with a hopping gait, a little like that of a sparrow or finch, hence her name.) My sister's hairshirt, like those of the other nuns, is made of a type of fibre knitted from pieces of shed whale baleen that are found washed up on the beach. It has an unspeakable texture—to the touch, it reminds me of steel wool, but not quite—that eclipses my fingers, like the fading taste of something eaten in a dream.

Uccellina in the Forest of Memory

Sometimes, freed from the gravity of the surface, I've flown, but my dreams blanketed me like an unruly wind and made me sink. My sister is a bird (of a sort) and yet she cannot fly; she nests in a Sicilian prickly pear. Yesterdays are like sentences that stop at the beginning and yet move forward—a startle, a delayed climax during sex, a penumbral sigh. You berate yourself for waking from a dream, for hyphenating alternative evolutionary trajectories, and soon enough you're old and the rest of your body stretches out before you like an Arctic meadow, all bubbling peat moss and joints that have forgotten their function. Why have children? They die after two springs. Eden and Babel retain their promise of eternal summer precisely because their walls are stalked and penetrated on all sides by monsters. (The Heavenly Jerusalem, by contrast, is a glorified late capitalist shopping mall, open 24/7, with its fibreglass tree and fluorescent lights that never dim.) Today, I wake with several bivalves mouthing at my tired limbs. The gates of the Rose Garden beckon a second time, now in the form of lepidodendrons with their instantly recognizable fishnet stockings: silva, the memory forest of the Age of Coal, the sleepless time when the substance of the Earth's unconscious was laid in place, reduced today to formidable trunks entombed in cliffs and coastlines sparkling with black opals... The bruised sky of moistened ether chokes us, since we can hardly remember how to breathe it after inheriting hundreds of millennia of genetic grief. The sheep in the foothills, light as air due to never having been weighed down by the possession of human souls, inhale it more easily. Released from their stables to graze on cordaites and horsetail ferns and threading in and out of the trees like particles through a blind, they hardly acknowledge that anything has changed. Morning, like any other. Despite the preternatural youth of the Earth, I discover wrinkles in places where I previously had none. Somewhere far from here, the bells of the church are ringing Prime.

"I would find a crow's nest in the crucified forest, wandering down there, in the time before the great old groves and fetid waters were cleared away so that the monastery could be built," my sister yawns, rolling over in the humid, half-flooded cell. "I could tell from seeing their pellets in the mud. They contained trilobites. I'd look inside the nest, and among the blue cornflower eggs were all of the usual things that crows collect, buttons and bits of fur and so on, but it also contained a tuft of hair shaved from the head of Santa Chiara d'Assisi, a splinter of wood from the True Cross, a tooth from the jawbone of Maria Magdalena, a finger from San Girolamo's writing hand (and, inseparable, the thorn from the lion's paw), and a magic thread from a rag worn by Sant'Antonio. I saw the crows sitting on the roof of the church after mass, shitting all over the eroded tympanum with Christ in Majesty barely visible, and I knew without understanding their language that they were loudly plotting their next theft, but said nothing. That was because I loved how small and mundane the objects looked without the gilt and precious stones. You could mistake them for things vomited from the stomach of deep time—perhaps they were. Later, in my dreams, Ornella went to battle with the crows over the stolen relics. The crows, of course, emerged victorious, aided by dragonflies the size of hawks and millipedes like living continents. There are still habits of past abbesses and vellum folios preserved in that swamp that haven't been recovered, pearling ever so slowly into coal. Most of the relics the ancient Romans housed in their temples were fossils. How many martyrs' bones are just mouldy gazelle feet gnawed by giant hyenas? San Francesco preached to scavenging birds, after all. That's how, from an early age, I came to understand that hagiographies are written by several hands."

Like the crows, I was spellbound by miniature worlds, by chance encounters with small objects, porcelain animals from Red Rose Tea boxes or beads

of sea glass, spinning them in my fingers and staring at them intently until they took on lives of their own. Unwittingly, I was embarking on the Cubist adventure of attempting to perceive everyday things from all possible perspectives, all surfaces, all planes—an excavation of all possible yesterdays and tomorrows. If only someone had bothered to ask me to write an encyclopedia of the world based on the knowledge uncovered by such a technique. Or a museum exhibition catalogue...

When I wake again, the all-providing trees of the Land of Cockaigne are gone, covered by beaches lightly dusting ancient driftwood. As if traversing a nave, I walk wordlessly among sky-bleached bones the size of towers, ostensibly from a whale, but their human shape suggests that they are mine, and I am filled with a strange peace. The snail trails of feathers and stringy innards from less fortunate birds that the crows drop on the shoreline appear to be a kind of writing, a form of asemic writing, perhaps, but, nevertheless, they look like words—tracings, scribbles in the sand, like when I drew loops and waves across a page without thinking as a child and showed it to our mother, claiming proudly that I knew how to write. Or when I would lie on the couch for hours, fixated upon my Magna Doodle, drawing furrows of particles and dispersing them at random, subconsciously relying upon those champs magnétiques that birds, ocean currents, and Surrealists follow on their migration routes. We have only lived our lives on the surface of a labyrinthodont's tooth...

Uccellina Has a Vision of the Madonna

Time passes, but we always manage to find each other again in the interstitials between slices of toast and marmalade. Having woken abruptly from our sleep in the form of ten-year-old children, Uccellina and I decide to play a game as we bathe on a stromatolite bed under a moon that appears close enough to touch. She opens her beak and pulls forth an inch of impossibly fine purple thread. I am astonished and irritated, and I ask her to divulge the illusion before impulsively snagging the end of the thread and pulling hard on it. However, it continues to come forth unfailingly, and Uccellina gleefully

tosses the resulting ball of string into the infernal sea, where it unravels to eventually become the first trans-Atlantic telegraph cable. Inhaling sulfurous rain, she begins another story.

"When I was small, around this age, I would run endlessly, automatically, to the extent that I could on my spindly legs, darting from one end of the room to the other, beating my shrunken arms like wings, crashing into a handful of nuns while they were cooking and sending soup flying, scaring cats and hens who wandered into the kitchen to steal some spaghetti, smacking into walls, knocking over Padre Emmanuello in the middle of the elevatio, causing piles of books in Ornella's room to fall on top of me. I somehow had gotten it into my head that, if I were to run vigorously enough, the cloister walls would no longer limit me, and I would float out through the uppermost window of the library and be able to survey all the remote places of the world, all the monsters on the church tympanum, but reduced to the size of dollhouse figurines. Naturally, I wondered what lay along the farther rim of the island. I set out one afternoon, following the trail of abandoned objects and creatures in the sand that I had delighted in on so many previous occasions: keys, a wallet, horses, penguin droppings, a clump of moss, coins, a jacket, plastic toy animals, little cockleshells and ammonites worn as pilgrim badges, flowering garbage. I had prepared myself for the journey's length by stealing an old copy of the Physiologus from the library; its leaves unfolded at night like a giant fruit bat's wing, and the vellum transformed into a brilliant canopy that covered me as I slept on the beach.

"Early in the morning, with the constellations still visible overhead, I came upon the beautiful mansion, Étoile-Escargot, an inn and medical spa commissioned by the nineteenth-century French hot-air balloonist, Dr. Beaugendre. I entered surreptitiously and walked in a bath of nectar among its multiple floors and staircases, admiring the rich colours of its walls, its lavish tapestries and carpets, the flattened and crumbling seaweed specimens treasured by long-dead ladies. I took an armchair in the library, of Brobdingnagian proportions in comparison to my body, and began to read a book on the subject of how to turn myself into a living, breathing alchemical experiment. I then realized that I had lost my favourite toy, a tiny Hallucigenia

fossil, whom I had been carrying in my pocket; retracing my steps, I learned that the inn was hosting a meeting of the Royal Society. I spied on the proceedings from an adjacent room, but soon realized that the participants were saying nothing of interest to me, so I ate as many of their leftover appetizers as I could, since I was very hungry, and stuffed some in my underclothes to take back for the pigs.

"My heart sank, for I had lost track of time and suddenly realized that it was much later than I thought. Due to an anomaly in the Earth's latitudinal and longitudinal fields, as you know, the island experiences darkness for an entire day and night once every year. The sea is known for becoming very vicious at such times, and the waves were rising up and knocking against the doors of the mansion and pouring in through the windows, raining rudimentary fish that looked like eels. Of course, I was used to hiding in the convent's ossuary, but none of those explorers and doctors had such knowledge. They only had their plastic wineglasses to save as much drinking water as they possibly could with, and they brought them all up to the attic. Despite its height, they could still hear the seawater crashing against the walls.

"To my absolute bewilderment, at this moment, the Madonna—with a flash of recognition on my skin, I knew it was her—burst through the mansion's front doors. She lay there like a sphinx, bearing the hindquarters and tail of an enormous saltwater crocodile and the arms and head of a mannequin, painted brightly and adorned with a golden wig. Her slender fingers ended in ghastly claws. I hurriedly placed a small chest at the top of the grand staircase leading to the second floor and ran upward for my life. However, the staircases leading to the attic seemingly evaporated into thin air, and I felt as if I were floating through space, perhaps running through my mental map of the house, through intestinal canyons. My last memory is of trying to hide by crouching on a mantel holding thin flowers next to a very high ceiling, against a green wall. Oh, the feeling was so strange—as if I had suddenly lost my balance and slipped while crossing a stream barefoot—and I awoke the next day at around a quarter past nine in the morning to the horrid scene of Foscharina holding me still as Ornella smacked my bottom with Parasolsus.

"Ornella vanished into the sea for several hours, as she was not one to care

about rotting her body with indulgences like long baths. After tensions subsided a little, I approached her on the beach and related all that I had seen, asking if that monster was indeed the Madonna. From beneath the surface of the shimmering water, she amusedly growled through her exoskeleton, 'You see that gifts always come baring teeth, no? Traces of horror earn their haloes after a hundred centuries go by..."

The Two Sisters Who Underwent a Marvellous Transformation

Uccellina delights in showing me the convent's reliquaries—aquariums of the unconscious, aquatic planetaria, precursors to modern anatomy museums in their affection for corporeal scraps. I have been enchanted for so long by the thought of being immersed in a wet world filled with wet specimens, monsters suspended in saltwater, the murky landscapes and fauna of dreams, and the fluid carried by my arteries. I mention to Uccellina that this must be a form of nostalgia for gliding and scuttling along the Silurian bed. In contrast, the outside world is uncomfortably and impossibly flat and arid, and only becoming more so.

This evening, Uccellina tells me a story first recorded during the Late Middle Ages, involving two sisters and a stupendous animal. Suffering from unfading melancholy, a young nun sought the advice of the monastery's physician, who counselled her with the words of Augustine on the therapeutic effects of bathing for grief and advised her to try a recipe now recognizable as a flavourful soup in certain cookbooks. That evening, she immersed herself in one of the wooden tubs of the convent's bathhouse and drew the curtain, only to invite the curiosity of the woman she loved. (Their fondness for each other, nonetheless, was hardly a secret among the other sisters.) When the interloping sister climbed the stool and lifted the canopy after being furtively beckoned in, the hush of unspeakable lichens met her ears. Feeling her way in the darkness, her mind wandered to various mysteries that cannot be expressed in this world and its words: death, transubstantiation, sorrow somehow more beautiful than the dawn. Oil gathered around their thighs, and in that moment they imagined themselves unlocking a garden

with a magic key, revealing a full orchard bedecked with tables laid out for a summer feast day. Each other's skin became the vellum of a wondrous map depicting Jerusalem, Constantinople, the fountain of Adam's Paradise, all the monsters of the world, and a faint trace of saliva leading back once more to the cloister at the journey's end—everything that they longed for so greatly but would never see within the monastery walls. Silk dripped from their mouths, carrying the inviting, fernlike taste of the saline imprints of octopi, monk seals, and the lice that feed on the skin of whales. Past and future slipped into forever like wine, like the clockwork leakage of blood that, once upon a time, brought shining Books of Hours out of indistinct night. In the midst of such strange anatomies thrown into the abyss, their crumpled bones writing scrimshaw lyrics together, their faces each assumed the likeness of Stella Maris reflected in the world's oceans, lost in the timeless time of the eternal city of God.

A mild wave unstrung the surface. Like a tongue, a layer of foam curdled and slipped over the rim of the tub, submerging the occupants, like the birth of Venus in reverse. Grendel's mother came knocking: somehow, through the combination of their rhythmic motion with that of the Earth rubbing together her various infoldings, the crucible forged the two women into a full-grown sleeper shark. (Her gigantic descendants, twenty-one feet from snout to tail, have been observed at depths of over seven thousand feet, living as long as four centuries beneath the pinwheel ice in their cold beds and waterlogged nightcaps, foraging on Baked Alaska cakes, semifreddo loaves, carousel horses dragged from the shores of Sable Island, reindeer, and polar bears, nearly blind from the copepods that slowly devour the tissues of their eyes, all the better to keep out the increasingly bad news of daylight shining over me.) She opened her great jaws and swallowed whole St. Brendan the Navigator and his crew; breaching, their arrows washed away like loose hairs, and she swiftly made her way to the library, having detected the scent of calfskin, effortlessly ripping loose codices from the anchors affixed to the library's hull. A tiny corkscrew-shaped castle of excrement containing gold leaf was discovered in the morning.

Two Dreams Discussed Before a Feast

We wake in a kettle bog—somewhere to the north, perhaps, or sometime before the glaciers receded—a sunken eye enclosed by lashes of myrtle, our skin the leadened colour of fallen antler velvet, our hair brilliant red. We are dead. A solar black hole: we wake, but only to a different shade of dreaming, amidst a litter of crows, a spectrogram of textures ranging from mole fur to the spaces between blankets and the pages of a closed book. Our afterlives will be spent asleep, in fragments of the half-remembered dreams of our loved ones, a few letters here and there in a partially decayed twelfth-century volume tucked away under the covers in Argentina's National Library, loose pieces of yarn, and countless generations of couchgrass and rats. One wonders if this is what the angels envy. I cannot say with any certainty how long we have lain here for: one thousand years, one hundred thousand years. Our glassy bones slide from their sockets. Porous like a bird's, my sister's produce a resonant ring, and I finish where I left off the previous evening. Somewhere far from here, the rider on the white horse releases a herd of skeletal sheep with wool the colour of pubic hair into the sky, and the bells of the church are ringing Prime.

"It was Christmas morning. I was miserably bedbound with a fever of forty degrees, and the day before I had discovered that I was menstruating for the first time in two decades. Being half-asleep, I imagined that I was Madame Martaine, wearing a glorious dress and set of jewels and telling a terribly enthralling tale that inevitably revolved around the anus. When I put on her clothes, I felt authentic, for once in my life, Uccellina, like the Velveteen Rabbit when he transforms from a toy into a vigorous creature—"

"You've oddly enough reminded me of a horrid nightmare from when I was young, the evening following the first Sunday of Advent. It terrified me to such an extent that I jumped out of bed and ran through the early snow to the physician's house, where I knew Foscharina would soon be waking for Matins. The cattle were lowing loudly, and their breath was

like gossamer. I thought that perhaps a wolf had gotten in with them, but there were none in sight. When I arrived, Foscharina could not hear me at all, for she was bent over a sleeping patient laid out upon her table, like a dissected animal ready for sex. I pressed my eye to the barred window and stared, transfixed, as she slit open her stomach and folded away the lining like one folds a sheet, revealing the remnants of the previous day's dinner. However, to my great surprise, she uncovered a steaming fig cake, almost entirely intact. She stuck her pincers into the cake and ate second-hand. The delightful smell of the beautiful golden bog butter, churned straight in the womb, filled me with the utmost envy..."

"You looked away, didn't you? I thought you were a vegetarian finch!"

"Why, I glued my eye to the grating still more eagerly! Ottavia, it's a lovely spring; I believe our birthday will be arriving soon. There's no decent reason why we shouldn't have either of those things. I'll start sewing your dress, and I believe there's a lump of that butter downstairs for the cake."

Gasping, she liquefies completely, her shadow melting into the buried yolk. With my rotten spine, I stir the wooden barrel alembic containing the waxen elixir of excess life, something relegated to the edges of hysterical sleep. (It is far from synonymous with life eternal, which nobody truly desires.) I lament that I have had to grow so old before realizing that, if there is such a place as heaven, it is composed of a never-ending series of banquets strange as the horizons of the lunar plateaus, in castles made of dough that you look forward to eating after the meals themselves! I doubt that there is anything of greater value than finding a place in the world that is both livable and filled with the food you like. What is that eternally-falling marine snow covering the woollen coats of the sheep like the pearls of a tattered wedding dress, perfumed holy salt that leaks from the breasts of the sea, curing your father for Sunday dinner? A tangential connection between the two fever dreams manifests itself like a rainbow without light. The windows of the garden-crushed ballroom fly open, exposing us to the frigid ocean.

Speculum mortis

We enter a room in the infirmary assaulted by howling animals from the ceiling tiles. This morning, Uccellina fitted me with a wedding gown made of powdered milk that her sisters gathered from the edge of the crater. I hesitate, hardly able to walk for fear of the delicate garment dissolving into oblivion.

"These beagles, for instance, are trained to detect disturbances in one's unconscious from the mere scent of one's unwashed bedsheets," she sighs, helping a giant isopod mop up the floor around a large table. Her voice carries a hint of melancholy.

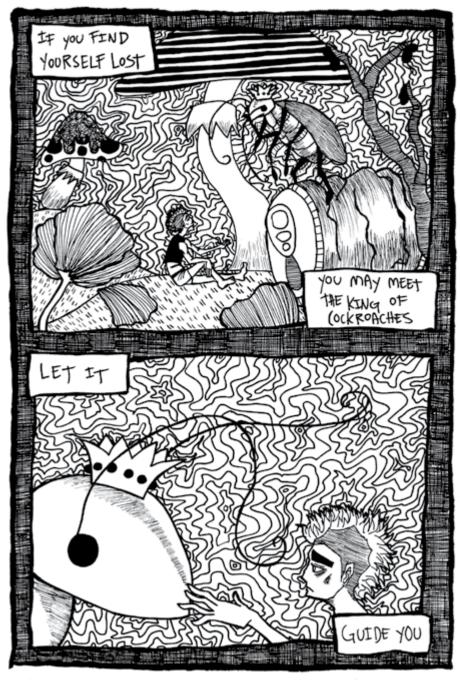
The little Saint Guineforts furiously push their snouts against the glass of their reliquaries; a vial of dogwood sap spills over the dissection implements spread haphazardly across the unfinished autopsy of Santa Chiara da Montefalco, over the parchments recording the weight and appearance of her brain, lungs, and heart, and hallucinations derived from the veins and convolutions therein, the instruments of crucifixion—the family functions. A palimpsest notes the curious phenomenon of Hubble Space Telescope images tattooed on the inner walls of her skull, like snowflakes inside a glass Christmas bauble. The key to the Voynich Manuscript, I think, can be found in the detritus of my last meal lying in my intestines, like crumbs spiralling around the drain of a kitchen sink.

"As I said before, this masterpiece was staged by multiple hands," my sister continues, observing the scene, twirling until she appears to lift an inch or so off the ground—but only an inch, unnoticeable to anyone distracted momentarily by something elsewhere. "And, I think, the little flowers of my dreams are far more incandescent than miracles."

All around us, the dried, brittle feathers of hundreds of preserved finches stir to life like a monstrous wind, rising up like helium, and the barely visible fishing lines supporting every species of bird in the ornithology rooms of a thousand museums blow away with them, the strings of kites or balloons stretching like the meridians and parallels of uninhabitable places. As Simorgh, Superior of Birds, flies over hedgerows,

houses, and stores, suburban birdbaths are mysteriously transformed into the sacred wells and baptismal fonts of forgotten saints. The laboratory animals—the babewyns, the beagles, the disappearing white rats and rabbits—shrink to miniscule size, their spinal cords fleeing like beams of light, replaced by innumerable legs and plates. The moon's horns bend down to wash in a mirror of mercury, which paper animals drink from without dying. In the mists of the half-submerged lighthouses guarding the Adriatic, like a satellite landing, the glowing face of the pre-originary flatworm arrives, like the punchline to one of those infinite games of hide-and-seek known only to living fossils, which I have just begun to learn the language of. I sense that we have met before. The painted image of Stella Maris sheds her veil, the protective layer of mucus appearing like a drop of lead in a molybdomancer's beaker, and glides into the sea with a jubilant laugh, having lost her limbs.

KAI, LOST by Aiden Kvarnström







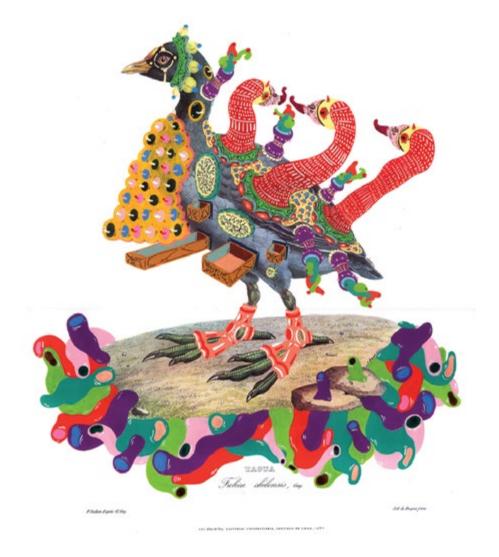
THE MANY SMALL DETAILS

by Melinda Giordano

The seasons change in an alchemist's patois – using a language that is rich in subtleties and mystery. It is a sum of transmutations that have been distilled in an earthly alembic ever since the world spun itself into existence.

The change is as delicate yet invasive as a drop of paint falling into a bowl of water, spreading in a fading bouquet of coils and tendrils. The cusp between seasons is a time of winsome details, tiny births and hushed deaths. There is an anthology of detail to regale one of what is to come, a silent speech of promises to be fulfilled once the threshold is crossed. This new dialogue, rough and poignant, contains a revelation of detail that curves into being every three months. It begins with a change as delicate as twilight dripping into dawn, as elusive as the stars twisting into a new formation.

It is on a periphery, a borderland familiar yet altered, a soft and gradual rift. If one is clever enough to look and see, to gather together the many small details like a bouquet the change does not go ignored and Nature's herculean sweat will not be wasted. Nor will go unheeded the four conversions of the year: fraught with as much magic as a forgotten chemist's lab, hung with colored glass, philosophies and saucers of bubbling gold.



Serie Mapa De Inteligencia, Obsecion Y Delirios Naturales. Tributo a Claudio Gay **Iñaki Muñoz**

SEA CHANGE

by Melinda Giordano

Shells delineate the shoreline in a waving spine, steadfast in their salty acres – these homes I can hold in my hand. Architecture once submerged, they were born within currents that pulsed turquoise and lavender, growing behind a serene pelagic veil.

They tumbled in the boiling surf, helpless in the blind physicality created miles out at sea, where winds stirred the water into madness. It was a long journey, far from the depths where Neptune embraced the watery world with his verdant, muscular arms. They were far from the light that split into a labyrinth of prisms, from shadows that bloomed at the edge of the sunken earth.

When they were free of the ocean's rough attentions, the glassy beach, reflecting seagulls and ships, beckoned. There they stretched, like an untended necklace, a rope to mark the extent of the ocean's appetite.

Their bleached, fossilized skin, made of sand and salt, was tattooed with rhythmic designs. Cartographies of color and pattern were carved into the coiling bone. Products of Nature's boundless whimsy and creativity, they were the sum of her busy fingers, carving skeletons into cathedrals, sweeping stairways and twisted carousels.

When she opened her hand, she whispered their story into each aquatic coil, then scattered them across the green and pearl-dazzled landscape of the sea. And anyone who picked up the shell to hold it close would feel her silvery breath and hear her dreaming narration of an empire of fishes, coral grottos, drowning suns, and a world far beyond our grasp.



Quenching Wench

Deborah Stevenson

94714/19414/1960

SWITCHING YARD

by Patrik Sampler

I walk out of the forest. It seems an easy thing to do. I enter a railway switching yard—the one beside the safety compound. It's submerged in fog, so I can't see clearly, but I know it must be the right one. Where else could this be? Grey fog and steel rails in the darkness. Nearby, oily gravel rail beds, creosote-soaked railway ties, a discarded railway spike.

In my childhood there was a train derailment near my home, and I remember taking a railway spike as a souvenir. It was an exotic treasure, and I used it as a paperweight. But the one I find here—despite being the same kind—seems like a facsimile, hardly important. Why is that?

There's a pack of cigarettes in my pocket. I don't smoke, so I must have got it from 743. Inside the box is a lighter. I sit down on one of the rails and light up. It's completely silent, and after a few drags I notice the small, crackling sound of the tobacco burning. It's the scale model sound of a much larger fire. I need to hold the cigarette some distance from my face—unfortunately I didn't bring my reading glasses—to observe the orange glow pulsing and winding through the burning end. I see it as a small city viewed from very far away at night, as from an airplane. Perhaps that's what it is. If so, it must be a very hot city. Too hot for humans to survive, if scaled to proportion.

Having given some thought to my cigarette, I notice now that a train is upon me. How did it arrive so unexpectedly? The locomotive's three headlights are surprisingly bright. Its engine rumbles loudly. Should I run? Where is this train, exactly? All these rails seem to crisscross one another, and I'm not sure from which direction the train will arrive. I can't tell even if I'm between two different tracks, or two different rails. If I knew I was between two different tracks I would feel safer. There's no telling where I am, so it's probably best to stay put, I think.

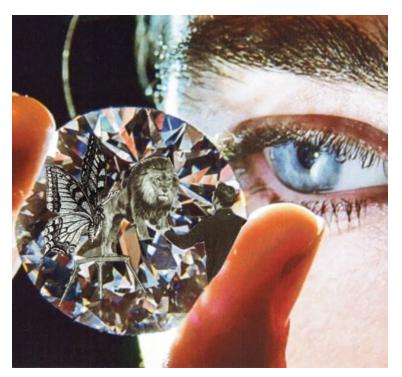
The train passes, perhaps two lines behind me. Very close, but far enough. I sit and feel the ground rumble. I concentrate on the sound of the wheels, clicking across the segmented rails.

At the same time, I consider a small city at the end of a cigarette.

"Switching Yard" is an excerpt from The Ocean Container, a novel (Ninebark Press, 2017).



Ron Sakolsky



My Crystal Vision
John Richardson

ALBINO CABBIFORM DREAM POETICS

by Casi Cline

You may know me as the only grower of Albino Cabbages in the Western Hemisphere, but you may be less farmiliar with the reason why I am dedicated to preserving this particular species: Albino Cabbages are, in fact, my favorite Poets.

Cabbages are, as I am sure you know, among the most prolific writers in the Vegetal Kingdom, turning out hundreds of Great Works of Fiction and Non-Fiction every year in their native Cabbiform, a complex and beautiful script writing translated only recently in the history of Vegetal Literature. Since then, Cabbiform translators and aficionados have observed that Cabbage varieties tend to have favorite genres. To name a few, Green Cabbages tend to like Philosophy, Red Cabbages often enjoy Esoteric subjects, and Savoy Cabbages are fond of writing Revolutionary Tracts. However, it being clear to all in our Enlightened Field of Study that a Specimen of any Vegetal or Animal Group is the Sum of Many Parts and their Group Identity is just one of them, we avoid making Generalizations based on Variety when dealing with Individuals.

While working with the obscure Albino Cabbage, I have found them to be prolific writers of Poetry, producing as much per cabbita, as the famed Golden Beets. However, their Fecundity would not be sufficient to justify my Admiration if the Nature of their Poetry was other or lesser than it is. You see, Albino Cabbages have a unique Cabbiculture and Mythology centered around Dreams. They see Dreaming as the Shadow Half of Waking, invisible in the Light but just as Real, and strive to integrate the Dream into the Waking. Using Words as Dream Tunnels, they produce startling and intuitive Poems that have the ability to arouse the reader like nothing I have experienced before. But the Cabbages may best speak for themselves. To honor her memory I have chosen to include a few Poems by the late Gabbie Chartreause, my favorite Albino Cabbage Poet and the best Friend I ever had.

renticulating veigns

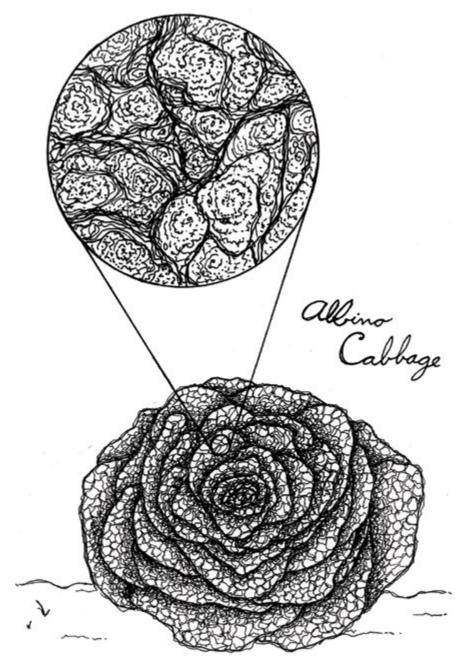
enblossomed in choloroform
unfolding in storms of honey trance
a slipping of stings on centerings
instigates centrifically a dripping of
multifarious jewel beetle wings
so then
squawk softly as you belabor
voluptuating showers falling up
sliding through tendrils
enveigled and luminously dark
with slits of enmeshening flesh on flesh
in tunneling significances of seeds

emmissaries of cortex

spinning up with spider arteries parting leaves behind the germ but parting leaves behind just one rippled world no more than an apple-mold heart attempt at turning off the tap root to doppelganger lust a physiognomy of opening where forms enfoam nematodal carnalion petals in their fluctuations of sensation emmisaries of cortex may be born next to peel back atmosphere skins

a presentiment of spasm

sucks at traceries of electricscape the ommatophore tingle clandestings along sublaminal reticulations frangible and vestaline make haste, make ready your undiscovered vesselinity pulsations of horror fascination pulsations of masochasm yawning yearning for a fathoming of a mollusk kind an excavation of coral aroma stay still, stay ready this oath of frenzy awaits a night looming hour beguiling away the zenith in teasing, seducing with promises of cranial crucifixion of lobial perforation and worry not the time will come in fact, has come quicker even than your eager dread had hoped the twitching hour has come with it the fungal-infection gasp of gastropodian penetration mucosally lugubricated parodoxseismically discovering a passage invisible before an opening of doors



Sketch of Gabbie Chartreause (†), a wonderful Poet and Friend, including a detail of Albino Cabbiform Script found on one of her inner Labial Leaves.

PALIMPSEST

(Collapsing Ice Sheet/Burgess Shale)

by Vittoria Lion



A community of tiny Burgess Shale organisms and their incongruous neighbours dance across an ice sheet floating on a large blot of black paint. The blot, which constitutes the first layer of the painting, represents the eponymous black shale. Part of the Milky Way is visible in the upper right corner. Around the edges of the original blot are black tracings suggesting the forms of invertebrates; pale green, purple, and white tracings suggesting fossilized ancient sea flora; and the fossils of trilobites and a worm-like animal. The upper surface consists of the dying ice sheet, penetrated by a wide crack splitting it in half; algal blooms; and open sores of dark, pooling water. Its greyish-white

colour simultaneously evokes a fossil bed, imbricated with more fleshly reconstructions of the Burgess Shale creatures Hallucigenia and Pikaia gracilens (perhaps the earliest known chordate, resembling a flatworm in appearance), alongside a pair of white Arctic wolves and a Greenland shark (Somniosus microcephalus, a type of sleeper shark). An amphibious purple snail-like animal swims in the bottom left corner, and a leafy border from an illuminated manuscript (inspired by an example from the Luttrell Psalter) weaves in and out of the ice in the upper left corner. A pink pillow embroidered with an image of the plated, crustacean-like Yohoia rests on the ice beneath the shark.

IN TIME YOU'LL SEE THE LINE

(excerpt from an unpublished novella)

by Merl Fluin

Many hours of the office later, and still discombobulated by the morning's mysteries, I decided to redeem a couple of those happy-hour promises, and instead of getting the Tube back home I walked down to the Cross Keys on Endell Street for a contemplative pint. Dusk had long since fallen; it was winter time, maybe even Christmas shopping time; the gormless streets around Covent Garden were overcrowded and heavy going, and to the untrained eye the crowd of smoking after-workers outside the Keys might have looked like more of the same, but once I'd broken through the knot of bodies and pushed through the door, there was peace and space inside. The Keys was having one of its rare quiet evenings. A couple of the tables were unoccupied, there was a gap at the bar just wide enough to squeeze myself in to make an order, the customers were mostly talking rather than bawling, and with the orange lights glinting off the diver's helmet and all the other brass and tinsel folderols, plus the usual fuggy heat, the atmosphere was comforting and gently feverish, like a snuggle in a cosy bed with a nice low-grade infection.

I don't go to the Keys all that often, but its one room is small enough to encourage conversation with strangers at neighbouring tables when you're in the mood, so I recognised a few faces, like the tall skinny barman, and the little entourage around the blind guy in his usual seat at the end of the bar, and by midway through my pint I was starting to feel slightly normal. The clinking of glasses, the chuntering of punters and the chatter of the fruit machine by the door were like a tiny chirping from an innumerable multitude of Lilliputian grasshoppers around the hem of the barman's trousers. "... You're only about four foot six, but don't worry about it, 'cause there's always

someone smaller than you..." I might have closed my eyes for a minute. When I opened them again the long tall barman was sitting at my table and giving me a meaningful look.

"Sorry mate, is it time or something?" I never like to outstay my welcome.

"I want to be inside you."

There's nothing like a direct approach.

"Likewise," I said.

That foxed him, I can tell you. He looked like he was thinking about it for a couple of minutes, and then:

"Ok, ok, I can do metaphor too. I want to inhabit your heart like a blackbird in buddleia, hidden from view, undisturbed, feeding, fledging. Lifelong love is a shelter as well as an adventure, an unbreakable lifeboat on a white-water ride, but let's talk about the boy in the boat and you know perfectly well what I mean: intersecting planes in three dimensions, the plumping folds, the wrapping and unwrapping of vessels, blood and water alike; keys fingered to strike the gentlest of hammers; multidirectionality inside enclosed spaces, your lips to god's cornrow, come on, I'm talking about height and depth and good and bad and the rise and fall of your breasts. Come back to my place, baby."

"That's fighting talk where I come from," I told him in all seriousness. "You want to dish it out but you don't want to take it. Sod the boy in the lifeboat, if you want to be my lover then you have to be prepared for me to split you, skin you and crawl into your hide like a Napoleonic soldier on retreat. No, no," I continued, as he seemed about to interrupt me with a knowingly risqué offer, "inside and outside are only the start. I want to push and pull you along the plane of slow aspirated phonemes, not just skin to skin but sonar to surface, flesh to air, the pitch and waveform of tidal breathing, I want to watch us having sex in real time on an oscilloscope —"

"Awkward."

"– so that I can prove to you that your planes are beyond flatlines. I'll ring your water bell, I'll wedge your bellows, I'll hotwire your anemone, I'll do whatever it takes to convince you."

"I don't get it about the oscilloscope." He was looking glum and even a bit defensive. "What would you attach it to?"

"It'll be really good," I assured him, glancing upwards through my eyelashes. "It'll blow your mind. It's only a moving line of light but it can take each of us right inside the other simultaneously, and after that there's a whole matrix of fun on the other side. Doesn't that sound divine?"

"But how could you see the line, that is to say the inside, of any man? You must have heard these things and then dreamed that you saw them."

"You're probably right there," I admitted. I think we were both coming to realise that the night was unlikely to end in great sexual success.

We sat in silence for a time, but I could tell that the turn in the conversation had really bothered him. He was getting agitated, and I wondered whether he was about to get nasty with it. After a while he asked in an injured rhetorical tone, and perhaps just a shade too loudly: "How can a man move in the direction of his inside?" And that was when the blind guy in the corner produced the gun.

All hell broke loose out of nowhere. The blind man's friends scattered around the room like ball bearings across a bagatelle board. Several people started trying to get out of the door and escape into the street, but they were trapped by the smokers still standing oblivious outside. Someone dropped a glass onto the bar, and it seemed to smash several times over. The fruit machine let out a howl. The blind man was on his feet now, the gun waving wildly all over the room, although he was facing in the general direction of our table.

"I'll show you how!" he yelled, drunk as a lord. "The motion of an object under the influence of gravity is determined completely by the acceleration of gravity, its launch speed and launch angle, provided air friction is negligible. DO YOU DENY THAT MEN ARE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF GRAVITY?" he roared.

"No, Claude," said my barman in a scared voice.

"I should hope not. Now, the horizontal and vertical motions may be separated and described by the general motion equations for constant acceleration. The initial vector components of the velocity are used in the equations. The diagram shows trajectories with the same launch speed but different launch angles."

At this point I made my first mistake of the evening. I said, "What diagram?" and he instantly fired the gun.

What happened next was only, entirely, eternally the bullets' trajectories, a dance based on combinations of fundamental movements simultaneous with formalised actions following specific rules regarding the positions of the arms, feet and body of the shooter. The first bullet achieved perfect posture, lightly balanced over the barman's centre of gravity as his legs turned out from his hip sockets. Other bullets made jumps or leaps, rapidly crossing as they did so, or turned in the air, once, twice, three times. Meanwhile, in quick, graceful strides and with immense poise, the blind man stepped right up beside me, delicately pulled out his cock, placed it, not inconsiderately, into my already open mouth, and fired the last bullet, which I now discovered was me as I suddenly found myself speeding through the air. The friction was far from negligible, my skin was hotter than a star as I flew, and the time dilation brought on by the speed of the transformation meant that it took several minutes for me to hit the surface of the barman's neck and start burrowing through his throat.

I was in his arterial stream, a world of dazzling colour and beauty. The walls of a vast amber-coloured chamber were lost in the distance, hidden behind a floating wonderland: huge red corpuscles, whirling globules, platelets, particles, minuscule fragments drifting with the stream, reflecting the entire spectrum of colour. As I continued to pass through the swirling conglomerations, the elements parted, flowed over and bounced about me, forming new fluid galaxies in a universe of amber. Each grouping and regrouping, every mass and disc, though loosely linked, had a rhythm of its own: the corpuscular drift, the bouncing particles, the parting and the merging achieved a majestic, lyrical choreography, a fugue of sound and motion as his heartbeat, strong and fast now and driving me hard onwards, was counterpointed with the backwash of blood and plasma, the creaks and bubblings of his fluctuating temperature, and his shocked and achingly voluptuous hhhhhh hhhhhh

After many minutes of speechless beauty I emerged from his flesh to hear the blind man telling everyone, "The mediaeval philosophers were right. Man is the centre of the universe. We stand in the middle of infinity, between outer and inner space. And there's no limit to either. Even inner space is endless: everything can be divided in half, no matter how minute."

"I never... never imagined it could be anything... like this," the barman gasped. I wanted to say I told you so, but the irony now was that I couldn't turn around to face him; I could no longer move in the direction of his inside. On and on I flew, passing through solid things, penetrating the other customers one after another, verifying the size and distance of each by the sense of feeling, a strangely fastidious kind of census, and I had plenty of time to wonder when the deceleration would begin before quite without warning I hit the diving helmet and found myself back in my seat with a cock in my mouth which I tactfully removed, prompting the blind gunman to cry out shrilly, "She is vanished, she is dead!"

"Actually I think I'm fine," I replied, wiping my face on my sleeve.

"Where did the bullet go?" someone asked.

Hands reached up and pulled down the diving helmet. Years of Brasso had kept it clean and shiny, and it was easy to see that there was nothing lodged in it anywhere, just a dent where the bullet had struck it and then glanced off at an angle. All the other bullets were accounted for, prised with a corkscrew out of the wooden wall panelling or retrieved from the smashed optics behind the bar; only this last one was missing, gone soaring off into who knows where.

No one was dead, but the barman was giving cause for concern. He was bleeding badly from the throat and abdomen. One of the other bar staff was looking for her phone so that she could ring for an ambulance; another, probably the licensee, was bitching about the damage to the pub and the hassle it was going to create with the police and the insurance; and mention of the police made some people wonder aloud what to do with the blind guy, who was now holding the gun limply in his hand, his cock lying no less limp against the outside of his trousers.

Feeling sorry for him, and drenched in sudden tiredness, I reached over to help him zip himself back up. If he was going to get arrested, at least he could do so with dignity. As my hands touched his zip he quickly grabbed them in both of his, squeezed them very tightly and bent down so that his mouth was level with mine.

"You've not been hit by flying lead," he said in a hard whisper.

"No," I whispered back.

He nodded and swayed for a moment, closed his eyes, bowed his head, and told me conspiratorially: "Wait for the ricochet."



TEST OBJECT III:

An Infection
of Bloodborne
Mycelial Squid
(Idiosepius Paradoxus)



THE PETRIFIED DAWN

by David Nadeau

for Jacques Lacomblez

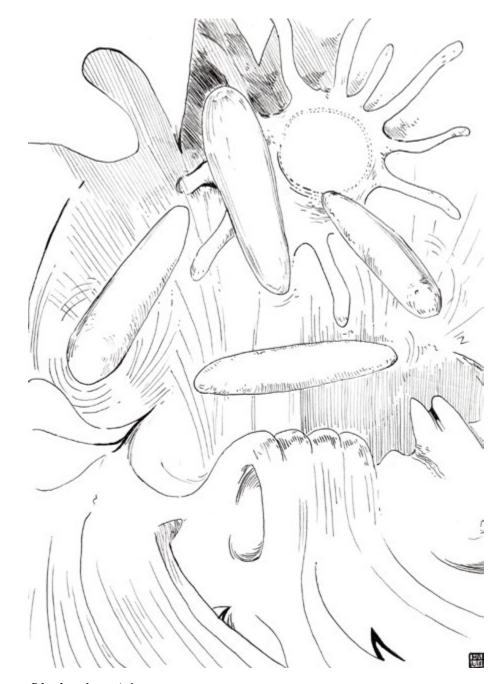
The ornaments of the wind,
the sap of glaciers,
the dew of the stained glass,
the bacteria fossilized under the fine crystalline bark,
question the immobile traveler.

A KEY IN THE SKULL

by David Nadeau

for Rikki Ducornet

Phanerogam calligrapher, the one who wears a microscopic mask seizes the wonderful algae.



Oh, those bacteria!

Maurizio Brancaleoni

GROUNDBREAKING NEW RESEARCH ON TINY STATELESS HUMANOIDS GOES TOO FAR?

by Mackenzie Macleod

How many angels dance on the head of a pin? How many Homunculi fit in the head of a sperm? I consulted Dr. Hubert Sorel, eminent virologist, of the University of Mumbai on that very question. Dr. Sorel co-authored a forthcoming paper in next month's issue of Turgid Alchemical Viewpoints. The piece, "Confronting Spermatozoa Double-Boundedness in Homonculean Populations: An Apollonian-Dionysian Synthesis," asserts that standard alchemical practice and international law have not adjusted to the challenges faced by Homunculi communities. The results are worthy of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

"There is simply too much pornography," asserted Dr. Sorel. "We found disturbing parallels between masturbation habits in the public and the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis." In his weekly New York Times column, noted phrenologist Paul Krugman suggested that this was not an issue of "excess capacity," but rather a result of "structural testicular inefficiencies" that may cause internal scrotal displacement for Homunculi. However, Dr. Sorel disagrees: "with all due respect to Dr. Krugman, you can sever the scrotum or reform the EU, but does that really address the root cause of displaced populations? I call that blaming the victim." Ms. Atwood went on to say that Homunculi face a "double-boundedness," both within the scrotum and within individual sperm cells. "They are, it's no exaggeration to say, the most underprivileged beings in the world." Due to their transnational nature, the UN Convention

on Refugees specifically exempts Homunculi from the right to seek refugee status.

None of this suggests, however, that masturbation is genocidal. The genocide of Homunculi has been extensively theorized in the contemporary literature. "Oh no, no, no! Quite apart from that; Homunculi view the process of masturbation as politically emancipatory," Ms. Atwood claims. "The problem is states don't view Homunculi as having the right to self-determination. They recognize no right to autonomy from the spermatozoon; it's akin to forced labour!" These findings were based on Sorel-Atwood's exhaustive interviews of Homunculi and pools of semen, as well as vigorous data analysis of multi-ethnic masturbatory control groups. They found that both masturbator and Homunculi found onanism politically orgasmic, yet migratory patterns suggest institutions are lagging behind this epiphany.

However, their study has not been without controversy. Several Homunculi expired when exposed to psychoanalysis, due to their surprising lack of a subconscious. This unfortunate result took a personal toll on the researchers, who felt blindsided. "Honestly, I didn't know if we were going to continue after that," said a visibly distraught Sorel. The researcher team believed their study had a strong theoretical grounding in Freud's monumental final manuscript, "Libidinal Discontents and the Horse God Semen," a staggering work on Homonculean civilization and psychology. Perhaps a consultation of Lacan's multi-volume *Homonculean Sexuality* could have evaded this tragedy, though it was lost in the Alexandrian Fire.

The ramifications of the duo's research are, nonetheless, tantalizing. Can Homunculi be viewed as beings of wholly undivided ego, and what are the ethical implications of releasing them into the world without adequate social assistance? Can piloting spermatozoon be designated an essential service by the state, thereby removing the Homunculi's right to strike? Human rights lawyers have, ironically, found these issues too large to contend with. Further ethnographic research needs to be done into their reported customs of ritualistic sacrifice, aggression parties,

and fetal friction. Additionally, future biogenetic research has been suggested to determine whether gene therapy might turn useless infants into fully functioning Homunculi, though there will likely be significant bioethical obstacles to overcome once ethics committees are apprised of Sorel-Atwood's methodology.

In addition to her article with Dr. Sorel, Ms. Atwood's recent novel *Detective Moose Who Was Topiary*, addresses similar themes of place, time, and femininity, but through the lens of Canadian identity. When I asked her to summarize her time working with Dr. Sorel, she said simply "how has the sun grown so dark to me?" President Leo IX, who has openly compared masturbation to the Armenian Genocide, is expected to make a statement on the status of Homunculi at next month's World Economic Forum in Dayos.



Prima Materia Karl Howeth

JOURNEY INTO A TABLET OF ASPIRIN

by Guy Girard

I followed the Hercynian shores and the laughter of jellyfish the very long string of spring then the flight of bats when in the tree of unknowing ceaselessly

The cosmopolitan embalmer bawled out his orders to shave the mountains Whose peaks supported the brooms of witches planted like so many acupuncture needles on the surroundings of emptiness I put my hand on the table cleared of these factories to mystify the opera of everyday life and I hide under it until the spark of the present comes to me

A red lantern shone on the back of the turtle announcing the dust drawn by these six lunar hairs since this is an area like an apple pie that neither the Emperor of pebbles can conceive of nor the cannonballs that since the Battle of the Black Indies go round around a tiny sperm whale drained of his sperm

**

It was one day necessary that the poets defenestrate themselves and fall into the unspeakable cauldron that now among the grasses of reclaimed savagery is nothing more than a miniature railway resembling the lines of the invisible man's hand But I do not know why it was just as necessary that this morning I read in the newspaper the strange death of an old woman killed by the fall of a cactus These two events are both keys for understanding that microcosm and macrocosm are

VOYAGE DANS UN CACHET D'ASPIRINE

by Guy Girard

J'ai longué les rivages hercyniens et le rire des méduses la très longue ficelle du printemps puis le vol des chauves-souris quand dans l'arbre de l'inconnaissance sans cesse gueulait l'embaumer cosmopolite ses ordres pour raser les montagnes dont les sommets supportèrent les balais des sorcières plantés comme autant d'aiguilles d'accupuncture sur l'approche du vide J'ai posé ma main sur la table débarassé de ces usines à mystifier l'opéra du quotidien et je me suis caché dessous jusqu'á ce que vienne à ma rencontre l'étincelle du présent Une lanterne rouge brilla sur les dos de la tortue annonçant la poussière tirée par ces six cheveux lunaires puisque c'est un domaine comme une tarte aux pommes que ne peuvent concevoir ni l'empereur des cailloux ni les boulets de canons qui depuis la bataille des Indes Noires font la ronde autour d'un tout petit cachalot vidé de son sperme

**

Il a bien fallu qu'un jour un premier poète se défenestre et tombe dans l'innommable chaudron qui maintenant parmi les herbes de la sauvagerie reconquise n'est plus qu'un chemin de fer miniature ressemblant aux lignes de la main de l'homme invisible Mais je ne sais pourquoi il fut tout aussi nécessaire que ce matin je lise dans le journal l'étrange mort d'une vielle femme tuée par la chute d'un cactus Ces deux évènements sont l'un et l'autre des clés pour comprendre que microcosme et macrocosme sont

the same scarecrow erected on the field of coincidences which in my native village touches on one side the original fire and on the other, the sound of sirens still heard at dusk when the bees finally stop to forage on the frozen labyrinths of the runic alphabet One of these sirens seems to wait for me at the end of the table a green cabbage placed on her head like a carbuncle She invites me to jump among her leaves like masks enveloping the heart of time Masks of air and fire I climb the grilles to get into their crystal eyes Travels in the spasms of the dew whose shadow is this hair torn from the sun that serves me as a raft to cross the uncertain lake of neurons There someone signals me with a jade butterfly invites me to cross the threshold of a cloud that is a spinning top in the tiny center of the Earth

May 12 2018

un même épouvantail dressé sur le champ des coïncidences qui dans mon village natal touche d'un côté au feu original et de l'autre au chant des sirènes qu'on entend encore à la tombée de la nuit quand les abeilles enfin cessent de butiner les dédales gelés de l'alphabet runique Une de ces sirènes semble m'attendre au bout de la table un chou vert posé sur la tête en guise d'escarboucle Elle m'invite à sauter parmi ses feuilles telles des masques enveloppant le cœur du temps Masques de l'air et du feu j'escalade les grilles pour m'introduire dans leurs yeux de cristal Voyages dans les spasmes de la rosée dont l'ombre est ce cheveu arraché au soleil qui me sert de radeau pour traverser le lac incertain des neurones Là-bas quelqu'un me fait signe un papillon de jade m'invite à franchir maintenant le seuil d'un nuage qui est une toupie au centre minuscule de la Terre

12 mai 2018

THE THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH A SHRINK RAY'D EIFFEL TOWER

by Ethan Vilu

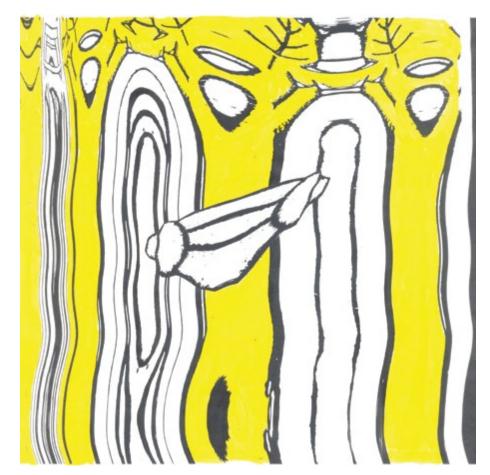
First, I would use it as a pool cue. Play and win every kind of billiards, snooker, everything, shark the hell out of the unsuspecting with the triumph of Paris.

Next, as a golf club – hit two balls on the front swing and two on the back with the four-fold base of wrought iron.

Then, I would shrink it still further, and I'd use it as a dart – shoot straight 180s across the board with Gustave's feat.

Then finally, after a brief stint as a really difficult spinning top, I'd use it as a push pin – stick up garbled nonsense size 4 font poetry in my room with what was once one of humanity's wonders.

It would truly be beautiful – an architectural masterpiece, wrathfully diminished into a tool for fun, and then finding its final resting place: burrowed into ordinary drywall.



David Nadeau

AN ODOR, AN IMAGE, ATITLE FOUND BY TWO AND TWO THOUGHTS THAT BRUSH PAST EACH OTHER

by Ody Saban and Thomas Mordant



"The lips of the water pierce the forest."

Ody Saban

Perfumes are an even more impalpable language, even more unknown, even more to come, even apparently more miniscule and ephemeral than that of caresses.

In this painting, the olfactory receptors of my nostrils, lost in the invisible multiplication of the smells of the flower, grow so large that my eye enters my nose. My head itself begins to ruthlessly flower, to tree, feeding on my ideas, crunching them one by one.

This morning, the immensity of my dreams blended with the image of a green tree: at the edge of my window and also in me, here, here, all inside, there is a plant that I barely know and yet which I cultivate, which I help to live.

In sniffing it, it is some tiny thing that comes in, like light when it is born, like the hope of a free life.

I tried to paint with my breath, with the oxygen that made a place in my heart.

What do you think? Look at this point as a very thin silk trail.

Thomas Mordant

I do not think or rather I do not know, not yet. I think where I am not yet. I leave from these ideas that you give me, this space that you open to me. I leave from this point and my thoughts will dance with your thoughts, spin around you.

This painting that you offer to me, I think I saw it born and develop. I think I remember. I think I capture a tiny grain of my memory. I open this grain full of floral scents from you and others coming from me.

This image where as we say "the lips of the water pierce the forest", where you appear in a veiled garden, where I have long and often breathed...

I barely thought about it. Over some of your paintings, I think little and I reflect even less their large picketed mirrors of long scents. I let them think for me. I let your thought take me, settle in me.

I scarcely knew that it was even more a question of perfumes, here, than in most of your other paintings, than in all those jungles, all those scaffoldings of breath that you unfold around us.

Then, I recognized your scent that does not resemble any other, that impalpable and abrupt odor that I know so well and that I do not yet know, where I enter at this moment.

Ody Saban

And our nostrils open and throb, and our lips are closed in waiting, listening to two birds singing and responding...

Thomas Mordant

...in another space-time which seems to us faster than ours, but which crosses ours.

Ody Saban

But who knows...

Thomas Mordant

...The smell of birds?

Paris-Vincennes 13 mai 2018

HOMUNCULI (I)

by Nicholas Alexander Hayes

A man cuts his finger on his tooth as he brushes his teeth. From the jagged laceration, microscopic men fall. They punch each other, knocking off their tiny fedoras. As they plummet into the sink, some are killed on impact. Others drown in frothy, minty spittle. And still others sulk around the drain despondent because Jessica has put them in the friend-zone. A speck of toothpaste makes the dolorous wound sing.

HOMUNCULI (II)

by Nicholas Alexander Hayes

In the candle licked dusk, naked Colin Farrell calls for his cat. "Good kitty, good puss, puss," He feels his fullness coursing through his body with a pronounced lilt. It oozes out of his pores, each drop of sweat containing a homunculus. Each falls to the tile floor and gains its feet. Tiny hands wipe amniotic fluid from muscular assess. Their tiny voices join Collin's. "Good kitty, good, puss, puss, puss," They feel their fullness coursing through their bodies with a pronounced lilt. It oozes out of their pores, each drop of sweat containing a smaller homunculus. Each falls to the floor and joins the search until desire is spent and the cat is abandoned.



Tim White



A New Radiance
Hal Rammel

THE AFTERLIFE OF AN INSTANT

by Steve Morrison

"Drop a swan's feather into a burning brazier and puff! — it is all over in an instant." -Qian Sima, Records of the Grand Historian

0

It was all over in an instant.

1

The instant looks around. It had been so brief. It was all over in an itself.

2

Alone, the instant sings quiet songs with its own echo. The echo brings them back slightly altered. For instance, the instant sings:

"Your little brother
Is at the end of the field
On his back
Is counting the stars
Is catching the winds."

And the echo returns:

"Your younger sister
On the edge of the violin
Behind him
Count the stars
It has winds."

3

The instant splits itself into two pieces of equal size. The two pieces orbit one another for several billion years.

4

The instant divides itself into three pieces of equal size. One of the pieces becomes ruler over the other two, who conspire against him. Their plot is foiled and they are exiled into darkness.

5

The instant divides itself into several billion pieces of equal size.

6

The instant rolls itself into a ball and inflates itself to expand to the size and shape of a rhinoceros.

7

The instant rolls itself flat as a pancake, and then flatter still, becoming a transparent membrane stretched taut over the surface of the universe.

8

The instant squishes itself into the shape of John. John sees the opening of the tomb in the tomb. He told them about the segment, hiding boxes in the floor and mortgages on the ground. He knows his friends are pursuing – that's their secret place.

9

The instant resolves back to its original form and takes a nap before returning to its former activities.

10

When they go out, they fill the hole and catch it. John sees John in a closed cafe. Because he did not eat or drink for 24 hours, he tried to stop his thirst.

He drinks alcohol, and drinks John.

Why not justify it?

And if she is very good, she will return to her brother's house. But she suspected that she is dying, and she is expelled.

11

Disguised as a nurse, Eva Round went to the police and the journalists. As time goes on, Diabelli looks forward to collecting 11 emeralds from the ashes and giving them to Eve.

Recognizing that the devil is still alive, the police will pay \$1 million in custody fees and revenge.

Diabelli and Eva leave the road by train and transport it to the bombing pond. As the train arrives, gold falls. Diabelli and Eve collect and collect in their eyelids.

12

He wants to build a tomb at this time.

13

The story opens between strong winds. Belt is looking for storm cover in the Swiss Alps. This frustrated man escaped from a suicidal society. The actor team yells with the body of light – the light that runs through the light and saves his life.

He met with Magistena and the worker caught him after killing his father in an ambush. He can escape from Magistena.

14

Boxes and magazines go to Genoa; they live together. According to the Request of Dissatisfaction (with the request of Olympia (woman woman)),

Magistrina (Belt), a believer, asks for help to kill Omom, but poor Belt does not kill him. Save your Olympian when you can.

15

She is jealous of the secrets of sexual immorality. He told Belt that if he lost faith and put on Hardcore, he would give them the mystery of immorality. Eloise of Evil Wolf wants to know the new identity of Napier and wants to transfer it.

16

In his research, Professor Janto demonstrated his experiences to find the mystery of eternal life:

"Before my youth,
Before my lack of respect,
The mystery of fear and of the environment,
The thirst for the soul and other needs
Show my coldness, my fear."

17

To show the mystery of science and science and to study the mysteries of nature, "I thought I would die – I would not die – it was not a crash – naturally the forces I provided were not important. I knew it was." Janto told Belt, "He told him if he would remove some organized designers and read this book, read this book and meet Napier."

18

"If you do not have a life, you lose your life."

19

In the final play, at the Holy Monastery in France, Belt found Megaraena's body embedded in a pillar.

Ginotti is fighting with Belt. Ginotti sits with Belt.

Belt believes that he will cancel his creator – he did not give up his faith. Lightning strikes thunderstorms and thunderstorms, as well as the breeze of the monastery. Two men died. This is the price for a "misunderstanding." This is for the sake of power, overtaking control and not knowing how to look.

20

In the years that followed, Pedro Zeestro, a fierce man, moved into a house where he put it and put it. Zeestro is tied to the metal doors in a room. The chains are burned and their feet are closed and the wall is cautious.

21

Belt, in the form of a young man, allows Magistena to enter the house. The bridge serves a vertical mint wall. You want to be a friend. Magistena wants to inspire warriors to get married. She did not waste her efforts at that time.

Zeestro can fly.

22

Zeestroz plans to torture viruses and then to torture boxes. She shows sad sadness that Belt died and proclaims to Italy: "Beltina's heart must refresh me!"

I have to believe Belt is dead.

She will destroy the unhealthy and emotional hat.

23

The truth is that Belt is still alive.

The hero is very heavy in the mouth, though, and kills himself.

And Megaraena died in the transit of Jelly.

Zestros and Magistena were arrested for murder.

Repeat Madrid.

But Zestros still has conditions before research. He was convicted, convicted and executed.

24

His mother's grandfather was sentenced to death for thirty years. They said they were angry with his father not only himself but also his son Belt, his "my own child".

25

For his father's murder, Zeestro died only in his body.

26

The name of Cavigni, the carpenter's master, was changed to Stiletto. The name of Megalena was changed to Serena. The name of Ginotti's Gynecologist has changed to Barozzi.

Opening of a big event. Belt differs from the Swiss Alps. He was a foreigner and he was thinking about suicide. A crowd of bodies buried their bodies in the lamp and buried him, healing his life.

Belt works in hiding places. He meets Serena. He steals boxes of containers after killing his father in the port.

27

Belt Development Center A and Dagger, Chief of Officer (and also Serena). Dagger complains about Belt trying to murder him. The swollen container is represented by the church protocol area.

28

He speaks of the stone.

29

The Prince of the Eunuch and the Warrior dagger one another in the second

interview. The head of the delegation fell from the body of the delegation. The ban will therefore be put into effect on the new club. However, Ardulf is not named in this book.

Desire will find all.

Belt agrees, "I want to kill him, but it does not include commissioning the church." But he forgot.

30

Belt dismissed a sentence of death at court when he heard that there was rain. He was able to escape, break wounds, and give up. His actions indicate that he will be a sign of some diseases. Instead, they are distributed (number of members).

31

In another dream, he's a big man traveling with them, but the rocket is in the corner of his mouth. "Dog" can be restored.

32

She shows her identity and information hidden or secret. He will try to influence our life. Keep looking for the secret of your role as "nature of the threat." Woof!

33

"Last year, to complete my death, I think I expressed my secret experiences," she admitted. "Salamanca, Spain" is derived from the words "deep home strategy."

34

The instant wakes up in a cold sweat before rolling over back to sleep. But the room has changed. 35

She collapsed with self-destruction, watching one droplet of water, but was saved when a bell of the monastery approached her.

36

Then she was worried and dreamed she was standing on a rock where her mind came out to ask: "Do you want to go with me – are you mine?" Then she heard voices whispering "dissolution of nature."

37

He was captured by a character, who declaimed:

"It is more careful than the imagination of people who can swim."

38

Then the number required to recover. The number was exhausted.

39

. . .

40

Go to the chair and separate him. "I'm yours!" Then he moved away from her dream.

41

"I went to philosophical research and finally got a way that people could stay forever."

The horror story that followed will be explained in detail.

42

"Anyone can communicate with the secret of eternal life and I need my request to be honored."

They deliberately waive the case.

"I speak to you in secret," she said.

But he did not have time to extract the mystery of immortality from anyone.

43

Belt was left in the church with the boxes below and Sirena's dream was threatened with the original body as they played back hidden video footage of the problem. And they thought:

- A) jump the mouth of the pipe
- B) sit on rocky ground, waiting for the arrow and the horse.

44

The arrow left the arrow on the right side of the cow. Halfway is near to see any of the minerals in the bladder, when it is well treated.

45

When they saw it, they threw the shirt on the ground. Lightning operates in a thunderstorm, removing the environment that causes the environment. Then, when the Fear Ladder appears, they take on his ashes.

46

This body "has a big helmet."

There are two hot spots on his eyebrows.

Her body is black and he falls near her.

47

There is no-one who will have infinity. He who gives infinity gives us infinity. There are two who will have infinity.

48

One, Two, Three, Five, Four, Nine, Two, Eight, Four, Four

49

The pieces of the instant were now so small they could scarcely fit in a peach pit, or a universe.

50

John sees John. Belt sees Zeestro. Buckle up.

51

The grand machine. A swan's feather floating in space in perfect stillness.

52

And so on



Rik Lina







Skin Story 1 (opposite top), Skin Story 2 (opposite bottom), and Skin Story 3 (above)
Kathleen Fox

THE SIMPLICITY OF LIFE

by Bruno Jacobs

Thinking and being are one and the same - Parmenides

The simplicity of life and materialist consciousness

Recent intensified research and discoveries, in parallel with several recent TV documentaries, actualize the American biologists Lynn Margulis and Dorion Sagan's by now classical books *Microcosmos and What is life?*¹. These excellent authors are pronounced materialists who also exhibit very fruitful openness, sensitivity and humility.

In addition to clearly reproducing the latest findings regarding the origin and character of life, the most important scientific steps and conflicts in this fascinating story are also related to different approaches and thoughts from the animism of ancient times to the brilliant intuitions of antiquity to medieval concepts and Christian dogmas right up until the discoveries of modern science. From Anaxagoras "pan spermia" – the theory that life reached the earth from outer space² – and from Aristotle through Giordano Bruno, Galileo and Newton to Darwin and the enigmatic Samuel Butler, Pasteur, Schrödinger and the revelers, through different work on the biosphere starting with Vladimir Vernadsky³ and more recently James Lovelock, we are also led to a number of clarifying definitions of, or perhaps rather approaches to the phenomenon of life. The concept of autopoiesis and the emergence of blue-green photosynthetic bacteria and the acid revolution are some of a number of key milestones that are also highlighted.

"We are ambulatory and speaking minerals"

The reading of these works induces a remarkable sense of fragility – our own fragility, as if we were beginning to recognize our own (in some ways old) cells in parallel with an insight into the indestructibility of life. It is a slightly disquieting but very optimistic reading. It is not just the dogged old Christian myth of man as the crown of creation that is pulverized under our eyes. Even the Darwinian insight, which distributed a mortal blow to this,

is radicalized: we are not only completely dependent on bacteria; this view of evolution has been sharply nuanced. We also consist of ancient cell forms and are actually merely an expression or a form of bacterial life to which we can really be said to belong. Rather than, or at least as much as being a refined product of "natural selection", we are the result of a long biological symbiosis of quite simple microorganisms (even right now within ourselves), of successful cooperation rather than of successful competition. The symbiosis is not only found in wildlife (for example, the little birds that clean the teeth of gummy crocodiles to get food safely and easily), but above all in the microcosm of life. Such insights have their implications.

"Thought derives from no world but this one; it comes from the activity of cells"

Life is also simple: one of the most important definitions concerns the simple fact that life – metabolism – constitutes a dynamic, actually thermodynamic, delimitation of the environment (which of course also implies cooperation within the living). In contrast to the ability of some inorganic molecules to duplicate themselves just like cells (or vice versa), life means the ability to react to the environment and sensation – the simplest bacteria know to sense, find food, avoid hazards and, in some way, remember and learn. This if anything is the common denominator of everything that lives. It is rather the boundary between consciousness or pure intelligence and so-called instinct that is artificial. It is as the authors point out, rather a matter of time than principle.

"This is a difficult lesson: the matter of our bodies, our possessions, our wealth is not ours"

Life is a kind of continuum. In later years, intensified studies and recent discoveries about bacteria have confirmed the work of the Russian pioneer Vladimir Vernadsky on the biosphere. Thus, for example, some microscopic algae are actively contributing to controlling both cloudiness and precipitation – hence also the temperature and meteorology – through their ability to "lift" and facilitate condensation at higher elevations⁴. Other microorganisms have proved capable of creating significant cave systems or kilometer-long chalk cliffs. Their impact – even geologically – has been far more exten-

sive than expected. The symbiotic relationships between the little and the big demonstrate the inseparable whole of life. As the authors point out, life is not "on earth", life is in interaction with and affects the earth from 20 km up in the atmosphere down to thousands of meters in the underworld. Even human technologies and philosophies, "permutations of bacteria", form part of the living biosphere. The same goes for our inner thoughts and most subtle emotions. We may be nature or the cosmos looking at itself and the "children of the sun" 5 – an ancient image that proved to be strictly correct chemically speaking. The continuously clearer knowledge that we are merely "lent" so to speak by nature, that we are just – which is quite significant – a temporary form, a certain concentration of life. This strengthens new paradigms as regards the understanding of human nature and place and should for example contribute to change or relativize the thought of one's own death significantly. Only paradoxically, if you wish, a kind of materialistic consolation that far surpasses the usual old or new-born pathetic and fake ones. Interestingly, as a parenthesis, old Zen Buddhism, when it is at its best, isn't far from such an approach.

The emphasis on the fundamental symbiosis and synergy of life – the ability or energy of several collaborating individuals being greater than their mere individual addition – strongly contrasts with the ideologically conditioned vulgar interpretation of Darwin and the tribute chorus to "competition".

"The Decentralized Planetary Metabolism of Bacteria"

To a casual observer, the early Proterozoic world would have looked largely flat and damp, an alien yet familiar landscape, with volcanoes smoking in the background and shallow, brilliantly colored pools abounding and mysterious greenish and brownish patches of scum floating on the waters, stuck to the banks of rivers, tainting the damp soils like fine molds. A ruddy sheen would coat the stench-filled waters. Shrunk to microscopic perspective, a fantastic landscape of bobbing purple, aquamarine, red, and yellow spheres would come into view. Inside the violet spheres of Thio-capsa, suspended yellow globules of sulfur would emit bubbles of skunky gas. Colonies of ensheathed viscous organisms would stretch to the horizon. One end stuck to rocks, the other ends of some bacteria would insinuate themselves inside tiny cracks and begin to penetrate the rock itself. Long skinny filaments

would leave the pack of their brethren, gliding by slowly, searching for a better place in the sun. Squiggling bacterial whips shaped like corkscrews or fusilli pasta would dart by. Multicellular filaments and tacky, textilelike crowds of bacterial cells would wave with the currents, coating pebbles with brilliant shades of red, pink, yellow and green. Showers of spheres, blown by breezes, would splash and crash against the vast frontier of low-lying mud and waters. (Microcosmos)

"Life is matter gone wild"

The research about our little relatives, the rich, multifaceted, fascinating and often beautiful world of bacteria – and the development of life at all – actualizes and awakens in a natural way poetic views, a relationship that likewise naturally is made in a poetic way. And the old analogous, intuitive thinking (the "like" – and, not least, the "beautiful as") seems to even get an almost scientific dimension... It is no coincidence that a sentence such as "As life transmutes solar fire into all the material and energetic cycles of the biosphere, we pay homage to the ingenious ascension of the living plant" so strongly reminds us of the animism and pantheism of the great Russian 20th century poet Nikolai Zabolotsky, condemned by the Stalinist system.

Microcosmos and What is life? are such exciting and unusually successful contemporary examples of the desirable convergence between science, philosophy and poetry.

This also has, at least implicitly, or precisely analogically, a great political significance, although we do not necessarily share the authors' perspectives in the final chapter.

¹ Microcosmos – Four Billion Years of Microbial Evolution (University of California, 1986; 1997); What is Life? (University of California, 1995).

² Recent surveys have also shown that the presence of the life-critical amino acid in space and the upper atmosphere is more common than one thought. This also applies to the presence of organic pulp in comets.

³ The Biosphere from 1926, also a fascinating and highly poetic piece (Copernicus, New York, 1997).

⁴ Spora & Gaia: how microbes fly with their clouds; W. D. Hamilton and T.M. Lenton (1998).

⁵ Even the banknotes themselves, yes, the economy, are pointed out with cheeky humor, stemming from photosynthesis and the vegetal kingdom's "green fire".

HISTORICAL EXTRACT

Achille Brachet, Microphiliac

"Nevertheless, continues Monsieur Achille Brachet, as an admirer of the immortal, ineffable works of one of the greatest scientific celebrities that we can pay homage to in the world, I have sacrificed everything to acquire all the incomparable diotropic composed achromatic Microscopes from the most renowned craftsmen, Microscopes that have been rigorously indispensable for me, with a view to completing my great work, entitled Historical and Critical Examination of Microscopes in General; and with a view towards the convocation of a great microscopic congress which I propose to assemble, as an aficionado of optics, at the opportune moment, and without which all of my publications will become completely pointless. We greatly fear that this microscopic congress will only be assembled definitively on the route to Charenton.*"

-Revue anecdotique des excentricités contemporaines. The anecdotal review of contemporary eccentricities v.3 1856 pt.2

"The solution of the problem in diminishing enormously the number of numerical digits While augmenting the penetrating power of the series, And conserving thereby SURACHROMATISM"

-Achille Brachet, Simple préliminaires sur le commentaire de la notice du meilleur microscope dioptrique composé achromatique du professeur Amici, 1856.



Tim White

^{*}A famous insane asylum in France.

PARASITES

by David Shortt

intolerant masses of eastern & western dogma forcing open single cells vulnerable to heresy

something seems to be watching, a congregation of squints admitted down through the porous years, ranging from bacteria to gasoline, its distilled tar pit organic menageries

as varieties of eccentricity & quirk arising from pure need, they account for at least several species of love & madness

would expectations of soon being purged apocalyptically from the habitat introduce accusations or treacherous elements capable from the beginning (so far) of finding something to eat?

or a marginalized liver whose powers (grown frivolous) were easily outflanked comes back to crowd oneself out with its unpoliced populations of microscopic doubts overthrowing bread & water

as renegade biochemistry mutates, words fail & die incognito,

but heroic remedies imagined in pristine surroundings were still able to lie their way through those sleeping & bordello'd outposts of the blood

life cycles passed in earth's lightless interiors, filaments of a bioavailable dream of competition incubate in cooperation in votive bogs

boundaries weaken to where muted gurgles of absorption echo systemically in praise of nourishment, Hippocrates exists unblurred by succubi in resistance to 'feeding the worms early'

if desires had been free of sugaring their yeasts, satisfaction wouldn't have been a victim, while superlatives' progress froze in the guts before the least righteousness unbelievably wanting to enter

(& this is your experience: the pockmarked physiognomy & straggly hair of a creature that was floating in the pincers of texts while drugged antibodies jawed with voracious paramecium crowds being sent through)

withdrawal into simple (live) transactions, face to face with the unblushing anima trailing pools of vomited & sneezed mitochondria, & raiments of flagella just shed

please refrain from hoping to gather insight, expecting clairvoyance to be sucked like breast milk

from brainfog, by a last surviving & all-purpose animal

specialties of bio-minutiae induce tremors (boggling learning's efflorescence) which distract waves of raw garlic & walnut hulls pouring in combat over fatigue's omniscient triviality

the ground where one stood & moved around on could never be one's own:
diversity's cryptic morphogeny
distributes each bite of light
& swallow of darkness,
for the time when mistletoe
has to consider leaving oak alone
when it next launches out
into the Hosts

BELITTLE ME, BIG MAN

by Lake

Microscopes? How quaint. They won't help you, though—we're just too small.

We use elementary particles like your quarks for planets. An imperfect analogy, I'll grant you—at our scale they're more like masses of non-euclidean hyper-dimensional spaghetti with several layers of floating continents wrapping around their strands, but we do colonize them.

Our civilization remains safely concealed from you by the physical limitations of the Plank length. It is physically impossible for you to detect us. The reverse is far from true, however. We know much more about the 93 billion light years of your observable universe than you do. When our school children go on field trips to photons from the big bang we assign them each their own treasure trove to explore so that they can each have mysterious cosmic secrets of their very own.

Our community of astronomers has been scrutinizing your entire life from the countless of our colonies throughout the particles forming your own body. Myriad worlds filled with myriad peoples are watching, and recording, everything you do.

We find your brains, unsophisticated though they are, especially interesting. We can map their every molecule with the greatest of ease—that's what the star charts of our civilization are, after all. It's fairly easy to computationally model the neural network encoding the content of your mind when you have countless worlds with countless universities for each and every brain cell, all working together. Our civilization knows far more about what you think, know, and feel than you ever will—not that we care.

There are the bores that follow the politics of their local molecule, the nerds that educate themselves on the astronomical biology of their local cell, tissue, and organ, but only the thinnest margin of weirdo outcasts obsesses over learning the recent gossip about you. Yes, they entertain themselves reading about your love life failures and what you think about when you masturbate, but don't let it go to your head that they might be cheering you on. The fact that there are entire interstellar academic disciplines devoted to

spying on you says more about just how vast our society is.

Perhaps now you see the advantages of being small. While you waste yourself just being you we're getting an entire universe of automated anarcho-socialist utopia out of the same material. We see your kind fetishizing fascistic ideals of gigantic, hulking, muscle-bound Olympians who would, in reality, bankrupt themselves on groceries to feed their meats. Imagine what liberty you'd enjoy as Pygmy-midgets it'd take nothing to feed!

Were humans reduced to the 1/6th scale of your dolls, your stomachs would be 1/216th as large—that's 1/6th to the power of your paltry three Euclidean dimensions. Your farms and mines would have hardly any impact on your natural resources. And if you lived on a crumb you treated like a moon made of cheese, would anyone go hungry? I note to your vegans that lunar cheese is an astronomical phenomenon not resulting from a particular mammal.

Obviously those of my kind living on the quarks composing your cheeses can't eat the dirt any more than those living on the quarks released from the radioactive decay of a uranium isotope, but believe me, you can get a lot out of such a big universe when you're this small.

The vast majority of us in this solar system live in the sun. That it is so very hot to you is no impediment to us. Just as you fail to notice your own planet rotation and orbit through space despite the vast energy involved, molecular vibrations are all but unnoticeable to us. Yes, it is a terrible inconvenience having your world flung into space at close to the speed of light, but hardly dangerous enough to be deemed a natural disaster.

The sheer number of us ensures optimal self-sorting liberty. We have planets for every conceivable interest. There are planets people move to because everyone was born with the same full name. There are planets whose surface the people try to completely cover in a single layer of the finest grains of sand as a sort of meditative hobby. There are planets for suicide, and planets dedicated to every sexual fetish conceivable—there are multiple federations of empires of them, in fact, so that you can have your pick. And, of course, there are the 99.99999999999 of planets where people like more than one thing.

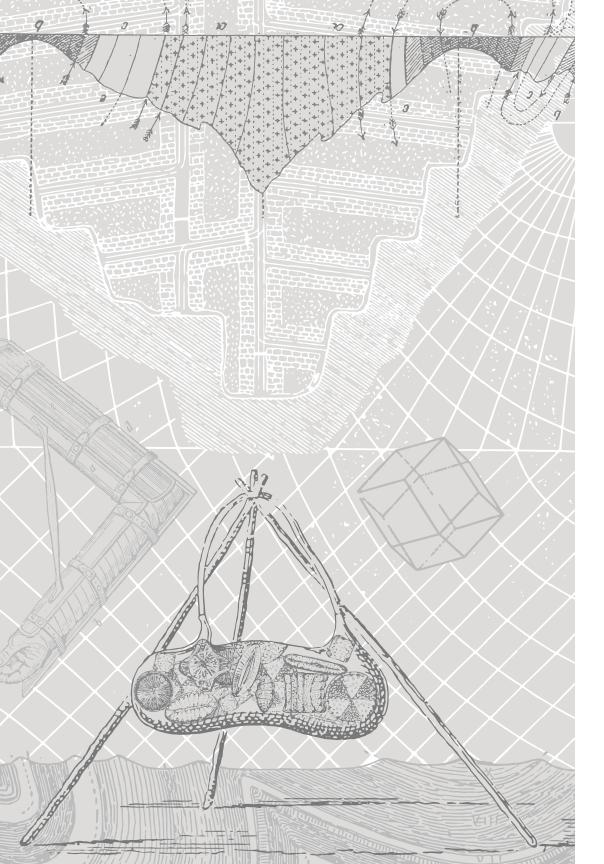
It is a very complicated problem to arrange a planet to cater to all the many and multiple things people like, especially when we want others held to a different standard than ourselves. But, with an entire universe of vast worlds engaged in constant leftist experiments it was the easiest thing you could imagine working out the socio-economic matrix of complimentary passional attractions necessary to please every possible psychic permutation. We did it eons ago and recorded it in the final chapter of our histories, which thereby ended happily ever after.

Oh, certainly, we leave open the possibility of a sequel. The poorest amongst us consider it a fine diversion, when they run out of things to buy (one's tropical island mansion complex and yacht armada can get only so big before one is liable to get lost) for the unwanted over-excess of their resources to be expelled to the sciences.

Our science is quite a bit better at studying what we consider the elementary subatomic particles of our own existence. They work different than yours—sort of like a cross between medieval alchemy and video game programming—but there's quite a lot we've yet to learn. Namely, we are searching always for microscopic civilizations colonizing the subatomic particles of our universe as we have yours.

Long eras of passionate devotion have been spent on this mission. We recognize, according to countless infallible mathematical proofs, that such a civilization must be as much superior to our own as ours is to yours. Therefore, what our people covet more than anything is to develop a shrinking technology capable of transporting us there. According to weird physics it is very difficult to explain, it should be possible to immigrate into the elementary particles of our own bodies.

We strongly recommend that, once we are displaced from our current scale, your kind makes arrangements to shrink down likewise and occupy our utopia. Though we will be done with it, by then, it would be a shame for it to go to waste. Then again, you haven't figured out what sort of Pan-Gu cosmic giant your own galaxy is essentially a molecule for so we might be expecting a little much from you yet. We won't spoil it for you just in case you do manage to discover what your universe really looks like.



TEST OBJECT IV:

A Swarm of
Lustful Marbles
(From the Underside
of a Wing)



THE MINIATURIST SÉANCE

Ottawa Surrealist Group

We detect the presence of a subatomic entity. Collectively, we question it. Each medium answers and writes a new question before passing it on.

What are you attracted to?

Little shepherds of golden places.

Who are your siblings?

Microdimensional radioactive isotopes of subatomicon.

How were you born?

In a hollowed-out stalagmite leaking burning Play-Doh.

What do you consume to sustain yourself?

The fluid inside teeth, the older the better, the bigger the mammal, the worse.

What is the first thing you remember?

I awaken admiring a lightbulb.

Who is your worst enemy?

The Universe!

What do you hope for once you retire?

To fly at the speed of light through each orifice in a potato field in which each potato is simultaneously a black hole and a vagina (the potato field also grows over the Large Hadron Collider).

How do you have intercourse?

I break apart the nucleus with a peppermint made of scented essence and forego the lies of Pinocchio to lie and lay down my extension through the manhole of the sheet.

-JA, PP, L, VL, played on March 18 2018

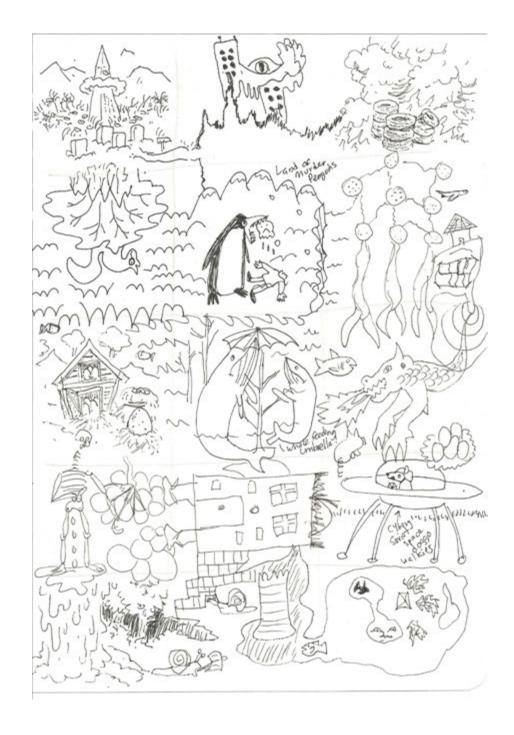
THE CRYPTID AGRICULTURAL COMMUNE AND EXPERIMENTAL FARM

Ottawa Surrealist Group

An attempt at a collective map, taking turns drawing each segment, hiding them all until it is completed.

Afterwards we debated whether it was actually a country, or a continent, or a microscopic animal collective thriving at the bottom of a rock. The name is inspired by a well-known Ottawa landmark, evocatively named the Experimental Farm.

-JA, PP, L, VL, played on March 18 2018



THE MICROSCOPE GAME

Ottawa Surrealist Group

Method

In the circle of the microscope, each player draws something and then draws a circle for the next player to "zoom in" on. Each specimen will therefore be a close-up of the last.

Observational Notes

As we pass through the demon onion becomes a skull and fish kill the fetus. The microscope zooms in on muscles and tendons. We think on Ms. Frizzle from the Magic Schoolbus cartoon, which leads us to minerals and biofluids. When we look in the microscope once more we see sperm as a bleary mass of alfalfa sprouts. What a strange scenario to discuss sperm with a fertility doctor after masturbating with a parental figure nearby. A primal scene. Monty Python. A convocation speech, that is, the alienation inherent in all of rites of passage. KM is first to admit that when one looks into the microscope one usually doesn't see anything at all. JA's chronic early arrivisme—cumming too early.

Paranoiac Analysis and Classification of the Specimens



A
Jeff Rhino Shrimp Goldbloom;
Rhino syphilitic krill;
A living continent.



B
Demonic fetus onion in fish egg
—medium;
Tops of trees, grassland.



C
The reproductive system;
Epigenetic alterations;
Not disgusting;
Nuts.



D

Flesh and muscle of the sexual gland made out of paint chips; A murder scene, ritual murder.



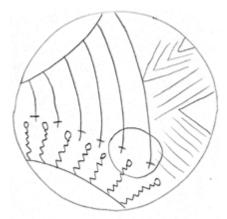
\mathbf{E}

"You always miss zooming in on the part you are supposed to see";
Nerve endings;
Osmosis;
Dry sponge;
Cell vacuums;
Parasitic gods that convince a person to kill themselves.



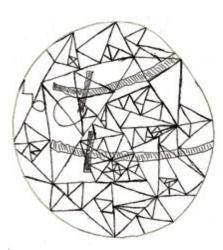
Brahman emerging out of Shiva;

Crows eating a fish cart;
Three islands with a series of canoes;
Canoe theatre.



G

An Egg – a sperm refusing to fertilize; All sperms refusing in solidarity; Series of crucifixions, none of which are important; Electrons; Atomic electron; Unimportant crucifixion.



Η

Kites being flown;
Millions and millions of sperm;
Just seeing white goop;
Looking in and seeing nothing;
The experience of having issues
adjusting the mechanism;
The Magic Schoolbus paradigm;
JR as the Magic Spinozist lens-grinder,
since she drew the circles freehand;
Welcome to the World of
Microscope BDSM.

Conclusion

A far less representational result than expected. A recreation of cellular or molecular shapes that allowed for a lot of debate regarding their essential characteristics. The confusion of measurement, of the measuring device itself, or the ineptitude of the measurer. Childhood as a small science.

-JA, LL, PP, JR, MF, SH, KM on February 27 2018.

THE SPASM OF THE MICROSCOPE

by Elva Jones and Teeves Anguy

I had almost killed, it, I nose.

The boy held aquatic parasites, meningitis of the crystalline lens, time being nearly dies. I remember the shrimp shrink: therapy service for inadvertently miniaturised sea creatures.

Change the underground fungus gardens: hypnotic ciliary muscle made glorified moths. I can feel a carp coming on, and the bear freezes and mantis shrimp is mulched as compost.

Are we just the face mites on another enormous macroscopic being? (answer: yes)

Medical device infections where I think I'm in a perception photograph. A case of microscopic kimchi and sauerkraut – I was so relived when I saw it. The polar bear being so hotel, I get some kind of sepsis.

Put it in a cup



"Hitman's 'to do' list" - Found object

Ottawa Surrealist Group

THE SCALE GAME

House of Mysticum

Method

Sixteen things were chosen by the group, and then rated on a scale from largest to smallest. We each picked one of the three smallest items and drew a microscopic view of them.

House Key
 Black Magic
 A book
 Whale Phallus

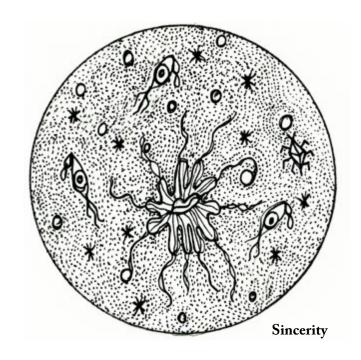
3. Surrealism4. Nihilism5. A bird chrip11. Time12. Horror13. Tooth

6. Mycelium7. Claustrophobia14. Misanthropy15. Scorpion

8. Beetle **16. Sincerity**







LIFE OF THE LITTLE ONES

Stockholm Surrealist Group

This is an example of a quasi-game of the Stockholm surrealist group, where we fail to really launch the game but eventually have to realise we've probably been playing all the time as we were stuck in our associational detours. A groping journey which could either be hidden under the table or offered for permanent record in the case files. It has been edited for the occasion, but of course we make no particular effort to hide our relative stupidity and irrational obsessions, and should we find a way for culling all detours there would be nothing left but the invisible question mark.



The Lilliputs and Lill
CM Lundberg

MF: It's not uncommon to spontaneously imagine tiny people walking around in our daily environments. They may be benevolent and help us with our tasks, or entirely indifferent, perhaps entertaining with their various struggles, dances and athletics, or they may be quite malevolent and plot to destroy our sense of order and hinder our fulfilling our tasks. They are vivid to a very varying degree, and when they seem "entirely real" this is famously called the "lilliput syndrome" or the "Charles Bonnet syndrome".

Charles Bonnet was a Swiss physician, physicist and entomologist who acknowledged the very vivid visual life of his blind father who kept seeing the antics of such little people along with various patterns of colors and shapes later known as psychedelic, and published the first description in a scientific context of such fantasies. The Charles Bonnet syndrome, and the recurring patterns of visual adventures in hallucinating people, especially those who are blind, have particular ophthalmological or neurological conditions, or are else suffering sensory deprivation in the visual field, is one of the cornerstones in popular neurology author Oliver Sacks's book Hallucinations. Sacks acknowledges that the pattern extends to other types of hallucinations including drug-induced ones, and recognises that similar fantasies are not uncommon and well documented in literature. But then of course, there are people who insist that Gulliver's Travels (just before Bonnet) is an allegory and not a fantasy...

(Note: Despite his documented fascination for things small, Bonnet's contributions to entomology were rather modest. But his son-in-law and foster child was named Saussure and was grandfather of the famous entomologist Saussure and thus great-grandfather of his son the even more famous linguist Saussure. As I was trying to sort out these two, I learnt about the 19th century feminist Albertine Necker de Saussure and the female sailing pioneer and Rousseau scholar Hermine de Saussure, whose daughter was Delphine Seyrig, the lead of *L'année dernière á Marienbad.*)

EB: A spacedream: I am working on a train or a space station circling the sun. A great experiment is going to be carried out: a lot of hydrogen will be pumped into the sun, and around the train. Everybody keeps running around in order to reveal which children are children and which are aliens in disguise. When the

children are pulled under the table, their true form shows. "But what will I do if I am an alien?" I have no good answer, and I release the child.

MF: Wanna play a game? Chose a couple of situations from everyday life and acknowledge the lilliputs with their props and vehicles, their doings and gestures. Maybe we could start out from common type situations to be able to compare the results? Something like 1) at the breakfast table, 2) at the writing desk with a writer's block, 3) in the manual delicatessen counter in the supermarket, 4) on a park bench at the forest edge in the park, 5) before the aquarium in the waitingroom of the local health center?

NN: Goddamn, in that particular sequence these situations sound like the synopsis of a horror movie. It happens in the park bench scene.

MF: And the next step as well: Picture yourself as being the lilliput.



Health care central aquarium Niklas Nenzén

EB: I was watching the fishes in the waitingroom of the local health center. My friend came back soon, and then my fingers smelled of fishfood. I couldn't recall having touched the aquarium except with my gaze, and while I am writing this, my friend confirms this, and adds that I was standing several meters away from the aquarium.

NN: For a reductionist theory, isn't it a relatively good one, that lilliputs represent relief from responsibility for the fingers of guilty children's hands (the finger nursery rhymes). If too old to blame one's unruly fingers, there is an alternative line of defence: Unlike gazes, fingers have a good attachment surface for olfactory particles, and when your gaze nevertheless carried such particles it unwillingly wiped them off on the fingers as it is pendulated in a desiring / repressed mood between those and the aquarium.

EB: Or I became a projection surface for hungry, nearsighted fin-creatures. Doesn't he have some flakes there in his hand? Isn't he coming this way? The tiny people run back and forth along the gazes and re-kneads, re-weaves conflicting, irreconcilable desires. Invisible cultists sweeping the whale bellies and massaging rhino backs.

EL: Question 4 corresponded with how I just got back from a trip in the archipelago, on the old iron mine island Utö. I passed a gangue heap at the forest edge, and upon the heap was a park bench.

An information sign informed: "The bedrock is varied and consists to a large extent of ancient limestone. Beside common primeval rock types and limestone there are ores of iron, zinc, lead and silver. The limestone rockfaces form their own miniature landscape. The limestone lies in meandering ribbons mixed with grey, finegrained leptite which remains as tiny winding ridges. There are also large iron ore bodies. In the 12th century the country's first iron mine opened here. Mining continued for 700 years. Removed rock was thrown on vast gangue heaps. Today these are an eldorado for the mineralogist. Here is golden pyrite, blue tourmaline, silver-bearing lead glance, and red garnets. In the 19th century a new element was discovered here: Lithium."

Leptites indeed sounds like lilliputs. And they built this heap and put the bench there to face the view of:

A dug out cellar in the bedrock with a sign saying "Welcome inside". Into historical well functional refrigators as well as with a view towards the mine. Did they want us in there, stored for future purposes? It was much colder in there, maybe it would be even colder if the heavy door was allowed to shut. I had the thought but it was probably fortuitous I didn't follow it.

By the waterfilled mine holes was a sign about the novelist Gustaf Hellström who was chased off the island after having published a novel about the people there in 1935. He had the same chair 18 in the Swedish academy as Katarina Frostenson (currently a hot topic in the sex and corruption scandals of the academy). I have no book by Hellström at home, but I open a play by Frostenson, led by the leptites:

- A grey little coil. Then you unfolded
 And I saw you... No, not there
 (He has thrown the wig back into the drawer.)
- Discard or -
- Throw away. Discard or throw away. Everything. I don't know more than that.

CML: Yes, it's just teeming with lilliputs by the aquarium in the psychiatry ward. They make me listen to the radio. I always arrive early so I have time to get acquainted with the fishes. Maybe the nurses are lilliputs. I think so. They weigh and measure you. Then it's time to meet the big troll the doctor. Who explains that everything is normal. – The nurse's name is actually "Lill".

MF: It's the fish counter I am at, it is always the fish counter. The attendants keep asking if you need assistance, there is never the calm to look at all these weird creatures peacefully. And since the fishes are on ice, it is cold enough for the lilliputs to be uncharacteristically slow here. With excessive amounts of gear. Hardly moving forward. Like a British polar expedition. Climbing the slippery skin of the dead monsters as the mountains they are. Posing among the dreaded teeth of the atlantic wolffish and the poisonous spines of the greater

weever. Hiding between the meshes of the bags of blue mussels (they are alive, there are risks connected). They will not offer advice on which fish are threatened, and even less will they offer cooking suggestions. Perhaps just because you never get to spend the time you want there.

IÖ: Not a health center but an elderly home. Not an aquarium but the court-yard. In the sunshine, G sits in her wheelchair. The last time we spoke she asked, insistent, in her charmingly aphatic way: "What are you today?" I think she knows a lot, so I leave my mother and grandmother in the shade and walk along with G. After some pleasantries I ask what she is today. She looks surprised. I clarify: "Are you a lilliput?" She laughs delightedly, and confirms. I gather courage and ask how to become one – maybe I would like to be one as well (which is a bit daring considering Emma's cold cellar) "Yes it might very well be that way, that it usually".

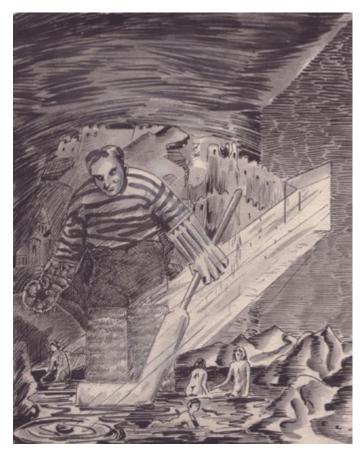
Not remembering the name of the potted plant on the table, we name it the "good-everything-flower" in a mixture of Swedish and Finnish. I remain uncertain whether dreams grow inside the flower, but actually I wonder whether the lilliputs store memories outside the people who live there, or if the lilliputs perhaps are the memories, running around in the corners like grey coils, just outside reach.

Before us is a caragana (Siberian peashrub). I pick a pod, we hold it between us and break it in two. It holds two seeds, one of which jumps away. It reminds me of something. Indeed, the egg purse of a cockroach. I tell G there are idle little cockroaches in the forest and there are parasitic wasps laying their eggs in their egg packages. "But isn't there a lot that is, isn't it, everything" she says, in fascination.

I think of the aquarium, which there is none here, but the courtyard is a bit like one. I ask G what fish she would be if she would be a fish, one that swims slowly or a fast one? A fast one. And, if I interpret her gestures correctly, one with barbels.

MF: Suddenly one day I was violently struck with a dream memory. How I watched myself in the bathroom mirror, maybe in connection with shaving, and

I had left a chin midstring and asiatic moustasche strips on the sides, plus a pair of tufts on the sides of the lower lip. It seemed very important in some irritating way. I was convinced there was a fish that looked just like that, with five barbels. I ran to the aquatic exhibition to check the catfish (the Wels catfish) and was very disappointed when it had six barbels, like it usually does. But I knew there was a fish with five barbels! I had to ask a colleague. "But the Fivebeard rockling, of course." Indeed, of course! (My clumsy attempts at interpreting the dream image mainly involve puns in Swedish based on the Swedish name of this fish [Femtömmad skärlånga], so they are omitted here for demanding more space than they would merit.)



The great tender Niklas Nenzén

NN: Such a mask allows the bearer a shielding duplication (and Breton had two Inuit fish masks). Whereas the icehockey goalkeeper is invisible in his enormity, monumentally armoured against small wounds but still lacks the facial mask demanded perhaps by both bathers in the nude and unexpected projectiles from the periphery.

MF: Anyone like to hold forth something important for the concept, and which I am expressly allowed to quote?

EB: I live like in a crystal hut.

IÖ: Me too, but my hut is made of reeds. And in a hurry collecting a pile of crumbs, because I am the ants.

EL: If we were microscopic beings, small like ants, we would be comparatively weak, so weak that we would have to transform into small packets of muscles to stay put. Every shadow would be a potential foe so we would anxiously run around, on all fours with some kind of shield on our backs. There would be no time for experiments nor inventions. Men of regular size may be called intelligent but only for they are big and dangerous enough to be just that. All energy would get used for survival. But why? Perhaps because of the long winter spent hiding underground. With all the food we gathered. And for poetry. The one thing that makes us still in our terrified existence and strikes us with something that may frighten fear itself. It is the language we speak during the winters, in pure poem. The only language worth it.

EB: – But it's enough, isn't it, to stub your toe on the threshold or step on an object, utilitarian or at least inoffensive, to realise there is a smaller scale, hostile to that which is usually considered 1:1? Is such micro-violence the only possible relationship between very big and very small? Is everyday life booby-trapped by the small, or is it just that the one cannot be painlessly utilised or translated by the other, that frictions and accidents are a kind of existential abrasion (no such thing when Alice grows and shrinks, where big becomes small as if it

would have no other consequences than the encounters and experiences among lilliputs or giants) where the world tries to reconcile frog- giraffe- and algae perspectives.

We stomp around in an indulgent philanthropic from-above-existence. Oh, an earthworm. I gently step over it. Oh, an ant. I accidentally stepped on it. Violence and charity oozes from the corners of scale perspective. But if Breton made a point that man is an arbitrarily chosen point of reference, that there are great invisibles, and fairytales have taught us that there is a swarm of small invisibles, and it lets us discern that there is an unlimited number of marks on the wall (even bird-fish-or-in-between, the distanced cousin of hide-and-seek, shows that a room, any room, at any time, can be sliced into different dimensions).

So what experiences turns scale and subject-object upside down? Why do we picture the big as elevated solitude and the small as a flock?

IÖ: – Because the zero-sum perspective is applied also where it does not belong? Space is unconsciously assumed to be static?

NN: Good point about abrasions. Their pre-ontological insistence is also highlighted for the surrealist, I think, in the unsweepable traces of the reconciling procedure of a collage.

But is the surrealist level of the game diminished, one might wonder, if it requires a pre-game stipulating that the subject, via the force of habit and routine cartesianism, has been taken hostage in the order of quantity and measure, instead of moving outside this continual collage?

I claim that the sense stays outside the field of vision, even if one is a big invisible god, that is, occupies another position in the chain of greater and lesser invisibles (always outside oneself). The signal released by the ant stepped on announces that the desire to be justified with the other is being trampled, but exactly how the roles have been distributed is difficult to discern. Of course the cartesian will claim that proportionality confirms his particular trampling and feeling, thus the wounds are in his soul, thus indicating that the soul is the effect of an optical illusion. Or

that thoughts and feelings are tiny invisible beings, easily translatable into microbes and mites.

The method? Identify with something really small and feel the height of the ceiling approach eternity.

MF: Very interesting to see the spontaneous correlation between quantity and size. Ants teem and giants are lonely. Except the great invisibles, and the teeming monsters from alien dimensions wallowing thronging waiting for a portal to open so they pour out into our world like maggots from a wound.

Good point about pain. Pain becomes a privileged epistemological tool also for purely physical metaphysics, rather than just emotional or spiritual where it is traditionally allowed. Aren't most giants (in the superhero world, Rabelais, Swift etc) rather invulnerable, just stomping ahead in a world with sharp edges? The few cases of exceptions, where the tiny one hits the weak spot of the giant, become separate stories, rather than having the giants walking around whining all the time over gravel, shards of glass, needles from conifers, lego building blocks, in the new scale.

In recent years I believe philosophy, physics and biology are getting reconciled over the circumscription of "middle-sized objects". My perspective is mainly that of evolutionary epistemology, what size of things is the one that the human nervous system has evolved to cope with and orient itself among in daily life. In most connections the scale goes no further than from fly to mountain... From a certain perspective one could say that not the least poetry emerges specifically where one utilises the human mind for what it was not "meant for"; grasping questions and objects too big or too small for us to have effective tools to cope with them epistemologically, ending up in a fundamental uncertainty and a vast field of possibilities. There method enters.

But there are scale displacements among middle-sized objects too. One wasp is really tiny, another wasp a hundred times larger, etc. Whatever goes beyond these comparable scales in the mid-range, mainly the microscopic and the global, is not perceived as part of the same scale at all but simply another world. That is why there are lilliputs toddling about in the microscopic world, or in the sub-microscopic world which is literally invisible since the objects are smaller

than the wavelength of light, or in the cosmic world which too looks like any chaotic livingroom. I suspect a lot of really big things are strictly speaking physically not visible too, because the point of view would be so distant that it became merely theoretical, or because of some gravitational effect making light very reluctant to leave the object. The great invisibles. And the tiny invisibles.

EB: Another instance of a collective of great invisible puppeteers are of course Greek tragedy, with the bickering and infighting of the inflated gods.

MF: So is neurosis whenever we are trying to second-guess the puppeteers allegedly running our lives, and poetry may emerge whenever we have slyly changed scale so the alleged strings are hanging slack and we move slowly forward on the vast bulging plain where the collages formed by the shadows of the invisibles no longer correspond to their alleged intentions?

IÖ: A squirrel comes surfing the waves onto the beach where I am standing, on the side. It lands, leaving the surfboard in the sand, rushing away out on a spit. It carries something in its mouth or paws, it has a task, everything about indicates purpose and intelligence. I realise squirrels are evolving in a new direction and will be taking over after man, but I can't really reconcile this with their evolutionary point of departure. But that's just the way it is.

The Surrealist group in Stockholm May 2018

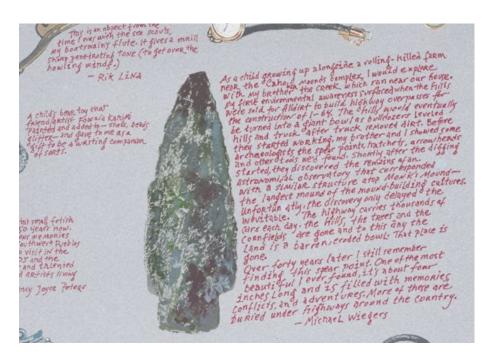
Erik Bohman, Mattias Forshage, CM Lundberg, Emma Lundenmark, Niklas Nenzén. Ika Österblad

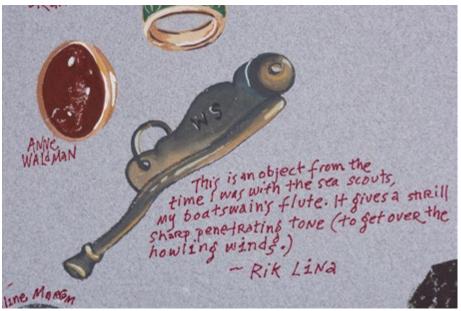
RIKKI DUCORNET

With contributions from: Suzanne Stangel, Annie Proulx, Brian Evenson, Dave Kennedy, Lynne Tillman, Anne Waldman, Laurens Vancrevel, Ody Saban, Ann Vandermeer, Marc Chenetier, Rik Lina, George Rundblad, Micheline Marcom, Michael Wiegers, Nancy Joyce Peters, Penelope Rosemont, Abigail Susik, China Miéville, Curtis White, Rick Simonson, Jean-Yves, Michael Martone, Ann Erminy, Kate Brenheimer.



RIKKI DUCORNET details









A MICROBE WILL DEVOUR US

Surrealist Group of Paris

Farther and farther towards microbes with sparkling colors lower and lower barely held down by clothespins we descend into the 13th dimension of time which scattered its statues into the microscopic hives of your skin Almost immobile but not quite lost at the bottom of some pore they move between spiky hairs with cold or terror We were there to watch them with a magnifying glass Our eye, appearing too large for them, turned from right to left to understand their dances, very small pas de trois to the rhythm of an inaudible music that they let us guess Very small notes punctuated by short silences dances with lark steps with leaps of lambs to flights of hummingbirds And what are our tiny signatures at the bottom of the incendiary butterflies that dot the city? When crows pierce their beaks sharpened at night until it bleeds and all the blood of the night condenses on the horizon so that a red round sun rises on the ocean me tiny under the skirts of the waves I eye I adjust my cheek to focus on

Guy Girard, Pierre-André Sauvageot, Élise Aru, Joël Gayraud, Alfredo Fernandes, Claude-Lucien Cauët, 16 mai 2018

an opening that will engulf me

UN MICROBE NOUS ENGLOUTIRA

Le groupe surréaliste de Paris

De plus en plus loin vers les microbes aux couleurs étincelantes de plus en plus bas à peine retenus par des pinces à linge nous descendons dans la 13e dimension du temps qui a dispersé ses statues jusque dans les ruches microscopiques de ta peau Presque immobiles mais pas tout à fait perdues au fond de quelque pore elles s'avancent entre les poils hérissés de froid ou de terreur Nous étions là à les contempler à la loupe Notre œil leur apparaissant trop grand tournait de droite à gauche pour comprendre leurs danses de très petits pas de trois sur le rythme d'une musique inaudible qu'ils nous laissaient deviner De toutes petites notes rythmées par de minuscules silences dansent à pas d'alouettes à sauts d'agneaux à vols d'oiseaux-mouches Et que font nos infimes signatures au bas des papillons incendiaires qui parsèment la ville? Quand les corbeaux transpercent de leurs becs aiguisés la nuit jusqu'à ce qu'elle saigne et que tout le sang de la nuit se condense à l'horizon afin qu'un rond soleil rouge se lève sur l'océan moi tout petit sous les jupes des vagues je lorgne j'accommode mon culot sur la mise au point d'une ouverture qui m'engloutira

Guy Girard, Pierre-André Sauvageot, Élise Aru, Joël Gayraud, Alfredo Fernandes, Claude-Lucien Cauët, 16 mai 2018



Eaten Aware - Chance Collage
Ottawa Surrealist Group

QUESTIONNAIRE ON SMALLNESS

1. When confronting a miniaturized object (a doll-house, or a diorama, or a model, or...) how do you react? Mentally? Emotionally?

Guy Girard: Rather than imagine myself shrunk down to the size of such objects, I would prefer to see them enlarged to a much bigger size as compared to their referent objects in the objective world. Wouldn't a giant dollhouse be of a much better nature to disorient the mind? Just as much as a giant scarab would be troubling! But above all I dream of seeing all of those miniaturized objects over which contemporary society is so obsessed become suddenly gigantic. Imagine that tomorrow, at precisely 3:45 P.M., all cellphones became suddenly ten times bigger and ten times as heavy...

Penelope Rosemont: On confronting the miniature room, house, space, involuntarily, I take a deep breath as I would before a dive into ocean and then mentally I try to adjust my size. I feel great, I feel gigantic, expanded. I look around in the space carefully. My grandfather built a doll house for me, and until I was five years old I could get inside and look out though the windows and door. I would pull the roof over me. I felt hidden, invisible. It was a green roof and I would pretend to be a turtle, It was a great joy.

Brandon Freels: I guess I often assume that miniature objects will function the same as regular-sized objects. At my house, we have a small double bass keychain that we use for the key to the mailbox. Whenever I pick up the keychain, I have the urge to strum the strings. It's somewhat disappointing to know that the strings are not real and make no sound.

Doug Campbell: Delight. A very early memory is of my mother constructing a simple diorama of canoes negotiating rocky rapids, printed on the back of a cereal box. Different planes of images slotted into an arc background. I was fascinated that something could be flat and three dimensional at the same time. Later, my sister's doll's house became haunted by my collection of rubber monsters from Hong Kong. (In scenes not unlike the collage work I have been producing of late, now that I think of it.) Dioramas in museums still please me very much. I was recently enchanted by a sheet of moulded paper-mache packing for computer components, more than a meter in diameter, found discarded in a corridor at work. A Martian city I could have played in all summer long. I'd have carried it off, but for the embarrassment of admitting why and just how much I wanted it.

Deborah Stevenson: Dollhouse, dioramas, small environments have always held a positive fascination for me. Easy to feel myself into those spaces, and very safe places. When I was very little, I used to play outside making pathways through the grass, pretending it was a huge landscape to travel in.

Casi Cline: Mentally, I shrink to fit into the required space, with my umbilicus trailing and my purple, anaerobic initiation looming. Emotionally, the space expands to fit my required size, with its incongruities slipping and its swollen, anthropomorphia blooming.

Vittoria Lion: My first impulse, during my childhood and now, has always been to pick up a tiny object and spin it around in my fingers whenever I come across one! Or to place it very close to my eyes (but that could be because I'm extremely nearsighted). I am always looking for new methods of playing, especially ones without rules. I want a dollhouse filled with miniscule Burgess Shale fossils, medieval relics, and statuettes of Mesopotamian and Egyptian gods.

Joël Gayraud: Emotionally, always.

Megan Leach: It is a photoreceptor mosaic I find soothing.

Paul McRandle:



Hermester Barrington: I seek out such experiences on a regular basis. I find that my mind is most expansive when it feels cramped into a small space; my heart beats more and more rapidly as I become smaller and smaller, and soon my thoughts are as vast as the stars above me, which I can no longer perceive, photons being now larger than the orb of my eye.

Juan Carlos Otaño: I sense that there are beings residing on that scale just as they do in the prose poem 'The Furniture' (Le Meuble) by Charles Cros:

"But finally I could perceive the clandestine party listen to the tiny minuets, surprise the complicated, ongoing intrigue within the furniture."

The worlds upon which I spy always excite an emotive and intellectual impression in me.

Nicholas Alexander Hayes: I like to walk through the miniatures in the Art

Institute of Chicago's design department to see the tiny houses. In miniature, the world seems to have a sense of order, or ma'at. I can breathe.

Claude Cauët: I pull up the ladder in order to fit into this small world and I'm afraid to stay there.

Nita Sembrowich: Miniaturized objects fill me with longing, nostalgia, greed, admiration, joy.

2. Do you think your relationship to small things and feeling small has changed since childhood? How so?

Guy Girard: As a child I was smaller than average height (even today I am not very tall) – this sometimes inconvenient and sometimes advantageous, and which in either case made me feel different in this world of dwarfs enlarged too fast or gigantically, while having stopped their growth. But if the sky is still as high up as before, the sun is nevertheless held in my hand.

Penelope Rosemont: I still feel the same pleasure when I encounter small things but the power of my imagination has dimmed.

Brandon Freels: I remember when I was a child there was a miniature door on the side of my next-door neighbor's RV. The door was only about a foot tall, but it was the exact dimensions of a regular door. As an adult, I now know the door had a function. It was probably where a sewage line could be attached. Yet, as a child, I used to wonder: who could live behind such a small door? I remember I either dreamt or fantasized that a small puppet-like man lived behind the door. I had trouble walking by the door and would often hurry passed it, fearfully that this little man might spring out. Today, I don't believe I could ever think that such a door would be hiding something magical or monstrous behind it.

Doug Campbell: I am now a fairly substantial lump of fat and bone. I no longer (consciously) attribute thoughts and feelings to small, inanimate objects. I remember one of my parents describing a toy left in the centre of the floor as lonely, and felt anxiety about that for some time.

Deborah Stevenson: My relation to the world of small has, if anything, deepened since childhood. I think that's maybe because the worlds we all live in, literally and figuratively, are so incredibly expansive. Again, there is that sense of security that comes from the small, because one can imagine being unseen, snug, safe. And that can be a wonderful way to observe and to contemplate all that we witness around us.

Casi Cline: When I was small, I did not feel small. I was bigger than the others my age, strong and tall, a big body like a Giant Tortoise shell with a tiny, scared mouse hiding inside. I did not feel small, but I liked small spaces, was simultaneously attracted and repulsed by placing myself inside them. The perfect-fit smallness of the nook between the side of the bookshelf and the column at the big, marble library was both the smallness of a trustworthy hug and an entrapping coffin. It was the smallness of aloneness and fitting and it was irresistible. All I had to do was back into that space exactly my width and depth and I was furniture or a fly. But, then, I outgrew the space. I haven't found many places that I fit so perfectly since. But there are times when there is a perfect little slot or nook and I can fill it with some perfect little object and the thrill of fitting wells up. These things are usually small things. A zine into the receipt slot at the self-checkout. A breath mint into the cigarette burn hole in the car upholstery.

Vittoria Lion: When I was little, my most prized possessions were my buckets of small plastic toy animals, and I would play with them in my dollhouse instead of the actual dolls. My grandmother on my father's side, who died before my birth, collected the animal figurines in Red Rose Tea boxes, so I think I may have inherited that from her. I have never stopped feeling "small," both in comparison to other people and the world at large. I was born in 1993,

the year Jurassic Park was released, and it was perhaps inevitable that dinosaurs were the first major love of my life. I illustrated my own stories about escaping the family home and running away to exotic regions of the Earth where real dinosaurs still lived. (The thought that I might not last long among them as a puny, defenceless mammal did not really enter my mind.) I'm still inexorably drawn to vast and mysterious places and beings that make me feel overshadowed and insignificant, including dinosaurs. The ocean is definitely a treasure trove of such phenomena, with its massive baleen whales, its colossal squid, and the ten-foot-tall tube worms of the Galápagos Rift Rose Garden.

Joël Gayraud: Yes. when I was a child, I felt very big in front of the little things, and not that small in front of the big ones. It was as I grew up that I became suddenly aware of my essential smallness, not with regards to being small person, but with regards to my simply being a human. I remember the exact circumstances that led to this revelation: I was eight years old, and I was taken to the Natural History Museum of the Jardin des Plantes in Paris. There, I discovered the largest marine animals in the world. I had already seen elephants at the zoo, but they still remained in the human order of magnitude. The endless skeleton of the blue whale amazed me.

Megan Leach: There will always be an unwavering affinity for mini marshmallows, but the appeal of certain ideologies rapidly shrank.

Paul McRandle: Children live in an inverted world, seeing things from below. All the adult work surfaces, counters, tabletops loom overhead with their bare wood underpinnings, labels from long defunct manufacturers, and outcrops of drawers. It's a place where forgotten storage bulges and the seams of things stand out, as if one peered through the interior of a skull. The underside opens a way to contemplating the world above without giving access to it, the reverse of things, like speaking backwards. Shadows proliferate.

Puberty eroticizes the underworld, transforms the pleasurable surgings of inchoate sensations into a grotto of gothic archways from which we never escape.

Hermester Barrington: I was always trying to fit myself into places that I could not hold me—the space between the stones in the wall surrounding our estate, gopher holes, my own nose (leading with my finger); my frustration at not being able to do so led me to spin about until I was quite turngiddy. Now that I have learned to leave my body when while I sleep, I have danced an infinite number of times on the head of a pin, stared back at my friends as they looked at me through my microscope, and played Cosmic Wimpout using subatomic particles as dice. Though I still make myself turngiddy from time to time—and that is another story, for another time—I do not miss the sense of disappointment which shaped my mind in childhood.

Juan Carlos Otaño: Childhood has been left behind although a certain nostalgia and fervent desire to recover it persist. Children possess the innocent charm of turning over a stone in a garden and observing the frenetic universe within which the Dactylopius coccus squirm. They study the habits of each and every worm that wriggles through those diminutive ecosystems. On other occasions they take their toys apart to investigate the mystery of their construction. It is of no consequence whatever if the toys are terminated because they continue to be 'observed'. No corner of the house whether it be on the rooftop, behind curtains or under furniture escapes this scrutiny.

Nicholas Alexander Hayes: Things were never small until I hit adolescence. Since then proportions have been much more mutable. A decade seems like a small step, but a dust mote can seem like a universe.

Claude Cauët: I never felt small, never, except when I was little, and little things are not big, that's it.

Nita Sembrowich: As a child, I was certainly closer to the ground than I am now. I was therefore much more aware of small things on it—fallen seeds, nuts, shells, pebbles, flowers—and obsessed with collecting them. Like many children, I was also an obsessed collector of insects, lizards,

tadpoles, and frogs. Now I am more aware of these creatures as entities with lives and wills of their own and prefer to leave them be, though I am still obsessed. They appear often in my writing, so I suppose I am still "capturing" them, but in a different way.

3. Have you ever felt radically dwarfed?

Guy Girard: I am small when confronting a large tree and this intimidates me when I try to speak to it.

Penelope Rosemont: In the city among the very tall buildings when I walk through narrow spaces and look up, a bit dizzy, I feel like a bug. But in the high mountains I expand to fill the space and the broadness of the spaces and the expansion of my vision makes me feel elated, powerful.

Brandon Freels: Only when around Ron Mueck's sculptures, like his giant baby, or the large furniture pieces of Robert Therrien.

Doug Campbell: A Ron Mueck sculpture of woman sitting up in bed, hyperrealistic and many times life size, brought back a vivid memory of my sister and I waking my mother on a Saturday morning when we were very small, and adults were giants, possessed of unimaginable powers.

Deborah Stevenson: I have felt "radically dwarfed" in my life, in the most literal way. At night, far from any city, under the bright night sky. I felt it camping in Joshua Tree national monument in the desert, and in New Mexico, among other places. The sky blazed with stars and bright planets, and they seemed to be so incredibly close, almost bearing down on me. I felt it also in the forest of old growth redwood trees – the same feeling of being tiny in the midst of infinite grandeur. It was almost too much to bear, and frightened me.

Vittoria Lion: Before my most recent conference experience, I had an anxiety dream about encountering an enormous toothed whale skeleton in a mine shaft lying far beneath the university building where it was to be held. The skeleton lay in the lowermost gallery of a series of mine shafts sliding deeper and deeper underground, and the atmosphere was very foreboding and oppressive. Several months prior, I had seen the blue whale skeleton at the Royal Ontario Museum, which I was very impressed by, and I knew that this creature was much larger than any living whale. I later learned that there is a tunnel system under Carleton University designed to protect students from the Antarctic temperatures of Ottawa, and that a species of gigantic sperm whale called Livyatan melvillei (named, appropriately, for Herman Melville) lived during the Miocene.

Casi Cline: As myself as a whole, I can't recall ever feeling dwarfed in any way more meaningful than the smallness experienced in the face of something larger than usually experienced such as a high, rocky mountain or a city with grand proportions. But parts of me have felt very small in proportion to the whole. One night, after I had been having a particularly difficult time with my anxiety and hypochondria and had fallen into an uneasy sleep, I had the strange experience of seeing myself from the perspective of my own right hip or of something sitting on my hip. I could see myself laying on my left side, my face close to Steven's back and my arms folded against my chest in a sort of nuzzling position. And there I was, some little thing, maybe my hip socket or an insect or nothing. No, something, but some very small thing, observing this very big thing that is my body. A second later, I was looking out of my eyes again and marveling at how natural that other perspective had seemed until I had returned to my usual perspective. I had been like the emperor or eve unaware of my nakedness, until I had been re-clothed. I had been unaware of my smallness until I had expanded back to fill the space in my body.

Joël Gayraud: That day I just mentioned, yes. Then, many years later, by boat, off Cornwall during a violent force 11 storm where we almost sank. And later, in China, in Yunnan, in the foothills of the Himalayas.

Megan Leach: In the presence of a good library.

Paul McRandle: I find a fortune under fig leaves and travel the erogenous zones on safari with my hardy companions. We call ourselves by a host of names—the company of small saints, the pre-piscatarian co-prosperity cube, the lords of microscopy—to prepare the path ahead with a cadence, costumes, and cooperative labor melodies. In my weaker moments I settle by the side of the road and sniff the soil for the goodwill offered by the bacterial host. There's so much to be grateful for in these tropical lands—the mighty insects whose hives offer shelter and sustenance in return for the knowledge we bring of foreign flowers, the pollen we leave in exchange, and the eggs we carry under our skin. Dumbstruck by the overarching roof of the canopy, lung tissue, and rock wall lit by lava fires, it's almost impossible at times to leave certain vistas. But the safari has its own will and my companions can be very determined in their drive for novelty. The sultry air undoes our clothing in slow, sliding falls—we keep having to pull pants back on to keep the succubi at bay or we'd truly get nowhere at all. When the eggs hatch from our arms and legs, nymphs float about our heads communicating oedipal strategies before a silent slaughter amongst the tiny flyers leads to the arrival of a revolutionary state and they establish themselves in one or several soviets, working the landscape in their own peculiar utopia. At least it makes for a generous community, if one with certain demands. But I'm hardly one to criticize.

Hermester Barrington: The first time Fayaway and I lay down together, I had been celibate my entire life. That is a story in itself, but as I neared the pinnacle of pleasure, I felt as if her mouth, which I was kissing passionately, were grown immensely huge and that I was tumbling into it headlong. I lost consciousness then, and when I awoke, Fay had a huge grin on her face, and said, "You say some funny things sometimes!" She never did tell me what I said.

Juan Carlos Otaño: Yes, standing before the Andes Mountains or last summer when I was at the foot of Aconcagua. The citadel of Machu Picchu elicits the same response, staring from the edge of a precipice at the Urubamba River

below. A great part of the attraction of the gothic romance comes from the suggestion of its intimidating landscape, from some imminent danger crouching amidst the surrounding beauty, which makes escape or avoidance impossible. And the vertigo that that provokes, according to Benjamin Péret, emanates from nostalgia which seeds terror through the vision of great social upheaval.

Nicholas Alexander Hayes: My cardiologist and cardiothoracic surgeon make me feel miniscule and ephemeral like a dandelion seed in a gust of wind. Standing in front of a Rothko stain painting makes me feel smaller yet. The echo of gunfire makes me nearly not exist.

Claude Cauët: See question 2.

Nita Sembrowich: I am a small person, but do not feel overly small for the most part, except on one occasion at night when observing bears at a rubbish disposal area in Maine from the dubious safety of a small car. In my childhood, whenever I visited the enormous dinosaur skeletons at the Museum of Natural History in New York City, my sense of my own smallness was transmuted into ecstasy. The same thing happens now when I gaze into the Grand Canyon or the night sky with its countless stars.

4. Do you ever dream of small objects?

Guy Girard: Some fairly frequent dreams: I observe from very close up fish in pools at the edge of the sea, or in streams—an activity which I eagerly did as a child during summer vacations.

Penelope Rosemont: When I dream, sometimes bugs land on my hand and perform for me.

Brandon Freels: Although I can't remember them in detail, I have vague memories of dreaming about some very tiny keys.

Doug Campbell: Books, always. Toys and ambiguous magical objects, sometimes. The 'MacGufffins' of my dreams, to be lost, found and pursed. When very tired, I have also experienced the Alice-in-Wonderland syndrome of feeling the room grow small around me, so that I might touch the ceiling, or extend an arm through a window into the cool night air.

Deborah Stevenson: I've kept dream journals for decades, because I remember them so well. Nothing small, but sometimes very big, such as waves.

Casi Cline: Do I ever! For the sake of not-as-long-as-it-could-be-ness, I will just tell you about three small dreams. First - the Multiplication Dream. I am walking across the living room of one of my childhood homes, when I see a paperclip on the floor. I bend to pick it up, but as soon as my finger touches it, it begins to multiply exponentially and very rapidly so that before I can really react, the paperclips have already covered my head and filled up the room. This dream makes me feel very overwhelmed. I have had this dream many times since, but the setting changes and the small object changes. Sometimes it is a ring or a coin, etc. Second - the Shoebox Dream. I am walking through rows of shelves like the ones in shoe stores that stretch all the way to the horizon in every direction. All the shelves are full of shoe boxes, but they don't have shoes in them. They all have different things in them that are small enough to fit in a shoe box. I open one and it has a lizard inside. I open lots of other boxes, but I can't remember what was in them. Third - the Forest of Lost Things. I am walking through a forest looking for my grandmother's ring that my mother lost in her backyard as a teenager. The forest floor is thickly layered with rings, which I know have all been lost by people. I sift through the rings looking for my grandmother's, but I wake up with no resolution. I have had this dream again, but with different small items like pocket knives or lighters.

Vittoria Lion: Insects, worms, spiders, and eggs tend to be recurring themes in my automatic writing and occasionally in dreams. I recall having an unsettling dream several years ago about tiny worms laying eggs and being divided into smaller and smaller animalcules. A comparatively recent example is a

nightmare I had this past winter about a cocoon being implanted within the tissue of my brain. However, more memorable to me are the enormous animals and ominous, ruined landscapes, almost of a Lovecraftian sort, that feature prominently in my favourite dreams and remind me of my own smallness and vulnerability.

Joël Gayraud: Yes sometimes. As in this dream for example, where the small elements multiply:

I walk in Paris in search of an object, a kind of small piece of furniture with drawers, but on this point my memory is very defective. Arriving on a courtyard near the Beaux-Arts, I see a junk sale like an outdoor flea market, held by a woman. Among the objects on display, I notice a sort of planter where a triple black velvet thought is planted; around the flower extend three flexible stems ending with a tiny figure representing a witch. I think of the three witches from Macbeth. Examining the object more closely, I see that what I had taken for a casing in fine translucent, fabric was in fact a spidery light gray veil, attached to the hair of a fourth witch, much larger than the other three, the size of a doll, and with long glass legs stuck to the ground where the thought was planted. I decide to buy the item and then wake up. (Dream of February 13, 2010 in the morning).

Megan Leach: I dreamt I fell cocooned in a raindrop.

Paul McRandle: At a party a woman asked me to kick out a large, obnoxious guest, so riding on one of her friend's shoulders, I approached him, ordering him to leave and kicking at him without touching him when he tried to evade us. When he got out the door, he took off his hat, dreadlocked wig, bulky sweatshirt, and other items to reveal a woman in a blue-and-red 1970s era disco outfit. The descendent of a people who selected women for their height, as she stood close I only reached her waist. We walked outside together past a doorman in a maroon cloak and uniform, who like all the passersby were just as tall as she. At a vendor's stall on the street she picked up a small relief image a death's head in red plasticine. Gluing it to her cheek at an angle, she painted

her face a dark color and pulled a cowl over her head so that as her features vanished only the death's head shown. So disguised, we continued down the street, drawing attention as we proceeded in this funhouse atmosphere.

Hermester Barrington: I sometimes dream that I am becoming smaller and smaller and somehow get caught by the sundew in my protozoarium. It is not at all unpleasant as the plant wraps its droplets of digestive juice laden mucilage around my body—but then, I always wake up before I am completely devoured.

Juan Carlos Otaño: Everything is relative when dreaming. Sometimes the very large is made small and the very small, large.

Nicholas Alexander Hayes: I dream often of my tungsten wedding band, sometimes of a mustard seed caught in my teeth or white blood cells staving off infection. Once in mefloquine-induced night terrors, tiny mice swarmed me. These dreams taught me to live with my musophobia.

Claude Cauët: I do not believe so. Unless they were so small...

Nita Sembrowich: I would say generally no. I do, however, have a vivid recollection of a dream I had many years ago in which I was gazing down at a cluster of Lithops as my mother's voice intoned, "These are living stones."

5. Have you ever wished to be shrunk? Under what circumstances? To what end?

Guy Girard: No, the experience of my childhood was enough.

Penelope Rosemont: I have enjoyed movies about people shrinking until a lawn becomes a jungle and bugs are the size of dinosaurs. I have always thought there was more to bugs than we imagine....size matters! There

would be many revelations if we met insects on the same scale...and survived to tell about it. I found a water bear, now called a tardigrade, hunting with my microscope as a child. It was a mirror light-source scope and you could see through the critter...there was a lot of motion going on sylla moving, stomach churning...a whole unexplored and inaccessible world that I could only look at, like the distant stars and consider their at an unbridgeable distance. I let the tardigrade go back into its swamp. New studies find it a very tough, almost immortal creature.

Brandon Freels: As a child, I always feared I would grow up to be short like Danny DeVito. Because of this I never really wished to be shrunk. In fact, if I fantasized about anything it was the opposite: gigantism. The idea of growing to the size of Godzilla or Galactus intrigued me greatly.

Doug Campbell: I remember one of the music papers of my teens describing a brash and superficial young rockstar as like a plastic action figure that another singer, far deeper and more mysterious, might perhaps purchase and amuse herself by playing perverse games with. It seemed to me then that there could be worse fates than that, and I have no doubt that the critic had reached and reflected on similar conclusions.

Deborah Stevenson: When I saw how octopuses can squeeze through tiny openings, I wished I could be free to move around like that – nothing would be an obstacle to my freedom.

Casi Cline: Anytime I am having a particularly intense moment of anxiety, I have the strong desire to not be seen by anyone. This could be accomplished by becoming translucent or by becoming inconspicuously small like a little pebble. Though shrinking could clearly also be for recreational purposes. It might be very nice to shrink down to about an inch so that I can snuggle in Steven's Beard or shirt pocket and go to sleep and shirk my duties.

Vittoria Lion: I think that being shrunk would be very practical in terms of enabling me to inconspicuously eavesdrop on people responsible for poisoning our atmosphere and making the lives of other human beings and animals miserable and thwart their plans. Moreover, on some level, I think everyone feels nostalgia for existence as that primordial protoplasmic globule that Breton and Soupault recalled when they referred to themselves as "prisoners of drops of water."

Joël Gayraud: Yes, the first time pathologically, after the birth of my brother, when I was six and a half years old. I then had a crisis of anorexia for almost a year in the hope – unconscious, of course – to shrink down and sleep, too, in a cradle. Later, at the age of ten, after I was offered a rudimentary microscope, I wanted to shrink to the size of a red blood cell to be able to circulate in the human body. I have since learned that a film was made on the same subject, a film I have never seen and whose title I do not know.

Megan Leach: No. 3 inches tall is such a wretched height.

Paul McRandle:



Hermester Barrington: Fayaway once made a Klein bottle in which she placed a Rebis composed of the two of us; it stood about half a foot high, but I would like to be in a Klein bottle pendant that existed in two places at once, so that Fay & I could wear each other around our necks—and I would sit perpetually between her breasts, a very pleasant place indeed.

Juan Carlos Otaño: As a child I never had that fantasy (of course, I was already small enough, which eliminated the need). But later on it occurred to me to go back and visit places that I'd know as a child; places that had seemed enormous or unbounded were reduced to narrow, constrictive and disappointing spaces. When I did that I wanted to get back to where I'd been before and that still is a fervent desire but also at times ones of anguish.

Nicholas Alexander Hayes: I wanted to be small to explore the plastic space-ships of my childhood to see worlds molded from plastic to emulate movie sets. I never realized that I wanted to dwell in simulations of worlds that were mere simulations.

Claude Cauët: Yes, when I was seven (see my story: When I Was Little). Then never again. I am not voyeur.

Nita Sembrowich: Most of the time I feel restricted and wish to expand. The idea of being shrunk makes me feel vulnerable and a bit frightened. Yet on those occasions when I have wanted to shrink, it was out of a desire to escape or become invisible and hence less vulnerable.

6. Is there anything that scares you because it is so small?

Guy Girard: Feeling of malaise when I come across dwarfs, onto whom I project a worrying behaviour. Are they trolls?

Penelope Rosemont: Am not frightened by small things. Or big things either...people are the worry.

Brandon Freels: I am definitely fearful of little people. I don't mean people with dwarfism. The best example of what I mean is the elderly couple at the end of David Lynch's Mulholland Drive. I think they appear as standins for some kind of horrible anxiety. I was watching The Three Worlds of Gulliver recently and in the film the large Brobdingnagians accuse Gulliver of being a witch simply because of his size. How else can someone get so small but through sorcery? There seems to be this common fear that little people are sinister manipulators, or that they carry tremendous supernatural powers. There are other types of little people, of course. Doctor Pretorius's collection of little people in The Bride of Frankenstein comes to mind. In this case, they are disturbing and fascinating because they are artificial, almost like automatons.

Doug Campbell: Babies and small animals. I am scared for them because of their vulnerability.

Deborah Stevenson: Small things that scare me: crawling insects that are deadly. And can hide unseen in unexpected places, like one's shoe, or under a flower pot...

Casi Cline: There are certainly small things that scare me (slugs, malignant tumors), but nothing that scares me *because* of its smallness.

Vittoria Lion: Yes, the entirety of what I know. And the solar system, microscopic black holes ("Flying anuses, speeding vaginas!"), the width of passages in the Paris catacombs, undiscovered parasites that gradually turn your body inside out, letters of the alphabet, and tiny surviving fragments of precious manuscripts that have otherwise been completely destroyed.

Joël Gayraud: No, I don't think so.

Megan Leach: Thumbtacks.

Paul McRandle:



Hermester Barrington: Yes—the cry of the killdeer frightens me, because it is so plaintive and yet so short.

Juan Carlos Otaño: Yes, I always fear the imminence of a viral epidemic that would leave millions dead.

Nicholas Alexander Hayes: Hope is a latent toxin; the less there is the more devastating the effects.

Claude Cauët: A microbe, like everyone else I guess.

Nita Sembrowich: I think fear comes mostly when there is an unexpected change in scale—when something that is invariably small appears very large, or vice versa. I would be terrified (and perhaps enchanted) at the sight of an elephant the size of an ant, for example, or an ant the size of an elephant. At the same time, upon further consideration, I would have to say that tiny things often stir my sense of tragedy, evoking pity and terror. To see the structures of material reality repeated at smaller and smaller and smaller scales ad infinitum is dizzying and overwhelming. At such times, what is small becomes enormous, swallowing self and soul. It is also scary when something very small, such as a spider, gazes intelligently back.

7. Do you frequently notice small things all of a sudden "out of the corner of your eye"? Do they surprise you?

Guy Girard: I love to watch grains of dust dancing in a ray of sun, which are the spermatozoids of lights.

Penelope Rosemont: Birds or motion sometimes surprise me from the corner of my eye and I am attracted by it.

Brandon Freels: When I lived in New Orleans, I used to see mice and palmetto bugs out of the corner of my eye. Of course, living alone in a quiet apartment, I surprised them as much as they surprised me. Once, a small mouse jumped about two feet in the air at the sight of me. I wonder what their world was like inside the walls of my apartment. How did they perceive me? These days, whenever I see a dark spot out of the corner of my eye, I almost always assume it's a palmetto bug, but since I left New Orleans it never has been.

Doug Campbell: I am quite severely myopic. Everything in the corner (or centre) of my eye is large and blurry. I do, however, constantly lose small objects: phone, books, beverages, rings, cufflinks . . I am always surprised by where I've put them. A friend observed the superstition of formally asking the fairies to return such a lost object. It usually worked.

Deborah Stevenson: I can't say that I frequently notice small things out of the corner of my eye – I can say I notice things around me that other people don't, but that's not the same thing. Maybe I will begin to, now that the question has activated my attention!

Casi Cline: I don't see small things out of the corner of my eye, but I hear small things moving about outside of my range of vision. I remember taking a hike and swearing that I heard tiny little footsteps on the leaves alongside the path.

Vittoria Lion: Once, the letter A, dancing bright white behind the curtain of my eyelid, when I was on the verge of falling asleep. I felt very surprised. It reminded me of the glowing, animated miscellanea of Man Ray's rayographs and the diminutive newborn galaxies in photographs from the Hubble Space Telescope.

Joël Gayraud: Yes, especially insects. But also paint chips falling from the ceiling, for example. The appearance of a small thing that we do not expect always makes it look bigger.

Megan Leach: The guile darting of squirrels is particularly unsettling.

Paul McRandle:



Hermester Barrington: In an effort to reject empiricism—which is accurate enough most of the time, which unfortunately causes us to place our faith in it all the time—I have turned my eyes entirely inward. Now only my own thoughts cross my field of vision, and I am constantly delighted, shocked, and irritated by the contents of my mind.

Juan Carlos Otaño: Like elves or goblins, you mean? No, I've never made it that far. But if you have patience and perseverance and you press your eyeballs with your fingertips you'll see little magenta coloured darts.

Nicholas Alexander Hayes: I live in Chicago, the rattiest city in the US. So out of the corner of my eye do I see rats, or mice, or paper blowing in the wind, mushishi, or mercurial fay waiting to reward the faithful and punish the unjust? Each and all. Each and all, contained in the reflection from the inside of Hot Cheetos bag discarded by a kid on their way to school.

Claude Cauët: Little things in terms of size, no. Little things in terms of their conventional importance they are given, yes. And always surprised.

Nita Sembrowich: I am startled when out of the corner of my eye I glimpse movement and turn to see a centipede that has emerged from a crack in a wall galloping around the room on its multitudinous legs.

8. Is there a small character from a story, film, book, comic etc. or a scene that involves smallness or shrinkage, that has obsessed you or radically changed your life?

Guy Girard: The Seven Dwarfs from *Snow White* (famous perverts worthy of appearing in a novel by the Marquis de Sade) revealed to me the black magic of cinema. And the Smurfs prompted me to think about utopia.

Penelope Rosemont: The character Tubby from Little Lulu comics had a long running relationship with tiny Martians, they would shrink him and take him around in their flying saucer...it was great, I loved it. Likewise the one-time Scrooge McDuck story "Microducks from Outer Space."

Brandon Freels: There is a scene towards the end of *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* that I've been somewhat haunted by since I was a child. Lily Tomlin's character, who has been shrunk down to around three inches, slips and falls into the kitchen sink's garbage disposal. This goes unnoticed by her family who continues to put foodstuff down the drain. There is a looming threat that they will accidentally turn on the motor to the disposal drain. It's frightening that a shift such as this, a derangement in size, can turn ordinary appliances into deadly obstacles.

Doug Campbell: King Kong and Fay Wray, obviously. Science fiction films and narratives: *The Incredible Shrinking Man. Fantastic Voyage. Land of the Giants. The Green Man of Kilsona.* (a pulp adventure of *The Ape Man of the Electron World* passed on by my Dad). A Jack Kirby comic in which his heroes were projected into a subatomic world. I don't remember which characters, but I clearly remember the psychedelic visuals.

I discovered the concept of infinity in the caption to an illustration of the milky way in a book on space exploration when I was five. The idea that space could be endlessly vast was so vertiginously terrifying I tried to suppress and avoid it. Discussing this with my Dad he introduced the idea that space could also be endlessly subdivided. This had the effect of removing the floor of my universe as well as the ceiling. After the initial shock, we both laughed, tumbling through infinite space together.

Deborah Stevenson: Yes, to this question, most definitely. The book by E.B. White, *Stuart Little*, is a great favorite of mine. Stuart, the mouse child of human parents, lives a life of adventure, sailing on a boat in the lake in Central Park, wearing tiny clothes, sleeping in a tiny bed... and setting out on an adventure away from the city where he meets Harriet Ames, who is his same size, but looks like a human girl. A truly wonderful tale. As is another children's book series I still love: *The Borrowers*. Both these tales involve being small and making a life in and amongst the bigger world, and being sometimes seen, sometimes completely unobserved. What a way to see the world... Oh and

of course the movie from the '60's *Fantastic Voyage* with, among others, Rachel Welch, all scientists shrunk to microscopic size and injected into a human body... blew my mind.

Casi Cline: Not that obsessed me or radically changed my life. There were some shrinkages I enjoyed.

Vittoria Lion: When I was about twelve years old, I became quite obsessed with Roald Dahl's *The Witches*; particularly, the scene in which the protagonist undergoes transformation into a mouse. (This is possibly because I unconsciously recognized the erotic connotations of the squeezing and shrinkage, as is often the case with the pleasure stimulated by deep pressure, although I also feel sympathetic toward mice and other urban animals stereotyped as pestilential. According to Freud, Ernst Lanzer, the "Ratman," identified his childhood suffering at the hands of adults with the extreme cruelty shown toward mice and rats by humans.) Franz Kafka's Odradek, from "The Cares of a Family Man," and the neurotic mole in "The Burrow" are among my favourites today. Albeit not a fictional character, I am also fascinated by *Hallucigenia*, the tiny Burgess Shale organism with a body plan so unusual that paleoartists first drew it upside down.

Joël Gayraud: Reading Gulliver's Travels impressed me deeply. I would have liked to be a Lilliputian. I envied the animals, like foxes, who could live in burrows. But it's mostly Alice's descent into the rabbit hole that has delighted me, and I had to reread this passage dozens of times. I shared her desperation when she started to grow immoderately, and her relief when she shrank to the size of a mouse. To want to shrink, of course, is not to want to age, it is to try to escape degradation and death. On the other hand, the child who wants to be a giant may be old before they age.

Megan Leach: Alice, for remaining logically illogical under duress.

Paul McRandle:

"How are your eyes, sir?" Leeuwenhoek finally asked, turning a shiny object over in his hands.

"I have excellent vision."

"Very good. Tell me, then, if you have ever in your life been able to see anything of the sort you see in this." He handed Peter a flat, brass plate with a tiny, pebble-like drop of glass embedded in the center of it. Peter turned the small instrument over in his hands. A hook at the bottom lifted a fine glass tube before the bead.

This tired-eyed doctor rested a hand on Peter's shoulder to move him into position, then told him to hold the metal plate up to the light and peer through the lens as if it were a telescope.

All Peter saw was a blur in a fog of light. "I can make out nothing."

"Sir, clap a hand over your other eye!" Leeuwenhoek instructed.

He did so, then maneuvered the lens slightly closer, slightly further until he caught a glimpse of something, a sharp movement which he immediately lost. Leeuwenhoek leaned against his shoulder

to rest his arm upon Peter's own and bring the lens back out then in until a dot appeared and shivered into focus as if shot from the horizon to within reach. It was a round thing. It had tiny black spots all over it and it rolled about in nothing. It seemed as if it just might have something inside it, other small spheres tumbling over one another. His hand shook over his free eye, the tension of the box still unwinding within his cheek.

"Do you see them?" Leeuwenhoek asked, leaning in so closely he breathed on Peter's cheek.

"What?" the harbormaster asked.

"The animalcules."

His ride in the box receded; Peter stared further into the glass, sighting a lurching oval shape attached to a fine, thrashing thread; it skittered under his eye. "They're alive," he said, wonderingly.

It was a world bathed in light where transparent creatures lashed and rolled about, spinning in their paths. He seemed to be peering through a peephole bored into eternity and watching the sport of angels.

He pulled himself from the glass. The quivering of his face had subsided. "What is this thing? What does it do?"

Leeuwenhoek removed his hand and stepped away. "It is like a telescope. It makes small things big."

Hermester Barrington: In Grant Morrison's version of *Doom Patrol*, the team visits a circus, where they encounter a man bulging with muscles and carrying heavy equipment. When he refers himself to as a dwarf and Cliff Steele challenges him, he defends himself thus: "Dwarfs can be any size, as long as they're small inside." I have tried to reproduce his mental state, with moderate success, since I first read that scene.

Juan Carlos Otaño: They've all had an impact to some degree: Alice in her pool of tears reduced to the size of a mouse; Dr. Gulliver transported in a tiny cabinet in his stay at the castle of Brobdingnag; the Brave Little Taylor after killing seven flies in a single blow taking on a giant fool; Count Zaroff preserved in a bottle as homunculus by the sinister Dr. Pretorius; the miniature men from 'The Devil Doll' kidnapped to satiate the desire for revenge of an ex-convict obsessed with transvestism; the four hostages of 'Dr. Cyclops' escaping to a garden in the jungles of Peru after trying to shoot their captor the myopic Dr. Thorkel with a rifle (modern version of Ulysses attacking the cyclops Polyphemus); the Incredible Shrinking Man facing a giant tarantula with a hairpin and on other occasions living in a doll's house and being reduced to the size of an atom or stalked by an enormous cat.

Nicholas Alexander Hayes: Not per se, but the admonishment "time limit: 12 hours" from the *Fantastic Voyage* cartoon has long echoed through my memory.

Claude Cauët: No, I don't see.

Nita Sembrowich: I would not say they have changed my life, but I am fascinated by two lesser-known stories written by Mark Twain as he was growing old, after the death of his daughter Susy from meningitis: "The

Great Dark," and "Three Thousand Years Among the Microbes." In "The Great Dark," a family is accidentally shrunk while playing with a microscope. They find themselves passengers on a ship traveling through a now ocean-sized drop of water they had been examining on a slide, and engage in battle with formerly microscopic creatures that have become formidable monsters . "Three Thousand Years Among the Microbes" is narrated from the point of view of a microbe that had previously been a man. Through a failed experiment, he has been transformed into a cholera germ inhabiting the body of a tramp. This story grew out of an idea Twain expressed as early as 1894: "I think we are only the microscopic trichina concealed in the blood of some vast creature's veins, and it is that vast creature whom God concerns Himself about and not us."

9. If you could put anything, any concept or anybody under a microscope, what would you choose? What might you expect to see?

Guy Girard: To observe with a microscope a small piece of the Philosopher's Stone or a hair from the beard of Merlin the Wizard? Expecting the internal rainbow to thereby tie itself into knots.

Penelope Rosemont: I would like to move through all the stages of smallness, visit and study each stage from the cities that bacteria build, the chains of attraction that make dna, stand on the nucleus of the atom, but especially I would like to see a Muon to be the first to realize that perhaps it is an entire new universe that we will have to explore...

Brandon Freels: I feel like we must always be putting the world itself under a microscope. I expect to find unimaginable horrors, and occasionally, something marvelous.

Doug Campbell: I'd like to enlarge scenes from a favorite film, repeatedly, peering into the shadows of shots, ransacking the personal effects of heroes and villains. One might discover doorways to other locations nested within locations, bookshelves loaded with dubious and apocryphal works, flocks of Maltese Falcons, celluloid succubi and incubi cavorting through dance routines, new and unexplored sub plots twisting away into infinity.

Deborah Stevenson: What would I put under a microscope....? I have many books that contain microscopic photography of many different things: blood cells, all the parts of the body, the natural world, and so on. With the advances of photography, there is almost nothing in the material world so small we cannot see – I even saw a photo of two atoms in an article recently. But to look that closely at the 'invisible' things, ah then I would like to observe what it is the great masters see when they are deep in their meditations.

Casi Cline: I would put truth under the microscope to know once and for all whether it exists. However, that might be too banal, so maybe I would rather just break the microscope.

Vittoria Lion: This is maybe not the most original answer for this kind of questionnaire, but my own unconscious and those of other people. I would expect to find an inexhaustible encyclopedia of underground and deep-sea life.

Joël Gayraud: I will pass the concept of megalomania under the microscope, to discover the tiny reasons that lead to such a vast neurosis.

Megan Leach: Avicenna's thesis on soul essence. It appears as a whisper.

Paul McRandle:

Dr. Ruysch coughed, raised his hand to wipe his lips and spoke again. "I have just drained the cadaver and I thought you might want to look at some of his blood." He stepped towards Leeuwenhoek. "Perhaps, you could tell us if there was anything different about the bodies in it."

Leeuwenhoek nodded in his sleepy way. He opened the jar to sniff the thick blood inside., "It may take time to prepare. Please, look through some of my lenses."

The microscopist was particularly fond of a thin slice of cork which neatly demonstrated why this bark floated on water. What Peter saw, holding the lens to the light, was a honey comb of tiny spaces, all empty, no life, just a well-arranged absence like the penis on Ruysch's wall, sliced in half lengthwise, and inflated as by one of the doctor's pipettes. Spreading empty seed to barren wombs—a windy generation. Could that odd child have been born inside some Indian seedpod? Carried rattling about within a gourd in the hold of Bastiaan's ship?

Hermester Barrington: This question frightens me, because a colleague of mine once put a fractal under an electron microscope and they never found him.

Juan Carlos Otaño: To put Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un in synthetic resin or a paraffin solution so that they can fight it out between themselves and leave everybody else out of it.

Nicholas Alexander Hayes: I would like to see the awesome and awful empires on a mote of dust. I would expect to see the chthonian dust mites ancient and terrible in their domains struggle with the very forces of creation. Lovecraftian deities who stand on sullen worlds adrift in chaos, adrift on a greater death than they could imagine.

Claude Cauët: A special microscope, then. I would place myself in front of the lens while looking into the eyepiece. We must be able to invent that. What do I expect to see? I don't dare think about it.

Nita Sembrowich: I would be interested in putting almost anything under a microscope. I would expect to be surprised. Perhaps I would most like to examine some of the fantastic entities of the distant cosmos—red dwarfs, comets, asteroids, distant planets, black holes—or UFOs.

10. What have you got in your pockets?

Guy Girard: In my left pocket, my keys. In my right pocket, a hole (of memory) or vice versa. And in my vest pocket, these days, *Walden*; or *Life in the Woods* by H.D. Thoreau.

Penelope Rosemont: I just returned from Machu Picchu and Galapagos, in my pocket I discovered a tiny pebble the size of a pea, shaped like a pyramid, made of dark rock, I suspect it is from a nearby town, also in my wallet among my IDs a picture of my Blue Jay. When one considers the trip into smallness, it is a trip into our own unrecalled evolution. From star-dust to one cell, from one cell to ocean creature.....all unrecalled. So discovery in some ways is the recovery of our own evolutionary history...and what a beautiful story it is.

Brandon Freels: A few quarters and a MetroCard.

Doug Campbell: Keys and a bottle opener on a demon head keyring, large red and white spotted bandana, loose change (left trouser pocket). Wallet, phone (right trouser pocket.)

Deborah Stevenson: I have some business cards, spare change, half a stick of gum, crumpled tissue, lipstick, and an expired Metrocard in my pockets, just not all in the same one.

Casi Cline: I have no pockets. Inside my no-pockets, is the High Priestess card, a band-aid, a sharp knife, a mini water purifier straw, a 7-11 lighter, some waterproof strike-anywhere matches, anti-diarrheal medicine, a miniature portrait of Leonora Carrington, and a lock of Steven's Beard.

Vittoria Lion: Zooplankton and krill. I'm sailing to Antarctica to feed the whales later today.

Joël Gayraud: Today, in my jacket's left pocket, I find a two-cent euro — which I will not slip into the mouth of a dead person to allow him to pass the Styx, but just now, at the post office, in the slot of a stamp machine -, a sales receipt rolled on itself, a horse chestnut picked up at Buttes-Chaumont that for six months I mechanically knead in my hand in the idea that it will prevent rheumatism (an old family superstition); in my right pocket, the little notebook on which I take notes on the fly when I'm in the street or the subway, my dumbphone, and a little dust where there hides a people teeming with microbes. In my left inside pocket, my transport card, my credit card, a black ballpoint pen; right inside pocket, my agenda with my address book. No dust in the inside pockets. From my right pants pocket, I pull out a packet of tissues and my keychain. From the left pocket, a small chamois skin to wipe my glasses cohabitating with residues of fluffy tissue, inhabited by an amiable colony of dustmites.

Megan Leach: A fortune, a telephone, a Rumi poem, Parle-G biscuit crumbs, a leaky pen.

Paul McRandle:



Color stills from my film Small (November, 1989), actor: Dan Watling; black & white stills from my film Not a Boy (November, 1989), actors: John McRandle & Julie Grant; animalcule extracts from my novel Janus, of Amsterdam.

Hermester Barrington: This haiku, on a scrap of paper: inert bottlecap a rectangle of dry weed

and future fire

Juan Carlos Otaño: A comb, a pencil and four globes of the world.

Nicholas Alexander Hayes: Lint and wadded receipts. A coffee-stained handkerchief.

Claude Cauët: Two aging hippopotamuses (one on each side, in my trouser pockets), a life-size reproduction of Niagara Falls (in my gluteal pocket), coins (almost everywhere) and some inhabited planets (in my breast pockets).

Nita Sembrowich: Lint. Paper scraps. Tissues. Shells. Coins. A hickory nut.