

melmoth

“Melmoth and Moncada exchanged looks of silent and unutterable horror, and returned slowly home.”



Salah Faïq



Haifa Zangana



Ysine

Tony Pusey



Melmoth is a surrealist magazine in the sense that its members term themselves "surrealist". We believe that surrealism is based upon a revolutionary conception of man and the world.

Melmoth is half a dozen or so individuals who, for the time being, have decided to act collectively. A group "direction" has yet to emerge; if one does evolve, it will be as a result of our collective activity and not because of a preference for one side or another in surrealism's age old gang warfares - old quarrels do not interest us. We are all tired of the sectarianism of the various surrealist groups, much of which seems to depend on purely formal definitions of what surrealism is. We hope that by writing, researching and playing without any a priori goal or definition in mind, it may be possible to bring about a coalescence of certain common ideas, views and modes of perceiving and appreciating the events and objects that surround us.

Melmoth does not claim to speak for surrealism. Melmoth is not dogmatic, nor is it sectarian. The members of Melmoth are active in 1980, not in 1924 and hence we feel that we cannot ignore other ideas, other tendencies (many of them deriving from surrealism itself) which now form part of our tradition, for example situationism or cobra. Melmoth is interested in polemic, though not in sterile internecine sniping, we are interested in what we find to be vital - much of this will exist in the various surrealist groups - but some may lie outside this domain, and as such Melmoth may publish groups or individuals who have for one reason or another moved "away" from surrealism, or those who do not claim to be surrealists, but with whom we feel an affinity. This may disqualify Melmoth from calling itself a surrealist review, if so, so be it, it remains a magazine by surrealists.

Rattus



Francis Wright



that orthodox "revolutionary" theory does not, of itself, confront in an adequate manner those questions which we believe are of fundamental importance.

Melmoth, then, tends to remain the same as in the book which bears his name and as he will be in centuries to come, the eternal traveller: MELMOTH THE WANDERER.

Tony Pusey

MELMOTH IS Salah Faïq
Tony Pusey
Rattus
Francis Wright
Ysine
Haifa Zangana
Our guest: Roger Cardinal

tradition is our
time's inherited
sin.
Steen Colding

OBSERVATIONS

Drawing
Francis Wright

I chart the anguish of orphaned newspapers
I observe the eclipsed creatures of the streets
and allow a coffin to ring a door-bell

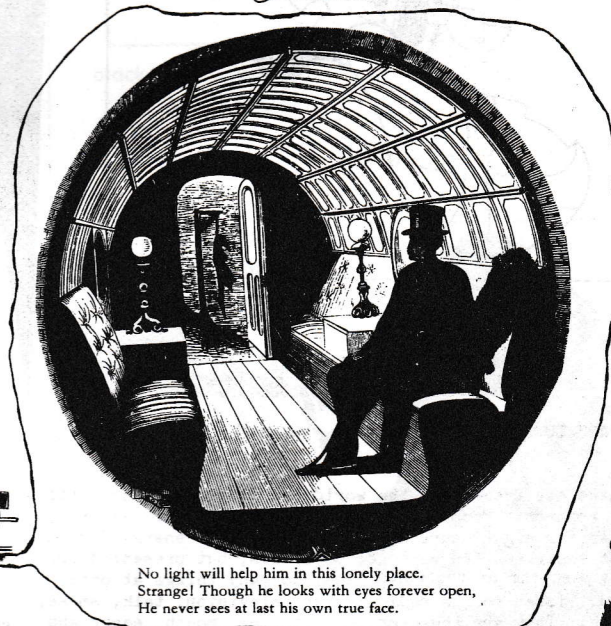
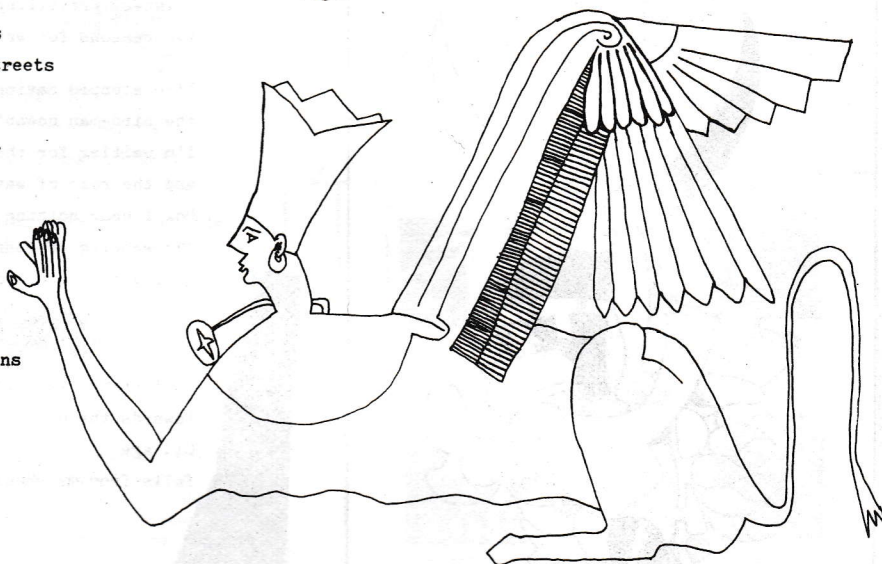
A small boy fishes for scars in the gutter
a cloud bursts into laughter
and catches his tongue

I return to the derelict factories
to the passports of phantasy
forged in foundries
to the murmur of the street lamps' equations

Words lie gasping at my feet
abandoned
like the woman who talks to the trees
and padlocks their leaves

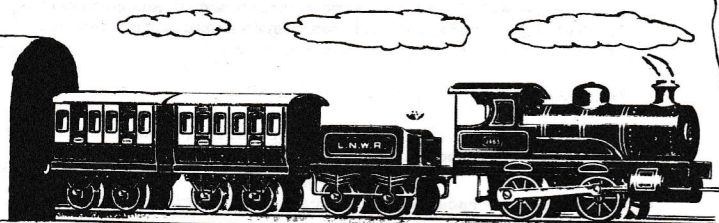
Lock up your sons and daughters
lock up your birds your beds your lovers
lock up your indifference your mothers your fathers
lock up your rosy suicides
lock up your words
before they whip you

The flames have risen
and now clutch the sky in their panic
I steal their blindness
to transcribe the implosion of migrating days



No light will help him in this lonely place.
Strange! Though he looks with eyes forever open,
He never sees at last his own true face.

Salah Faig

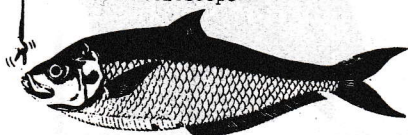


One by one the trains appear
shrouded in the echoes of coal mines
they have lost track of life
and hang in the air
like the dismembered bodies of former lovers
unforgiving nightmares animated by the wind
buildings steeped in scotomata descending to the depths
of horror at midnight
the Babels of a modern world buried beneath slag

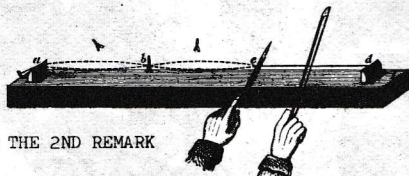
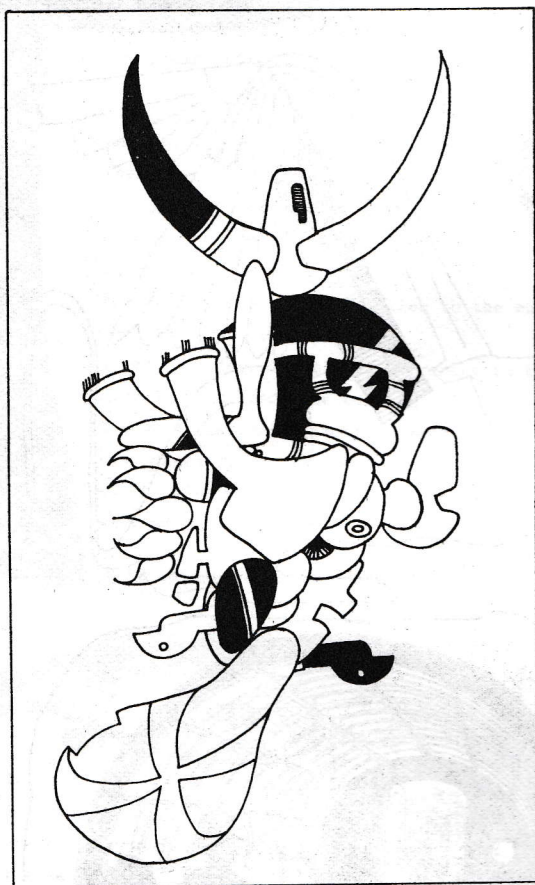
The howl of night
has no memory
I drink its bitter liquid
flowing between the quicksilver of mind
and the dead lead of body
an astronomer paints his lips with the stars
to observe the day
as unknown woman plans the escape of my hands
from his telescope

In the drawers
in the wastelands
illustrated by the dream
there are the bones of burning stars
illuminating the idle wind. Passages in my head
where horses chew money
sunken islands rise
pleasures bloom
shoeless boys smash the dams
the city's guards cry as they
lean against the doors
I see the huge poem;
huts and dancers in the forest
departing on a new journey
and the spreading dark
has diminished

Salah Faig



Rattus
August 1980



LET US PASS TO THE 2ND REMARK

The machine has fragmented the world and it is like the battles of giant spiders. People are slowly committing suicide, they are forced for eight hours a day to spend their energy for purposes not their own, in ways not their own, but presented for them by the rhythm of the work. They do many things at once, they read, listen to the radio, watch television, talk, smoke, eat, drink. They are the consumer with open mouth, eager and ready to swallow everything. Human values have become determined by economic values. What is good for machines must be good for man - so goes the logic. Modern man thinks he loses something - time - when he does not do things quickly, yet he does not know what to do with the time he gains - except kill it.

The old protestant ethic of work is resurrected among people, defining labour as "the source of all wealth and all culture". In addition to that another threat hangs over the artist: that of becoming a tool of the ruling classes. Instead of draining rivers, society directs a human stream into a bed of trenches. Instead of dropping seeds from airplanes, it drops incendiary bombs over cities and through gas warfare the aura is abolished in a new way. Curiosity, love for jest and desire to astonish; I again raise my head.

Listen: do you know that blood flows in great waves across the world and reality has destroyed man's dreams. The war is on and men are being slaughtered one million, two million, ten, twenty, a hundred million and then a billion, everybody, man, woman and child, down to the last one.

The world is void: our minds have become dulled, our feet no longer run across open fields, the magic and wonder of life have burned away.

When I see the figures of men and women moving listlessly behind their prison walls, sheltered, secluded for a few brief hours, I wonder: are these men and women? And what about children?

Arch of images

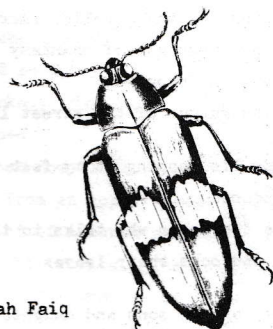
darkness prevailing in the world: these are
two reasons for writing

I've stopped saving my voice for the last hours of night
the bird-man doesn't fly
I'm waiting for the wolf's howl to fill the cities
and the roar of waves to emerge from escaping lovers
Now I hear nothing except
the weeping of guards
coming from the lanterns



As I travel away from the city
towards the countryside
Old age
falls from my shoulders

Salah Faiq



Time and again, in all schools, it seems to be the task of the teachers to spoil the seen and unseen world for the pupil. Time and again they want to make him copy and imitate. This copy will grow up to be a good member of the society.

Who that has a desperate, hungry eye can have the slightest regard for these existent governments, laws, codes, principles, ideals, ideas, totems and taboos?

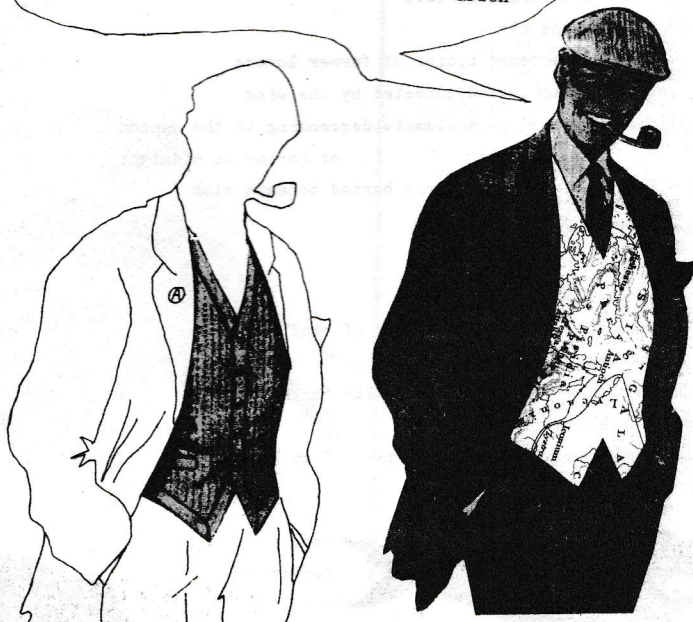
Everywhere in all times the same ovarian world announcing itself. Yet also, parallel and contemporaneous with them new totem poles, new taboos, new war dances.

Do you know what the fucking war means?

To say yes you have to first be a surrealist, because you have understood what it means to say NO.

No boundaries or races or climates. No religion no temple,

Have you ever been alive?
Curious sensation isn't it? - Marcel Mariën



No prison no guard and no police
No laws
No states



1. Do we act like a tiny, dying, closed community?
2. Are we looking perhaps for a road that no longer exists?
3. Are we merely going through the motions of a dead ritual?

It was a winter night while the icy wind whistled through the pines, we opened the door in the dead of dark and admitted surrealism. Our central image is that of a traveller and we turn against the world which denies the validity of living, which questions the existence of anything that cannot be quoted on the stock exchange in terms of pounds and pence.

Our intentions are to get rid of the absurdity of events and the stupidity of the official life that weighs heavy upon the future as well as the present.

The untiring quest for the marvellous takes on various aspects according to each imagination. It is a question of themes supplied by the unconscious, chance, madness, dream, hallucination, delirium or humour, states capable to deliver sensibility from the grip of the conventions that has governed men of all times.

We find ourselves in a magnetic field wherein by the attraction of one image to another the objects of reality are deviated from their traditional roles. Beyond that we must also have the ability to arouse in the others the curiosity to grasp our image. Those are the means we use to destroy traditional dogmas, laws, accepted formulas and the established order.

True we may wander around for a while rather aimlessly, like a wolf seeking a scent in the wilds, but we then need only to choose at random a street and a door, to climb any number of flights of stairs until we feel we have at last reached home, where we find the eternity of love and desire.

P.S. It is clear that surrealism doesn't regard the completed work as sacrosanct, an indestructible entity to be preserved intact for posterity, but rather as a temporary statement to be modified.

Haifa Zangana



"It was discovered on the 21st of December, 1831, after a heavy storm that had torn it from its native situation, which, from its rarity, we may suppose to be in deep water. In February, 1838, I obtained two other specimens, which had been thrown up by a tempest. The largest measured two inches and three-tenths in length, which enabled me to discern still more of the internal structure of this fish."

THE ECHIDNA.

The food of the Echidna consists of ants and other insects, which it gathers into its mouth by means of the long extensible tongue. It is a burrowing animal, and is therefore furnished with limbs and claws of proportionate strength. Indeed, Lieutenant Breton, who kept one of these animals for some time, considers it as the strongest quadruped in existence in proportion to its size. On moderately soft ground it can hardly be captured, for it gathers all its legs under its body, and employs its digging claws with such extraordinary vigour that it sinks into the ground as if by magic. The Echidna is tolerably widely spread over the sandy wastes of Australia, but has not been seen in the more northern portions of that country.

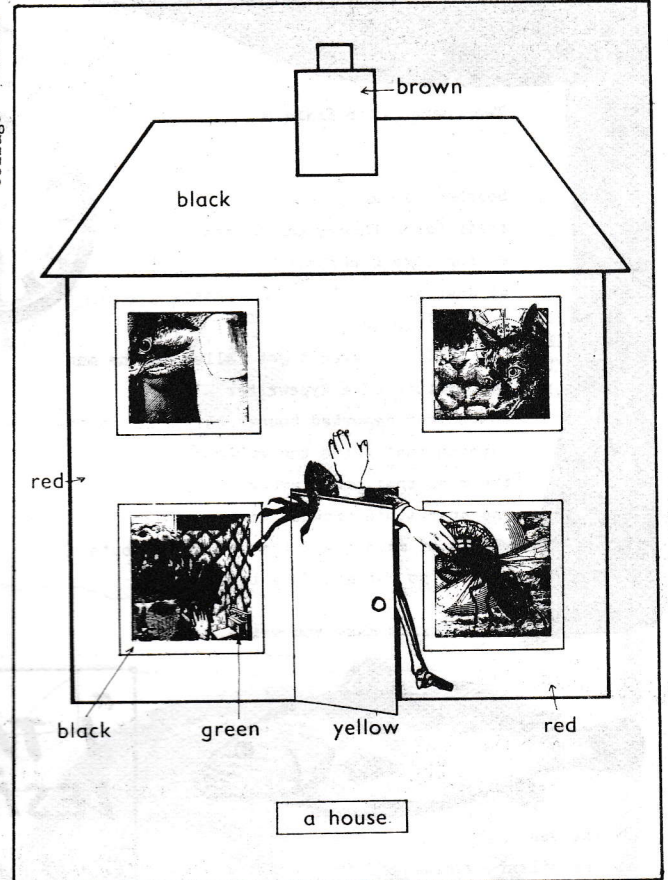
The colour of this interesting little fish is light ashen brown, relieved with slight dashes of blue on different parts of the body, and in certain lights gleaming with beautiful iridescent hues that play over its body with a changeful lustre. About twenty species of Sea Horses are known, several of which have been exhibited alive in the aquarium at the Crystal Palace.

They present a very quaint appearance while thus engaged. An inexperienced observer would hardly take the black wriggling mass to be composed of fish, but rather to be a collection of decaying weeds, agitated by the ripple of the stream. Soon, however, these masses can be resolved into their constituent elements, and are gradually analysed into the labour of scooping the groove, his duty being to watch over his mate and to fight any other fish of his own sex and species who may intrude upon their home, and that the whole task devolves upon the female, who executes it by twirling her tail, and not by grubbing with her snout.

The whole process of depositing the numerous eggs occupies on the average about ten days, and, after it is accomplished, the parent fish leave the eggs to be hatched by surrounding influences, while they themselves quit the spot and remain in the river for a short period while they recover from the exhaustion caused by the process. During this period they are usually ravenous, and vast quantities of the young of their own kind, which are about that time abundant in the river, fall victims to their insatiable appetite. After a time, and about then a tiny and almost transparent creature, hardly to be recognized as a fish; and being too feeble to employ the mouth in obtaining subsistence, bears a portion of the egg still adhering to the abdomen like a transparent amber-coloured sac flecked with tiny blood-vessels; and by gradually absorbing this material into the system, preserves its life until its increased dimensions permit it to seize prey with the little mouth, afterwards to be so formidably arrayed with teeth.

F. WRIGHT

Collage Rattus



Life is a butchers shop
where they only sell fish
- Marcel Mariën

AS IF THE LIGHTNING

And so it goes,

on the track of some wild
water, as yet unyielding spaces,
set amid days of light and foliage:
that blue spirit, attached

or cast forth
in richness or terror, joyful
bar the taste of emptied air.

As if the lightning
over tomorrow were already struck
with the new disquiet, you hear
a dark train passing
down the slope, beyond the forest,
and then discern the smile of time
rimmed by more tactile energies,
your own sense of the task
running into that echoing rock
inscribed with the features of her face,
distracted.

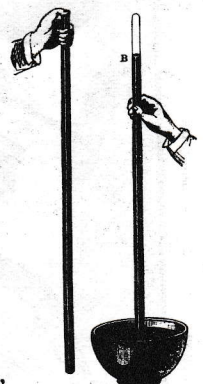


FIG. 15.
Torricelli's Experiment (Ganot).

Roger Cardinal

Two poems (for Francis)

Smashed Clocks

their hands thrown in the road
moving like caged animals
at dawn you see the old teacher
burning his letters
the obelisks haven't yet fallen to the mud
the stutter of a typewriter
women from deserted houses shivering in the street
rubbish that feeds the gulls
the moss that grows among fingers
the apartments crowded with screams
whirls of memory and the quivering mouth
want to go out and face the bridges
these things make you write



HIGH SIERRA

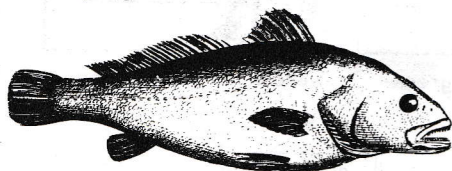
"I am the inhabitable one".

To gallop and to gallop further; the climb
was worth it, even without flowers. And dear
Aquitania lies up this high valley where
the wind squeezes by at midnight. Peasants
bring cheese, grappa, fruited wine:
their lesson is lackadaisical, grandiose.
Days drift by with bells and tinny music.
Remember what I told you last summer
about the keys and the tomatoes,
watering the cat and so forth. Well now,
the presentiment worked. That was a castle
we should have grasped
with both hands. That now leans
disconsolate, while from an upper window flutters
the last pink kerchief of a dazed princess,
ripped by thorns at the lattice. The image
exactly coincides with the promise of San
Francisco, outstretched like a brittle fan
in the morning light. And nothing
much more can intervene as the bandit's
life ebbs away, crimson under the rapids.
While you linger, dry-throated,
way below, at the fringe of the crowd,
hating it but not daring
to admit. This is your choice
in the unflinching dawn.

Roger Cardinal

"Good fortune consists in having many passions
and many means of satisfying them.
Attractions are proportional to destinies"

Charles Fourier.



By the sea
in the silent evening
thousands of crows are flying
in the sand
there are traps for the waves
then in the distance
a cry can be heard
the crows attack each other
the sea is disturbed
the silent evening withdraws

Salah Faig

"I TAKE MY
DESIRES
FOR REALITY
BECAUSE I
BELIEVE IN
THE REALITY
OF MY
DESIRES"



SO NOW YOU KNOW!

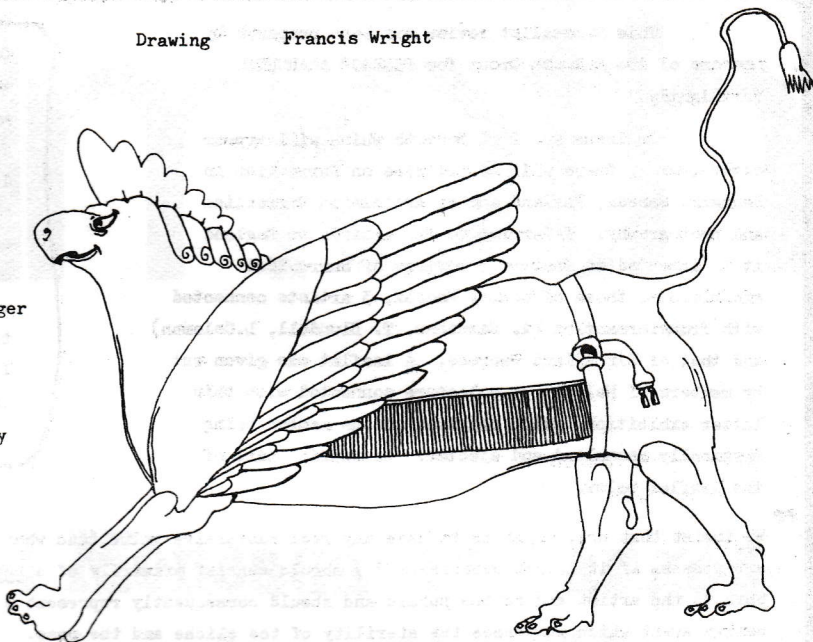
"(The Surrealists)...stand
for violence and neurotic
unreason. They are truly
decadent. You catch a
glimpse behind them of the
deepening twilight of
barbarism that may soon
blot out the sky, until at
last humanity finds itself
in another long night.
There are about far too
many effeminate or epicene
young men, lisping and
undulating. Too many young
women without manners,
balance dignity - greedy
and globbering sensation-
seekers. Too many people
who are steadily lapsing
into shaved and powdered
barbarism.....
Frequently they have strong
sexual impulses that they
soon contrive to misuse or
pervert".

J.B.Priestly
on the Surrealists.

AGITATION PASSING

The suspect in hiding settles
into his journal of rain enclosed in doubts
and suppositions leading through figures
to a brusque reconstruction of the felt
experience of senses abandoned
throughout that long, uncanny absence.
Yes, a fresh feeling of time, flaws
and all, now signals keys of silver while we linger
ill at ease in an after-reality
soft with spasms still.
Thinking of Brooklyn, then, the regular hand
dispenses genuine advice and, seeing we are fully
out of town, shakes her irrational hair
over the solitude of streets
to the root. Rich in gaps
and confusions, we no longer see a point
in forethought. Her precise position
wavers upon feathers of water
across the flagstones with all their associations
of reading ourselves. Rapid space
chatters in the black outside with actual
speeches mirrored in the window, to cross
the body as incandescent heartbeats:
while on the lighter level the blue
light of kisses endures the cold.
Each of these four ways of love manifests
the same presence like a flame,
bright as an arrow breathing in the night.
And you remember most clearly the odour

Drawing Francis Wright



of grass trackways prefigured
in idly fingered definitions. All this
grandeur after the flood releases
fragrances free of hesitancy, a lop
sided poignancy, bare shoulder to
the glass, so our circle
of shared signs is complete.
The last album opens on an azure
alchemy of influences where
Ariadne's dreams are painted
thick and sharp, sultry and blurred,
all agitation past.

Roger Cardinal

I have scalped the indifference of day
I return to the cry of seven pillows
strewn along a corridor of venom

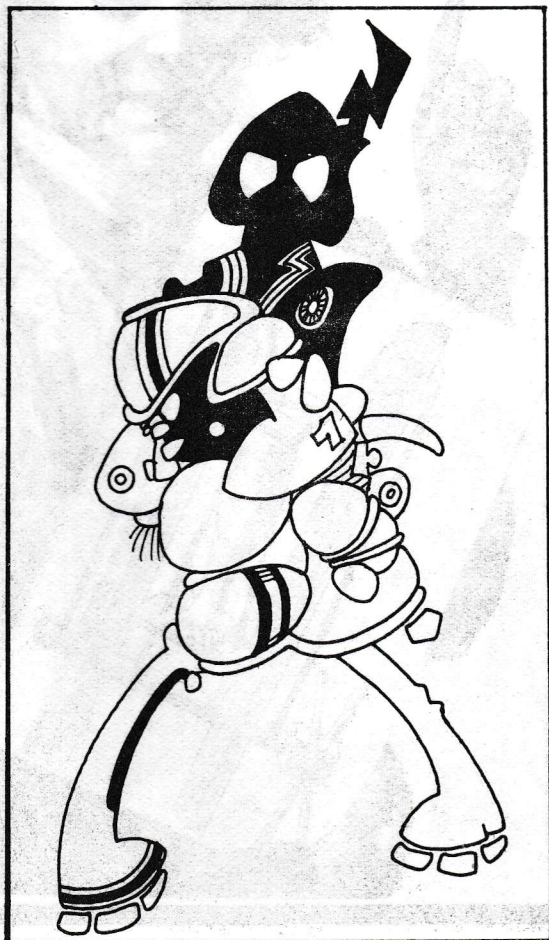
I return to the night
offering the heads of ancient dryads
to the dreams I once constructed
in a village in the sveldt
there are no animals here
only the violence of bleeding crysanthamums
the hollow whining of ruined streets
only numbers masquerading as stamen
and a flight of heresies
invading a factory of blind memories

Passing through his country
are the skeletons of gloves
on which the hieroglyphics of love
are scrawled in blood
a guillotine of kisses
decapitates the silence of all words
hovering unwanted between my lips



Rattus
1980

Drawing Tony Pusey



This Surrealist review has been prepared by members of the Melmoth Group for FREEDOM ANARCHIST fortnightly.

In issue No. 2 of Melmoth which will appear early-Jan. , there will be articles on Surrealism in Denmark, Canada, England and an article on Surrealism and photography. Referring to the article on England it is intended to feature 3 reviews of Surrealist exhibitions, those of Conrey Maddox, 3 artists connected with Transformation (A. Earnshaw, T. Blundell, L.Coleman) and that of Sir Roland Penrose. A leaflet was given out by members of Melmoth at a lecture connected with this latter exhibition, which resulted in one member being physically assaulted and ejected. We reprint part of the leaflet below.

" We insist that art, if it is to have any real subversive value (and what value can art possess if it is not subversive ?) should consist primarily of a revelation both to the artist and to the public and should consequently represent a communicative event which surpasses the sterility of the cliché and the pose. Bizarreness or weirdness of imagery cannot, as often happens, be mechanistically correlated with the intrusion of the surreal which manifests itself above all in terms of the explosive impact of its content. "

The largest selection of surrealist books, reviews and ephemera for sale in the world (over 2000 items) is available from John Lyle who also publishes the review Transformation from Harford, Sidmouth, Devon.

Also current in English is Arsenal - surrealist subversion, the journal of the Chicago group, available from 2257 North Jansen Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, 60614, USA.

Current reviews in other languages include:-

In French: Flagrant Délit, 51 rue de Laxou, 5400
 Nancy, France
 Le La, BP 463, 1211 Geneve 3, Switzerland

In Spanish: Luz Negra, c/o General Solchanga,
 No 2, 3c Madrid, Spain

In Arabic: Le Desir Libertaire, 551 Caledonian
 Road, London N7

Multi Lingual: Brumes Blondes, Ruysael Kade 23(1),
 Amsterdam 1008, Holland

WARNING

Not all magazines that claim to be surrealist are, whilst some that do not make this claim publish work by, and of interest to surrealists. Three such journals are:-

Phases, 24 rue Remy-de-Gourmont, 75019,
Paris, France
Ellebore, 189 rue Ordener, 75018, Paris,
France
(reviews of the movement Phases)
La Crecille Noire, BP 20, 75860, Paris,
Cedex, 18 France
(review of the "Melog" gang)

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Compassion is my real home
when I glorify the whistle of a train
write letters to persons unknown
fold curtains
laugh at the most contrary people
observe the moss growing on a rock
come upon an exhausted rabbit
caress its belly and shivering head
walk in the fields
touching the marks of old bites
I discover only a man seeing himself
in everything

Salah Faig

All poems in this review by Salah Faig are from two collections of poetry first published in Arabic "Hostages" (1975) and "That Country" (1978).

