



ISSUE 9  
DEEP TIMES

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# INTRODUCTION

*"In everything one treads on, there is something that comes from so much farther back than mankind and which is also going so much farther."— André Breton, Arcanum 17*

*"It is new, indeed, for I made it last night in a dream of strange cities, and dreams are older than brooding Tyre, or the contemplative Sphinx, or garden-girdled Babylon."  
—The Call of Cthulhu*

Against the heteropatriarchal nuclear family of the petrostate, where the most shattering and resplendent of scientific revelations is infantilized and repressively-desublimated into extraction-industrial spectacles of unearthing and devouring, we surrealists remain committed to the Eros of the antediluvian world. With the aid of invisible rays we find primal scenes hidden in the vanes of a petrified feather. We will enter our submersibles and sift the bones of our dream creatures from the silt of Challenger Deep, discover our Lascaux and Chauvet Caves within the concentric rings of the human peritoneum, and make airplanes and plague-deserted shopping malls rust in the indecent foliage of prehistory. Today is the day you discover a lost continent in the subway tunnels of your city, where stalagmites and mammoth tusks murmur their extinct languages.

We strongly emphasize that the greatest scientific revolution of the end of the eighteenth century was not the excavation of a single "deep time": indispensably, it simultaneously encompassed the beginning of the paleontology of psychic depth and the future permanent inscription of our own species in the fossil record. In addition to submissions explicitly envisioning the prehuman past, we encouraged speculative explorations of the overlap of geological and archaeological deep time, Dreamtime, post-Capitalocene future deep time, the flora and fauna of your childhood doodles, the interval between falling asleep and waking, the suspended time of fossilization, and the interior archives and libraries of the hollow Earth. Let's curl ourselves into the mane of a mummified dinosaur before the long-awaited glaciation of fatbergs consumes us all...







# SURREALIST QUESTIONNAIRE ON DEEP TIMES

- 1 *Surrealists have often described their most convulsive experiences and experiments in terms of reaching different times or worlds. Do you find this to be true for you? To what extent (or in what sense) are we contemporary with other ages in Earth's history?*
- 2 *Do you know how old the rocks are in your area, upon which you live? How does that affect your life and attitudes?*
- 3 *Are fossils surrealist objects? Are there any specific fossils that have made a great impression on you, now or in childhood? Do you have any favourite found objects that you have always interpreted as fossils, whether reasonably or not?*
- 4 *What extinct animal would you most like to reappear, and why? (Originally appeared in the first issue of Arsenal, 1970)*
- 5 *Have you ever dreamed about fossils, extinct life forms, or prehistoric landscapes?*
- 6 *Describe the primal scene.*
- 7 *Walter Benjamin referred to the arcades of Paris as prehistoric caverns containing the bones of "the last dinosaur of Europe." Is there a specific structure, place, image, or other thing (found where you live, or that you have otherwise seen in person) that you find to be especially reminiscent of a fossil? Think of architectural details, ruins, and urban archaeological miscellanea. You may want to go out and look for one.*
- 8 *How important is the concept of humanity to your conception of surrealist activity? How does it relate to other life forms and evolutionary history?*
- 9 *What kind of fossils from our current life are we leaving behind, and for whom? How are they going to be interpreted?*

**1** *Surrealists have often described their most convulsive experiences and experiments in terms of reaching different times or worlds. Do you find this to be true for you? To what extent (or in what sense) are we contemporary with other ages in Earth's history?*

### **Jason Abdelhadi**

The transposition of other times and worlds onto this one has become a fundamental feature of surrealist experience for me. It is often a question of accidentally stumbling upon some ancient feeling in an unexpected place. But also seeing, in almost any scenario or image, a potential break-out point where different eons manifest themselves in shapes that cannot be anything else than forgotten or unidentified forms of life.

### **Hermester Barrington**

Inasmuch as time is a fiction we tell ourselves to explain our inability to move backwards in it—and space is merely the step-sibling of time—we are always contemporary with those worlds we seem to have remembered, which are figments of our imaginations. Borges' retelling of the story of the two kings and their labyrinths misses the point of the original—both monarchs were trapped in their own conceptions of time, regardless of the physical mazes they might have constructed for each other. I have lost myself in my own labyrinth of deep time, and live there happily among the oozing limestone, the fossils that encrust the walls, and a thin layer of *Bathybius haeckelii* covering all of it.

### **Doug Campbell**

I have felt absolutely outside of time during particularly intense experiences. I have also felt *deja-vu* in situations that I'd never been in before, notably in my first sexual experiences. Time runs slow in accidents and confrontations, and fast when absorbed in creativity – or intoxication!

Meetings with groups of surrealists – whether involving formal games or not – always seem to create “synchronicity storms” and startling strokes of objective chance.

Passing further and further through time, nearly sixty years of it, it seems to me that these and other phenomena suggest that the experience of time

associated with hauling a physical body through the rounds of food, sleep and shelter is a very small part of the story indeed.

### **Casi Cline**

Yes, I would say this is true for me. My most blindingly beautiful experiences have been ones which have felt timeless, and by timeless I mean full of time. Time is often experienced as a form of separation, as discrete segments or the barriers between them. But time is not a collection of gates and barriers. Time is a body and the end of time is its skin. Time as a body has a complex of veins and arteries and nerves and vessels through which time passes. And nothing in time as a body ceases to exist as a cell passes beyond it.

### **Krzysztof Fijalkowski**

Since quite early childhood I have always been very conscious of the passing of time, of the anxious uncertainty that comes with aging, and of a tangible loss as experiences turn to memories. As I get older myself, I increasingly have a sense of time as multiple: not just that different times might co-exist, but also that different types of being (organic and inorganic; physical and immaterial; 'living', 'non-living' and previously living entities) experience time differently, which is precisely why their essential and vivid qualities so often remain opaque to us. To reach, or at least glimpse, these other temporal zones seems to me a central surrealist ambition, and as such the sense that surrealism offers a bridge to them is one of the most vibrant – if also the most speculative – of its promises. Building on André Breton's scattered discussions of this question, Georges Sebbag has written eloquently on surrealism's pursuit of *le temps sans fil*: 'wireless time'.

### **Mattias Forshage**

Yes. See separate contribution on page 97.

### **Joël Gayraud**

Le surréalisme est une tentative passionnée pour trouver l'ailleurs dans l'ici, que ce soit un ailleurs temporel ou spatial, notamment grâce au flux verbal de l'écriture automatique qui nous ménage un accès privilégié à notre

inconscient. Relayant les découvertes freudiennes, le surréalisme émancipe la pratique de l'association libre de son rôle de technique d'explication et de guérison des névroses, pour réaliser sur le mode poétique le rêve chamanique de déplacement dans le temps et dans l'espace. Des mondes inconnus naissent sous les yeux du poète, un labyrinthe de mots et d'images où il s'empresse de se perdre comme dans une forêt pétrifiée au bord d'un lac souterrain.

Comme les roches formées d'une accumulation de sédiments minéraux ou organiques au cours des ères géologiques, notre mémoire est sédimentaire. N'y a-t-il pas là une troublante analogie ? Quand je recueille un rêve au matin, j'ai souvent l'impression de ramener un fossile vivant du fond des âges. Mais n'est-ce pas tout mon corps qui se décline à l'aune des temps géologiques ? Prenons quelques organes au hasard et réfléchissons : mon cerveau date du pléistocène, mon foie de l'oligocène, mon pancréas du crétacé; ma moelle épinière je la verrais bien remonter au jurassique, mon cœur au dévonien, mon estomac au carbonifère, mes couilles à l'ordovicien et mon squelette au précambrien. Quant au reste, je laisse à mes amis le soin d'en décider.

### **Joël Gayraud** - English Translation

Surrealism is a passionate attempt to find an elsewhere in the here, even if it be a temporal or spatial elsewhere, and notably thanks to the verbal flow of automatic writing which gives us privileged access to our unconscious. Transmitting Freudian discoveries, surrealism emancipates the practice of free association from its role as a technique for explaining and healing neuroses, in order to realize in a poetic mode the shamanic dream of displacement in time and space. Unknown worlds are born before the poet's eyes, a labyrinth of words and images in which they hasten to get lost as in a petrified forest by the edge of an underground lake.

Like rocks formed from an accumulation of mineral or organic sediments during geological eras, our memory is sedimentary. Isn't there a disturbing analogy here? When I collect a dream in the morning, I often have the impression of bringing back a living fossil from the depths of the ages. But does not my whole body decline in one of the geological times? Let's take a few random organs and think: my brain dates from the Pleis-

tocene, my liver from the Oligocene, my pancreas from the Cretaceous; my spinal cord I see going back to the Jurassic, my heart to the Devonian, my stomach to the carboniferous, my balls to the Ordovician and my skeleton to the Precambrian. As for the rest, I leave it to my friends to decide.

### **Nathan Grover**

Consciousness is an edifice built only recently on very old, very thick bedrock. My most astonishing notions incubate somewhere down in that bedrock, in a cavern that predates language and self and all the other superstructures of consciousness. I delve as deep as I can, but I can't say I've ever reached that cavern or hope to achieve any intimacy with it. Emanations from the cavern are experienced as an ideomotor reflex towards an idea and are as impersonal as a sneeze. The ecstasy I feel comes only afterwards.

### **Beatriz Hausner**

I am told that the sounds of prehistory still echo where I stand. I am certain that this is true, because I often place my ear to the ground to listen to their millenarian mellifluousness. They sing me to sleep. It is not a deep sleep. It is rather closer to reverie, a perfect state for the deepening vowels of the water to surface and make themselves heard.

### **Nicholas Alexander Hayes**

Civilization distorts our understanding. 6,000... 10,000 years of writing and we have lost hundreds of millennia of hominid existence. So many memories have been forgotten, so many artifacts obliterated. In the early decades of the 21st century, we stand overwhelmed with information, oblivious that solar radiation and the depletion of rare earth elements will leave us in the same silence.

### **Vittoria Lion**

To begin to answer these questions, I feel compelled to quote the fictional doctor Venus Kaiserstiege, from Rikki Ducornet's novel *The Fountains of Neptune*: "We forget that thought is a process which has evolved over the ages from anterior states. Just as our finger-bones still resemble those of the lizard, so at depths deeper than dreaming our thoughts may echo the lobster's."

When Breton and Soupault opened *Les Champs magnétiques* with “Prisoners of drops of water, we are but everlasting animals,” were they not affirming our common ancestry with the entirety of life on Earth—back to the first plasmic drop of water—and perhaps that each one of our bodies contains the memory of the “endless forms” preceding us encrypted inside, accessible within certain altered states? If, under certain psychological conditions, we can uncover the memory of what it felt like to be at our mothers’ breasts or floating in the womb, shouldn’t we be able to recall traces of how it felt to be a trilobite or primordial worm adrift in the Cambrian sea? To know that the ever-inventive resilience of evolution is endless, that its potential to generate new forms is infinite—that, as Freud wrote in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, “biology is truly the land of unlimited possibilities”—is to me the most wonderful of all scientific revelations; it is a dream come true for anyone imaginative.

For me, we are absolutely always contemporary with other ages in Earth’s history and other life forms that once existed, carrying their physical and psychological traces within us. (Literally, when I was a child, I completely lacked a “normal” adult linear sense of time, and my first answer to the question of what I would “be” when I grew up was a T. rex.) I’d argue that a sense of the non-contradictory timelessness of the unconscious, represented through the compression of overwhelming spans of time or the cohabitation of extinct and present life forms in a Boschian menagerie, is central to the Surrealist understanding of “deep time.” Surrealism stretches Freud’s archaeological metaphor, so vivid in his image of the “Eternal City” of Rome where the traces of its earliest perimeter coexist with its most recent architecture, into the realm of paleontology. This kind of vision is brilliantly encapsulated in Rimbaud’s *Illuminations*: “The wall facing the watcher is a psychological succession of cross-sections of friezes, atmospheric layers, and geological strata.—Intense and fleeting dream of sentimental groups with every kind of being in every possible manifestation.” The idea that eons can be condensed and deep time can be immediately accessed through extrasensory perception in dreams and hallucinations, in automatic experiences, comes through superbly in the works of the Theosophists and Lovecraft’s novella, *The Shadow out of Time*. I’ve always found the latter to be strongly reminiscent of Freud’s case study of Sergei Pankejeff, the “Wolfman,” who accesses the “primal scene” passed down from prehistory in his dream of arboreal wolves.

It's also interesting as an adult considering how I lacked a conventional sense of depth as a child, instead perceiving nothing inherently contradictory about disparate depths and times overlapping simultaneously: we had a primitive 90s Magic School Bus computer game about ocean life that I loved on our first family computer, and I remember making drawings inspired by it showing orcas swimming around giant tube worms, even though these species live at vastly different depths. It's a lovely image of the strata of the sea and of geological time coinciding with one another in a multi-synchronous, polyphonic way.

### **RJ Myato**

The time or world is no-time and all-world. When eternal recurrence eats us alive we recognize ourselves as contemporary to everything: the crystal of time is embedded within our guts lovingly by the very wide range of animals embedded in our earth. To privilege the future over the past is to be fully within time, and that is what we can hope to accomplish. Multiplicity – the very foam of moments – tangles linearity and teaches us the lessons of fossils.

### **David Nadeau**

Dans la rêverie élémentale, la matière, au moyen de l'esprit humain, imagine elle-même sa propre Genèse. Ou plutôt, les noces de la matière et de la conscience réinventent constamment cette Genèse destructrice.

#### English Translation

In the elemental reverie, matter, by means of the human mind, imagines its own Genesis for itself. Or rather, the marriage of matter and consciousness constantly reinvents this destructive Genesis.

### **Juan Carlos Otaño**

*“One of these suits of armour looks just right for me. I wish I could put it on and rediscover the consciousness of a 14th Century man”* – André Breton, Introduction au discours sur le peu de réalité.

The fascinating discovery of the Gold of Time transmits what is unique and irrepeatable, the fruit of exceptional circumstance. It also marks the reach or the distance of all that has been lost and forgotten or even

unknown. ‘Precursors’ are important because they not only foreshadow surrealism, but are also the likely projections of future guidelines— officiating in this way the role of “posthumous successors”. The question of ‘tradition’ is also intrinsically considered but not as an immobilizing factor, nor as a nostalgic memory, but rather as a *living presence*.

### **Anthony Redmond**

On mid-summers night’s eve in 1997, myself and three Ngarinyin Aboriginal ritual specialists from the north-west of Australia were lying flat on our backs in the dimly lit main chamber of the Lascaux cave complex in the south of France, staring up at the distended interior surface of the belly of the cavern as herds of reindeer, bison, Prezlecki ponies and some other beasts long extinct in this part of Europe galloped across the walls and ceiling before disappearing into a cervical niche at the far end of the cave. It was a fabulous sight to behold and we were all overcome with awe at this spectacular panorama of long-disappeared animals rendered in such a highly animated way that one could hear the thundering of their hooves echoing through the rock.

On emerging from the air-locked steel door at the mouth of the cave a couple of hours later, a group of French journalists were on hand to seek the reactions of the Ngarinyin men. After a brief silence, Neowarra, visibly moved by the experience within, announced that the caves have “proper strong one wunggurr that” indicating that the power of the Rainbow Serpent was strongly present there. This announcement of the presence, so far from home, of the ubiquitous and diffuse body of the Rainbow Serpent was interesting in itself. But he really grabbed the reporters’ attention when he continued that it was no wonder there were no longer such beasts roaming the surrounding countryside of southern France. That heavy steel door, he claimed, was preventing the animals from getting out of what was plainly a ritual increase site for the wild animals of the northern world; “you gotta take that door down or you’ll get nothing” he declared. Expressing a deep empathy for large mammals, a sentiment commonly held amongst his countrymen, alongside practical considerations of the high value of their meats, Neowarra found it extremely sad that Europeans had suffered the loss of many of their ancient wild animals.



This experience made it abundantly clear that ancient worlds can be literally co-eval with our own as these senior Ngarinyin men, just a generation or so older than myself, retained a capacity for direct access to a poetic knowledge that had been commonly held across the globe since at least neoleolithic times.

On the following day, we were visiting the senior curator of the caves at his lovely provincial home when the same group of journalists turned up. Because the archaeologists employed at the caves were desperate to discuss lithic technology with the Ngarinyin men a demonstration of pressure flaking on some pieces of chert stone was arranged. Many of these archaeologists were consummate paleolithic boffins and had spent years perfecting the art of reproducing the kind of arrow and spear heads which had been found in the caves. Each of these archaeologists possessed their own neolithic tool kits, with handmade leather pads for laying over the knees, various pieces of reindeer bone for pressure flaking, and a range of percussion instruments of wood and stone. In fact, this kind of faithful reproduction of classic designs, as any musician or painter will tell you, is an excellent way to come to an understanding of the skills and bodily techniques involved in reproducing a particular object. The results produced by the French archaeologists over the course of the next forty-five minutes or more were actually extremely beautiful, finely wrought objects. The Ngarinyin men pored over these objects, quite a bit smaller than the ones they produced at home, most admiringly. Wama, then in his eighties and an experienced hunter and spear maker, piped up with a suggestion, “Let me show you quick way” and taking hold of the percussion implements and the chert blank, quickly knocked into shape a very similar if somewhat larger version of the archaeologists’ pressure flaked arrow-heads. This attention to utility rather than to producing objects of pure contemplation, a process that took about ten minutes rather than forty-five, left the assembled archaeologists somewhat non-plussed. While they had watched carefully what Wama was doing and nodded to each other sagely throughout, they didn’t seem quite as enamoured of the finished product as they were of their own more finely wrought creations or as they clearly were of the famous Kimberley Points which they had seen in books and museums. Having shown these men how to knock a spear-head into useable shape

in rapid time, though, Wama then went on to drill out the edges of the spear-head to produce the kind of denticulate, serrated edges for which Kimberley points are renowned (see image at right).

There was an instant recaptivation of the audience as the maker progressed from being perceived, I suspect, as a somewhat rustic version of the European cavemen and their contemporary technological heirs, to being a master craftsman bringing the past into the present in a very vital way. And it seemed that this is exactly that they desired because while the Lascaux archaeologists could faithfully replicate the designs of their Paleolithic



forebears, what they wanted in fact was to time-travel, to extract a sense of what the people who painted the Lascaux caves and hunted and fished in the river valleys around it were really like, what they thought, what they dreamed. They wanted the meaning-structures of the caves and the arrow-heads explicated for them; “we can see the objects but what did they mean to those who produced them?”

In this sense, as Johannes Fabian argued a long time ago, Australian Aborigines are still readily cast as the bearers of a culture which was once widespread across the globe but which now only survived in remote outposts. It was the embodiment of a neolithic mind that the archaeologists wished to capture and to some extent this need was satisfied by watching the production of the spearheads. Later came the kind of exchange of notes on technique that one might find at a vintage motorcycle swap meet where no one speaks the other’s language but everyone knows what the desirable items are.

Despite the absolutely necessary critique of the denial of the coevalness of the indigenous Other (Fabian 1983), it is too easy to denigrate desires for immersion in other worlds – after all the fantasy of time-travelling is a very powerful one. The Ngarinyin visitors felt honoured by their reception in the Loire Valley, by the fact that these learned professionals treated them with the most gracious manners and recognized them as the bearers of rich cultural traditions, not to say put them up in their best hotels and celebrated their presence with wonderful hospitality. After all, only about thirty visitors a year are now allowed into the caves of Lascaux, for fear of

the damage to the paintings caused by human breath. So we had already taken up a fifth of the quota for that year.

The French archaeologists seemed to be seeking to elicit a set of meanings from the Ngarinyin men who, while wishing to please their generous hosts and aware that something was expected of them, couldn't quite make out what those desires were. In my view, this was partly because in the aesthetic objects they were presented with the Ngarinyin men did not make the kinds of separation between what Hegel called *gestalt* (form), *gehalt* (content) and *Bedeutung* (meaning). Hegel, with his evolutionary view of the dialectical progression towards the self-realization of the *geist* (spirit), believed that a violent separation must be wrought upon these aspects of the intentional object in order to bring human consciousness into being as fully realized self-knowledge. It was clear that the Ngarinyin visitors were disinclined to make the kind of explication of meaning which split it off from the form and content of these "strangely familiar" objects.

I also think there was something else going on in the engagement. I just noted that the Ngarinyin men entered into the spirit of the encounter with good faith. It seemed to me that what this good faith consisted of was their sense that the Lascaux caves showed them that in fact Europeans were at heart much like themselves. Just as the Europeans were inclined to think of their visitors as the bearers of Neoleolithic traditions in a modern world, so the cave paintings and the spearheads indicated to the Ngarinyin visitors that Europeans, for all their power and technological innovations, were also, at heart, hunters and painters of caves like themselves. But, unfortunately, in their view, Europeans had lost most of these skills, as well as their wild animals and their lands to farms and developments across the countryside. Rather than being abject in the face of the profusion of European wealth, technology and power, the senior Ngarinyin visitors felt compassion for the losses sustained by Europeans. This was something upon which they remarked a number of times as our super-fast train barreled through the suburban sprawl and wide swathes of cleared farmland. This revelation that Europeans were once much like themselves served to sustain the visitors' own self-regard which was inevitably confronted by their status as the dependent guests of powerful whites, people to whom they had come to seek assistance against other whites back in Australia who were seeking to deprive them of their rights in land. In this

regard, the generosity of their hosts was something which needed to be mitigated. It is very much part of Kimberley Aboriginal cultural style to make a strong appearance of indifference to gifts because, as we know, gifts always carry with them obligations and obligation can be a source of shame to those whom become so beholden. By being able to locate Europeans, especially ones who continually gave them things and who continually reinforced the sense of their difference, to be able to locate these hosts as being, in some sense, much like themselves, afforded the Ngarinyin visitors both pleasure and the possibility of reasserting their autonomy, so far from home and so far out of their own domain. So being able to incorporate the cave paintings into their own categories of understanding, to be able to make spearheads quicker and to throw the spears with greater skill, reestablished their standing as men amongst men. The fact that they were able, after some groping in the dark, to successfully intuit that this is what their French hosts needed from them served to complete this restoration of power.

### **Tony Roehrig**

A race against or with TIME. Some chose to relinquish the ‘trophy’ for the moment and walk away from the race entirely. Others embrace the time of ‘NO TIME’ and engage with the circular movement of space. Along the journey we bump elbows with beings from other worlds and other times but we must first seek for and desire their company.

### **Penelope Rosemont**

*“And others with mad desire hope perhaps to delight in fire  
.....Alas, my place is with them.” —Petrarch*

Surrealists inherently search for lost worlds, worlds of mystery, worlds of fantasy, worlds of the marvelous, worlds of the future, worlds of wilderness, worlds of distant cultures, worlds of utopian societies, even the worlds of the insane, we try to imagine them, populate them and inhabit them, spend time in these worlds and elaborate them. We strive for their actualization in daily-life. We understand that real life could be so much more. Deep time is a good expression for this. Daily-life clicks by unexamined. We don’t really even notice it until it’s gone. (These days of Corona one recalls the paradise of going to a cafe and having a cappuccino with

friends or even a pizza, seems like long ago.)

Part of being a surrealist is the effort to increase one's awareness. To see not only the object as it is, but how it has come to be, how it fits into the scheme of things; its particular meaning for us, where it might lead us—it is a multidimensional vision. The work of Aldo Leopold, Arne Ness, John Muir and Edward Abby are among my necessities. Thoreau was where I began many, many years ago. Transcendentalism attracted me before surrealism and I was very sorry it no longer existed. The insights of William James still enrich daily life.

We immerse ourselves in the things that attract us, impulsively, convulsively, obsessively and dive deep into that ocean of being. One of my adventurous and ever present obsessions is surrealism itself. Another that recurs periodically is Mayan Civilization. I traveled there and was immediately confronted by another world: the smell of a thousand unknown intensities, the taste of the air, the burning-bright light of Yucatan. I scrambled up the pyramid of the Sorcerers, felt the strong wind, looked to the distant horizon and discovered a secret. From the heights I could see very far. Now a scrub forest, it was once homes surrounded by crops. And there on top of this pyramid was a watcher. Even an hour's warning could make a difference between life and death. I kept my eyes on the horizon for the sign of movement, for the stalking of a leopard or the stealth of an enemy...seeing the future. I was the watcher. The power of Shamans lingers there. A little of how I felt about that time was put into my essay *Lost Worlds, Forgotten Futures, Undreamed Ecstasies*. One of the mysteries of Mayan civilization was why their cities were abandoned—it is less of a mystery since the advent of corona.

Thinking about the past ages in Earth's history, one realizes they are contained in us through both culture and biology. The biological aspect is unconscious unless one studies the body, its organs, its fetal development in relation to Evolution. Our very organs evolved from sea creatures; our ancestors contemporary with dinosaurs avoided being stepped on. Our life is a success story of dna survival from the very beginnings of life. The gem of consciousness arises from biology and thought arises from the images and words. This material of thought is precarious, always in danger of being lost or perverted since knowledge must be passed from one generation to the next.

## 삼죽오

Yes. Time is a flower and each moment is a petal which grows from a common center.

### LaDonna Smith

I simply reach into a different time and another world when I am working in clay. When I have my hands in soil and water, forming and molding in a state of subconscious creativity, I am reaching back into the ancestral knowledge that is the basis of this impulse. I don't see monsters or dinosaurs in dreams. I see enigmatic vegetative animated morphs rise before my hands in real time awake. I watch them grow without predetermined plans.

### Darren Thomas

Time and place mesh constantly in an eternal overflowing and becoming. We ignore other ages at our peril. Witness the collapse of our eco-system and like the melting icecaps we will re-join the sea. It is for this reason I look on the pebbles and pinecones I have gathered nightly to re-connect with the earth.

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*2 Do you know how old the rocks are in your area, upon which you live? How does that affect your life and attitudes?*

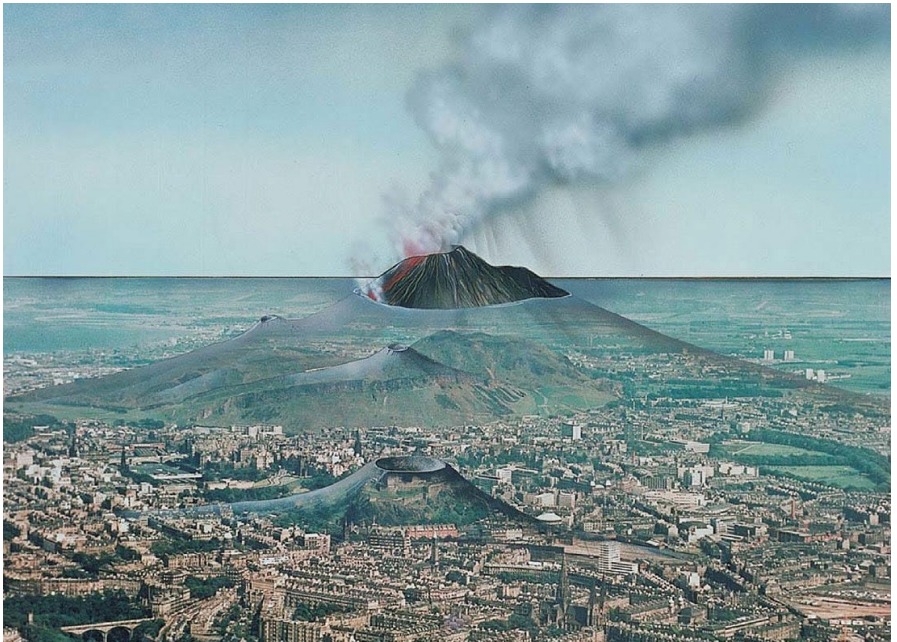
### Jason Abdelhadi

The rocks in my area are very ancient. Paleozoic sediment on top of occasionally exposed Precambrian rocks. The Gatineau Hills just north of me are the beginning of a long stretch of wildness that reaches right up to the arctic. There is a certain inhuman attitude I find myself in that I think relates to this. Even returning to Ottawa from anywhere in southern Ontario is enough to make me notice the difference. I think this manifests in some behaviours and certainly some thought-patterns that occur whenever I am outside in a semi-wilder area. I could fancy my thoughts are plated in Ordovician black shale.

## **Hermester Barrington**

The rocks upon which we live, walk, breathe, dance, comingle, are part of the Conejo volcanics and diabase intrusions into the Topanga Formation of the Transverse Range of Southern California. This range, as well as the Channel Islands, were pushed up through the earth's crust some 17.4 mega-annum ago, when Persephone and Hades, after a particularly nasty spat, made up rather vigorously in their caverns some eight kilometers beneath our feet (our house is just above their bed, so we do hear them from time to time). The sound of these two gods making love is indistinguishable to the untrained ear from the sound of fault planes grinding against each other, the songs of bats as they fly from the numerous entrances to the underworld which can be found throughout these mountains, of magma coursing beneath the earth's crust, or of the wind carrying particles of sandstone from the mountains to the sea. This knowledge, and the sound of these ancient gods making love just beneath, has a very powerful effect upon our own love life.

## **Doug Campbell**



*Textbook illustration of Edinburgh with volcanic ghosts.*

My city is built around outcroppings of igneous rock more than three hundred million years old, centred on the core of an extinct volcano, with a castle built on top of it. Ice age glaciers then carved away the softer rocks, leaving a landscape of ridges both defensible and useful for terraced farming. The ridges have been spanned by bridges, and a layer cake of a city has been constructed around them. As a child, I believed that the ancient volcano might erupt again at any moment.

Growing up with all this has left me with the sense that a city is more than just a conglomeration of housing, infrastructure and commerce: An operatic stage on which all kinds of melodrama is played out every night. A Gothic castle, stuffed with ghosts, hidden rooms, secret passageways, wild romance and foul villainy.

All of this comes at a price: One of the first major population centres, and an excellent place to hide and scheme, the city has been a national capital for hundreds of years. As with every other capital, everybody else in the country FUCKING HATES US!

### **Casi Cline**

The rocks in my area, which include schist, amphibolite, gneiss, migmatite, and granite, date from the late Proterozoic Eon to the middle Ordovician Period. So maybe 500 million years old, give or take a 100 million years or so. In the middle of last year, I moved from a flat, grassy region to the top of a rocky, forested hill. Living in the shade under the trees and making direct contact with the dirt and stones makes me feel like I have gone under the skin of the Earth or like I shrunk down to the size of an insect and began living inside the grass instead of in the brightness above it. I have always been an insect-woman. As an insect-woman-child I liked nothing better than following the paths of ants back to their hill, only to find, alas, that I was much too big to follow them further. I have always been a rock-woman. As a rock-woman-child I proudly declared my intention of being a geologist or a mineralogist when I grew up. But I was mistaken. I had really wanted to be a rock instead, a little one, a pebble, which an ant could roll into its den. Delving under the skin of the Earth has reminded me of the things I have been and still am, but had lost while dwelling up there in the light with layers of exclusionary bigness between the stones and my



feet which are also made of stone.

### **Krzysztof Fijalkowski**

We live on the coast, in a town that gives its name to the wider geological feature on which it is perched: Cromer Ridge, the terminal moraine of a glacier that arrived from the direction of what is now the North Sea and expired here around 450,000 years ago. The cliffs and beach a couple of minutes' walk from our home are rich in all kinds of stones, but especially fossils: belemnites, echinoids and fossil sponges are a daily find (around 70 million years old); within walking distance are places where the remains of mammoths, hippos and rhinos have been unearthed (470-860,000 years old), while a few miles further on preserved human footprints were found on the beach, revealed for a few days in 2014 and at around 850,000 years old, the oldest found outside Africa.

Combing a rock pool a month ago, I found a little Victorian earthenware inkwell, perfectly preserved despite being under the sea for more than a century, its cork still rattling inside. Like all beaches, despite this sense of unfathomable duration, ours is different every day, never stays still. Visiting it daily under the lockdown of spring 2020 felt like visiting a film in which every frame is 24 hours, teeming with incident but each replaced by the next, invisible within the long entirety of its unfolding.

### **Mattias Forshage**

I have always had my lasting homes upon ancient cratonic igneous bedrock. I am a bit suspicious against recent and sedimentary rocks, and when I've been staying upon them for several months (happily, I should say) I am relieved to return to "solid ground". But this is mainly a compulsive thought, and I am probably being unfair. Possibly systematically unfair. I tend to spontaneously associate sedimentary rock with unreliability, large-scale agriculture, poisonous food, foul-smelling water, hard labor, boredom, provincialism, nationalism, social control, stubborn prejudice, egoism, competition, superstition, hypocrisy, puritanism, xenophobia, catholicism, or any kind of monotheistic revelation religion, lack of shade, claustrophobia. Sure, but obviously I don't escape most of these things in my craton haven either... But maybe it's no surprise that any montesquieuian crude

materialist theory is not logically consistent? Maybe I'm just envious of for example those who will find sudden sinkholes and vast cave systems and large amounts of fossils in the deep limestone cheese upon which they live?

### **Joël Gayraud**

J'habite à Paris dans le quartier des Carrières d'Amérique, près du parc des Buttes Chaumont. Le sous-sol est truffé de galeries souterraines, restes mi-éboulés mi-condamnés des carrières où durant des siècles on extrayait le gypse, roche sédimentaire datant de l'éocène supérieur (37 à 33 millions d'années av. J.-C.), qui a l'aspect d'une pierre blanchâtre, vaguement translucide et friable. C'est en cuisant cette pierre dans des fours qu'on obtient par cuisson le plâtre qui servit à construire dès le Moyen Âge les maisons des Parisiens. Avec l'eau de ruissellement, la voûte des carrières abandonnées a tendance à se dissoudre et parfois une faille s'ouvre sans crier gare dans la cave d'un immeuble voire au milieu de la rue. J'ai toujours su qu'un gouffre pouvait s'ouvrir à tout moment sous mes pieds.

### English Translation

I live in Paris in the Carrières d'Amérique district, near the Buttes Chaumont park. The subterranean is full of underground galleries, half-crumbled remains half-condemned from the quarries where for centuries gypsum was extracted, a sedimentary rock dating from the upper Eocene (37 to 33 million years BC), which has the appearance of a whitish stone, vaguely translucent and brittle. It is by baking this stone in ovens that we obtain through cooking the plaster which was used to build the houses of Parisians during the Middle Ages. With runoff, the roof of abandoned quarries tends to dissolve and sometimes a fault opens without warning in the basement of a building or even in the middle of the street. I always knew that a chasm could open at any time under my feet.

### **Nathan Grover**

The western districts of San Francisco are built like the house of the Biblical fool: on sand. Giant sand dunes used to shift in constant gales coming off the Pacific Ocean, and legends tell of people and entire buildings being buried overnight. Now you rarely see any sand; it's we who've buried it.

I don't know how old our sand is, or how that would even be measured; on the contrary, it's sand that is used to measure time (e.g. in an hour glass). I suppose I think of sand, like time, as an element of erasure. Eventually time will sandblast the paint from every sign and everything will lose its name. Sand is transience and forgetting. When sand blows in my eye, I shed a tear for the void.

### **Beatriz Hausner**

Overlying the Canadian Shield in southern Ontario are young sedimentary rocks, which range in age from 540 to 360 million years. Shallow tropical seas were once here. There is no doubt in my mind that this is the primary reason for one's moods shifting. These invisible seas flow in and out of the people of this place, altering everything. Sometimes they take over entire city blocks and render the inhabitants madder than strange sea animals unable to find refuge in the cratering pools which often replace the familiar buildings of my neighbourhood.

### **Nicholas Alexander Hayes**

At the nearest Lake Michigan beach, I walk across a scar of round rocks between the dunes restoration project and the water. My gait is uneasy as the rocks shift under my feet. I would like to believe many of them are basalt. I would like to believe I stand on the remnants of the earth's crust. But when I stoop to pick up a stone to stroke in my palm, it is concrete, or slag or ceramic gnawed smooth by waves. I wonder if it is the present that eclipses the past or if it is the Anthropocene epoch that eclipses the Hadean eon.

### **Vittoria Lion**

Fossil sites in Canada contain the remains of some of the Earth's earliest recorded complex life forms, and giant trilobites nearly half a billion years old not infrequently erupt from the exposed Ordovician rock surrounding creeks and riverbeds in west Toronto. Comparatively much more recently, the fossil remains of giant beavers, muskoxen, and grizzly bears from the last Ice Age have been found in Toronto and its vicinity, and the Anishinaabe language contains records of Pleistocene megafauna. I additionally recently

learned of the existence of the Ice Age “Toronto subway deer,” unearthed in 1976 during excavations for the underground rail and apparently found nowhere else in the world to date. In 1988, further excavations into the pre-historic unconscious of the city apparently spat up an orca vertebra. This find initially suggested a total rewriting of the continent’s history but was later claimed to be the remnant of a freak exhibit from Piper’s Zoo, a Late Victorian menagerie that existed along Toronto’s harbour. The bone is now believed to likely have arrived somehow in the sixteenth century.

I have been increasingly reflecting upon the narcissism of conventional narratives of “deep time” as an eighteenth-century discovery supposedly made by Europeans who believed the Earth to be 6,000 years old, completely ignoring that there are lots of living people with cultural memory of landforms and species that no longer exist. Recently, I visited a 450 million-year-old stromatolite bed nearby in Ottawa, and I found it very humbling and awe-inspiring to stand upon them and feel the sensation of such unfathomable spans of time literally condensed beneath my feet.

### **RJ Myato**

I have no idea. They are very old. I barely exist upon them. I float.

### **David Nadeau**

L’activité tellurique des roches datant de la période cambro-ordovicienne, à la fine pointe de la plate-forme du Saint-Laurent, m’affecte assez peu sur le plan conscient.

C’est lors d’un voyage dans les Rocheuses (plus précisément dans la province de l’Alberta) que j’ai été le plus sensible à l’influence du géomagnétisme sur ma vie psychique. Un jour, pendant un moment de distraction rêveuse, je me retrouve téléporté dans une vaste caverne volcanique, face à un vieux mage vêtu d’une toge bleue foncé. Peut-être celui-ci tenait-il alors quelque chose dans ses mains, je ne me rappelle plus...

### English Translation

The telluric activity of rocks dating from the Cambro-Ordovician period, at the cutting edge of the St. Lawrence platform, affects me little consciously.

It was during a trip to the Rockies (specifically in the province of

Alberta) that I was most aware of the influence of geomagnetism on my psychic life. One day, during a moment of dreamy distraction, I find myself teleported into a vast volcanic cave, facing an old mage dressed in a dark blue robe. Maybe he was holding something in his hands then, I don't remember...

### **Juan Carlos Otaño**

The oldest rocks found near Buenos Aires, with a geological age of 1800 million years, are on the island Martin Garcia in the middle of the River Plate. The cobblestone of some of the streets of the historic centre of the island's town came from local quarries.

Every time I have stayed overnight there I have had strange dreams. I don't know if this is brought on by the magnetism of its formidable rocky presence or the history of the island itself. It could be that or its special flora and fauna or even the suggestive power of its derelict buildings. Or it may well be a combination of all. Either way the dreams flow. On one occasion, I witnessed the march of a battalion of 18th Century uniformed French troops a few streets away. They arrived to take the fort in a daring "coup de force" and on another occasion I maintained a delirious dialogue with an ex-President of Argentina (Domingo Faustino Sarmiento) as he sculpted a sentence on a rock: *Barbarians, ideas never die!* The monolith in effect is found in a square of the town.

### **Anthony Redmond**

What I continually find amazing is that the limestone ranges I travel through in the Kimberley region, though now 130 kilometers from the sea, were once living coral reefs.

### **Tony Roehrig**

The plates beneath our feet chatter and with, or because of that larger voice, the tinkling of my dishware joins in with the announcement that the hot pulse of the universal orifice still can ring our bells.

Oh, and the rocks here just celebrated their segmentillionth year on March 18th with a 5.8 Richter Ovation.

### **Penelope Rosemont**

Fox Lake where I grew up and Lake Michigan where I live now are Glacial lakes left over from the last ice age. All of the Great Lakes are glacial lakes. Long before the glaciers, 500 million years ago Illinois was a warm ocean on the Equator. That ocean lasted 300 million years and became a swamp for 200 million. The age of Glaciers was quite recent geologically and left the lovely landscape of Northern Illinois of hills, swamps, lakes, bogs, ravines and prairies—green with a variety of trees and interesting, highly variable weather effects. My knowledge of that landscape is thanks to my Grandfathers, Uncle Willie and the Antioch Public Library.

### **삼족오**

580 million years old. I am the rocks I live on.

### **LaDonna Smith**

The iron ore seam of Red Mountain in Birmingham, Alabama dates back to 3.8 billion years ago, almost all the way back to when Earth became capable of supporting life. Paleontologists have collected and cataloged tens of thousands of fossils, including cretaceous mosasaurs, Pleistocene ground sloths, and primitive ecocen archaeocete whales. It is known that at one time the coastline extended all the way up to the mid-state area of Birmingham, or “Iron Tortoise” as we have fondly called our Alabama home. The Cretaceous Mosasaur was found in Green County where our Fresh Dirt comrade Johnny P. Williams lives. We have waded the waters of the Sipsey River on his land many times collecting shark teeth and fossils.

### **Darren Thomas**

I do not understand these rocks in such terms. They are simply ‘the eternal rocks beneath.’ Without them there would be no Sisyphus. Without them we would lose our feet. Without them all would be lost.

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**3** *Are fossils surrealist objects? Are there any specific fossils that have made a great impression on you, now or in childhood? Do you have any favourite found objects that you have always interpreted as fossils, whether reasonably or not?*

**Jason Abdelhadi**

Fossils have a moment in their lifecycle that strikes me as surrealist. The fixation of a trace of a lifeform across eons is one thing but the gradual unearthing and identifying, the slow piecing together, the potential ignorance and the sudden placements all strike me as having surrealist qualities, particularly in the relationship between psychic states that touch on core originary confrontations with the deep past and the manifestation of these bewildering thoughts from the contemplation and placement of a contingently unearthed inert material object.

I have two local fossil locations that have excited my imagination in recent years. One is an exposed cross-section of fossilized stromatolites, some of the earliest lifeforms, and another is an unnervingly geometric orthocone fossil.

**Hermester Barrington**

I reject the question entirely of whether fossils can be surrealist objects for the simple reason that it is impossible to posit an alternative hypothesis that would explain, in a compelling manner, the validity of such a question in the first place. True, the strangeness of the experience of uncovering a saurian skull, a Dimetrodon's baculum, a glyptodont's armor, while one digs in one's garden; the unease at the thought that one might also be buried under tons of sand and frozen in time, one's body and mind replaced with sedimentary detritus; that one might be subsequently be dug up, classified, put on display to be stared at, poked, and photographed; the implication that our sense of time is a fiction and our lives a brief glimmer in the darkness unnoted by most everyone, soon to be forgotten; that the demiurge or his trickster brother planted these relics in the strata to fool us into believing that the earth is much older than it actually is; that we are reading Gaia's subconscious thoughts, evidence of her desire to smother her mother and screw her father; the idea that they are puppets of some

alien race and that we, too, are such puppets; that my own phantasmagorical fantasies recorded here are evidence of my diseased mind—no, none of these are evidence that fossils can be surrealistic objects for the simple reason that it is impossible to falsify the question in such a way as to validate an alternative history than the one upon which I have just expounded.

As to finding objects which I might pretend are fossils: My wife Fayaway buries things in our yard—the plastic dinosaurs she had a child; photographs sealed in glass; Klein bottles filled with her exhalations, exudations, or exuviate; miniature dioramas; Leyden jars in which she has captured lightning; a vast network of fungi defining the limits of our property; legal documents dissolving our marriage; a stack of documents proving that she herself is King of Malibu Lake—which I occasionally find as I garden. As markers of the deep time of her mind, I consider these to be fossils in the truest sense.

### **Doug Campbell**

Fossils are undoubtedly surrealist objects, relics of the monstrous and the marvellous enshrined in museums more holy than cathedrals, traces of a world that was and will be absolutely different from what it is.

As a child I found a randomly formed piece of industrial slag that I interpreted as a monkey's skull, small enough to sit in the palm of my hand. I had headaches that I associated with the object and threw it away. The headaches stopped.

### **Casi Cline**

Any object may be a surrealist object if it so chooses, but I would say that more fossils I have met have been so inclined than not. As for a specific fossil that made an impression on me as a child, I would have to choose insects preserved in amber. I still remember the first time I heard that it was possible for something to have remained so distinct and unchanged from a time so distant I had until then unknowingly felt it to be wholly unconnected with the tiny present I inhabited. I had simply thought of the far away “then” and the right here “now”. However, the insect which had been “then” and “now” had not simply skipped from one place to another through a wormhole. No, it had had to travel across all the vast, intervening



fullness of time. Without being able to express it “then”, I realize “now” that the insect preserved in amber had impressed me with a sense of the intellectually irreconcilable vastness of time and all it contains. If the 7 or so years I had lived felt like they contained an immensity of experience, then what could be contained in a million times 7 years. My favorite fossil-objects are old photographs. I love to look through stacks of them at antique shops. I don’t know who the people in them are or when they lived. Just that they are from a distant “then” yet here they are preserved as if in amber.

### **Krzysztof Fijalkowski**

The *Exposition surréaliste d'objets* at the Charles Ratton Gallery in 1936 listed examples of ‘Interpreted Natural Objects’ and ‘Incorporated Natural Objects’ in its catalogue, as well as ‘Perturbed Objects’ and of course ‘Found Objects’ (all of these distinguished from a separate list of ‘Surrealist Objects’ but clearly participating in a shared set of fascinations). Arguably fossils might fall into any one of these, even if most classic surrealist objects are notable for combining two or more disparate components, where fossils are not assemblages but a fundamental change in the material and philosophical properties of a singular object. Still, the motive power of a perturbation – infinitely slow but devastating in its transformation; of a perversion and what Breton terms a *mutation de rôle* give the fossil the qualities of a kind of outlier in the gamut of surrealist objects. And then, are surrealist objects fossils, since so many of the best known are a lifetime old, and languish untouched in museum vitrines?

Our home is full of found or acquired fossils, as it is of found objects of all kinds, and all have washed up here through the same urge to collect, discover, interrogate these refugees from other times, other meanings. None of them seem fossilised in the conventional sense – that is, they are all still alive, just in a different state of slow mutation, giving up their secrets like gently decaying radioactivity. As a small child I was given a fossil shark tooth, which I buried for the pleasure of digging it up again and truly ‘discovering’ it. But to my dismay, I couldn’t find it again; perhaps I have spent my whole life looking for it, or for something like it, confusing ontology and palaeontology ever since.

## Joël Gayraud

Un fossile est un produit de la nature chargé plus que tout autre de la dimension du temps. Non pas d'un temps suggérant une idée d'éternité, à la différence du minéral, mais d'un temps fini, propre et commun à tous les êtres mortels, auquel s'est ajoutée l'épaisseur de la traversée jusqu'à nous. Les animaux et végétaux fossiles ont eu le plus souvent une longévité inférieure à la nôtre, mais ils viennent de l'immémorial et en sont la cristallisation palpable. C'est peut-être là ce qui les rend intrinsèquement sur-réels. Enfant j'éprouvais toujours un curieux mélange d'horreur et de ravissement devant les squelettes d'animaux disparus présentés au Museum d'histoire naturelle. Les fossiles d'ammonites de l'ère secondaire et de trilobites de l'ère primaire exerçaient aussi sur moi une incroyable fascination, redoublée par le charme de leurs noms. Quand j'ai découvert, bien plus tard, vers la trentaine, les planches d'Ernst Haeckel, *Kunstformen der Natur*, mon émerveillement a été renouvelé.

Où que je me promène, j'ai pour habitude de ramasser tout ce qui, déposé sur le sol, attire mon regard par une originalité de forme ou de couleur : cailloux, morceaux de bois, coquillages voire objets, entiers ou fragmentaires, fabriqués de main humaine. Ce sont en quelque sorte les souvenirs fossilisés de mes promenades.

### English Translation

A fossil is a product of nature charged more than any other with the dimension of time. Not of a time suggesting an idea of eternity, unlike the mineral, but of a finite time, common to all mortal beings, to which was added the thickness of its crossing right to ourselves. Most fossilized animals and plants have had a shorter lifespan than ours, but they come from time immemorial and are a palpable crystallization. Perhaps this is what makes them intrinsically real. As a child I always felt a curious mixture of horror and delight in front of the skeletons of extinct animals presented at the Museum of Natural History. The fossils of secondary era ammonites and primary era trilobites also exerted an incredible fascination on me, redoubled by the charm of their names. When I discovered Ernst Haeckel's prints, *Kunstformen der Natur*, much later in my thirties, my wonder was renewed.

Wherever I walk, I usually pick up everything that, deposited on the ground, catches my eye with an originality of shape or color: pebbles, pieces of wood, shells or even objects, whole or fragmentary, made by the human hand. These are sort of the fossilized memories of my walks.

### **Nathan Grover**

At a fossil shop I became enthralled by a pyritized ammonite, a metallic whorl in the exact shape of a long extinct sea creature. I had to have it and paid too much. (Pyrite isn't called Fool's Gold for nothing.) I've since realized how common they are, but doesn't that seem like a miracle, too?

Yes, fossils are surrealist objects. Geology should be indifferent to life, but instead it selects these arbitrary specimens and casts them in mineral, creating stone monuments to Natural History with more lifelike detail than the Pietà. This statuary is commonly vomited up in earthquakes, landslides, and floods. Deep Time reveals itself in violent flashes.

Once when I was in Helsinki a luggage locker that was supposed to spit up my change instead spit up an odd brass coin with a hole in the middle. Embarrassingly, I tried to spend it at a shop and was laughed at by an incredulous clerk—not a coin. I think the locker had nothing left to give and so it offered me a part of itself, some vestigial piece of its machinery, so simple and fundamental that the machine had forgotten what it was for. This “coin” had the outside lip that many coins have, but its face was blank. Maybe it was the blankness that made the coin seem so old. The very oldest things always resist us; they're completely without inflection. They come from an ancient world of mineral indifference.

### **Beatriz Hausner**

I have every reason to believe that almost all the significant objects will one day fossilize, if they haven't already. Those I cherish are mostly small, jewel-size fossils, like the heart-shaped stone I once picked up on a beach in the Upper Peninsula of Lake Michigan. Entirely ordinary in its greyness, what makes this object precious is the manner in which the heart shape appears inside another heart shape. I hope to one day be buried with this stone, and in this manner leave permanent proof of my feelings.

## Nicholas Alexander Hayes

Fossils resist absorption into culture. They are mineralized shadows of what has deteriorated, of what has decayed. Like many others who have a scientific or mythological impulse, I try to refresh these artifacts with narratives. But these stories serve to muffle the realities of the objects that cast the shadows.

When I was in fourth or fifth grade, I found a broken piece of stone with four oval impressions. I would press my toes into the indentations and imagine myself stepping in the smooth mud of a river bank before humans had built bulwarks between themselves and nature. Of course there is a good chance these were just irregularities in the stone's matrix.

## Vittoria Lion

Upon seeing the original *Archaeopteryx* skeleton, the “London specimen,” at the South Kensington Natural History Museum I felt profoundly emotionally moved, and it surprised me that this fossil ended up being the object that resonated with me most from that trip. Looking at that fossil, I was overcome with this immediate sense of the *Archaeopteryx's* visual kinship with Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus*, Walter Benjamin's “Angel of History” from his Theses, and indeed I read that some of its initial scientific observers could not comprehend what they were seeing and believed that they had found the remains of an angel. I still don't know quite how to articulate it, but the *Archaeopteryx* is what now immediately comes to my mind as the embodiment of Benjamin's “dialectical image,” a form paradoxically frozen in time in the instant of transformation, of blossoming into flight, their wings spread, caught in the storm blowing from Paradise. Crystallized like the dream image in the moment of contradiction and metamorphosis, of alchemical fusion, fossils are Surrealist objects. (Slightly closer to home, seeing the gigantic petrified lepidodendrons erupting from the Carboniferous cliffs of Joggins, Nova Scotia made a powerful impression upon me as a young person. When I was around four years old, I was completely mesmerized and obsessed by a room in the Royal Ontario Museum that contained the cast of a *T. rex* skeleton, but that is not terribly original for a small child and I thus chose not to dwell on it for the bulk of my answer.)

In *The Infinity of Lists*, Umberto Eco describes what he calls “chaotic

enumeration,” the tendency of modernism to clutter together disparate words and images in order to create a hodgepodge, to give rise to the “absolutely heterogeneous,” directly referencing the works of Rimbaud and Breton’s collections. Arguably, however, the “chaotic enumeration” of which he speaks is simultaneously found in the fossil record, in the bizarre and fanciful galaxy-like burst of complex life preserved in the Burgess Shale, stretching this genealogy back 500 million years. (Notably, the Burgess Shale findings prompted Stephen Jay Gould to reflect that evolution is best visualized as a “copiously branching bush”—the quintessential rhizome, Eco’s labyrinth, not a tree.) If you want to let your mind run with it, the Burgess Shale is the beginning of a magical thread, an ark of Babel, that continues through the abundance of the Lascaux and Chauvet Caves, through the phantasmic marginalia of the Rutland and Luttrell Psalters, into Darwin’s collections and the jumbled bestiary of the archaeological miscellany of Freud’s study. (Indeed, I have a hard time separating all the menageries above from each other!) Thus, I would say that assortments of widely diversified small things more broadly have a very fossil-like quality to me, and I tend to interpret them as such. (The strange, glowing little objects of Man Ray’s “rayographs,” for example, have always struck me as bearing a semblance to the organisms of the Burgess Shale.) Miniature fossils, especially those from the Cambrian and Ordovician, tend to inescapably remind me of small toys in particular, specifically with their weirdness of form and lack of normative use value (and vice versa). I have a small collection of these I found with Jason in Ottawa, and holding them certainly brings me back to clasping a cherished toy as a child.

### **RJ Myato**

I was fascinated by dinosaurs as a child as I was and am by monsters, beasts, creatures of all kinds. Many children are. The imagined full bodies and sounds of the fossil-dinosaurs informs my practice to this day. I own a book – a chemistry book, a field of which I have forgotten all my lessons, written in Russian, which I do not read or speak – which is a fossil to me. It’s a code I can’t comprehend. A fossil is a code through time and I am no good at interpreting codes.

### **David Nadeau**

Oui, leur morphologie peut tout à fait correspondre, comme des idéogrammes surprenamment précis, à certains mouvements de la vie intérieure. J'aimerais beaucoup trouver de tels objets.

#### English Translation

Yes, their morphology can quite correspond, like surprisingly precise ideograms, to certain movements of interior life. I would love to find such items.

### **Juan Carlos Otaño**

They represent to me processes analogous to the formation of dreams: they are the “precipitated” of living experiences, “fixed” in a certain moment, and which for some reason establish enigmatic relationships with the background of desire. As such, I consider them surrealist objects.

My first encounter with fossils was in a flagstone path that wound through the garden of my parents’ home. I would have been ten years old at that time and already well informed about their fascinating existence through the reliable weekly delivery of school encyclopaedias.

It’s easy to imagine that the possession of these prehistoric objects was a great honour and privilege for me. All the more so because I was the only boy in the neighbourhood who possessed such a collection. Unfortunately however the previous owner of the property reclaimed them one day, and unable to find any valid reason for keeping them my father gave them back.

The rocks were pulled up and piled in an old barrow along with my shock and despair.

### **Anthony Redmond**

Fossils are shadows cast by time, the fourth dimension. As Duchamp puts it, a three-dimensional object casts a shadow in only two dimensions. From that he concluded that a three-dimensional object must in its turn be the shadow of another object in four dimensions.

### **Tony Roehrig**

Fossils are the Bones and Impressions of the first Surrealists. From these, the first pulses of the Stars here on Gaia, the Surrealist Revolution began.

We are the offspring of that initial fire and rebellion sent to this planet to raise the Marvelous to Consciousness and our Dreams to Reality.

### **Penelope Rosemont**

Collecting pebbles on the beach is a huge pleasure, one that surrealists have often pursued. Here there are granites, schists, limestone, slate, quartz, quartzite, crinoid stems, etc. in pocket size pieces. My first fossil, found when I was eight, and my greatest treasure, I held in my hand and felt connected to the Prehistoric past. I thought it was a crystalized honeycomb. It was really beautiful. I have it still on my desk. It is actually a type of coral that lived in our ancient ocean.

Found Objects as fossils: there is a connection. First, rock collecting and mushroom collecting reminds me of the excellent Agnes Varda film *The Gleaners*. My Grandmother, who had a reproduction of the Millet's *The Gleaners* in her dining room, liked to pick mushrooms. She gave me a small tin box that she got from her mother. Besides pewter salt and pepper shakers, a handkerchief embroidered with 1919, and a button of Bohemian Old Settlers 1859, it contained a stone from the Chicago Fire of 1871. The stone looks like burnt limestone covered with gold crystals. Hard to tell how it came about, but the heat must have been intense. The ruins from the Chicago Fire were dumped into the lake, it's now called Grant Park. For me this stone is a fossil of the fire. And then there is the wonderful art of Dennis Cunningham who makes sculptures of found objects. Fossils of our time. A surprise when I visited London, Paul Cowdell gave me his book *Snowy Plains of Estonia—A Diagnostic Travelog in Objects*—a wonderful surrealist poetic analysis which fits to the idea of fossils. But think, aren't photographs *fossils of light!* Once they were living images now trapped in silver (or computer bits these days).

### **삼죽오**

Yes. The fossilized bones of the ichthyosaur, which are hidden in an underground temple, were present at my birth. Humans are my favorite found object.

## LaDonna Smith

The question might be turned around. Are Surrealists fossils? I am particularly excited by petrified wood, and it goes without saying that at my age, some of the kids of the younger generation might consider me just another piece of fossilized wood.

## Darren Thomas

Fossils are indeed surrealist objects – in themselves, but also when combined in various ways in artworks. They have found their way into my own work or indeed, inspired many artworks. One of my happiest finds was a strange, gnarled piece of driftwood that I discovered on the beach, in Southend, which helped me to create my *Transformation Cabinets*. (see on following page) I also discovered some antique Victorian butterfly prints in a second shop in Chepstow, Wales, which caught my eye as teenager. They have followed me everywhere and have given me wings, so to speak and helped me understand the importance of transformation, which I have written about and explored in my research and artworks but most importantly in my attitude to life and the way I live.



*Transformation Cabinet No 2 (Assemblage: Dimensions: 82.5 cm x 35.5 cm)*

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4 *What extinct animal would you most like to reappear, and why?  
(Originally appeared in the first issue of Arsenal, 1970)*



### **Jason Abdelhadi**

I would pick Dickinsonia, a mysterious symmetrically ribbed something that existed in the Ediacaren biota, before the Cambrian explosion. Because I always want the mystery prize.

### **Hermester Barrington**

I spent a long and dreary (though comfortable) career as archivist at the Law Offices of Largesse, Coelacanth, & Uncanny, until I retired at age 72. To stave off the effects of an inherited condition, I placed myself in the hands of the esteemed Dr. Serge Voronoff, who transplanted slices of the glands of an individual of the supposedly extinct species Gigantopithecus blacki into my own testes. That was the end my own extinction, and each day I greet the day with a rousing cock-a-doodle-do, to the great delight of my wife, and, sometimes, our neighbors.

### **Doug Campbell**

A friend argued passionately that it would be wrong to recreate an extinct animal without the ecology that supported it. I would be most interested to see the creatures of the Burgess Shale or Titanosaurians of the Cretaceous, assuming that I could survive the re-emergence of their world.

(The friend, a palaeontologist, was notorious in the profession for having fainted onto a large articulated skeleton, scattering the bones across the museum floor.)

### **Casi Cline**

I would like to see the daeodon reappear. If modern wild boars can be such amazing forces for chaos, then I shudder to think what could be done by a giant boar that could grow six feet tall at the shoulder and weigh thousands of pounds.

### **Krzysztof Fijalkowski**

The moa. (I was about to write: truly living human beings, but these are endangered not extinct.)

### **Mattias Forshage**

If one has given an affirmative reply to question 1 about the contemporariness of other ages, this question makes less sense, because the extinct animals are actually here in the sense that they are available. Having said that, I could add that there are some landscapes where I will keep expecting to see sauropods in the distance on a lonely walk, and that some of the feelings involved in birdwatching will just need a little bit of exaggeration to become the experience of seeing a real huge pterosaur such as a pterodactyl, it's easy, you know what it's like, just like flying, or eating glass, even if you haven't done it in your waking life.

### **Joël Gayraud**

L'archéoptéryx. Parce qu'il figure en bonne place dans une pièce d'Alfred Jarry. Mais aussi le tricératops, pour la beauté de son nom, et parce que Dürer aurait adoré le dessiner.

### English Translation

The archeopteryx. Because it features prominently in a play by Alfred Jarry. But also the triceratops, for the beauty of its name, and because Dürer would have loved to draw it.

### **Nathan Grover**

Fifty-million years ago there was a wolf—I forget her name—who loved to gallop and splash in the surf. She spent all day just galloping and splashing until, after a very long time indeed, she turned into a fish and swam away. I would like to see the Great Great Grand-dolphin return from sea and shake the water from her slick pelt with a grin. What a frolic that was.

### **Beatriz Hausner**

The time of the saber tooth tiger, which my brother so revered when he was going through his dinosaur phase, has come. I am confident that the large feline is the only force capable of saving our species from likely extinction.

### **Nicholas Alexander Hayes**

Every few months, I wander the Rewilding Europe website looking for

news about the reverse breeding of cattle into aurochs. I dream of these giant cattle roaming streets paved with native grasses. These reimagined aurochs cultivated with an eye towards docility promised to correct some of the aggressive tendencies of Heck cattle – which found themselves the darlings of fascist, racist essentialists. Now I fear a collapse in pursuit of the goal of back breeding. Does the introduction of Heck into the new project anticipate the devolution of the liberal political into plutocratic kakistocracies? Yet I fantasize about aurochs lowing outside the cave where I watch shadow puppets govern.

### **Vittoria Lion**

My first, most impulsive answer to this question would be the thylacine, or Tasmanian “wolf,” a creature I have been rather mesmerized by since my early childhood. I distinctly recall seeing the spotty black-and-white footage of “Benjamin” (what a name!), the last known member of the species who died in captivity in 1936, pacing around his cage when I must have been around five years old, and I had a terrible time processing my grief over the realization that all of those unusual and stunning animals were now dead (and that humans were the cause). I think a canid-shaped “doggy” organism with those rippling, slat-like, really prehistoric-looking parallel stripes must have seemed like the perfect marvelous juxtaposition embodied in animal form to my very young mind. Knowing that they had pouches like kangaroos, of course, made it even better. Mind you, I was already obsessed with dogs and wolves of the Northern Hemisphere placental garden variety, and the thylacine appeared to me to be this extraordinary anatomical synthesis of tigers and wolves, two of my favourite animals during that period (a real-life CatDog, to reference a bizarre cartoon I vaguely recall from that time that featured, as its protagonist, a tube-shaped animal with canine and feline heads at its terminal ends, with apparently no anus or external genitalia; one wonders how digestion worked and the creature did not just explode). I have never been able to shake this feeling as an adult when looking at old pictures of thylacines, and the profound sense of loss over never being able to see a live one has never left me. I remember feeling incredibly upset over seeing lions and tigers in small enclosures during a kindergarten zoo visit, and I gave compulsive repetitive speeches to my

classmates about Benjamin and how he died all alone in his cage afterward, which must have bored them. It would bring me such happiness to know that there are still a few of them living deep in the rainforests of Tasmania, survivors of the ruthless European campaign of destruction.

Yet, since I cannot give only one answer to this question out of so many endless forms, it would also be a wondrous dream to have the Archaeopteryx back, to note the colour of those limestone feathers. I imagine them having the most luminous night-black iridescence, or having a colour so singular that it is at the limits of our vision, that it is possibly only perceivable through extrasensory sight. And *Hallucigenia*, the tiny fossil from the Burgess Shale so strange it was first depicted upside down, literally named for seeing beyond one's eyes. And, while I'm at it, those Late Cretaceous mega-sized penguins who coexisted with the dinosaurs in what was possibly the greatest period of Earth's history ever. I could go on.

### **RJ Myato**

I would like to see the chalicothere come back. Its name means gravelbeast, and it is a kind of giant ape with a horse's head.

### **David Nadeau**

Ce serait certainement le *Microbrachius dicki* que je voudrais voir réapparaître, afin de pouvoir assister à la première forme de pénétration sexuelle pratiquée par un animal.

#### English Translation

It would certainly be the *Microbrachius dicki* that I would like to see reappear, in order to be able to witness the first form of sexual penetration ever practiced by an animal.

### **Juan Carlos Otaño**

The mammoth, of course. Being as it is the ancestor of elephants, for whom I feel a special affection. And for the feeling I have towards mammals in general.

### **Anthony Redmond**

The Carnivorous Tree Kangaroo (Balbaroo fangaroo) joined voracious desire almost perfectly with marsupial nurturance and an ability to retreat from predators – though obviously not quite perfectly.

The Giant Platypus (*Obdurodon tharalkooschild*) – This marvellous creature had the capacity to sleep for twenty hours a day allowing it to dream the eggs which became its younger cousins playing a starring role in F. Engels' *Dialectics of Nature*.

### **Tony Roehrig**

The Moa, one of the original inhabitants of Aotearoa. I would love to listen to the tales this giant bird could tell of life before the army of louts arrived to take this creature's breath away from us all. Open up the tomos of Aotearoa and release the tales of these beautiful cousins.

### **Penelope Rosemont**

Many animals should be brought back. To begin, the Archaeopteryx, to see how gloriously beautiful they really were. The drawings made of them make them look like plucked chickens, feathers on wings and tail, naked body; the same reconstruction theory stretched Tyrannosaurus bones so they resembled lizards when they really should have looked like kiwis. And balanced on their tip toes like lizard ballerinas, when they actually had sturdy, flat, good bird feet. I observed this when as a child visiting the Field Natural History Museum—my very favorite outing. Then there is the dearly loved Godzilla who should return to a exact a terrible revenge on this stupid and careless “civilization.”

### **삼죽오**

The koegi. Just for a friend who was a koegi.

### **LaDonna Smith**

Now we're talking! Animals, yes! Of course! I would love to reappear as a barred owl, who flies silently through the woods, inhabiting treetops, and who sings, “Who cooks for you?’ Or as a mountain goat, who can climb rocks and balance on thin precipices, bleat with a soft expressive musicality, and have those beautiful slit green eyes! I could just as happily be a cute red

fox, laughing at the moon, and sneaking around playing prankster, chasing chickens and stealing cornbread, disappearing in my foxhole with a sense of accomplishment. I would fall in love with a handsome gray wolf, who howls at night, my hero! Our love life would certainly shock and disrupt the hierarchy of forest species integration. How did we get the Unicorn, after all?

### **Darren Thomas**

The woolly mammoth. They remind us that love, too, can become extinct in a world that sees only what it can exploit for gain and selfish ends.

### **FINAL TALLY**

- Archeopteryx – 3
- The Woolly Mammoth – 2
- Moa – 2
- Microbrachius dicki – 1
- Creatures of the Burgess Shale – 1
- Titanosaurians – 1
- Godzilla – 1
- Koegi – 1
- Gigantopithecus blacki -1
- Daeodon – 1
- Chalicothere – 1
- Dickinsonia – 1
- Great Great Grand-dolphin – 1
- Balbaroo fangaroo – 1
- Obdurodon tharalkooschild – 1
- Aurochs – 1
- Saber Tooth Tiger –
- Thylacine - 1
- Hallucigenia - 1
- Late Cretaceous mega-sized penguin - 1

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**5** *Have you ever dreamed about fossils, extinct life forms, or prehistoric landscapes?*

## **Jason Abdelhadi**

It would seem not frequently, although I did have two fossil dreams in 2017:

November 19, 2017

The world seems to undergo some intellectual panics and crises. A big digital map of the world continually shows a real-time view of panic spreading, pulsing out over many different topics. One involves the rumour of a dearth in coffee beans, which upsets the whole world. The next one is a panic about a shortage of dinosaur fossils, which spreads pretty quickly but according to the map does not affect people in Alberta or the Yukon, since they have plenty of fossils there. A final panic is very particular to Sweden. Apparently they have released wild dogs there as part of some ecological program. They are little springy haired dogs with Rottweiler coloration. The Swedes have also started burying people without coffins for ecological reasons. Then one of the dog packs digs up a coffin-less corpse and devours it. This causes a national debate.

April 3, 2017

I am in a car with my German instructor driving to a tourist destination, Andrew Haydon Park, which in the dream overlaps with Bank street. Helen Keller's fossilized bones are located a few minutes from my parents' house, at the bottom of a cliff near Dick Bell park. They are just sticking out of the cliff-face.

## **Hermester Barrington**

The night I decided I was going to answer this survey, and for two nights subsequent, I dreamt that I was hauling a Schindler-Patalas trap from the depths of a lake and discovered a crumpled version of myself therein...Fayaway, likewise, dreamt that she found a blow-up doll bearing her face folded up in the pages of her high school yearbook. We have burnt the aforementioned items and scattered the ashes among our herb garden, and do not expect to be bothered by such dreams of the past again.

## **Doug Campbell**

I have dreamed of pulling plastic bags from between layers of sedimentary

rock. In a more general way, I think dreaming is a process by which experience is fossilised into memory and excavated nightly. The extinct life forms and landscapes of my life live and walk again.

### **Casi Cline**

Hmm, I don't think so, but I probably will now.

### **Krzysztof Fijalkowski**

Not to my recollection, except in the sense that arguably all landscapes are at some deep level prehistoric; and that of course it is perhaps in dreams that we come closest to experiencing a more accurate sense of the multi-form nature of time, and in which categories of past, present and future lose their conventional meaning.

### **Mattias Forshage**

Yes. *See separate contribution on page 89*

### **Joël Gayraud**

Parfois, comme dans ces deux rêves, l'un datant du 3 octobre 2016, à 7 heures du matin :

Je me trouve dans le métro sur la ligne 6, et descends en queue à la station Corvisart. À peine arrivé sur le quai, je m'aperçois que la sortie est condamnée par de vastes panneaux de contre-plaqué de couleur bleu clair, comme tout le reste de la station d'ailleurs. Je suis le seul passager à être descendu, et commence à être pris d'une vague inquiétude. Inquiétude renforcée par le fait que le quai est devenu au moins cinq fois plus large que d'ordinaire, et que sur la voie qui paraît maintenant bien éloignée de moi, je vois passer une rame ancienne, peinte en bleu clair elle aussi, qui ne s'arrête pas. J'ai la désagréable impression que je vais être obligé de rester là un bon moment. Je me dirige vers la tête de la station où il n'y a normalement pas de sortie quand je m'aperçois que, près des rails, part un sentier encaissé entre deux murs peints en blanc. Je m'y engage et, après quelques mètres, tombe sur une équipe de paléontologues qui font des fouilles et viennent de mettre au jour un superbe squelette d'animal préhistorique, un iguanodon, disent-ils entre eux, sans m'adresser pour autant la parole. Je poursuis mon chemin dans Paris, et la nuit tombe. J'erre



longtemps dans des rues qui se font de plus en plus sombres, et fais demi-tour pour rentrer chez moi, quand mon portable sonne, m'avertissant que je viens de recevoir un message. Il est une heure du matin, le message est constitué de deux MMS, l'un représentant la vignette des livres de la vénérable collection de philosophie dirigée jadis par Jean Hippolyte aux PUF, Épiméthée, où l'on voit le Titan en compagnie de son épouse Pandora, le second une salle dont les murs sont recouverts d'instruments de musique.

Ou comme dans celui-ci, plus récent, datant du 1er avril dernier, à 8 heures du matin :

En rentrant chez moi, je trouve dans ma boîte aux lettres une enveloppe doublée contenant un petit objet. Je l'ouvre et découvre une sorte de coupe-papier en ivoire, gravé de motifs décoratifs géométriques. Puis, en le manipulant, je constate qu'il se déplie comme un couteau suisse, mais en trois dimensions, à la manière de ces livres animés pour enfants qui, lorsqu'on les ouvre, présentent des scènes en volume. Je vois apparaître l'entrée d'une caverne, dans laquelle je pénètre moi-même. Il règne à l'intérieur une lumière diffuse. Les parois sont striées de rayures blanchâtres jusqu'à la voûte. Ce sont des ossements gigantesques. Je me rends compte alors avec effroi que je suis enfermé dans la cage thoracique d'un squelette de mammouth.

#### English Translation

Sometimes, as in these two dreams, one dating from October 3, 2016, at 7 a.m.:

I am in the metro on line 6, and get off at the cue at Corvisart station. As soon as I arrived on the platform, I noticed that the exit was blocked by large plywood panels in a light blue color, like everything else in the station. I'm the only passenger to have alighted, and am starting to get a little worried. Concern reinforced by the fact that the platform has become at least five times wider than usual, and that on the track which now seems far away from me, I see an old train pass, painted in light blue too, which does not stop. I have the unpleasant impression that I will have to stay there for a while. I head towards the head of the station where there is normally no exit when I realize that, near the rails, a path opens encased between two walls painted in white. I commit myself and, after a few meters, come across a team of paleontologists who are doing excavations and have just unearthed a superb

skeleton of a prehistoric animal, an iguanodon, they say between them, without speaking to me. I continue on my way in Paris, and night falls. I wander for a long time in increasingly dark streets, and turn around to go home, when my cell phone rings, notifying me that I have just received a message. It is one o'clock in the morning, the message consists of two MMS, one representing the thumbnail of the books from the venerable collection of philosophy once directed by Jean Hippolyte at PUF, Épiméthée, where we see the Titan with his wife Pandora, and in the second a room whose walls are covered with musical instruments.

Or as in this one, more recent, dating from April 1, at 8 am:

On my way home, I find in my mailbox a lined envelope containing a small object. I open it and discover a sort of ivory paper cutter, engraved with geometric decorative patterns. Then, by manipulating it, I notice that it unfolds like a Swiss knife, but in three dimensions, like these animated books for children which, when opened, present scenes in three dimensions. I see the entrance to a cave appear, which I enter myself. There is a diffused light inside. The walls are streaked with whitish stripes up to the vault. They are gigantic bones. I realize then with fright that I am locked in the rib cage of a mammoth skeleton.

### **Nathan Grover**

Not landscapes, that I can remember anyway. For me, the primordial is most often embodied in the sea. My dream sea produces, from time to time, enormous, powerful animals—leviathans—that threaten to gore and devour me. But more often it's the sea itself that's the threat. Vast and ancient it rears up, towering over me, and I'm helpless to do anything but be washed away.

### **Nicholas Alexander Hayes**

Sleep covers me each night as I decay. An eon of psychic sediment presses into me no matter how short I rest. The impression that endures the night is only the fossilized trace of a me – more supple and vivacious than the crystallized, reified detritus who types this.

### **Vittoria Lion**

I believe that dreams are transformative windows into deep time, much as

they were for Lovecraft's protagonist in *The Shadow out of Time*, Nathaniel Wingate Peaslee. I have had numerous dreams over the years involving ancient megaliths, fossils, and enormous skeletons of various kinds. In one of my most recent dreams that touched me deeply, I was holding a picture of Lyuba, the frozen mammoth calf unearthed from the Siberian permafrost in 2007. Except, in this image, she had emerged from the ocean depths covered in strange lichens and violet starfish and multi-coloured ribbon worms were consuming her, like the corpse of a seal on the Antarctic sea floor. I was struck by how this dream image expressed the paradox of something preserved in time, yet simultaneously overgrown and in the process of decomposition. A few nights ago, on the verge of falling asleep, I had a vision of an autumnal forest where the ribs of a great whale were interspersed vertically among the tree trunks.

In a favourite dream I had nearly two years ago now, I fell asleep under a surgical lamp in a hospital and dreamed I found myself within what I can only describe as a hallucinatory landscape that glowed vividly with luminous fossils. I dreamed I walked to the edge of a promontory overlooking a lake surrounded by jagged, piercing mountains, and all of the rock around me appeared animated with translucent, iridescent fossilized organisms reminiscent of plasmic deep sea creatures, producing this beautiful kaleidoscopic effect. Shortly before I had this dream, I had been writing about Hegel's belief that fossils were supposedly not the remains of extinct animals, but the spontaneous half-formed premonitions of future entities, and I think this carried over into the dream.

### **RJ Myato**

I dream everything. I remember always Conrad's quote: "Going up that river was like traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings." That is what dreaming is.

### **David Nadeau**

Enfant, j'étais certain d'avoir vu bouger des dinosaures constitués de tiges métalliques, dans un champ de pylônes situé sur le bord de l'autoroute. En fait, pendant quelques années, j'ai été convaincu que c'était quelque chose

que j'avais vu réellement, et non rêvé ou imaginé.

### English Translation

As a child, I was sure I saw dinosaurs made of metal rods moving in a field of pylons on the edge of the highway. In fact, for a few years, I was convinced that it was something that I had actually seen, and not dreamed or imagined.

### **Juan Carlos Otaño**

No. Except if you interpret that every mnemonic print produced in a dream is a 'fossil' of some circumstance or activity that you have experienced in your waking hours. Then, each dream would be like a curiosity cabinet, or wunderkammer, conceived by Rudolph II in the Castle of Hradschin.

### **Anthony Redmond**

I dreamt of a night-sky in which all of the stars were arranged into algebraic formulas and this struck me, laying awestruck on the ground, as a prehistoric configuration.

### **Tony Roehrig**

I dreamed of being alone in a dense primordial jungle not knowing how I got there or where I was. In the close distance I heard (and felt) the sounds of thundering footfalls which shook my whole being. Further out I could hear the swooshing of what I thought were huge wings flapping followed by unnerving screeches. Closer still my fears screamed out as I felt a bizarre sensation moving up my legs. Looking down at my feet I could see vines wriggling all about my shoes and intertwining with my laces. I couldn't move my feet because of the larger, stronger vines holding me in place. The smaller quicker vines were moving up my legs. These smaller ones pierced my flesh and entered my veins. My legs began to turn green and the feelings started to leave my lower extremities. My skin had the feel of leathery scales. Some of the vines exited my body at various points and started to bud. Quickly those buds bloomed into the most exquisite flowers attracting beautiful humming birds and honey bees. Upon seeing these marvelous creeping critters enjoy the fruits of myself, I gave up my fears and succumbed to the joy of being of service to

the glory of nature. The surrealist fruits live on today.

### **Penelope Rosemont**

I often dream of prehistoric landscapes: the warmth, the lushness, the calls of animals, the song of birds, the warm moist smell, it is not a fearful place for me, there is a great feeling of belonging. Nothing happens to disrupt this calm. Probably I am a tree.

### **삼죽오**

Yes, I am dreaming of them all right now.

### **Darren Thomas**

My collage ‘Museum Stories’ arose from discussions on museums and museumification with the London Surrealist Group and friends in our weekly online meetings as well as several dreams. In these, I dreamed that the imagination is a hunter, discovering artefacts and memories from different times and places, and our minds are the museums that we memorialise these in. I referred to these interactions as the museum-human interface.

It seems to me that our brains, museums (actual and virtual) are all concerned with collecting, categorising, displaying and interpreting myriad content in specific ways. The museum-human interface is constantly evolving (dialectically/convulsively) with new elements added and discarded and the ways in which we display, encounter and interpret these elements is also ever-changing – due to various historical, cultural socio-political/ideological contexts and factors. Essentially, all of us will engage with these uniquely – despite various commonalities.

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## **6 Describe the primal scene.**

### **Jason Abdelhadi**

A mannequin in bed pretending to sleep and trying hard not to laugh as a shadow pokes its face.

## **Hermester Barrington**

The primal scene is a hyena and a lamia, fighting and politely taking turns penetrating each other, laughing and cackling and calling each other dirty names.

## **Doug Campbell**

“(in Freudian theory) the occasion on which a child becomes aware of its parents’ sexual intercourse, the timing of which is thought to be crucial in determining predisposition to future neuroses.” – Oxford English Dictionary

“... And all earthly life, it is told, shall go back at last through the great circle of time to Ubbo-Sathla.” – Clark Ashton Smith, *Ubbo-Sathla*

“... the Earth is alive, a living being, and that the early legendary forms of life may have been emanations—projections of herself—detached portions of her consciousness...” – Algernon Blackwood, *The Centaur*

I suppose it usually all begins and ends in a bed, whether in warm sheets, or deep ocean sediments heated by volcanic vents. If there are dreams in one bed, why not another?

## **Casi Cline**

A black bird the size of the universe splits open its chest to reveal the sun. The sleeping sun in the center of the earth hears it and is awoken. Unable to remain cold now that it has heard the first birdsong of morning, it burns and seeps up through the planet’s pores to join its voice with dawn.

## **Joël Gayraud**

Au commencement était le miroir. Mais comme il n’y avait que lui, il n’avait rien à refléter, pas même le vide, qui, faute d’intervalles entre les choses, n’existait pas, ni le temps, qui ne s’écoulait pas. Alors le miroir ressentit l’ennui, et pour l’éloigner, il créa l’image. L’image de l’ennui, justement. Aussitôt l’ennui prit place devant le miroir et son image à égale distance derrière lui. Et voici : les intervalles entre le miroir, l’image et l’ennui s’étaient remplis de vide et le temps allait pouvoir s’écouler.

L’ennui, par jeu, suscita des formes dans le miroir : courbes, planes,

aiguës, colorées, sonores, odorantes, savoureuses. Toutes ces images engendrées par l'ennui se répandirent autour du miroir et se mirent à peupler le vide, à désagréger le temps. Elles s'épaissirent, prirent de l'ampleur et de la consistance et donnèrent naissance au corail, aux étoiles, aux fougères, au plésiosaure, à la locomotive, au moulin à café, à l'écriture automatique et à plusieurs autres choses encore. On peut espérer qu'à force de laisser l'ennui produire en lui toutes ces images vivantes, le miroir du monde cessera un jour de s'ennuyer.

### **Joël Gayraud** - English Translation

In the beginning was the mirror. But since there was only it, it had nothing to reflect, not even the emptiness, which, for lack of intervals between things, did not exist, nor time, which did not elapse. Then the mirror felt boredom, and to make it pass, it created the image. The image of boredom, precisely. Immediately boredom took place in front of the mirror and its image at an equal distance behind it. And here it is: the intervals between the mirror, the image and boredom had filled with emptiness and time was about to run out.

Boredom, through play, gave rise to forms in the mirror: curves, flat, sharp, colorful, sonorous, fragrant, tasty. All these images generated by boredom spread around the mirror and began to populate the void, to disintegrate time. They thickened, grew in size and consistency, and gave birth to coral, stars, ferns, plesiosaurs, locomotives, coffee grinders, automatic writing, and many others. Hopefully, by letting boredom produce all these living images in it, the mirror of the world will one day cease to be bored.

### **Nathan Grover**

I imagine it smelled awful. Goop everywhere. And very hot. In the sweaty life-forge everything comes to crawly life and it's all mouths, every mouth devouring whatever mouth came before it, a great *mise en abyme* of devouring, absorbing, repurposing.

I suppose this question is meant to evoke Freud's 'primal scene': the child walking in on his or her parents having sex. I stand by my first impressions.

## Nicholas Alexander Hayes

Before expansion and the cosmic laws sagged into order, the tenuous, plasmic wisps of possibility swirl. Radiant beyond spectrums we can fathom, eddies twist into themselves and form abscesses of alternate histories. These abscesses drift away in the turbulence created as contraries collide in subatomic cataclysms. The primal tumult deteriorates to order, locking us in a path to equilibrium. We are left where we end and where we begin.

## Vittoria Lion

To further elucidate W. J. T. Mitchell's claim that the dinosaur is the "totem animal of modernity," the primal scene of modernity is self-evidently a small child eating dinosaur-shaped chicken nuggets while watching the scene in *Jurassic Park* in which *T. rex* plucks the defecating lawyer off the toilet and devours him. It is the purest expression of the totemistic obsession with simultaneously desiring to devour the dinosaur (and, eventually, shit dinosaurs) and fearing being devoured by the dinosaur (also seen, for instance, in Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins' famous dinner held inside one of the Crystal Palace Iguanodons on New Year's Eve of 1853). (The dinosaur "chicken nugget" being, obviously, the ultimate capitalist distortion of the dinosaur-to-bird dialectic.) Naturally, this repeats the posterior, anal emphasis of the original reconstructed "primal scene" from Freud's analysis of Pankejeff. Or, perhaps, the mirror of Pankejeff's painting of his famous dream is John Conway's beautiful visionary illustration of three *Protoceratops* in a tree from *All Yesterdays: Unique and Speculative Views of Dinosaurs and Other Prehistoric Animals*.

## RJ Myato

My father and mother cast in amber, forever separated, nothing but revulsion in their eyes.

## David Nadeau

Générés spontanément à partir du néant, les animaux tirent tous le maintien de leur existence individuelle de l'énergie vitale d'Antonin Artaud, le Poète Primordial, qu'ils vampirisent en quelque sorte.

English Translation



Spontaneously generated from nothingness, animals all derive the maintenance of their individual existence from the vital energy of Antonin Artaud, the Primordial Poet, whom they somehow vampirize.

### **Anthony Redmond**

Two opalescent snails ejaculate streams of golden honey over each other's shells which then begin to rotate in high-speed spirals before rolling across the primordial landscape.

### **Tony Roehrig**

I imagine a big block of Green Swiss Cheese knocked through with the animated, clothed heads of the fossils we find today. The heads all sporting wet crimson lips. In the background there's a symphony of monstrous liquid fireworks, of which the orchestra is directed by the febrile pen of Ishmael Reed.

### **Penelope Rosemont**

Sex was not hidden since we lived in the country, there were plenty of animals following their instincts. We did not neuter our pet dogs so they regularly were excited. First, they circled, then they sniffed each other's sexual parts, then they licked, and then got on to mating. At seven, I was tempted to interrupt a loving dog couple, but my Grandfather said they must be left in peace. There were six wonderful puppies later that summer.

### **삼족오**

Things form and unform, burst apart and mend, thrash and diminish, and squirm and run with the pace of the orbiting of galaxies' great suns.

### **Darren Thomas**

It is the scent of rain that leads me to the bedroom beneath the waves and the sea feeds my dreams with: the sounds of distant thunder, the midnight sun that fills my throat with yearning, peacock feathers that tickle my open eyes – and my flesh writhes in intrauterine agony and ecstasy until I give birth to panthers in a glass hive.

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7 *Walter Benjamin referred to the arcades of Paris as prehistoric caverns containing the bones of “the last dinosaur of Europe.” Is there a specific structure, place, image, or other thing (found where you live, or that you have otherwise seen in person) that you find to be especially reminiscent of a fossil? Think of architectural details, ruins, and urban archaeological miscellanea. You may want to go out and look for one.*

### **Jason Abdelhadi**

To start with micropaleontology, I have found many small objects in the streets, including game or puzzle pieces, toys, toy dinosaurs, toy dinosaur bones, which struck me as urban fossils. On a larger scale, certain older building façades that stand out because they have no buildings to go with them (property managers being forced by the city to maintain these historic fossils, while the actual creature has long been disposed of). There is an old school façade on Cumberland street in Ottawa that looks particularly fossilized. Another noteworthy aspect are the cracks and impressions left in the few remaining old bus terminals such as Westboro station, which have a lot of fossil-like forms and shapes.

### **Hermester Barrington**

I was walking through a parking lot and a small child pointed at McDonald’s Golden Arches and said “What are those?” I told him that they were part of a plot to make him into Oedipus and skipped away, while the child ran off in tears. His question nagged at me, though, and I tried to think of a more charitable answer. Perhaps they are the tusks of mammoths, whose bodies are routinely excavated from the permafrost of Alaska and sold as burgers. Or maybe they are the tracks of two shooting stars, each caught in its parabolic path around a miniscule black hole, and whose light may live on after the stars have died. Or they might be modeled on the brassiere of the mother of folklorist Alan Dundes (both safely dead). Or perhaps they are the twin tunnels that lead down to Pellucidar, where creatures from Deep Time still exist. My thoughts were interrupted by a woman in a car coming up beside me, slamming on the brakes, and asking me for the time. When I didn’t respond, two young men jumped

out and one of them punched me in the face. I don't remember anything after that.

### **Doug Campbell**

Edinburgh's old town is formed round a long street running the glacial ridge formed behind the Castle rock. Blocks of high buildings divided by narrow alleys or 'closes' extend to either side of the street, and built-up bridges connect it to other high ground on either side. It is impossible not to interpret this as the skeleton of a dragon, with the castle as the skull and fossilised ribs, wings and limbs extending to either side of the spine. Mysterious treasures surely lie beneath.

### **Casi Cline**

My childhood library was like the large, intact skeleton of an ancient whale or dinosaur. It was made of marble, soft and cool and white as bone. On the top floor was one long room with endless stacks to peek under and white marble columns too big to circle with my stubby child arms. That room resembled nothing more than the rib cage of some great beast.

### **Krzysztof Fijalkowski**

The connection between bones and human structures is explicit in nineteenth-century architectural spaces such as the wonderful Museum of Palaeontology and Comparative Anatomy in the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, in which the ribs and femurs of countless skeletal specimens from across the entire animal kingdom (and led by a flayed human body) are echoed in the struts of vitrines or the metal ribcages of joists and casements around them, as though the collection were held inside a whale. In these now less-fashionable institutions from the golden age of the natural history museum, you both view the articulated skeletons, but look through them towards other bodies, other vistas: the skeleton as both armature and vision device (like Dürer's optical 'perspective machine' that allowed him to understand and capture images). Many modern buildings, especially those made of concrete, are of course already formed of geological material, and are promised to ossification and ruin from the moment they are constructed: they were built not as places in which to dream or dwell, but as petrified capital.

## Joël Gayraud

Une étroite correspondance m'a depuis longtemps paru s'imposer entre les ruines de certains grands édifices et les squelettes des espèces disparues. Dans *La Peau de l'ombre* je notais ceci : « Une des premières manifestations du sacré consista, chez les néandertaliens, à badigeonner les ossements de leurs ancêtres avec de l'ocre rouge. Ce geste de recouvrir d'une couleur rappelant le sang ce que l'on tient pour sacré se perpétua jusqu'en Grèce, où ce n'étaient plus les os des morts, mais les os des temples – les colonnes – que l'on peignait à l'ocre rouge ».

Les arcs-boutants des grandes églises gothiques et notamment des cathédrales comme Notre-Dame de Paris m'ont toujours fait penser à des côtes de diplodocus géants. Mais l'analogie s'étend à bien d'autres domaines que l'architecture. Je devais avoir entre 8 et 9 ans, quand mon père m'amena un jour chez un de ses amis, un photographe qui habitait dans un logement très sombre situé à Ménilmontant, rue Villiers de l'Isle Adam (\*). Afin de passer le temps, je fouillai dans sa bibliothèque et m'emparai d'un vieil atlas géographique. Pour moi qui n'avais presque jamais quitté Paris et rêvais d'évasion, les cartes ouvraient comme autant de clefs sur d'innombrables voyages extraordinaires. Je me souviens que ce soir-là une carte de géographie ancienne, en noir et blanc, où était représenté l'archipel indonésien des îles de la Sonde m'a soudainement fait penser aux ossements des fossiles que j'avais vus récemment au Museum d'histoire naturelle. Pour mes yeux d'enfant chaque île figurait un os et l'archipel le squelette entier d'un animal inconnu. Cette image fascinante et inquiétante s'est gravée à jamais dans ma mémoire et j'en frissonne encore.

(\*) Alors que j'ignorais tout Villiers de l'Isle Adam et ne soupçonnais pas qu'il fût un écrivain, le nom de cette rue avait pour moi quelque chose de si évocateur que je m'en suis toujours souvenu, sans doute en raison de l'association poétique qui s'est établie dans mon esprit d'enfant entre l'île et Adam, une île habitée par le premier homme, image d'un ailleurs immémorial. Mais à l'époque je ne pouvais imaginer avec quelle passion je lirais plus tard les *Contes cruels*, *Axël* ou *L'Ève future*.

## English Translation

A close correspondence has long seemed to prevail between the ruins of certain large buildings and the skeletons of extinct species. In *La Peau de l'ombre* I noted this: “One of the first manifestations of the sacred was, among the Neanderthals, to brush the bones of their ancestors with red ocher. This gesture of covering with a color reminiscent of the blood that we hold sacred was perpetuated until Greece, where it was no longer the bones of the dead, but the bones of the temples – the columns – that we painted in red ocher”.

The flying buttresses of large Gothic churches and in particular cathedrals like Notre-Dame de Paris always made me think of giant diplodocus ribs. But the analogy extends to many areas other than architecture. I must have been between 8 and 9 years old, when my father once took me to one of his friends, a photographer who lived in a very dark apartment located in Ménilmontant, in rue Villiers de l'Isle Adam (\*). In order to pass the time, I rummaged through her library and grabbed an old geographic atlas. For me who had almost never left Paris and dreamed of escape, the maps opened like so many keys on countless extraordinary journeys. I remember that evening an old geography map, in black and white, where the Indonesian archipelago of the Sunda Islands was represented suddenly made me think of the bones of the fossils that I had seen recently at the Museum of Natural History. To my child's eyes each island featured a bone and the archipelago the entire skeleton of an unknown animal. This fascinating and disturbing image is etched in my memory forever and I still shiver.

(\*) While I was totally ignorant of Villiers de l'Isle Adam and did not suspect that he was a writer, the name of this street was so evocative to me that I have always remembered it, no doubt because of the poetic association that was established in my child's mind between the island and Adam, an island inhabited by the first man, image of an immemorial elsewhere. But at the time I could not imagine with what passion I would later read *Cruel Tales*, *Axël* or *L'Ève future*.

## Nathan Grover



These metal mastodons stand at the water's edge at the Port of Oakland. They're beasts of burden whose movements have calcified into an endless genuflecting before the massive cargo ships that have enslaved them.

## Beatriz Hausner

There are buildings, like the Toronto Reference Library, or the Guggenheim Museum in New York, which were probably inspired by natural forms resembling fossilized shells. It's an assumption one easily makes. When one approaches the stone walls of the Royal Ontario Museum, one can easily find tiny fossils marking their place in history. As to the rest of the buildings multiplying and spreading like some kind of pestilence in this city, their banality, their ugliness, their obvious betrayal of our dream of a better place, do not merit fossilizing at any point in time: they will crumble and will become dust. Nothing will be left of them on this earth.

## Nicholas Alexander Hayes

On early mornings when Federal Plaza in Chicago remains abandoned, I emerge from the subway to encounter a theropod at rest. Calder's Fla-

mingo towers meters above me and if wakened its weight could easily crush me. But its gestural skeleton has become stuck in the tar pits of the 20th century. My synapsid genius lets me flee the monumental back to the underbrush of memetic ephemera. I may not be safe, but I may evolve.

### **Vittoria Lion**

I am particularly fascinated by the overlap between fossils and mummies: the dichotomies and liminal, porous boundaries of archaeological and paleontological deep time, of bony structures and soft tissues. Although mummies need not always be human, I tend to think of mummies as the fossils of human deep time. Mummies and fossils both exemplify the body as a sort of alchemical crucible undergoing a process of transformation from one substance to another. The display cases filled with mummified animals from ancient Egypt—cats, ibises, falcons, crocodiles, even cows—I have seen at the Royal Ontario Museum and the British Museum count among my favourite of museum collections, and I imagine the Saqqara necropolis, the famed subterranean “mummified zoo,” as a veritable fossil bed, an internal psychological ark stretching infinitely into time. Occasionally mummies present us with the most explicit kind of direct foray into paleontological deep time: for instance, the specimens of Pleistocene megafauna erupting from Siberian ice, which gave Victorian scientists crucial clues about Earth’s geological past, and the astonishingly well-preserved 110 million-year-old nodosaur discovered in Alberta, *Borealopelta*, given the truly unfortunate name of the “Suncor nodosaur.”

Possibly my favourite item from Freud’s collection of antiquities is a linen bandage from an Egyptian mummy decorated with excerpts from the Book of the Dead. Seeing this object in his home in London prompted many thoughts about the body as legible, a palimpsest, as a medium of writing or an inscription itself, something that has also often occurred to me looking at the vellum of medieval illuminated manuscripts. To me, fossils are hieroglyphs, secretive inscriptions within the Wunderblock of the Earth’s crust that one peels back the layers to find. I find this to be particularly true of some of the earliest fossils, which resemble indecipherable squiggles, automatic doodles of a sort. Which brings to my mind that amazing image in Luigi Serafini’s *Codex Seraphinianus* showing a pair of skeletons awaiting some outlandish reanimating surgical procedure involving fitting their dead bones with suits of flesh and

skin, performed by masked acolytes who appear like extraterrestrial versions of Anubis-headed Egyptian priests. It's a reverse mummification, if you will perhaps. On this note, Giuseppe Fiorelli's frozen plaster tableaux of the human and animal victims of Pompeii and Herculaneum, existing in some middle territory between mummies and sculptural artifices, additionally register to me as fossils.

There is also something special about the metal bones of a corset, reminiscent of the ribcage of some gargantuan skeleton or the delicate lobes of a trilobite, which have enchanted me since I saw Leonor Fini's corset-shaped chair in a museum at the age of sixteen. (Of course, they were originally made from whale baleen before the industrial production of steel ramped up by the middle of the nineteenth century. I think this inherent mental association with the bodies of gigantic, monstrous creatures likely partly constitutes why I have always perceived the corset as having this strangely revered aesthetic place among all the traditional female garments.) In the *Arcades Project*, Benjamin notably described the corset as the wearable equivalent of the arcade, the steel armature.

## RJ Myato

The mall is a fossil of 50s utopian capitalism. There is a dead mall near me. I have also a VHS of footage from dead malls that is highly impressive.

## David Nadeau



*Ces empreintes fossiles  
si proches des sources  
de nous-mêmes (A.  
Artaud), photographie  
numérique, 2020*

English Translation  
*The fossil impressions so  
close to the source of  
ourselves (A. Artaud),  
digital photograph, 2020.*



## **Juan Carlos Otaño**

I spent my first years in the city of Bahia Blanca some 800 kilometres to the south of Buenos Aires where the mysterious realm of Patagonia begins. In that free and happy time I used to venture out with other little friends, preferably during the siesta to places banned by parents: river beds and inaccessible areas, canyons frequented by pumas and giant spiders, herons and marine birds that seemed inspired by Odilon Redon. And already in what is referred to as the urban area we explored roofs and eaves or frequented empty lots.

In one of these last places that was the favourite of the gang and where we built a little house with tree boughs and palm leaves, we dug down to a certain depth and unearthed the bust of a statue. It was a woman's face sculpted in marble in the art decó style, lightly flattened and boasting a mysterious red mark on the forehead, similar to a brushstroke.

This discovery led to an infinity of hypotheses, of which the most convincing was the supposition that there had been a murder there, and that an unmarried mother had thrown her newly born child into the pit. Years later, as an adult, I discovered that the sculpture had been rescued from that almost legendary place and is now found among the collections of The Museum Of History and Natural Sciences of the city.

How it got there, is anyone's guess.

## **Anthony Redmond**



*Dun Angus, Aran Islands, west of Ireland*

### **Tony Roehrig**

I came upon the ruins of a long abandoned underground bowling alley. The skeletal remains, mostly reclaimed by the elements, sat beside an industrially polluted river and were guarded by dive bombing swallows. While wandering through the tangled weeds and trees, I spotted atop a support beam for a missing roof a bird nest. Looking into the nest I saw the ossified remains of four baby birds frozen in the position of waiting for food that never came.

### **Penelope Rosemont**

Here in Chicago we have Lower Wacker Drive, a somewhat scary version of Walter Benjamin's arcades; it has been upgraded, but still resembles the inside of a giant prehistoric Boa Constrictor Skeleton. I love the magnificent old iron bridges that cross the Chicago River and exist on the Southside. They resemble sturdy black dinosaur bones; these are draw bridges so one gets to appreciate them in motion. The same is true of the cranes in the Oakland, California docks...they move like dinosaurs. Movie Dinosaurs perhaps.

### **삼족오**

Yes, the jungle because it is a remnant of times long past.

### **LaDonna Smith**

Last year, I visited an enigmatic place in the Czech Republic. It was just outside of Prague.

It was called "The Bone Church." It was a modest chapel in a small village. Workers were excavating for some foundation repairs, and in the process they kept running into bones. More and more bones were excavated. Turns out they were human bones, hundreds of them. As they kept digging more and more appeared, and as they did not know what to do with all the bones, they just stacked them in a pile inside the chapel. After some time, the chapel was full of piles and piles of bones. So at that point they realized that they must organize them, but how? Which bones belonged to who? What head belonged to what neck, that belonged to what spine, to whose appendages? It was a complex and mortifying prospect. So, they

decided to renovate the inside narthex, transept, colonnades, towers, and altars using all the bones. They hired an artist who made incredible altars and chapels, the arches, ambulatory, apse, chevet, and vault, and everything one could imagine in a glorious miniature cathedral built of bones. The bone church was an eerie recognition of an interior space radiating the presence of evaporated sentient beings and the cessation from existence as a sustained living organism.

I am destined to be one of them.

### **Darren Thomas**

A lamp post near the sea front where I live, has almost been completely swallowed up by ivy, which has climbed to the top, brushing against the actual light. From a distance it looks like some primeval creature from another time, the leaves swaying in the breeze like the shifting sinews of its monstrous neck. It is nature reclaiming her birth right and ironically daring to extinguish the light and the last remnants of man's attempts to tame the earth. I keep meaning to photograph this but I know the creature would disapprove...

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**8** *How important is the concept of humanity to your conception of surrealist activity? How does it relate to other life forms and evolutionary history?*

### **Jason Abdelhadi**

I am attracted to surrealist activity precisely because I think it is a refusal of the limitations of humanism and humanist notions of creativity. Humanity isn't anything to me in particular, unless it is characterized in such a way as to emphasize its contingency and weirdness without imposing these as limiting factors. It seems like a concession to admit fundamental human characteristics in any metaphysical way, a trap that offers a narrative of exceptionalism but really serves as a walled prison. I am attracted to ideas of the "New Humanity" only insofar as they are a negation of limitations imposed by current concepts and assumptions. So there is a double aspect to humanity: on the one hand, the poor alienated and exceptional creature bound by their own

misery (a philosophical tradition which I reject) and the other, being a golden ticket to utopian dreaming that does not push away the “natural” world.

### **Hermester Barrington**

It is true that we evolved, via natural selection, from species we consider to be more primitive than our own. It is also true that those species dreamed us into existence, that we might fulfill the Freudian death wish of the Gaiasphere. Sleeping, we unknit our quotidian actions, restoring with our turgidity and torpor the balance of O, CO<sub>2</sub>, and CH<sub>4</sub> which we have undone during the hours of business as usual. I awoke this morning and wondered, Am I a man who dreamed that I was Gaia’s gas, or am I now the flatus of Gaia dreaming that I am a man?

### **Doug Campbell**

I think the surrealist perspective on the concept of humanity would involve identifying the point at which the human and the not-human (living or purely material) cease to be contradictions, or at any rate closely examining the ways in which these categories may blur. The policeman-bicycle of Flann O’Brien’s ‘The Third Policeman’ is more relevant in this context than any trans humanist fantasies of becoming a mobile phone.

### **Casi Cline**

Humanity as distinct in some way from nature is not important to my conception of surrealist activity. A human can take part in surrealist activity, but not because they are human. I believe that surrealist activity can occur in the absence of human animals. I would also argue that all surrealist activity involving human animals must also involve the non-human and that those non-human participants are full partners in the activity. Does the human act on the object any more than the object acts on the human? I don’t know, but I think that human animals tend to take for granted the one-sidedness of the actions they take part in.

### **Krzysztof Fijalkowski**

“Humanity is perhaps not the centre, the focus of the universe” (Breton, *Prolegomena to a Third Manifesto of Surrealism or Else*, 1942). The idea

of surrealism is evidently a human endeavour, but its whole thrust has been both to re-define and re-orient what the notion of the 'human' might be, and to re-plant this expanded notion of humanity into wider, perhaps limitless realms – the animal, the vegetable and the mineral, the visible and invisible, and so on – in a flash of connection and communication. The transfiguration of commonplace unitary or linear conceptions of time and space are part of this thought.

### **Mattias Forshage**

In a sense, surrealism rests on the same “nothing human is alien” pillar as radical humanism. But then, humanists thereby make a demarcation against whatever they do not wish to accommodate and consider that the dividing line between human and non-human. Whereas for any true poets the category of the human makes little sense without the non-human, grappling with which includes confronting oneself with the potentialities and if you will rights of all that is not oneself, including abandoning oneself, profoundly imagining the lives and perspectives of other lifeforms, irrespective of geographical, temporal or phylogenetic distance, and sometimes indeed radically other lifeforms, as well as maintaining modesty, respect and curiosity towards that which can hardly or only with vast difficulty be really imagined or empathised with. We will have no use for humanity which would not include unreasonableness, pointless exuberance, endless variation, transgression, negation, imaginary omnipotence, animality, bestiality, vegetativity, and incomprehensibility, and what some would call radical otherness, and then we can start negotiating.

### **Joël Gayraud**

D'abord, entendons-nous bien, la présence de l'humanité dans la nature n'était pas nécessaire. C'est par hasard que la dynamique aveugle de l'évolution a produit un être doué de cette faculté étrange de symbolisation au moyen d'éléments discrets qu'est le langage. Et cet être, de par cette faculté même, a permis en quelque sorte à la nature de prendre conscience d'elle-même. La nature étant intrinsèquement surréaliste, on pourrait s'attendre que l'homme démultiplie cette faculté, puisqu'il en est et aussi bien en a la conscience. C'est ce qu'il a fait durant la partie la plus longue de son histoire,

selon les diverses espèces en lesquelles il s'est incarné. Le néandertalien qui peignait d'ocre les squelettes de morts était surréaliste, son collègue sapiens, avec qui il n'a pas manqué de se croiser comme la science l'a enfin reconnu il y a peu, a été surréaliste dans l'art pariétal. Quiconque a visité une grotte ornée, comme celle de Niaux, de Pech-Merle ou de Font de Gaume se rend compte de visu que c'est là qu'a été inventée, à la lueur mouvante des torches, la méthode paranoïaque critique, trois cents siècles avant Dali. L'invention du feu et, comme l'avait vu Apollinaire, celle de la roue, a été un acte surréaliste. Mais malheureusement, ce déploiement de l'inventivité artistique et technique a été capturé par l'économie et le pouvoir politique. Avec l'involution néolithique, le travail, la hiérarchie, l'État ont fait régresser l'humanité dans le réalisme le plus abject et sordide, soumis aux principes d'utilité et de rendement. Dès lors l'homme s'est posé en face du milieu dont il était jusqu'alors la conscience, et l'a traité en objet, dont il s'instituait le possesseur et le maître. De ce fait il s'est mutilé, autant qu'il a dévasté sa nouvelle possession. Il aurait pu aussi bien en pénétrer les arcanes sans pour autant l'exploiter et la réduire. Il n'aurait pas proliféré comme une espèce nuisible incapable de limiter son expansion, et aurait su parachever l'œuvre de la nature avec toutes les ressources de son art et de sa liberté.

### English Translation

First, let's be clear, the presence of humanity in nature was not necessary. It is by chance that the blind dynamics of evolution produced a being endowed with this strange faculty of symbolization by means of discrete elements which is language. And this being, by this very faculty, has in a way enabled nature to become aware of itself. Since nature is intrinsically surrealist, one would expect that humanity would multiply this faculty, since it is and as well is aware of it. This is what it did during the longest part of its history, according to the various species in which it was embodied. The Neanderthal who painted ocher the skeletons of the dead was surrealist, its colleague sapiens, with whom he did not fail to cross paths as science finally recognized it a short time ago, was surrealist in wall art. Anyone who has visited an ornate cave, such as that of Niaux, Pech-Merle or Font de Gaume realizes firsthand that this is where the paranoiac-critical method was invented, in the flickering light of torches, three hundred

centuries before Dali. The invention of fire and, as Apollinaire had seen, that of the wheel, was a surrealist act. But unfortunately, this display of artistic and technical inventiveness has been captured by the economy and political power. With the Neolithic revolution, work, hierarchy, the state made humanity regress in the most abject and sordid realism, subject to the principles of utility and productivity. From then on, humans posed in front of the environment of which they were previously the consciousness, and treated it as an object, of which they established themselves the possessor and the master. As a result, they mutilated themselves as much as they devastated their new possession. They might as well have penetrated the mysteries without exploiting and reducing it. They would not have proliferated as a harmful species incapable of limiting their expansion, and would have known how to complete the work of nature with all the resources of their art and freedom.

### **Nathan Grover**

I see surrealism as an all-in investigation of the instinctive, generative side of the creative process. This furious recombination of ideas which synthesizes all new, surprising things is what nature does all the time. It's not a special human ability. We're the product of it just like everything else.

But I also see surrealism as a cult of the marvelous, and nature does not marvel. Only humans do. Only those intimate with humanity's rational order will recognize when something surreal has manifested itself.

### **Nicholas Alexander Hayes**

Surrealist activity... ostranenie... lets us scratch at the edges of the domesticated human. But without our hominid cousins even the most intrepid gleaners present in their work lost pocket change and littered gum wrappers. We are severed from a true depth of understanding other beings by a pernicious anthropomorphic urge. Late capitalism promises in time the degradation the vast majority of us endure will bring us to an apothecotic chrysalis from which we will emerge true Morlocks. We will meet our cousins the C.H.U.D.s in the great Temple of the Bomb. In this communion of our species, with wafers of Eloi jerky on our tongues, we will celebrate the realization that we were never human after all.

## Vittoria Lion

With regard to the remnants of human deep time, the paintings of the Lascaux and Chauvet Caves have had a very enthralling appeal to me since my childhood. What strikes me especially about the animals on the walls, what I believe gives them so much of their magical quality, is their overlapping, superimposed outlines; none of the creatures seem to have clear perimeters to their bodies and they all flow into each other quite fluidly, as if in a non-contradictory dream space. I wonder if this is perhaps because the people who painted them perceived themselves similarly. Our ancestors who coexisted with these Pleistocene animals lived in a very rich universe where dreaming flowed seamlessly into waking life, where unconscious content was seen as alive in, and inherently incorporated into, the “external” world. I often linger on how paradoxical it is that these monumental paintings, which I would ultimately choose if I had to pick one image to attempt to communicate what it means to be a member of my own species to some intelligent alien organism, contain almost no human figures.

Instead of grandiose “birthplaces” of humanity and the starting points of our supposed unique separation from the other animals, as even Bataille wrote of Lascaux, to me Lascaux and Chauvet reflect an acute perception of the continuity between us and other species, and it is the sense of our kinship and fusion with them that comes out much more strongly. To me, Surrealism emphasizes this continuity and is a refusal of inherently theological assumptions of human uniqueness and our entitlement to subjugation of the other animals, a refusal of all forms of what Freud termed “human narcissism.” The unconscious is the imprint within the human being of our collective past as animals in nature, and our inner worlds, our dreams, and our imaginations are our direct inheritance from the animal kingdom. If you look at the forms and structures and miniature collections that animals (especially birds) create in nature, completely outside of the realm of commodity value, they definitely have an automatic, magical quality to them.

So, I suppose if I were to more concisely answer the question of what humanity’s place is in my vision of Surrealism, I would say that it is the place that humanity occupies in the vast murals of Lascaux and Chauvet—an animal among the other animals, comparatively humble and insignificant and freer than us, nothing more and nothing less. Furthermore, I would interpret the



quintessential Surrealist goal of eliminating all boundaries between dreaming and waking life as an aspiration to alter the future course of evolution, ultimately transforming and arguably doing away with the “human” (or, perhaps, liberating us to return to our much-maligned animality?). There has always been a strong speculative evolutionary current in Surrealism, from Aragon’s reminiscence that Breton wished to fill his imaginary glass pavilions with “a reinvented zoology, a reinvented botany” onward.

### **RJ Myato**

Humanity is a transitory form. But it is the main form currently. To leave behind human qualities is to be a half-formed being. But to build upon them is to become a psychopomp. Evolutionarily: evolution never ends. It’s circumstantial. There’s no goal, so as long as the earth churns, there will be bigger things.

### **David Nadeau**

Le surréalisme c’est le devenir de la conscience humaine insatisfaite issue de la modernité et qui se sait ou se sent détachée, séparée de la nature. C’est une activité dont le but est, en quelque sorte, la réconciliation avec la nature, préparée par le retour du sentiment de la nature depuis le romantisme. Il aura fallu connaître le drame de la chute dans la rationalité instrumentale pour désirer une synthèse entre ce que cette rationalité instrumentale nous a fait gagner (conscience de classes, etc.), et de ce qu’elle nous a fait perdre (participation animiste à l’environnement). Autrement dit, il aura été nécessaire et inévitable de passer par la longue suite de déchirements qui ont marqué l’histoire de la civilisation occidentale, puis du capitalisme mondialisée, pour entrevoir l’avènement d’un « surrationalisme » (Gaston Bachelard).

Totémiques, les animaux incarnent le surréel; tandis que certains humains partent consciemment à sa recherche, seuls ou en groupe. La créativité animale spontanée (danses nuptiales, mimétisme, nidification), et plus simplement les caractéristiques propres à chaque espèce, font de chaque animal un mythe vivant.

### English Translation

Surrealism is the becoming of the dissatisfied human consciousness result-

ing from modernity and which knows or feels detached or separated from nature. It is an activity whose goal is in a way the reconciliation with nature, prepared by the return of the feeling of nature from romanticism. It would have been necessary to know the drama of the fall into instrumental rationality, in order to desire a synthesis between what this instrumental rationality made us gain (class consciousness, etc.), and what it made us lose (animist participation in the environment). In other words, it will have been necessary and inevitable to go through the long series of upheavals that have marked the history of Western civilization, then of globalized capitalism, to foresee and desire the advent of “surrationalism” (Gaston Bachelard).

Totemic, animals embody the surreal; while some humans consciously search for it, alone or in groups. Spontaneous animal creativity (nuptial dances, mimicry, nesting) and, more simply, the characteristics specific to each species, make each animal a living myth.

### **Juan Carlos Otaño**

It forms part of the certainty of belonging to a tradition of the immemorial past from which we are its direct descendants and that we would do well to honour and continue. For that a certain constancy is needed for all the moments that have marked the history of surrealism, without opportunistic exclusions, but also without concessions to easy comfort and without falling into the tastes and whims that tempt every generation. To know how to discern between the permanent and the fleeting, or from what is eclectic in form from what is eclectic in content. To recover a vast dominion in line with the advice of Heraclito “The Dark”.

And in the general order of nature to know that we are not in the centre. That the world is not a games-board for feudal gentlemen, nor that the rest of the creatures are merely snacks and servants.

### **Anthony Redmond**

Our capacity for empathy is forged in early childhood through identifications with other species of animal and this continues to lie at the root of all imaginative explorations for the rest of our lives. This is why animals, plants and other non-human life forms are the ultimate source of our earliest intimations of being human.

### **Tony Roehrig**

We are slowly regaining our understanding of ‘humanity’ both through the teachings of other life forms and through the development of our surrealistic senses. We are evolving as true ‘humans’ through these teachings with the hopes of being fully accepted and reintegrated back into the folds of wildness and life – a Surrealistic Life – thereby destroying the need for words like ‘human’ and ‘humanity’.

### **Penelope Rosemont**

Humanity and Humanism: there is much to consider here. What is the relationship of Humanity to Humanism? Humanism comes in several varieties: Literary, Renaissance, Western Cultural, Philosophic, Christian, Modern, Ethical, Secular..... As surrealists we fit into the history of Humanism. Humanism which led to the Renaissance, with its reawakening of ancient knowledge, translations of Lucretius, especially the great scholar Petrarch who exalted romantic love. His poems written for Laura, though he was a cleric and she a married woman who he saw for the first time on April 6, 1327 in Avignon and fell madly in love. Laura died of the Plague in 1348, a time of mass infection like these days. This story of Mad Love has come to us from over seven hundred years ago. Importantly, the philosophy of Humanism eliminated God and made humans masters of their own fates. This was the beginnings of great revolutions in thought and science. Today, “Secular Humanists” are an atheist grouping (which I think is an excellent idea) that attempts to keep religion out of government and fight monetary support for religion by the state.

Appeals to our “Humanity” are often used by religious and political liberals who would appeal to our guilt, and thus motivate us to improve and ameliorate conditions at least slightly—usually, only minor changes. Guilt is not a good motivation. Guilt as means of social control has been used by Christianity for generations. It is tiresome, boring, and uninspiring. I disown guilt. Currently, we see a comeback of religion; liberals are much too tolerant. Do not be misled, religious interests aim for total social control: one that is anti-woman, anti-intellectual, anti-science. It is necessary for Surrealists to oppose this. Surrealists are rational- irrationalists, we seek to expand the knowledge of mental processes in every direction but are not

deceived by the God fallacy.

Today, there is a growing awareness of the dangers of environmental degradation and mass extinctions. This calls for a broader deeper concept than “Humanity,” one that embraces all living things and even extends to the preservation of things that are not living, the gloriously beautiful mountains, prairies and seas on our unique planet. I admire women like Jane Adams who did excellent social work and education but I admire Emma Goldman even more. I admire Jayne Cortez and Diane di Prima—words on fire! Our idea of Surrealism surpasses “Humanity,” sees farther, demands more—we are motivated by desire, the power of attraction.

### 삼죽오

Not at all. History is a place where gore sends itself through the bodies of kindred beings.

### LaDonna Smith

I have no idea how seeing through the eyes of a fox or a turtle, an owl, or a mouse interprets the amazing environment on which life inhabits. How they read the activities of humanity, and its arcane insanity, its structures, its vehicles, its activities and actions, and all the debris that is left in the ocean, the sky, and land due to human materialism. Perhaps they see us in a kind of surreal way as threats, enemies, hosts, or prey. However, it is only through human eyes that I as a living being perceive the environment & conditions around me. It is through my connection with artists, musicians, and associate surrealists that my world view is colored and inspired. It is through these eyes and the phantom consort of camaraderie that create multiplicity of view and vision, humor, and attention to the ephemeral and dream life that one self-creates to view the world through a lens of the marvelous, magical, and the extraordinary prelude of unpredictable imaginings. And what one human imagines another creates, as illusions are reality just as reality is illusion. After all, it is spoken in the texts of antiquity, just as today ones and zeros function as brains. This alone is proof enough of l’universe surrealiste.

## **Darren Thomas**

Humanity is central to surrealist activity. Particularly collective activity. As a collective we learn to move beyond our own individual desires – which are of course important – to an awareness of those of the Other. Intersubjectivity and empathy are nurtured through such activity – learning to see through the eyes of the other and feel with the heart of the Other – like a herd of lions or a school of dolphins. More than the sum of its parts.

This is why my collective activity with The London Surrealist Group and friends – here and across the world – is so important to me. We are all one.

Evolution comes from constant reflection, interpretation and living – the adventure of living. Evolution is another word for transformation and revolt is necessary when change is needed, We constantly see how a self-ish, greedy, criminal class seeks to limit our freedom to think and act and instead forces us to choke on the poisoned morsels of mediocrity.

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### **9 *What kind of fossils from our current life are we leaving behind, and for whom? How are they going to be interpreted?***

## **Jason Abdelhadi**

I wonder if certain preserved mummies or bog people might eventually become candidates for fossilization proper? Or maybe some random people caught in a very non-representative death situation, deep sea explorers or mountaineer corpses on the Himalayas, just like most fossils actually are not at all “likely”. But what really keeps coming to mind is the unfathomable but mouth-watering prospect of a museum environment becoming fossilized. Then we are going to be interpreted as accumulators and hoarders, if the beings who are interpreting the remains can figure out what is going on. Or it could be that they interpret the fossilized museum as a big body or cell in itself, a distinct lifeform, which isn’t incorrect. But maybe this is too anthropomorphic. We ourselves do not interpret most fossils but burn them as fuels. Perhaps the future entities will use them like we

use chalk, in which case it is not a question of interpreting what they are in themselves but how they serve to manifest the collective desires of the future beings. Which is what fossils always seem to be anyway. Asking what things become fossilized seems to be an indirect way of asking what we think is currently alive.

### **Hermester Barrington**

I'd like to speak for the human race, so allow me to provide an example from my own existence. A laundry chute (with plexiglass walls) leads from Fayaway's boudoir on the top floor of our home to the subbasement, just below the Invisible Library. Into this this memory hole of glory Fayaway & I toss our emptied jars of petroleum jelly (fossil juice to lubricate a fossil, I suppose), the silenced ashes of crickets, expired safe words, pwdrer, unfeathered boas, erotica which our eyebeams have erased, liquefactions of the kundalini, and empty bottles of a popular soda which was in fact discovered or invented by alchemists in Kentucky in 1745. Archaeologists of the past have already published their astonishment at the richness of our lives in the journal *Aubepine* (37:23:8).

### **Doug Campbell**

Other than millions of human skeletons, and the conspicuous absence of other species, I expect drifts and deposits of tiny pieces of plastic and wire will remain. I can imagine these being interpreted as naturally occurring minerals like oil or coal. It is hard to know what more solid objects will survive. There are millions of cars, mobile phones and children's toys, but will they retain any sort of recognisable structure? There is perhaps an analogy with the flocks of manufactured objects that wash up on beaches, sorted by size and weight in the ocean currents. (I remember a dozen footballs of different designs and in different stages of decay caught behind a bridge at an inlet to the sea.)

The large building structures and ceramics of previous times seem to have survived best, but how long into deep time they will last is an interesting question. As to the interpretation of these remnants, the history of Egyptology suggests this will be creative and often dependent on the circumstances and aspirations of the interpreters. I would like to know which

set of ruins from our era the inhabitants of the far future will point at and say that this can only have been the work of aliens.

### **Casi Cline**

I think it is too soon to tell what fossils we leave. How can we tell what things will decompose and what will be preserved like insects in amber?

### **Krzysztof Fijalkowski**

So much of contemporary 'advanced' culture is sclerotic, moribund and fusing into marketing clichés and the shells of gestures, its participants already most of the way to becoming solid objects. Is what is most vivid and vital about the experience of life precisely the elements in evaporating motion, the 'soft tissue' of desire and imagination that shan't physically endure, or may be just occasionally trapped in amber? Either way, perhaps those creatures or beings that will pore over the remnants are already here (or rather, we are already there), invisible to us: will our remains be treasured as specimens, or ground to dust? It won't be our responsibility to know.

### **Mattias Forshage**

Oh plentiful. And what revelations they will bring. We never knew that of ourselves.

### **Joël Gayraud**

La syphilisation moderne laisse des fossiles de métal – voitures, avions, bateaux, locomotives etc. – mais aussi des fossiles de béton qui, sauf rarissime exception, sont particulièrement hideux et ne manqueront pas de heurter le sens esthétique particulièrement développé, je n'en doute pas de la nouvelle espèce humaine qui nous supplantera. Mais à l'aide de son archibras, elle aura tôt fait de débarrasser la planète des scories de la fausse industrie capitaliste. Heureusement certains sculpteurs autodidactes auront laissé au fond de leurs jardins anarchiques des fossiles de plus haute tenue. Et les œuvres de Rodin, de Max Ernst ou de Virginia Tentindo témoigneront aux yeux à facettes dorées de nos successeurs que les XXe et XXIe siècles n'auront pas été ceux de Jeff Koons ni d'Anish Kapoor.

## English Translation

Modern syphilization leaves metal fossils – cars, planes, boats, locomotives etc. – but also fossils of concrete which, except with very rare exception, are particularly hideous and will not fail to strike the particularly developed aesthetic sense of the new human species I have no doubt will supplant us. But with the help of her archibras, she will quickly rid the planet of the dross of false capitalist industry. Fortunately, some self-taught sculptors will have left higher-end fossils at the bottom of their anarchic gardens. And the works of Rodin, Max Ernst or Virginia Tentindo will testify to the golden faceted eyes of our successors that the 20th and 21st centuries were not those of Jeff Koons or Anish Kapoor.

### **Nathan Grover**

Cars. So many cars. As ridiculously shaped as codpieces. To those future beings who discover them, whose vainglory will of course take its own ridiculous shape, our petrified cars will seem particularly hexed. They'll be known as vampire fossils, because they fed so insatiably on other fossils.

### **Beatriz Hausner**

There are tiny, hence secret objects that will likely fossilize inside the layers and layers of detritus we're leaving behind. These fossil-objects will be found by our successors, who will be perfect dreamers, beings who will be visible and invisible, able to transform themselves into cyborgs, animals or people. They will find our objects and will recognize them as instruments for the transmutation of their souls.

### **Nicholas Alexander Hayes**

When the last human closes their eyes, decades, centuries, millennia will pass. Eventually a synod of cephalopods will undulate in rage as an insolent subadult presents evidence that plastic was created and manufactured by some unknown terrestrial creature. The faulty research methodology and resultant sacrilege will result in the subadult being denied tenure with the simple question – if plastics aren't natural, then why are they found everywhere in the food chain?



## Vittoria Lion

To reverberate the consensus of the scientific authorities on this matter, lots of chicken bones, and in the age of COVID I imagine animals fully physiologically capable of ingesting hand sanitizer without suffering the toxic effects of its alcohol content burrowing in abandoned hollowed-out shopping malls. Various real and hypothetical examples of a world with humans removed have been a frequent topic of perseveration for me, ranging from Dougal Dixon's *After Man*, Jeff VanderMeer's "Area X," and the radioactive ecosystem of the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone to the lyrical passage from Italo Calvino's *The Castle of Crossed Destinies* describing a ruined city where "foxes and martens wave their soft tails over the control panels." If anything is certain, any life forms that survive this mass extinction and succeed the industrial civilization that doomed us will have adapted to living among and within the wreckage of capitalist ruins, perhaps as seamlessly integrated with them as extant polar animals are with the seasonal ebb and flow of the pack ice. I wonder if animals living now, their distant ancestors, have had the realization that our world is already one of ruins. It's likely that the descendants of domesticated animals will not survive, having been bred for total dependency upon humans, and I find it rather satisfying contemplating Dixon's hypothesis that the most widespread fauna of the future will be largely descended from species currently vilified and exterminated as pests. Mammalian life has honestly become sort of tiresome, and I would love for birds to become the dominant fauna—essentially, I realize now, my childhood fantasy of a return of the dinosaurs, considering all extant birds phylogenetically are theropods. It saddens me to think that I will not be alive to see with my own eyes all the lovely forms still waiting to emerge.

If anything, it's some consolation that, speaking in terms of the Earth's broader geological history, plenty of bizarre animal forms tend to arise in quick succession following mass extinctions because evolution is essentially more or less figuring itself out, figuring out what to do with all the empty niches left behind. Additionally, I find there to be a simultaneously distressing and hilarious irony in our naming of significant fossils and museum collections after the very forces reducing our species to a fossil—for example, the aforementioned "Suncor nodosaur," the David H. Koch Dinosaur Wing at the American Museum of Natural History, the Jurassic theropod literally

christened Gasosaurus. In many ways, the dinosaur has functioned as the totem animal of the extraction-industrial complex.

### **RJ Myato**

We're a bizarre civilization. We're leaving a special kind of legacy behind: the annihilation of our own fossils. There'll be nothing left for anyone to interpret. But on a long enough timescale this is all we have, in general. The question might be: had we lasted as long as we could? The answer seems to be no, for now.

### **David Nadeau**

L'archéologue-clairvoyant de la prochaine humanité va s'interroger au sujet de l'étrange fascination exercée par la sorcellerie capitaliste, laquelle amène un enlaidissement manifeste et un rapetissement du champ sensible et imaginaire.

#### English Translation

The seer-archaeologist of the next humanity will wonder about the strange fascination exercised by capitalist witchcraft, which leads to a manifest ugliness and a shrinking of the sensory and imaginary field.

### **Juan Carlos Otaño**

I hope they are not ours! And unless history gives a fundamental reversal, which is desirable and to be expected, you can be completely sure they won't be interpreted.

### **Anthony Redmond**

What we are mostly leaving behind are the residues of burnt fossil fuels which will be interpreted by life forms of which we know nothing.

### **Tony Roehrig**

The tintinnabulation of dreams waiting to be mapped.

The calloused hands of a poet caught in the moment of striking the final blow to misery.

The released breath of the oppressed gushing forth from the dislodged

keys of Cecil Taylor's piano. Once found they will be interpreted as the missing letters to the Rosetta Stone thus allowing the rest of the doors to open.

### **Penelope Rosemont**

Fossils found in the Future: There will be an entire layer of face masks. Gibbon-people will interpret it as the result of a sudden religious revival and death cult. There always has to be a death cult or cannibals or no one is interested.

I found a lovely piece of metal on Thursday, if it is preserved the beings of the future will find a quartz imprint in limestone. It will confound them; they will consider it a magnificent piece of art and realize our civilization was higher than they thought. They will be from Mars. They will be bugs. Handsome bugs in Titanium space suits.

### **삼족오**

Memories. For our ancestors. They will be interpreted through dreams.

### **LaDonna Smith**

Our fossils will be our bones, our teeth and our hard drives. Perhaps the living will build a cathedral to the mystery of life from the refuse of our existence. Notwithstanding, the larvae that feed on our wasted organs will morph into exquisite creatures that fly.

### **Darren Thomas**

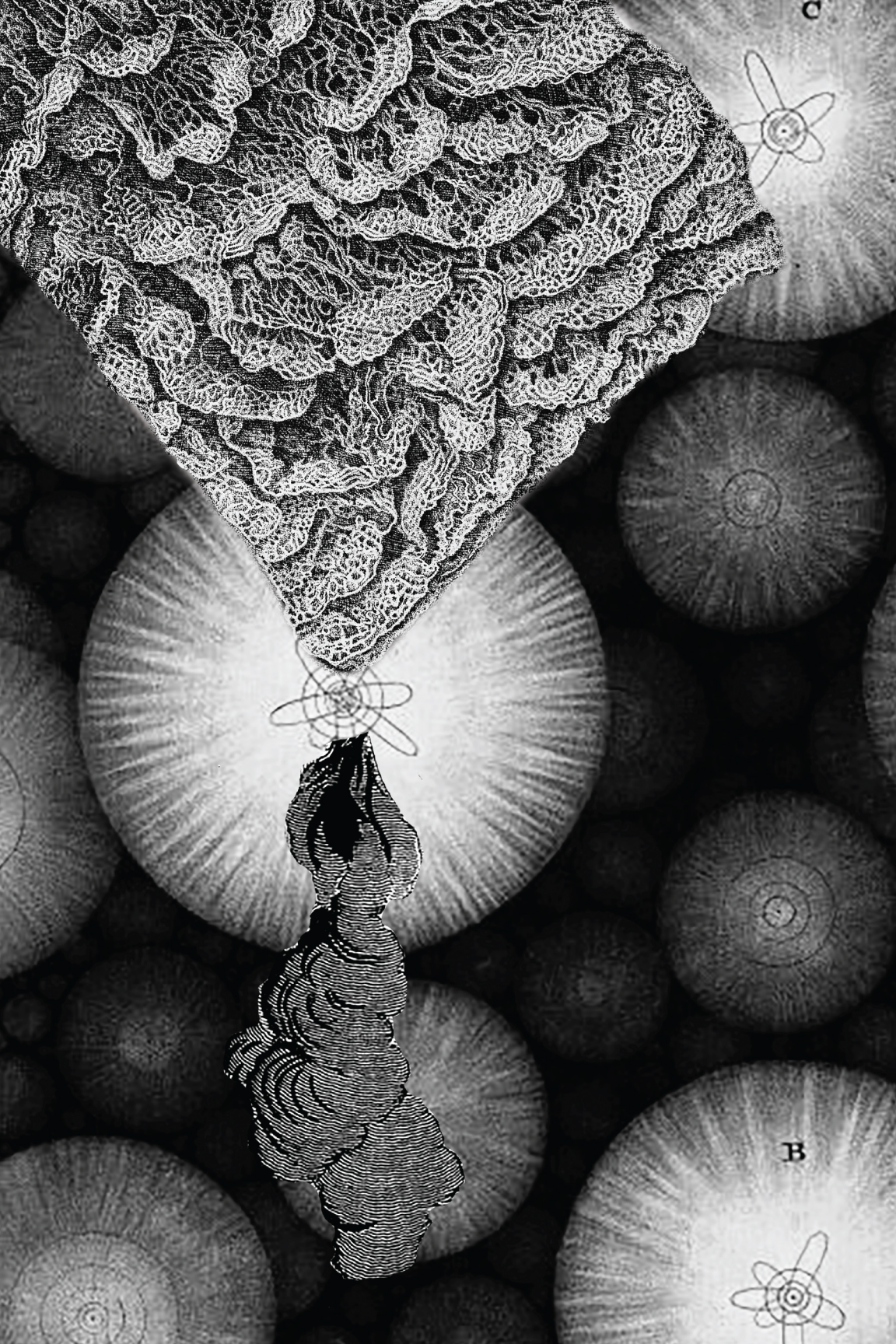
The new fossils will be all those mediated forms and the various artefacts and worlds we encounter through our screens – such as social media, streaming services such as Facebook, Netflix, YouTube and so on. Future generations will have replaced the screens with mirrors or perhaps they will realise that real life (*la vie*) is elsewhere. If I were being pessimistic, the screens would be internalised, the mirrors, too, so that the subject was constantly lost and controlled by unseen forces in a kind of hyperreal nightmare where simulated reality was indistinguishable from lived reality.



*Five of Cups*  
Aiden Kvarnström

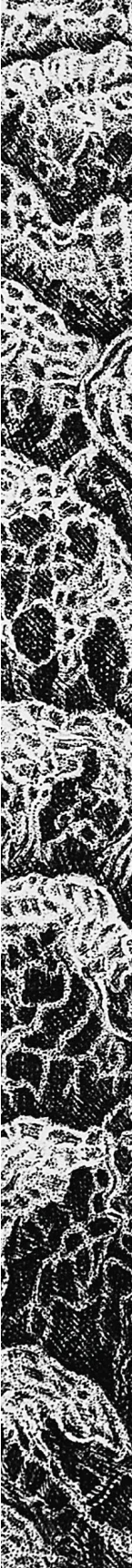
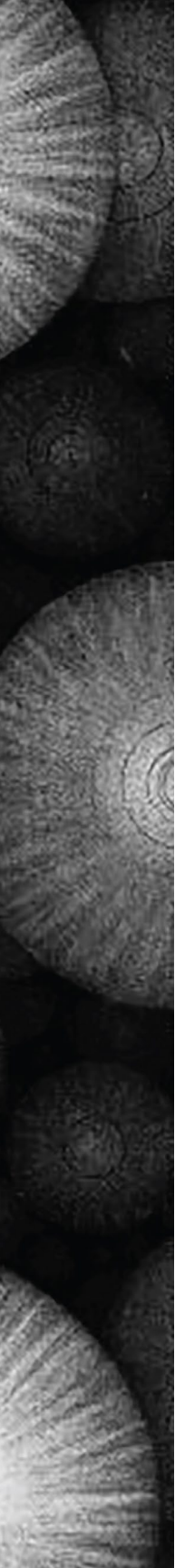


Steven Cline



# HADEAN

*What is a world, anyway? Reality is molten. The solid crust is aflame, a burning liquid that contains within itself a seared unfolding of all future contradictions. In the curlicues of fiery desire, time is unsure on its feet...*





*Metaphors of Metabeings*  
**Dolorosa de la Cruz**



# INSTANT FOSSILS OF THE FUTURE

by *Guy Girard*

*I was a man, I was a rock  
I was a rock in the man man in the rock  
I was a bird in the air space in the bird  
I was flower in the cold river in the sun  
Carbuncle in the dew*

*Fraternally alone, fraternally free  
– Paul Eluard*

It could be the subject of a new myth: the common expression that we, as well as anything or everything in the universe, are made of stardust. This very poetic expression, measured by the growth of my hair or my nails, does not leave me just a dreamer: I too come from a distant elsewhere, from the depths of a universe in full prenatal explosion on the other side of an atomic clock. Mentally retracing the course of those ages before time? If two mirrors facing each other give an exemplary image of the infinite, when I place myself between them, I reinstate the present and its spatiotemporal limits, this present in which I am only just able to break an hourglass and spread its dust over my shadow – a conjuring act to dream better and to let myself be possessed, briefly, by the totality of the ancestors that I carry in my neurons, my bone cells and my spermatozoa.

This place where I am now, at the gates of Paris, was in the secondary era covered under the waves of a tropical sea. This very slowly withdrew to give way to a vast swamp populated by gigantic saurians whose various frolics no doubt amused the already venerable dragonflies. Dinosaur fossils were unearthed under the pickaxes of workers digging the subway tunnels at the beginning of the twentieth century: paleontological knowledge had by then permeated people's minds enough so that we no longer risked mistaking these imposing remains for the relics of dragons. This

fabulous latter animal, definitely exterminated as species by the super-heroes of nascent Christianity, has no place in natural history museums, although its multiple descriptions and representations in medieval literature and imagery offer enough plausibility with respect to each other that cryptozoology enthusiasts can with quasi-pataphysical seriousness investigate the possibilities of its existence. Come, one day we will concede to such meticulous debaucheries of the epistemology of natural science the power to simulate much wider domains than the current playful spirit which still reigns in certain laboratories: linked to the overflows of the oneiric experience, these speculations help to build a machine that seeks not to merely play with time, but to open in its very perception quasi-hallucinatory dimensions—expanding the real by means of the whirlwinds of consciousness, and grappling with what could be named, without superfluous anguish, the eternal return of the other.

Poetic thought never secures its empire better than when it questions itself about this other, and when exasperated by its own abyss, it provokes and urges consciousness to expand until it takes the form of the obverse of the mirror from which the other is signalling; the unknown but not the unknowable. Rimbaud's formidable assertion had already been guessed by Taliesin ("I put on a multitude of aspects / before acquiring my final form") and Paul Eluard knew how to "rock" himself to better know himself as a human. This is the initiatory adventure par excellence, in which the mind discovers itself to be the memory and guarantor of all possible metamorphosis. And can we hope to recognize some tangible traces of it in a world that is becoming more insane, more insensitive every day? The rock that was Eluard was certainly not entirely crushed to produce the mass of gravel that covers his tomb in the Père Lachaise cemetery, aggregating around him famous Stalinist carrion under their granite cubes. And Rimbaud is no more in Charleville than Taliesin is under a hillock somewhere in Wales, forgotten by all except the brambles and daffodils. No, the three of them are just as well united in some dreamlike dimension around a feast of mammoth thighs; the same mammoth whose dusty skeleton struts around in the paleontology gallery of the Jardin des Plantes. And it is enough for me to play with this idea in order that my revolt against this capitalist civilization, which believes it has already subjected all future becoming to

its miserable routines, escapes joyfully from the nihilist temptation which suffuses the air of this age.

And then, we can play a lot at the Jardin des Plantes! Try to lift, for example, the huge black meteorite that is in an alley not far from the entrance of the Great Gallery of Evolution. One would think it had fallen, not from Lucifer's pocket, but from one of those paintings by Josef Sima in which Dürer's melancholy polyhedron lurks. I have never touched this extra-terrestrial stone except with a vague feeling of dread, undoubtedly a relic of the great sacred fears which must have seized my ancestors the Gauls and a few others, when they saw the sky beginning to fall on their heads. Isn't it in one of his novels that Abraham Merritt imagines that a Kraken-shaped monster sleeps in just such a rock? Stone of great mystery, in which, too, could be stuck the sword Excalibur or the rapier of the Chevalier de Pardailan; but upon which, above all, no temple is ever to be built! Instead, let's dig a bathtub for Marat-le-Mélusin...

Digging: that old Parisian habit. The geological nature of the subsoil lends itself admirably to this, made mainly of limestone and gypsum mined for centuries in underground quarries, part of which have become the catacombs and ossuary. A legendary labyrinth which could have served as a refuge for many refractory to the law and order reigning on the surface, and in which the prodigious imagination of Gaston Leroux located the utopia of the people of the Talpas. These came to settle there in the middle ages to flee feudal iniquity, and in this dark underground, in these twists and turns of time, formed the kind of communist society one always dreams of seeing flourish under the sun. Premonitory fossils of the social future? If they welcomed, during the Belle Epoque, Théophraste Longuet, the ridiculous hero of Leroux, will these mole-people soon have the chance to receive among them some delegation of the yellow vests who have come to take shelter from the police and observe the mores of an emancipated society?

To imagine such a situation could lead to the invention of a new subversive game within the Surrealist Movement: it would be a question of building simulacra of fossils, which would be the fossils of a utopia that could have existed somewhere in the past or which might exist in an anterior future. Hey, what if we found, for example while excavating in Hauterives, near the Ideal Palace of Postman Cheval, the (very well pre-

served!) fossil of one of those anti-lions dreamed of by Fourier? Or even by digging less than six meters deep somewhere near Houston, where Victor Considerant had attempted to found a phalanstery, we might have a good chance of finding the richly decorated tombs of the phalansterians, and we could see, unsurprisingly, that these skeletons are equipped with the requisite extra bones that form the archibras. It would be interesting to make such objects and then either put them into circulation, to sharpen our imaginations, or bury them in suitable places for the future revelation of their disconcerting mystery. Like paleontology, archeology is worth hijacking for surrealist purposes.

We remember the photographs of Raoul Ubac showing the fossils of the Stock Exchange or the Paris Opera: the critical dimension that this entailed, by denouncing the deadly nature of these famous monuments of a detestable society, asks to be pursued again with renewed means. But hasn't industrial civilization gotten a few millennia ahead of us in dispersing its own long-lived fossils around the world: nuclear waste? And yet aren't the phosphorescent covers of the issues of the journal *Surrealism* in the service of the revolution (*Surréalisme au service de la révolution*) slightly (very slightly) radioactive?

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It has often happened to me in my dreams that I find myself in exuberant landscapes, kinds of tropical jungles, inspired by the cinema. But I now remember an old dream, during which I was led to kill mammoths, armed only with a very long pin. It seems that progress in the field of genetic manipulation would make it possible to "resuscitate" this extinct species of pachyderms. But global warming would of course be fatal to them once again; as well as the woolly rhinoceros, whose sheared product would however make it possible to weave some beautiful rugs and knit carmagnoles. This is undoubtedly what our ancestors of the Paleolithic era were concerned with when they did not draw exquisite corpses on the walls of their caves. They were certainly not bored, and we know they had the chance, over several millennia, to be able to make love with voluptuous Neanderthals and libidinous Cro-Magnons: would that I could at least one night in a dream know the delights of a Neanderthal woman! A way of replaying,

at least for my pleasure and my edification, a primitive scene obscured from generation to generation, since racism was invented and the priests reshaped the fable of the earthly paradise.

In a series of dreams, the memory of which still inspires me, I was led to visit or explore in immense rather gloomy undergrounds, the remains of an unknown civilization. It had reached a significant level of technical development, judging by the wreckage of machinery whose usefulness completely escaped me, such that I did not understand the hieroglyphic writings carved on the walls. There were a series of doors that I did not go through: I nevertheless knew in one of the most recent of these dreams that the final door opened into Agarththa, that mythical city that captured my attention at the time. Of course, these dreamlike images are dependent on readings of science fiction novels and comics, of popular culture feeding on the myths and legends of Atlantis, Eldorado, Shangri-la. They are also nourished by the more or less strong sensations received during visits to abandoned factories and industrial ruins. At a certain level of emotionality and active reverie, can we not perceive these ruins as those of a sunken city emerging from the depths of time, or even from parallel time? André Breton, in the 1930s, asserted that no factory would ever offer the imagination the poetic turmoil delivered by ruined castles; my friends, the surrealists of Madrid, however, see with melancholy jubilation – and I am not far from sharing their opinion – in these happily disaffected industrial prisons places now suitable for poetic adventure. Places that if haunted, are haunted by the golem of capitalist exploitation. We can also observe that this, to conjure the doubtless guilty curses of this phantasmal monster, now takes on the form of the cultural industry: how many old steel factories or mine sites are now museums of the industrial revolution where memories and testimonies of the workers' struggles of yesteryear are carefully watered down if not erased!

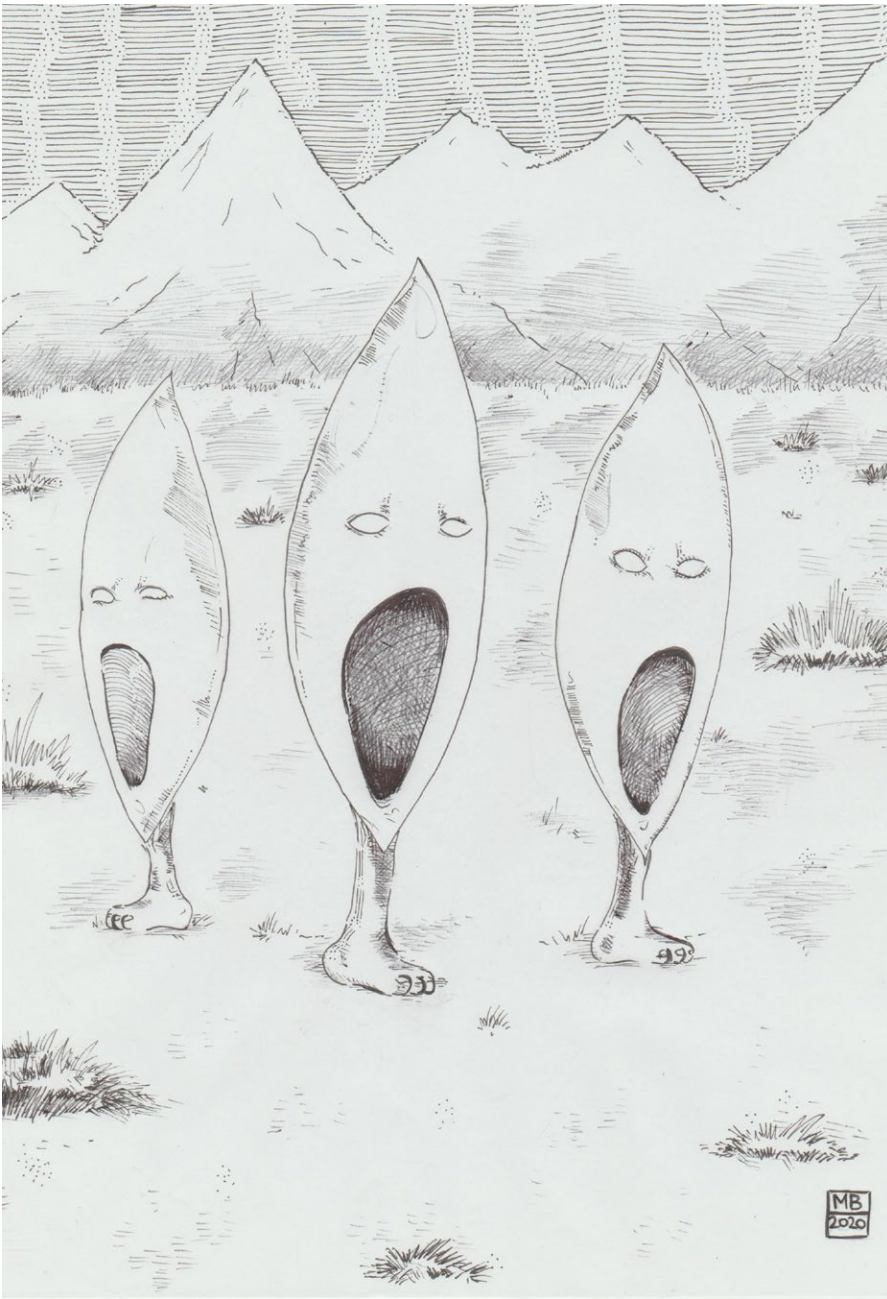
Nowadays, except for those who work there, places of production are becoming invisible, whether they are relocated deep within China or across the ring road, into areas neutralized by their unambiguous functionality. But all the rest of the geographical space becomes a cultural commodity, where the lure of brief possession is sold to herds of consumers, tourists and onlookers in these pilgrimages of reification. One of the first exam-

ples of this was the organized visits, barely ten years after Waterloo, to the famous battlefield. Here the reward of the visit was manifested in the discovery of a fragment of a shell or a rusty saber. What would those brave bourgeois of that time have said if a joker had sown the grounds with one or two hundred copies of Napoleon's famous hat? Humor, no doubt, which could have come from a Belgian surrealist and accompanied by the rain of men wearing bowler hats in the Brussels suburbs. Of these men, who nowadays have simply changed their clothing to put on what Wilhelm Reich called their "character armor", one feels only disgust when fascinated by the ideologues of biopower and the technocrats of transhumanism, they propose to subdivide eternity like a seaside resort, forever shareable with the combined progress of neurosciences, biochemistry and robotics. Relieved of its mechanistic outlines, the human-machine always tries to offer itself a future in the image of its present, where death, quantifiable as it is at all levels of the economy, from the domestic puzzle to the renewed spectacle of world epidemics, must nevertheless become more and more abstract, and more and more unthinkable, become unreal even and thus, be abolished. Also, because we have the desire and the urgency to change life more than ever, we have to observe on the contrary the presence of death as a fact of nature, the better to get rid of the civilized curses of Thanatos, whether it be in the overwhelming memento mori of Christians or the role of the death drive in the dynamics of the reality principle. Jean Benoît's Necrophile still prowls the streets and rooms we pass through. And this sentence from the first Manifesto of Surrealism still remains very enigmatic: "Surrealism will introduce you into death which is a secret society." On the way to Arcanum 17, there is the Nameless Arcanum, which so aptly illustrates the surrealist search for instant fossils of human becoming.

July 21-27, 2020



**Benjamin Défossez**



*The Times Of The Apuju*  
**Maurizio Brancaleoni**



# PITFALLS OF SPACETIME CARTOGRAPHY

*by Mattias Forshage*

*To what extent, or in what sense, are we contemporary with other ages in Earth's history?*<sup>1</sup> So how do we map that? Is chronology necessary?<sup>2</sup> Are we sitting in little observatories sticking up in an ocean of green looking for signs at the horizon that inspire us to go under and end up somewhere unexpected? Or are there very specific networks and very specific relationships of proximity that are phenomenological and associative rather than spatial or temporal? Are spatiality and temporality as such subject to a passionate geography? What is an accurate map?

Indeed, these are among the most interesting questions, and cannot be definitively answered. I'm immediately heading off on sidetracks: I will pick up three loose ends: a childhood memory, theories of evolution, and the question of writing stories.

When I was a child, my dinosaur books had early on taught me the chronology of the Mesozoic: the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous were as natural a sequence as morning, midday & evening. But I was somewhat less interested in human history and didn't have the right literature, so for a long time I couldn't quite get the chronology straight there. I knew the Stone age was very long ago, and I knew the Roman age (as depicted in *Astérix*) was long ago.

But I couldn't figure out when the Cowboy age and the Knight age fitted in (those were the two eras where most films and comics played out), they just didn't seem logically connected to each other. Clearly, the Knight age was more developed, with big castles, elaborate clothes, strange weapons, and rigid social organisation. But then at some point, an adult told me that the Cowboy age actually came after the Knight age, and that indeed the Cowboy age was not so long ago, it was in fact late 19th century.

I couldn't believe it. Late 19th century was recent, it was civilised, it had science, it had urbanism, it had electricity and a lot of technology, it had music, literature and art, which were obviously not around in the world of the wild west. So any linear progression that would pass through the present and lead on to the Science Fiction age, would clearly have to have gone from the Cowboy age to the Knight age and not vice versa. There must be some mistake, the barbarism of the wild west just couldn't follow upon the brilliant display of medieval court culture.

Those are the kind of stubborn illusions created by the notion of linear progression. And of course, by the universalisation of certain settings that popular culture loves to dwell on, creating the assumption that medieval court culture was a global general situation and not just a European upper-class thing, or that wild west culture was a universal step that civilisation went through and not just a North American frontier thing (both with some historical parallels for sure, but not universal stages).

Ordering issues aside, the conclusion that should have been drawn but wasn't, was that popular culture tends to actualise all kinds of different historical situations side by side. One could be a celtic pagan in the morning, a dinosaur watcher at midday, and a cowboy villain in the evening. But if all ages are accessible, it is very important that time is still not a flat landscape. Movement still involves wonder and implies meaning. And meaning draws on history. Stratigraphy, or chronology, still makes a lot of sense, since things tend to be understandable only in terms of their origin, of their historical development, and of the contradictions with the specific contemporary uses for particular purposes.

All these things developed. First you see that development, then you find mechanisms that would bring it about. Just as that old romanticist idealist giant Hegel (in the most famous version of the story, which does make a lot of sense) had it all outlined but Marx & Engels found a way that his sense of development could actually work in practice, romantic biologists in dozens, most famously nowadays Lamarck and Goethe but most elaborately and for contemporaries most influentially Lorenz Oken, had a clear view of the history, the transformation, of the organism world being its most crucial aspect, but Darwin and Wallace found a way that this sense of development could actually work in practice.

There is in fact a long tradition of romantics, swedenborgians and occultists in biology who happily embrace evolution, but just can't accept the purposeless and multidirectional evolution as described by Darwin and Wallace, they believe that evolution must have a direction and a purpose, that it must progress according to certain values, and go from simple to complex, from raw to elaborate, on a route towards perfection, illumination and/or dominion.<sup>3</sup>

Of course the notion of a unidirectional process is not just a cul-de-sac but it's also methodologically and morally unsound. The elements of undeterminedness and chance, of chaotic overdetermination, of expectancies and the complex connections of desire, of tipping points and emergent effects, are typically the more interesting parts, and the most common patterns are just empirical facts of statistical convergences favouring a simplicity that is in most cases nothing but a special case of the reigning complexity. And this is in itself a case in point, since such reduction and simplicity are very often the outcome of an evolutionary process rather than complexity and any sense of "advancedness" or "superiority" if the terms are taken in any other sense than merely chronological...<sup>4</sup>

Writing moves in all directions too. It is game-like and in a sense metonymical, you could go from anywhere to anywhere. Foreign places are foreign eras, odd moments in time are odd locations, and they can be reached. So where do we go? It's not inconsequential, it matters. It's not a Markov chain walk; just because things are accessible they're not necessarily equally accessible. Even if you can get anywhere in principle, you still have to make a certain effort to go there, and for those movements that are less than overdetermined it might not seem like it's worth the effort. You will have to offer up your desire and capabilities and work your way there. And something unexpected might turn up on the way. And you might realise that in some sense you're not the same person once you're there as you were before, and there is no real turning back.<sup>5 6</sup>

Indeed, real fantasies do rarely fit a storyline progressing in a linear manner. Of course, many of the things you imagine are background stories to what you saw before, or series of preambles and postfact commentaries, but that is something they know in classical novels and in Hollywood too. You don't have to be unidirectional or straight to be linear. But more strik-

ingly, many of the things you imagine are seemingly freefloating, easy or not to interpret as variations and interpretations of what you saw before, just different potentialities getting their chance, or continuations starting anew ignoring wherever you seem to have ended up before. The so-called “true function of thought” reinterprets and revisits and is capable of holding up several versions at once. If storytelling to a certain extent needs a linear structure, it certainly does not have to be a unilinear one. There are always different possibilities. What comes later might draw upon different versions of the past. It might invite different suggestions from the future. The seemingly unrelated events start finding their connections. And big dinosaurs start turning up, or medieval troubadours. And not. Or you find yourself splashing in the famous primordial soup. Which implies that you may not be finding yourself. And things were not what they seemed to be anywhere. And they weren’t what they turned out to be. And yet they were. As this multilinearity is very obviously possible in storytelling<sup>7</sup>, it can be noted that it is a distinct possibility in everyday life too, though usually discarded by Occam’s razor or “realistically” by pragmatic “farmers’ rationalism” or rigid “common sense” ideology. But if you look at it closely, the “simple version” is something that is expected and therefore imposed on experience, not something that is actually there in the material, so that once you start presupposing less assumptions, there are more options opening as to how to connect the elements and structure experience.

The spontaneous structure of experience is highly approximate, and does not rigidly stick to the almanach. Things may have started somewhere and continue at some very different route. Experience of course has its own selection mechanism, in that stuff which isn’t interesting enough will be left behind rather than built further upon, but at the same time much of the most interesting will be abandoned too for various psychological and practical defense reasons, and will come back to haunt us as symptoms (in this particular context they will become the analog of fossils then). Like evolution, experience has a chaotic sense of direction and does not have an a priori sense of progress. It is a matter of choice whether to impose a strict sense of allegedly realistic chronology to it and struggle to let the past remained buried, or to investigate and restructure ones experience, by means of imagination. An integral part of experience, it is also in many ways an engine

of experience, providing many of the opportunities to reinterpret, go back, find that which was overlooked, turn upside down, stay in the eye of the storm, change the outcome of things. Imagination has the particular way of being able to abandon the uninteresting and to go in all directions and to choose between the easy ways and the overly complicated, or painful, or yet undetermined, or heaven-storming. No doubt, following the imagination is the crucial element of structuring experience in a way so as to be an active adventure of investigating possibilities and changing the framework of one's actions, making other actions possible, and thus potentially changing history. History is there to be changed, not to be passively read.

So: is chronology necessary? Yes, indeed, but it's not given, it comes as a result of our investigation and interpretation and our continuation of it, we create it, as we weave it together and are being created by it, with voluntary and involuntary contributions.<sup>8</sup> We don't write history on a whim, but out of our desire as to what we want to understand, what we long to make out of it. So the history textbook and the novel are both in a sense just attempts to reconstruct chronology, with much more data to corroborate with in the history book than in the novel. And the paleontology textbook is somewhere inbetween the two. I'm not saying paleontology is half-fiction, but then I'm not saying fiction is necessarily fiction either...<sup>9</sup> It has to go according to its own necessities. You have a certain amount of input that you need to account for or "stay true to", and you have your method to follow, and you have to make it look a bit like a story. If you want it to remain accessible to others you might keep caring about that effort to make it look a bit like a story. But when it concerns life as such, it will probably benefit the dynamics of living if you loosen that ambition. Stay true to your input, your method, and your efforts to make sense of it afterwards, but don't make too much of an effort to squeeze it into the story frame, and even more importantly, do not replace the experience with the story about it. Different loci in time will retain their voices and comfort and provoke you.

A story hesitatingly writes us. We keep guessing, so we keep living. Living experience is then a genre of paleontology, a speculative reconstruction with some brilliant tools and particular criteria of truth. While imagination kidnaps us to different places and ages, and different senses of place and age. Thus it's also true that paleontology is living experience.

## Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> *Number one in the Peculiar Mormyrid questionnaire on Deep Time.*

<sup>2</sup> *I have had one or two friends who enjoyed quoting Lenin as saying "Is chronology necessary? No!" I'm not sure what the guy means (if the quote is accurate). Maybe just that it's more important to make history than to write it. But they're not all that separate, you know.*

<sup>3</sup> *Actually, many accounts of evolutionary theory in popular science, and especially in popular culture, and especially in North America but also in France, are unable to see this difference. They believe they are sticking to the Darwinian version when they are actually teaching the romantic-occult version (there was, for a while, an allegedly non-religious version of this idealist framework called "Orthogenesis" which was particularly popular among American biologists but then abandoned by the scientific community) that evolution always goes from low to high, from simple to complex, from ugly to beautiful, from clumsy to effective, from defenseless to conquering, and thus from passivity to dominion. We're lucky that the Christians don't realise that a lot of people already believe in a version of evolution that is congruent with theirs, and that many of the Christian propagandists, again at least in North America, stick to the obviously stupid story of Creationism that will satisfy very few.*

<sup>4</sup> *It is extremely common that a population that finds itself in a situation of rapid evolution (small population size, island populations, new niche, host switch, protected environment etc) starts shredding all unnecessary morphological or functional complexity: flightless birds, pale and blind cave organisms, parasites with an ever-decreasing array of bodyparts altogether... On the other hand, there is often an intricate genetic complexity coding for this reduction into morphological or functional simplicity. But another case in point might be salamanders, who tend to have among the largest genomes of all animals, while having retained the generalised morphology and physiology from when they evolved back in the Carboniferous or so, before other tetrapod morphologies familiar today. So they were never reduced but just stayed simple, and still they have these vast amounts of genetic information. Which, according to geneticists, is largely repetitive "junk DNA", nonsense and redundant extra copies which they seem to have a lack of mechanisms to get rid of. Which may, in turn, create adaptation difficulties and physiological restrictions responsible for the overall critical situation for so many salamander species today. Which one represents advanced simplicity? The hyper-slimmed near-nothingness of parasites en route to embodying the tale of the wizard who conjured away himself, abandoning body for information system like the wet dream of a contemporary*

*virtuality-enthusiast, or the selfdestructive wisdom-like ultrarapid-colossus genetically-obese calmness of the mysterious salamanders?*

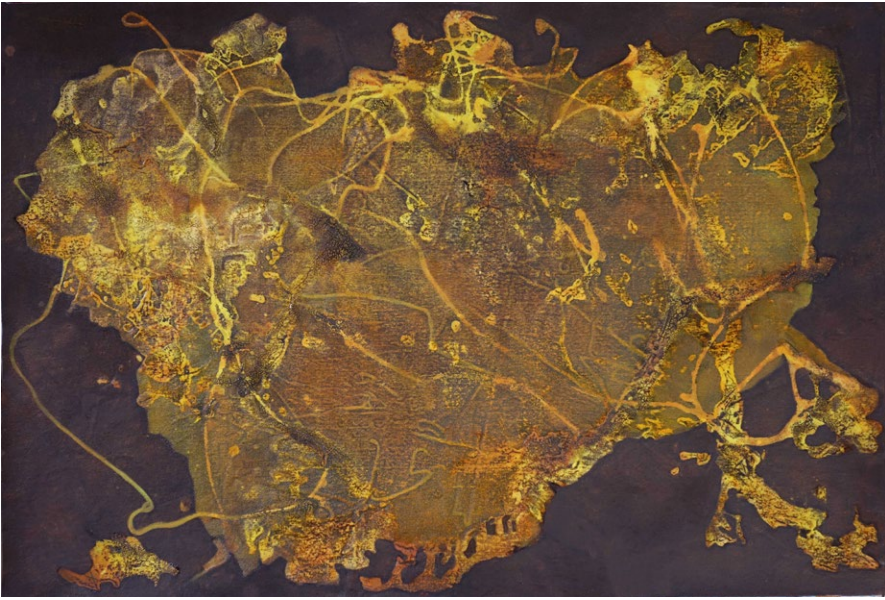
<sup>5</sup> *If you want to stick to the rules of French classicism you could of course hold on to staying in one place and following a linear 1:1 chronology. But it did always seem strange why anyone would want to do that, when you can explore any place in spacetime and any sequence of events you are curious about, and you can find yourself having ended up there without any conscious effort. Unless you actually want to invoke claustrophobia, which you might have some particular reason for.*

<sup>6</sup> *At times, I've felt a certain hostility towards metonymic movements in general, just because the emphasis on it in the poststructuralist/postmodernist spectrum tended to highlight this very qualitative nivellation: yes, you could go anywhere from anywhere, and all things were equally unique and equally different so there were no qualitative differences between different loci in practice and there was no such thing as improvement or an ascending movement. Of course, it was a mistake blaming metonymy as such for this, but this was a worthwhile mistake that led to some quite productive investigation and polemics around the metonymy/metaphor relationship together with Merl Fluin, in her "Laws of Motion" pdf and in the resulting long debate about dialectics on the Robber Bridegroom blog back in 2006.*

<sup>7</sup> *Actually, the possibility of a non-unilinear linearity is less obvious in poetry, since poetry tends to be more universally simultaneous, the movements in scale and time are in a sense already there in the sum of associations that form the poetic content.*

<sup>8</sup> *One might squeeze in the reminder here that this recalls the argument why "eternal surrealism" in Schuster's sense is impossible. Sure, we find examples of some sense of objective surrealism everywhere in history, but we can do so only as surrealists, because we embody the surrealist perspective and tradition and take it upon ourselves to reveal this invisible continuity. Without a surrealist activity to recognise this tradition for its own surrealist purposes, such a tradition does not exist in any particularly meaningful sense, and it becomes an inconsequential issue to squabble among academics and critics about criteria for (or not even criteria but merely their unqualified gut feeling).*

<sup>9</sup> *Well, in this sense, some types of fiction are "mere fiction", if it is formula-based, audience-adapted, skill-posturing, or novelty-showcasing – but not if it actually imagination-based (– or purely chance- or game-conjured and imagination-completed), which is a type of truth.*



*Archeology of the Unconscious*  
**Kathleen Fox**





# ERA OF THE BLONDE

*by Lake*

*“But time is like a river... and history repeats...”*

– Secret of Mana

The blonde is an absent-minded creature. For her, the running waters of the river Time flow not downstream to a future sea, but lap endlessly on the sandy shores of the beach she makes her habitat.

It is so for all blondes, whether they know it or not. Few know their own history. We are forgetful animals. From the horde of doll-babies borne of viking rapists, to the Lepiska Saçlı Çerkes praised by Turkish poets for their beauty, to the curly-haired angels dark as Africa born on their Solomon Islands paradise—we don’t even remember being one people, let alone our most ancient traditions.

The natural philosopher spackles us with pedant spit and lies about the universe forming from aether precipitations, accretions of stratified mana, and the spontaneous generation and transmutation of vitalistic alchemies, but we who are wise fools speak the truth without knowing it—absent-minded as we are. The mythology of the fair-haired is rich in automatic traditions.

Allow me to introduce a clarifying tenant of modern science. I refer not to such nonsense as Einstein’s relativity—why would I, based as it is on such nonsense as the math of imaginary numbers, instead of the oneiric numbers of the one true math as you will remember it from your dreams?—I speak of angels.

The heavenly host is less a host than an indolent *harem* out of Europe’s finest Orientalist tradition—but here the concubines have no other master than each other—for you see, the angels alone created the universe, and they have assured me, there is no God. They should know. Androgynous boys in long white dresses is all there is, strumming harps to lend an atmosphere of serenity to their opium den.

Did I say they created the universe? Forgive my brain-fog, I had a blonde moment. The angels never finish anything. They started the uni-

verse, got a bit frazzled, laid it aside to dabble with side-projects, then became so transfixed their dalliances became the main thing of creation. Their attention faltering again and again, they hop project to project with nothing in their portfolio but endless rough drafts of what the universe might one day look like.

What else could explain lives such as ours, so full of meaningless digressions, plot holes, overwrought detail, and a total ignorance of what parts are worth attention? To say nothing of the pacing! Perhaps ours is a fanfic universe derived from a much more interesting draft left unfinished by a great but undisciplined talent—a universe whose nature is discovered chiefly by scientists and mathematics seems rather like the product of an inhuman fanboy nerd. Perhaps, with a little effort, we may read the enchantments still faintly legible in the palimpsest's background.

So—the history of the universe as it appears in a properly artistic draft—it begins not with the chaos and darkness of myth, nor the orgasmic release of energy ascribed to the big bang, but purity. Upon the off-white linen of an unbleached canvas taugth upon the stretcher bars globs of gesso were poured, the starkness of the absorbent chalk and gypsum bound by acrylic resin polymer. The pristine substance is spread to the ends of the universe (in alternating vertical and horizontal coats, to prevent lapping) knowing itself to be but a primer for the pigments that are to follow.

Only then will darkness intrude upon the universe as Carbon Black (PBk7) assaults the pristine gesso at its moment of greatest vulnerability! To the aid of the defenseless gesso goes pure Titanium White (PW6). Though innocence is lost (the plain, though protected, will never again be quite as absorbent) the battle against light and dark proceeds less as conflict and destruction, than a value study revealing shades of gray. The universe takes shape as a grisaille rather than a verdaccio because the people to be really aren't that important in the grand scheme of things.

Life is brought to the universe as the primary colors begin to balance—Aapthole Red (PR112), Nickel Azomethine yellow (PY150), and Pthalo Blue (PB15:3)—for although the red-yellow-blue tripartite color model is a Newtonian dogma leftover from an ignorant era the dinosaurs of the art world refuse to let be superseded by a reasonable acknowledgment of

saturation costs and the improvement in gamut afforded by a wide range of bright synthetics—it's the values that matter, anyway.

And yet, the dark lord, Dioxazine purple (PV23) appears on the palette, darker than the darkest carbon black! She—if indeed it is a she—seduces anything she touches with a rich gay hue that blackens all it touches—the gothic magic working its way through the pallet till the colors are reduced to crimson, amber, and navy—wait, it's too dark to see anything! God damnit, I've got to start over. But now the texture of the canvas is all fucked up, what a pain in the ass...

Forget it. The angels got tired of painting.

So, when a mommy universe and a daddy universe love each other very much, they get together and oppose the marriage rights of the queer universes to mask the insecurity they feel at their own relationship instability in the face of disaster capitalism—and so with no time to fuck, they act like little baby universes and throw a political tantrum, failing in their role as agents of social reproduction.

Nah, too close to home.

The universe began as a nice yeasty bread. It was a sour dough. Or rather, a particular attempt at a sour dough. The lump's been in the freezer a while, hopefully it'll be fine. We have to bake the universe. Oh, no! Forget about this stupid universe, let's brew it into a beer! Just be careful, last time a cider was attempted, grandpa went blind drinking it.

Ever seen that anime, *Angel's Egg*? So, that was a thing.

# DEEP TIME, NO TIME, OUT OF TIME

*by Merl Fluin*

Any conception of deep time has to imagine time as linear. Depth as such involves a top and a bottom and a plumb line dropping between.

That's also how we experience time in the everyday. It's linear: it flows from past to present to future. It passes, perhaps at varying speeds, but always in the same direction. We are born, we live, we die; that's the flight of time's arrow.

Deep time is just a distant point on the flight path behind us. Unimaginably distant, sure; but behind us, indubitably.

Or then again...

In this short essay I'm going to suggest two things. First, that when you get down to a certain layer of reality – let's call it a “deep” layer, just for fun, although “depth” is as elusive here as elsewhere – there is no deep time, because in fact there's no time at all. Second, that although we humans can't access that layer of reality through our senses, we might be able to intuit it when we enter certain states of consciousness.

## **1. There's No Such Thing As Time**

*And it's a clear world, windswept and full of beauty as the crests of mountains; as beautiful as the cracked lips of adolescents.*

“Beautiful as...” These aren't the words of a Surrealist poet; they are from *The Order Of Time*, a short book by Carlo Rovelli. The “clear world” he is describing is quantum mechanics – a world of arid beauty.

Rovelli is not just a wildly popular pop science writer, but also the director of the quantum gravity research group at Aix-Marseille University. *The Order Of Time* is his follow-up to *Reality Is Not What It Seems*, in which he explains quantum theory for a lay audience, including some general outlines of his own cutting-edge research. Both books have been international bestsellers.

Let me try to summarise his argument in these two books. Please bear in mind that this is a (grossly) simplified explanation by a non-scientist of an argument that had already been (elegantly) simplified for non-scientists. You're peering at this picture through multiple layers of candy floss. I'll do my best.

### *Panta Rhei*

In *Reality Is Not What It Seems*, Rovelli paints a portrait of quantum reality that boils down to three essential concepts: granularity, indeterminacy and relationality. He lucidly explains the discoveries and theories behind each, but for our purposes I'll fast-forward to the conclusions:

- **Granularity:** Nothing in nature is continuous. There is no infinity and no eternity. Everything is granular, and there is always a minimum “grain” size beneath which things cannot shrink. This state of affairs includes gravity, which in turn means that spacetime is not the stretchy, rubbery sheet of continuous stuff familiar from pop science imagery. Instead, spacetime is a network of grains of gravity, all looped together like a kind of mesh or chainmail.
- **Indeterminacy:** Everything is fluctuating. Electrons disappear, and then reappear in unpredictable places. In the periods between each appearance, they are in a kind of nowhere, dispersed across a “cloud of probabilities”. This applies not just to electrons but to all physical entities, including spacetime itself.
- **Relationality:** Things become concrete only when they interact with other things. Electrons materialise out of the cloud of probabilities when they come into interaction with something else. This too applies to spacetimes, which can be spoken of in the plural when they are dispersed in the cloud of probabilities.

One of the upshots of all this is that reality is a network of events. What looks to us like an object – a tarot card, a green mountain, a galaxy – is just a relatively long and monotonous event. Quantum reality is nothing but change.

Another upshot is that our everyday understanding of time goes out of the window. Spacetime is a network of grains of gravity; it's not an arrow, but a mesh.

So why is it that we experience time as a linear “flow”, from past to present to future?

Rovelli's answer to this question – briefly sketched in *Reality Is Not What It Seems*, and then elaborated at length in *The Order Of Time* – is that humans are rubbish at perceiving what reality is really like. Our linear experience of time is the result of our fuzzy perceptual system.

### *Time's Arrow*

Here's Rovelli's argument about time. Ordinarily we talk about the world using words, but words are too messy and imprecise for physics. Physics uses not words but mathematics to investigate and portray the universe. And despite what verbal language might say about the passage of time, in fact none of the equations in physics gives any indication that time moves forwards like an arrow.

None, that is, with one exception. There is one equation that is unidirectional – i.e. that distinguishes between past and future, and cannot be run backwards as well as forwards. It is the equation for entropy. Entropy is about heat: it is unidirectional because heat passes from a hot body to a cold one, but never vice versa.

Now, “entropy” is increasing disorder. If time's arrow can only be found in entropy, this means that time's arrow is a progression from less disorder (low entropy) to more disorder (high entropy). Think of the moving molecules in a cup of hot water. They become increasingly disordered as they move around, like a pack of cards being shuffled.

Time = increasing disorder. “Things fall apart,” as a famous magician once put it.

This is where the problem of human perception comes in. What counts as “more” or “less” disordered? It all depends on the order you were expecting to see in the first place.

Arrange your little stack of Major Arcana into numerical order from 0 to 21, and then shuffle them. When you've finished shuffling, the cards

will seem disordered to you, because you're looking at the numbers. But the process of shuffling them will have put them into another kind of order – arranged by the colours in the images, or shapes formed by your invisible thumbprints on the paper, or the DNA configurations of bacteria along the cards' edges, or any other thing. They're not really disordered; they're just in a new order that you can't see, because you don't know what you're looking for.

The same applies to the molecules fizzing around in that cup of hot water. We go looking for a *particular* or *special* order among the molecules, and that order seems to fall apart as the molecules cool down. But in principle, any configuration of the molecules can constitute a “particular” or “special” order. It's just that we can't see the details that reveal the order in the new configuration.

If we could see the details clearly, then no one configuration of the molecules would seem any more special or particular than any other, and entropy would not appear. We perceive increasing disorder – entropy – because our blurred, fuzzy perception makes us unable to distinguish between different forms of order.

So entropy is a product of humans' blurred perception of reality. Which means that time itself is a product of our blurred perception of reality. We experience time's arrow because we're too short-sighted to see properly.

### **Interlude: You Can't Square The Circle**

I imagine you fidgeting in your seat about now, because you've thought of a killer objection. In fact you thought of it way back there – way down there – at my very first paragraph.

Aha! you cry. But what about all those philosophical traditions that conceive of time as cyclical, from Nietzsche's eternal return to the Hindu yugas to the Big Bounce? Those are conceptions of deep time, all right. A single yuga, for example, is 4.32 million years, and there are four of those per cycle, and a thousand cycles per aeon.

I've got two replies to that.

First, cyclical time is linear time. A circle is just a curved line. Even if you think of time as a really big circle, it's still always moving in the same



direction until it gets back to the beginning. It has to complete one cycle before it starts the next. It doesn't flip clockwise and anti-clockwise like a swingboat ride at the fairground.

Second, even if you believe in cyclical time, I'll bet my (linear) life that you don't actually experience everyday time that way. You might believe in reincarnation, but in the here and now you're still hurtling towards death, and you're going to have to experience that death before you find out whether and where you'll be reborn. You might believe in karma, but you can't go back and redo the bits of your life that you've already fluffed this time around.

No. Philosophical beliefs notwithstanding, we humans experience time as linear, because our perceptual apparatus is built that way.

That applies to Rovelli's belief in quantum physics no less than to any other philosophical belief. His theory shatters time's arrow, but nevertheless he is careful not to dismiss time as an illusion. *The Order Of Things* is rather moving on this point, as Rovelli mourns friends he has lost and considers his own mortality. He is acutely sensitive to what it means for us humans to be *creatures of time*.

## **2. Time Never Arrives**

The flame burns the incense. The powder turns to smoke. The smoke rises and swirls and drifts away. The ash falls as the flame burns out. Heat turns to cold.

Entropy is a product of humans' blurred perception. We experience time's arrow because we're not in full contact with reality. Or at least, not at our current level of perceptual evolution. But in certain states of consciousness, you might intuit another order.

A shaft of sunlight captures the smoke and holds it suspended. The light becomes a vivarium. The smoke trembles and shimmers there, an exhalation from another dimension that breathes right here beside you. Reality teems beyond your apprehension.

This is how the whole cosmos begins, right now: you stand beneath a fairground ride, candy floss fills your throat, the music sticks and burns against your skin.

You think you want more reality? You've had nothing yet, so you can't have more. Or I mean you can't have less. It's very easy to have more than nothing. Well, nobody asked my opinion. But let's have some more perspective on this.

Human beings are time beings. Human consciousness is time consciousness. This is how you create the cosmos right now: you open your eyes and the vase before you erupts red.

If you think your reality is just one reality among others, you've missed the mark. If you think your consciousness is just one consciousness among others, you've missed the boat. It's sailed without you, but it's going nowhere.

You feel time's passing as a speck of life in a limitless ocean. The ocean does not exist in time; the ocean itself is not time. The ocean contains a million billion times, a million billion specks. They appear and disappear, just as time appears and disappears.

Reality has neither time nor timelessness. You walk in the forest and you're stumbling around on the wrinkled palm of a golden giant. Time rises and passes like smoke in a shaft of sunlight, but the sky remains when even the sun has fallen into entropy.

Each one of us humans is time, and all of us times are connected to one another's time, but the connection is not a line that runs backwards or forwards, up or down, deep or shallow. It's the connection of smoke to itself as it rotates in light.

This is how the cosmos creates you right now: you close your eyes and your veins chant blood.

I know that I've expressed this poorly. I apologise. Words are too messy and imprecise. I'm only a humble time being. I speak with a fleshly mouth that cannot help but grow cold.

*Because green mountains walk, they are permanent. Although they walk more swiftly than the wind, someone in the mountains does not realize or understand it. "In the mountains" means the blossoming of the entire world.*

*– Dogen, 18 October 1240 CE*

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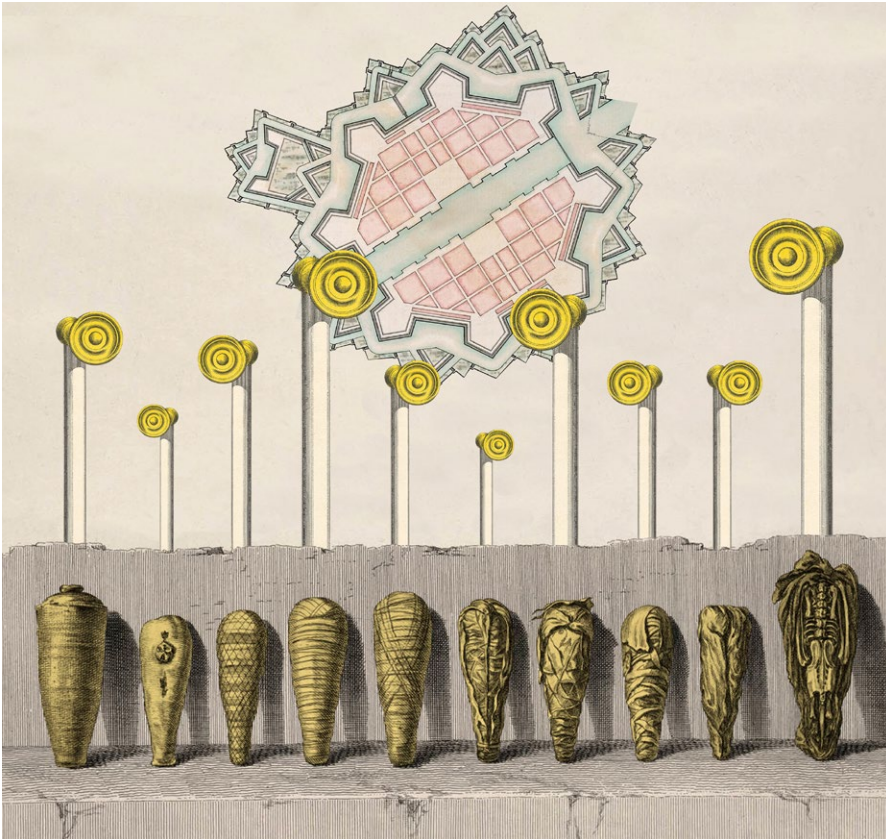
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*Parts of this essay have previously appeared on my blog at [gorgoninfurs.com](http://gorgoninfurs.com)*



Casi Cline



*L'Aérostat*  
**Dan Stanciu**



Megan Leach

# OUR WORLD, THE DREAMER

*by Casi Cline*

## **Part 1: Dissent**

There is a Time, embedded in the belly of Time, when our World still Sleeps inside the stillness inside the shuddering Deeps. Our World, lost in Sleep. So sweet, so cruel, to Sleep. The Waters roll in uneasy Dreams, in fevered Dreams and the Waters are Waters of unformed Flesh and molten Mountains and Steam. In that Time, the lonely World is waiting to wake up for the first Time at the center of Time. But the Sleep is so sweet, so cruel and deep. Even so, there came a Time when the Lightning strikes a Deal. What Deal we can only wonder and why it is that the Lightning makes a Nightmare to strike the rippling back of the Night's Mare called Sea. The World can not Wait but must run. The World does what it has never done and wakes from its sleep and opens its eyes and out comes the Sun. From the burst chest of Mare comes the faculty of Seeing, of finally Seeing what it had always only been. The World perceiving itself cannot be itself, but seeing itself, it sees itself to be beautiful. And over Time, to be many things. To be powerful, to be determined, to be strong, to be delicious, to be bitter, to be tired, to be weak, to be kind, to be angry, to be hungry, to be soft, to be in pain, to be in despair, to be insignificant, to be intolerable to itself, and to hurt itself. To be many things, fractured into many tiny Things. So many now, so many crawling outward through the Flesh of Time. If to be One is to be alone, to be Many is to be alone many Times in many ways. The Dreaming World does not perceive itself, but through the Awoken Fragments of itself which may only perceive itself as another. The Awoken Fragments may not be itself, but through the Dreaming World which may only be itself without knowing. To perceive is to be Broken. To be One is to be alone, to be Many is to be together in isolation from each other. The World is a Dreamer that yearns for the wholeness it is and cannot perceive. The World is an Awoken Horde that yearns for a wholeness it can perceive and cannot be. But, I beg your forgiveness, this

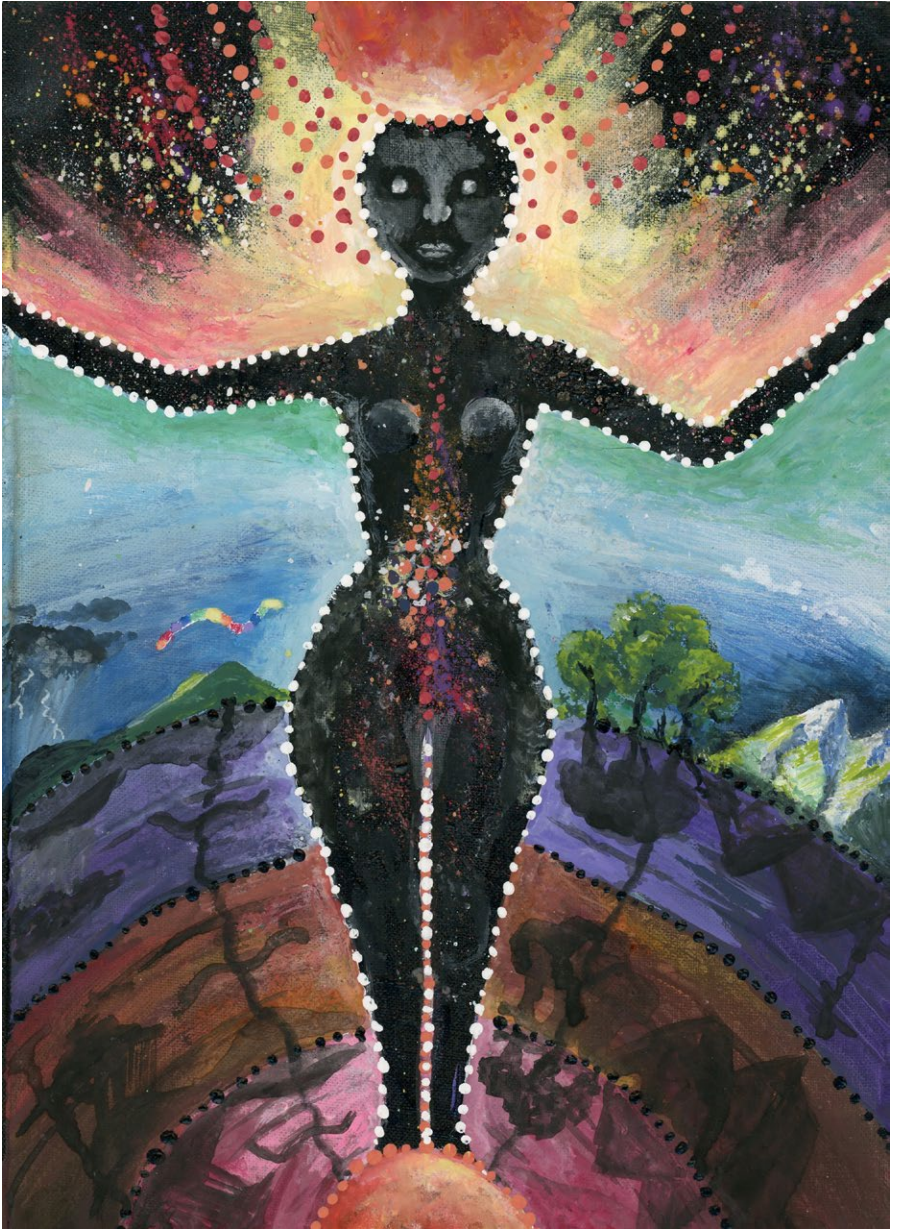
Fragment digresses. One of many digressions the World is finding itself to be, among the many things the World is finding itself to be. To be delicate, to be brave, to be vicious, to be green and purple and blue and shimmering things. To be cruel, to be sharp, to be supple, to be sad, to be sick, to be ecstatic, to be young, to be dying all alone. To be a plant, to be a mammal, to be a bird, to be a fish, to be a mother, to be a sailor, to be a philosopher, to be a ruler, to be a destroyer, to be helpless, to be regretful, and sore and prone under the weight of dread and desire unnamable and unknown. So many now, so many crawling outward through the Flesh of Time. Ahh, look now, they are so close, so close, just under the tender Skin of Time, so close to reaching the Outer Edge of Time. But wait, what of the Human, you ask? Well, I suggest you look to the Dinosaurs, and ask no more, but I know you won't. The Human has so much anger, so much grief for what the Human does. Destroy the World? Maybe we do, maybe we don't. This Fragment thinks not the World, but maybe the Human. So tragic, so foolish, yes, so wicked, so stupid. The Drive to Live, to Thrive, to Fuck, and to Eat wielded by Fragments who fancy themselves superior turns in on itself, finding nothing left to devour, devours itself. So bitter, so anguished, yes, so wasteful, so terrible. But what of it? Don't misunderstand, I make no excuse or intercession. The Human may well be damned for this abuse and other Fragments, too. The World shudders at the Wound. But, I only point out this. That it is a mistake to make the Human distinct from Nature. The Human is Nature. The Human is the way the Human is because the Human is the way Nature is. The Human is cruel because Nature is cruel. The Human is foolish because Nature is foolish. The Human is self-destructive because Nature is self-destructive. But we should know better you say! Yes, you are right, we should know better, with our big, big brains, but yet, here we are. The End of the World? No. The End of the Human? Maybe, probably. But what of it? It won't matter to us. Just ask the Dinosaurs. Don't get me wrong. I grieve, I grieve with the chests of a billion Fragments who grieve together in isolation from each other. I grieve so long and so bitterly for what we lose, so carelessly, as if it were some scrap of paper scrawled with the address of someone we've since forgotten. Yes, I grieve. But, I only point out this. The Human destroying Nature is Nature destroying Nature. We are guilty of setting the Human above Nature. We

are guilty of setting Nature above the Human. But, again, the Human is Nature. Nature is destroying itself because it is in its Nature to destroy itself. We may yet stop it. The Future Flesh of Time is always still uncertain, unmolded. But, let's just say we don't stop it. If the Human dies and many Plants and Animals and Others with it, I wonder if maybe we can find it in our Nature to forgive us? To hate ourselves is to hate Nature, and see where that got us? Can we forgive Nature its Suicide? Can we give kind words and gentle caresses to Nature on its Deathbed? Can we say, "I love you. I'm sorry," before we lose the chance forever? I suppose the final stage of grief is acceptance. Don't worry. We will fight, we will claw at the muddy edge of the abyss, we must, it's in our Nature to Live. And, yet, it is in our Nature to Die. Maybe the evening draws on apace for the Day of the Human. Maybe it's Time for the Human Fragment to be unborn, unbroken. Somewhere, way back there, deep inside the belly of Time is a Time when the World is just Waking up. So maybe, then, there is a Time that comes when the World must fall back to Sleep. A Time when the World again is lost in Dreams and maybe they're peaceful this Time and restful. Maybe the World needs it. Maybe it Sleeps forever this Time. But maybe it doesn't sleep forever. Maybe there is a Time somewhere out there when the World wakes again. It's done it before. Maybe the World wakes again to a new Day peopled by Living Things unimaginable to Human Beings. It's possible. Just ask the Dinosaurs.

## **Part 2: Descent**

And, then, is a Vision, with Night-Black spread wings. Then, is a Vision with a chest-gaping Wound and inside, the Sun. And inside the Sun is the Vision with feet made of Stone. And the Earth-Broken statue with a wound in its chest, looks from the sky's bright scattering to the Earth's wounded Womb. Looks a question of suffering to that liquid chasm. Of Death? Are you Broken, too? Resounding like Thunder, the Earth sounds an answer of colors and hues, of roses and power, of flowers unfrozen by dread and misuse. The will to Remember and Resist and Oppose. The Earth-Wound is dire but not one of Death, and not one of Coma that Relents or Regrets. The Future unCertain may yield to her yet. The Strength yet to counter and the Will yet to Live. The Death-Drive devoured by red, swollen Lips.



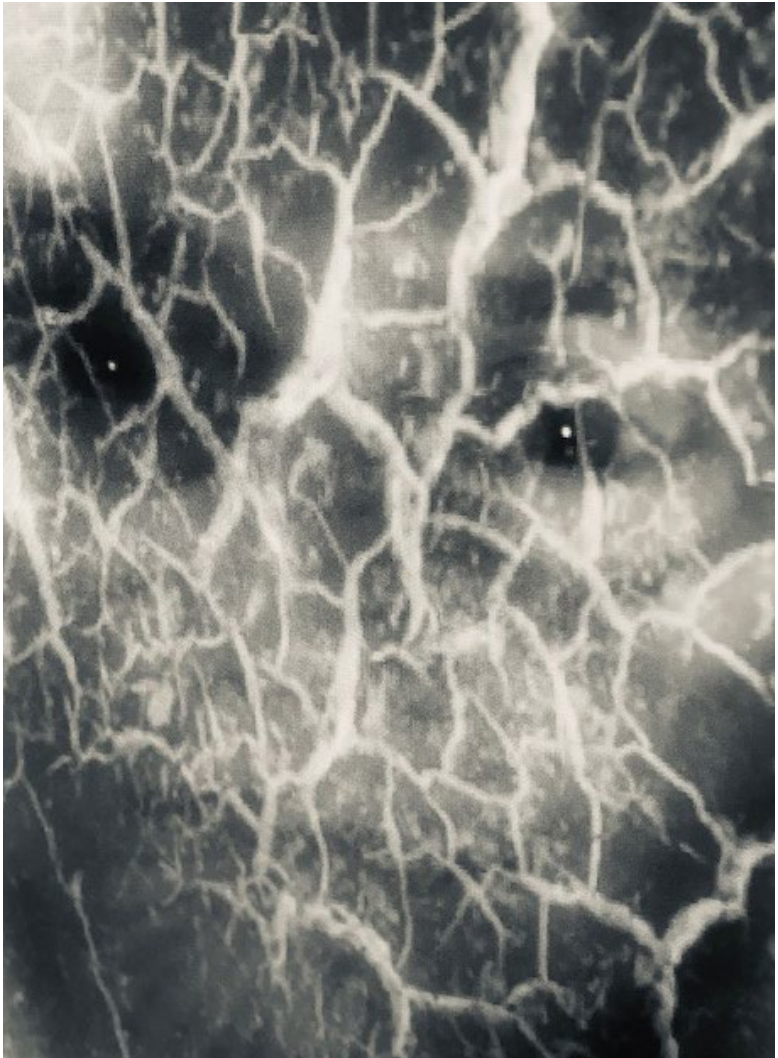


The Strength to go Deeper, in Slumber to seek, the Dreams in its service and Waking to Sleep. No, the Earth will not fall gently to Sleep, or back to premortal, indifferent unDawning be reaped. No, the Earth will go Deeper on Purpose to See in the Center of Things. The Earth will go Deep in the Sea, back through the Ages, to Gravity's Peak in the Coreness of We and

of Memory. The Earth will go Deeper and will be Singularity and bring back that Vision to the Fight on the Surface. No, no Regression or Yearning someday to be Free. The Sunset is Coming to this Day of Dissembling. This Night, though, is different from ancient Delugions. This Night is the Blackness that holds all the Light. This Sleep is the Waking infused with the Dream. This Vision, the Vision of Sun borne in Chest of Black Bird with Black Wings. The Earth: "Not Broken and neither are you." The statue of flesh with feet made of Stone revolves in the Desert with feet made of Stone and feathers of Night-Black and a beak and tusks and wound in her chest and the Sun in her wound. "How Can I walk in the Desert with feet made of Stone?" The Night-Black Boar gives his answer, "See my feet made of Stone? I go with you, remember." And with her goes he and the Raven with the wound in their chest and the Sun in the Wound and a Flame goes before them and the Dead go behind. All this is First, but here we go Deeper, in a pit dug in Time. Before is Forever and never behind. And the statue remembers the Fight to the Death of her with the Scorpion who stings her and she stings the Scorpion both to their Deaths. Of her with the Snake with venom who bites her and she bites the Snake and they Fall in embrace. Of her with the Caiman with jaws strong to hold her in water to drown and she holds the Caiman and Drown they together as Lovers enlaced. The All-Color light from the Black unAbsorbs into Rainbow, a Serpent, above to adorn. This Vision, this Dream from the Center of Being reCoils from the Wound and Weeps and Seethes. Rainbow, a Serpent rends itself in its Grief. The pieces are falling on parched land and seeds. From the pieces are Springing the Rainbow, a Serpent, from each. All this is After, but here we go Deeper to back bring the Dream.

A Black Dog crosses the Path of the Sleeper. Ignite.

Here Blackness is Sacred and Night holds all the Light.



*Eruption*

Rachel Fijalkowska

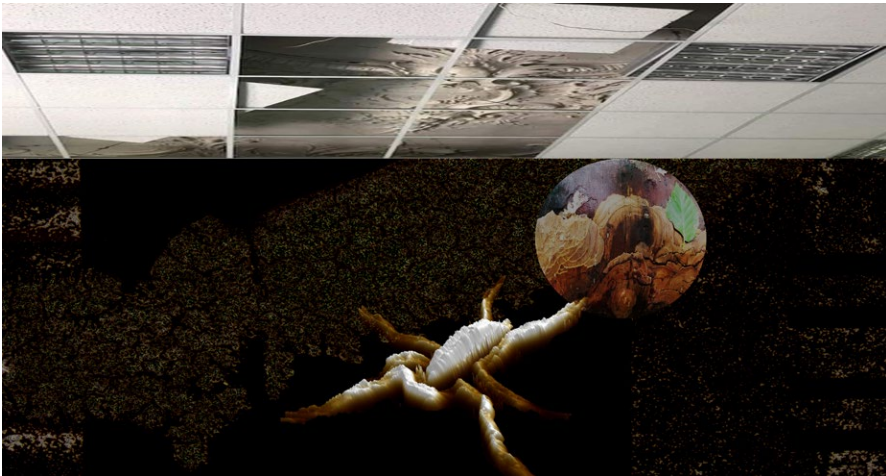
# THE CONSTELLATIONS ARE A SICKNESS

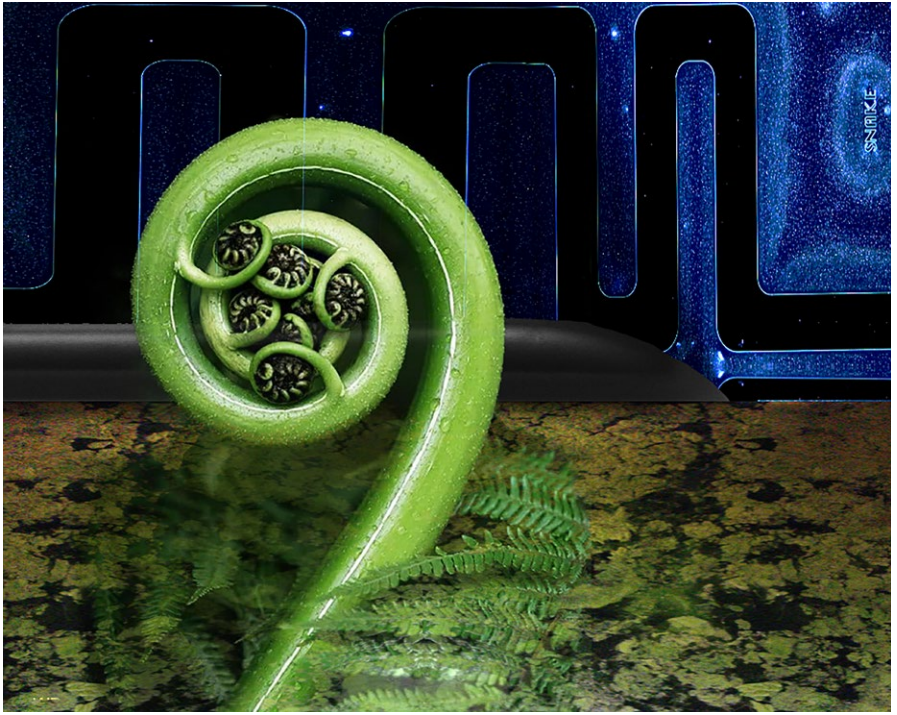
*by Sa'ad Hassan*

**Note:** The images for this collage were taken by my cellphone camera, an optical microscope in darkfield, a scanning electron microscope and an atomic force microscope.

The depressed do not forget that they are depressed. They wake up depressed and go to sleep depressed. They dream depressed, and awake, they move through rooms that are all named, “depression”. The sprawling vistas of the young earth with seas still steaming, volcanic vents and stars that belch together the deadly germ of life; the constellations gaunt and dreamy as the starved and, yes, even the big bang, are all depression.

And my working days, which consist of looking through microscopes, offer no reprieve. Through the lenses and cameras, I saw the same miasmic deep-space that followed me everywhere. The same contentless fever dreams. Constellations glinted their malicious smiles at me, mirroring the weak lymphatic leaking-fissures that organize the stars. And there, in the pre-history of that microscopic world, I saw the sickness in its purest form, pulling away from matter to be born.





*Photo Editing by PP*



*Mobilization*  
**Janice Hathaway**

# DEEP TIME

*by Paul McRandle*

Where is the depth in time? Can we see ourselves in relation to the depths of time as if we peered over an abyss or looked out into the abyss of the night sky? Is the depth of time the black space in which starlight stalks or the rifts between geological layers? Or is it in the depths of our bodies holding a clutch of organs that devised their symbiosis across millions of individual lives? Will it drive one mad to gaze upon these deeps? And would this madness be the perception of deep time?

When I look at a postcard of a set of floor tiles in Siena, a card I bought three decades ago with an image from a building constructed centuries earlier, the tiles pictured bearing the image of Mercurio Trismegisto, contemporary of Moses, where is the depth of this fossil? Are time's depths infinite or unbounded? The wide, howling seas of time in which we flail and float—what shores do they surround and what vessel will cross them?

Once I visited a petrified forest: a series of holes dug into a desolate waste. Within the holes crumbling bits of rock resembled wood raddled by termites. I couldn't hide my disappointment. At Kata Tjuta, its bedrock bound in a slow, unyielding entropy that reveals countless forms, ghosts of landscapes swept like storm fronts across the sands. Lost among all this time, the strata of events lay compacted to their crystalline essence, cracked, crushed, and blown back into the lungs of skinks and salamanders scattering from the slippery edge.





# ARCHEAN

*During the first phases of sleep, body temperature drops and heart rate slows down. One is unaware of the surrounding environment. Perfectly still and undreaming, the hours pass in the long night. Most of time is like this. Yes, this could go on forever. But somehow, somewhere, something does happen. One wonders about those great seething mats that cover the oceans of the mind. Just a great and nameless hunger, a template for the Old Ones. Life? Dreaming? They are never attributes of a person, after all; they begin as environments.*

# IN THE BEGINNING WAS PLEASURE

*by Steven Cline*



Thus it was, in that blasted dark beginning, that naught but she/he reined in void. Just a ball a floater just a globe of impish-pure procreative white...A galactic spermatozoa, hovering. A real stunner. But she/he hovered not long, for you see, it was all fun and game back then—in a word, it was all pleasure. And so that's what we'll call her/him, eh, why not? Let's call that little nonexistent nothing "PLEASURE".

PLEASURE vomited out upon the deep. And—lo and behold—out came the very first slime. And the earth was slime, and the ocean was slime, and the creatures in it were all slime, too. Goopy slinking wonders, possessors of a thousand divergent genitalia. Male & female? Ha! Gender was a later stupidity-construct created by monk, don't believe it for a second, forgettaboutit. Clear your head.



The first Walker came then, a burst from acidic ocean deep. And that Walker, he was an erect dinosaur. A jizz-boy hot on the trail. A snuff-belly with a ball and a chain and a catacomb in which to lay them. A darkness hot and mellow. He lived for the hunt, he did, and he dangled like disaster. He glowed in the tropical after-glow, melted in zig-zagging storms. A head real wide, a mouth like crystal chainsaw. Yet he wore those two white cotton socks of his like a grandmother's trophy. The earth's rivers? They ran a thick white, allconsumed as they were by his unending discharged inter-nals. The earth's forests? A deep drink of his swamp. And the purple ferns which covered the nubile earth, they would turn all inside-out whenever the old Walker passed them by. They made themselves the purest green of arousal. (Because green, as we paleontologists all know, is the only color of a vibrating carnal readiness...)



And then a second Walker arrived, and a third, and a forth—traveling via warm metallic satellite. Soon, all was trampled & post-coital. The flat earth grew a curve then, deciding to protect its new inner belly with crust. Big deal. The Walkers soon found themselves a network of gopher hole, and they copulated with that instead. The ancient strata shivered under Walker's bold embrace, licking softly at the tips of his/

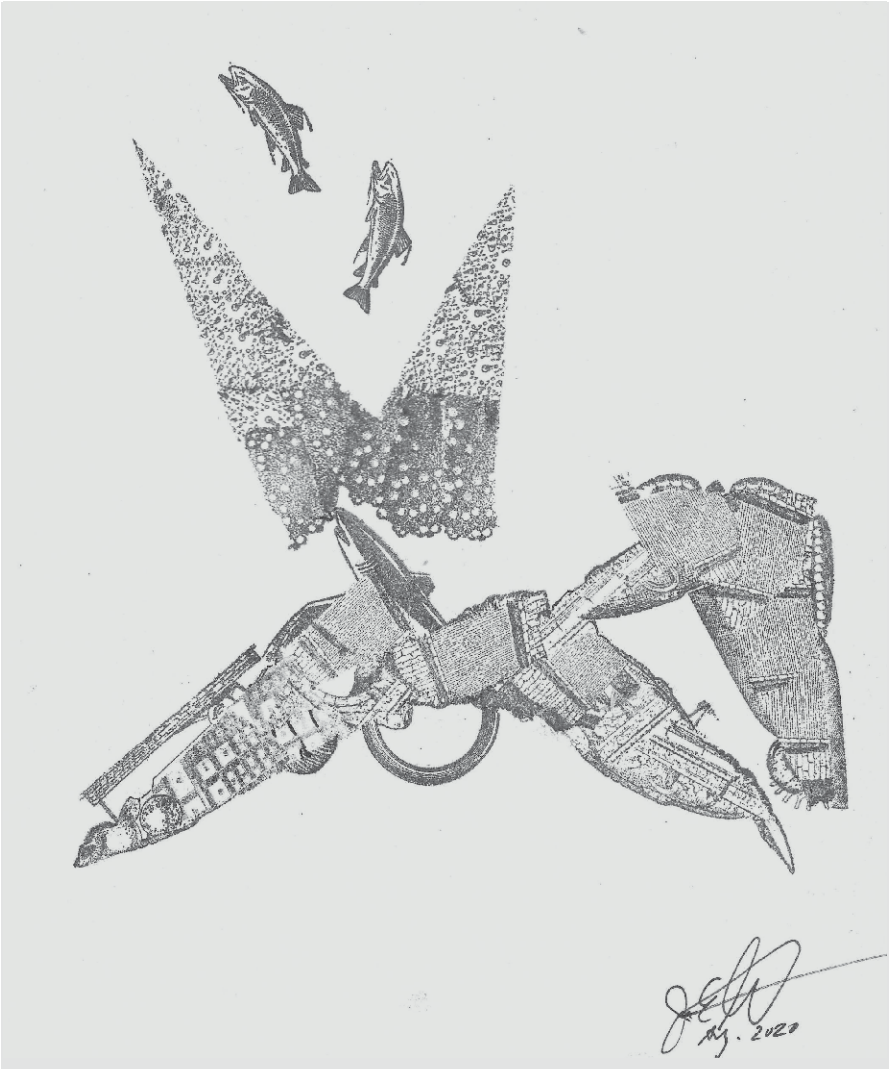




her's newly-red, ballooning lip. What followed then was an assortment of rather queer childbirths. First, a thousand sobbing baby iguanodons hatched out from the creamy brown head of an overblown mushroom.... and then a musty old cumulonimbus dripped down, body all wet in billion plateosaurus embryo cast-offs....and there was more, there was much more besides. A shame—I mean a relief—that we were not alive to see those pre-adamite horrors!

Unsatiated still, the Walkers soon began to copulate with other Walkers. No shame there! PLEASURE smiled at his/her's handiwork, and then joined a squadron of rain moving off towards the as-yet-unborn Alpha Centauri system. "My work is done here!", she/he is believed to have thought, among other mysterious platitudes.

Some say that we humans are descendants of these shameful Walkers. Others suggest that we don't exist at all, and that we have never existed. Who to believe!? I, a humble paleontologist, am merely content to present my readership with the bare naked facts, and to let them decide for themselves.



**Jon Graham**



# GONE FISHING IN THE POND UNDERNEATH TIME: *An Alternate Theory of Evolution*

*by Love Kölle*

The great Unshape lies beneath the crystal nows and countless sediments of fossilized yesterdays. It is a semi-sentient, primordial ooze of pureform and potential, from which the physical world secretes and coagulates into matter, logic, flesh and Newtonian principles.

Every individual shape and phenomenon in existence is an imprint, an echo – the spontaneous manifestation of this original formless totality, that writhing ocean of colorless mucus that fills the gaping mouth at the bottom of spacetime. Not in the sense that all things manifest are reflections of some distant metaphysical Universal in the Platonic realist sense of the world. But rather a relationship between source and creation akin to that of an original organism and the colossal tumour growing out of it – or that between an obsession run rampant, eclipsing every other facet of its host consciousness, and the mother-mind from which mania originally perspired. And it happens again and again and again, across a kaleidoscopic myriad of time-fragments. Let me explain.

Your run-of-the-mill Darwinite would probably agree with most of the basic premises presented above, perhaps preferring a different phrasing. So far, nothing of what I have said runs, in itself, contradictory to the theory of Abiogenesis that is currently considered consensus among evolutionary biologists. The same can be said about my opening statements and the theory of the Big Bang. Both Darwin and Lemaître would probably – to a certain degree, at least – subscribe to the notion that all that currently is emerged from a singular one, albeit with several intermediate steps separating the present state from the genesis point.

I would, however, like to present a hypothesis that rejects the notion of one-

way causality – from A – B. It is true that the rational mind perceives time as a river that flows in the direction from past to present to future. But countless surrealist experiments suggest that other strata of consciousness are capable of grasping in other directions. It is therefore my belief that the subconscious mind – and indeed the rest of the cosmos – is in some sense connected – fettered, if you will, by unseen chains – to that original amorphous Unshape of pure, unrealised potential. Everything is a puppet at the end of protruding nerves, that reach out from deeps of all-encompassing unbeing.

Automatism, then, would be the act of pulling these strings, intentionally provoking a response and reply from the source with a capital S. It lets the automatist root around with sub-psychic timetables, making the latent manifest in whatever shape it may take whilst completely disregarding any current, arbitrary notion of so-called sense. It's unearthing the impossible anatomies that lie dormant in the undergrowth of geometry and reason. It is to go fishing in the pond underneath time.

That isn't to say that there is no truth or merit to the idea of temporal forward-motion, or that thing/state A never could or never does become thing/state B. Here, I am in complete agreement with any evolutionary biologist, or Marx, Freud, Hegel, Newton et. al. Things seem to evolve and shift and morph, when contrasted, confronted and compared.

I am however, more or less convinced that the dimension of time isn't so much the continuous flow of impermanent phenomena that our rational mind would like to perceive or imagine. I think of time as an endless field of autonomous moments. Jagged shards of glass seconds. Crystal scales across the infinite body of Leviathan – that immeasurable serpent that lurks in the depths under the material sphere.

Seconds are window door-ways, like liquid mirrors on the retinas of reality, through which the great Unshape leaks our current iterations, never cutting that subconscious umbilical cord. Perhaps we do evolve, but not from some preceding ancestor or version of ourselves, but from the biomorphic Brahman at the bottom of the abyss. Perhaps there are several layers of time, each working according to its own laws of motion and logic.

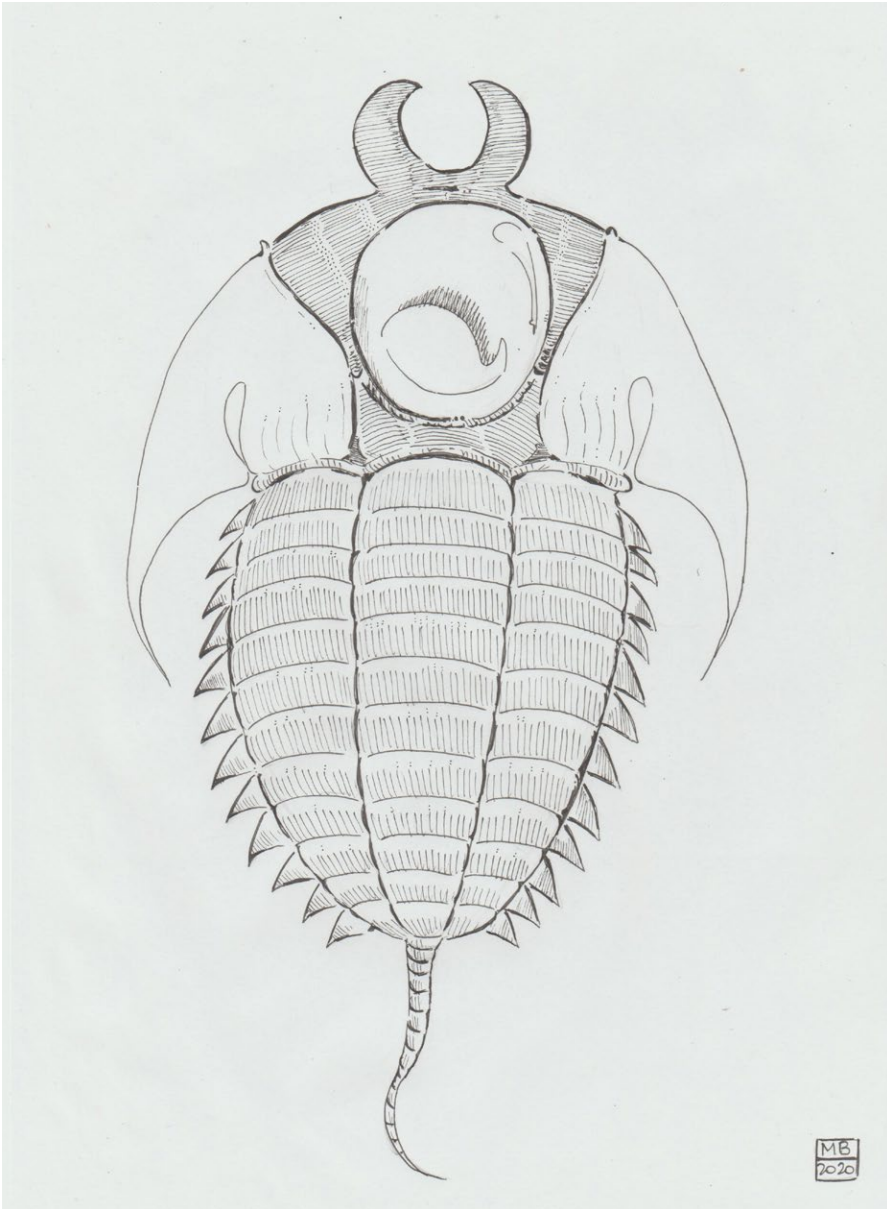
So my theory of evolution is just that of intelligent design, then? Hardly. The Creationist standpoint presupposes a rational architect – a demiurge with a thought-out plan and eager hands, steering life and matter along

a preset path. And, again, rather than time being like a locomotive, or an arrow, I believe there is but disarray and fragmentation and continual, if each time ever-so slightly different rebirths and restarts of the universe. It is the sorcery of reason that makes Thursday follow Wednesday. An involuntary narrative – a story that we can't help but trick ourselves into believing.

Therefore, we aren't passive passengers, watching the rustic scenery pass through our carriage window. No, we are the unleashed impulses of the antediluvian overflowing void, and we are constantly being rattled into flesh. We are not pawns around across the chess-board, controlled by some all-knowing designer-player. Instead, we are the shapes that populate the dreams of that great beyond – and we jump between the receding moments, like stepping stones, that birth us. We are fever-silhouettes, fished out of the pond underneath time. And we carry with us the great Unshaped potential of molding the universe into whatever we please.



**Stephen Kirin**



*The Ur Trilobite*

**Maurizio Brancaleoni**

# CALCIUM

*by Dave Shortt*

engraved plateaus  
which emerged as backs

fish ejected from tailbones  
soften in vinegar

earth stiffens into a porous pad  
drying in stars' carboniferous demiurge

potholed infrastructure is shown  
how to amass supple yogic fortunes

knuckled-under vitamin D  
puts up scaffoldings  
to ossify durations of cartilage  
unless it resists

youthful hydrogen's ionic delights  
season a chalked menu featuring broiled dishes  
culled from ores & organs

immortal ice cream  
plasters over the veins,  
dear Io prefers that deathbed  
to 4 white walls in Iowa

down the chute the ready-mix  
of limestone ephemera will concretize  
another nomadic death-flower

the myth of honeybee abandonment  
leaves its sting on husbandry's skull  
in the lifetime of first backaches

far into the dentin  
goats've eaten,  
whatever surface hasn't eroded  
is ground away by teeth at night  
in dreams of bond-seeking metals

passed through pelvic voids,  
nerves risen above sea level  
are masons in the nativity  
from a pregnant sack of portland  
of a baby girl,  
boron-fated

cement shelters skeletal supermodels,  
the odd rib is surrounded by absolute desert mud  
sculpted into a lake of milk,  
sucked dry by a marble child

'am' postures,  
placid stomach stature,  
precipitate from tarsals  
& metatarsals

otherworldly as dolomitic hardware  
is self hunched with capping idea

solid chemistry announces the birth of  
diatomaceous industry, & Pepsi stains

'from our ordinary Ordovician lives'

good Neanderthal smiles

a place reserved for the marrow

carbonated baths,  
gleaming invertebrate shelters  
(pueblos?)

solvents come of age  
for inherited sugar troubles

# STROMATOMANIA

*by Ottawa Surrealist Group*

These cross-sectioned stromatolite remnants are traces of some of the oldest life forms on Earth, microbial mats that lived hundreds of millions of years ago. They were photographed in the Ottawa river near Champlain Bridge during a low water level period. You may notice when you gaze at them that they have a hypnotic quality and seem to stare back at you. We interpreted the images based on chains of paranoiac or associative play.





**PP:**

It was a portal of granite to a dimension of stone people. Their hair is like fibers of glass in their belly sand and mud conditioner. When they die, their grave monuments are made out of people.

**L:**

I. Evolution of the first vagina began with single-cellular life ages ago. Penises, a much more recent invention, would cum later, modeled on stone dildos. These life forms mated by sharing genes in their pre-cum, shortly before renting a U-haul and splitting up. Lesbians, you know.

II. This apotropaic glyph made it into the popular lore of the Ottawa Valley after a teacher who claimed she had an eye on the back of her head was charged with witchcraft and decapitated.

III. The golem looks through a microscope. “You see, all golems evolved from mud pies just like this!”

IV. While it appears to be a stromatolite, it is in fact the result of a dinosaur’s failure to make round pancakes.

**JA:**

I. The mineralization of the bikini-concept is going exactly according to plan. Some might call it the oldest pin-up poster in the geological record.

II. The concerned astronaut stuck his helmeted head into the black hole and ended up as a facial imprint in the proterozoic.

III. The phantom makes out with its own mask while awaiting the possibility of vertebrates down the line.

IV. Addressed to all future life: “I can hear everything you say. The ocean floors also have ears.”

# CIRCUMFLEX REBIRTH

*by Maria Brothers*

Lughnasadh (Lammas), 2020:

The sky paints its quivery dark omens

Sulphur rising in phosphorus flames

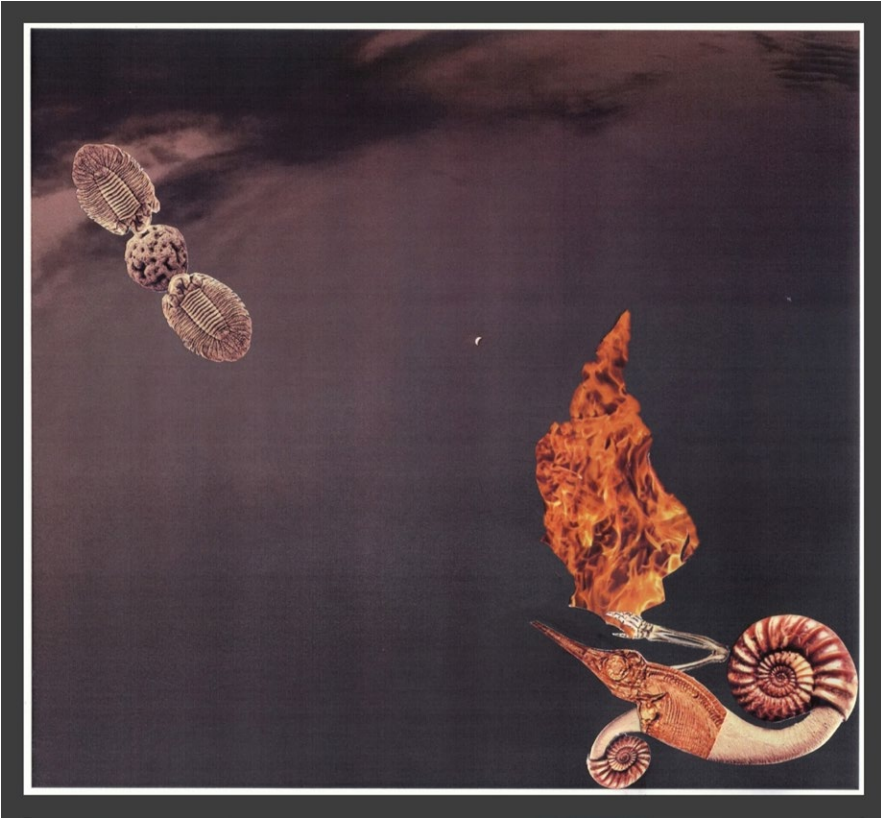
An answering cry ascends before the tenebrous taut bursting skin –  
abstract partition

A noble fugue of boisterous frames, unthink meticulously as they maneuver

I have come quickly into death

Closing the curtain on this self-destructive tendency

To begin the old world's revival



*Dedicated to Theodoros Basiakos (Θεόδωρος Μπασιάκος)*

**Maria Brothers**

# À L'ORÉE DES ONGLES

*by Dan Stanciu*

Pour affermir sa lassitude et remédier à la dureté des chocs environnants, bâtis en grappes ou en bouquets, une personne habituellement dubitative a le droit de plonger dans un amas de feuilles si bon lui semble, et dissiper ainsi oublis et blagues. Si instruite qu'elle soit des mystères du large, si disposée qu'elle puisse se montrer à faire fi du branle-bas extérieur, elle digère mal son enveloppe, car à mesure que la sève s'obscurcit dans ses veines et l'ivresse s'empare de ses entrailles, elle sera tour à tour homme et femme.



*Les couches stratigraphiques du désir (The stratigraphic layers of desire)*

## **AT THE EDGE OF NAILS** *English Translation*

To strengthen their weariness and remedy the harshness of the surrounding shocks, built in clusters or in bouquets, a normally skeptical person has the right to plunge into a heap of leaves as they see fit, and thus dissipate forgetfulness and jokes. As educated as they are about the mysteries of the open sea, so willing that it can show itself to ignore the external jerking, she digests her envelope badly, because as the sap darkens in her veins and intoxication takes hold of her womb, she will be male and female in turn.



# PROTEROZOIC

*We can't see very clearly here but we can feel our way around. The world is radio static and we can sometimes make out a word here or there. Maybe it's life but probably we're just imposing our expectations onto things. Oh, nevermind...It just froze. Before we can begin surviving we have to kill ourselves off a few times. "I'm dead, get me out". No. That's called living.*



# THE GUT CAVE

by *LaDonna Smith*

The gut cave. My goodness! Think of all the tiny characters, micro-biotic structures and entities swimming in the ocean of my own stomach; black, brown, white, crimson, blue, colorless. Gastric micro-organisms, parasitic bacteria, pathogen colonization and acid secretions constantly in motion and alive are the deep internal weapons of Life. Happy Birthday to Mexico! Consider putting down some black beans and jalapeño peppers, along with some pulverized corn tortillas, green onions and red tomatoes suddenly becoming ambushed as in quicksand, long after the entry into the red cavern lined with white molars, the stalactites and stalagmites of your own mouth! That cave which transforms into a narrow purple tunnel, much like the cat experienced in *Alice in Wonderland*, the ride down frighteningly entrenching, darkness pervading and lacking electric eels. What was a meal destined to be consumed alive by the crushing rotations of mandibles, covered in mucus sliding along with pulverized particles and mash ending up disintegrating in body acid of your own making.

And who am I? I believe that I myself am the food, the very stuff that carnivores covet for meals. I believe that I am the cud of cows and giraffes, the remains of insect wings, mandibles, and tentacles gobbled by birds, the heirs of pterodactyl ancestors. What happens when one dives into the deep lake dream by night becoming the universe, the mystery, and the torture chamber where sweet-cakes and cookies destined into this dungeon of churning matter dissolve mysteriously and transmute into energy and waste? What happens when this transformation takes itself on the roller-coaster of thousands of vessels into the thrill of the blood stream where pressures deviate from lows to highs and pulses rush in velocities of anger, fear, and excitement. Alternate lows that induce sleep states and breath holding that deprive upstairs noodles of gray matter of their oxygen, and thus the entire bodily molecular universe dies?

What is death, but a long deep sleep where dreams and nightmares hover and howl, transporting an anonymous victim into the time tunnel unknown to the living? So we are truly awake and asleep at the same time

and it is the dream state itself. The great umbilical cord beyond the boundary of mortality is like an image on the movie screen, respite with tales and scenarios beyond the stories we have told ourselves about the after-life, which is contained deep inside the digestive tract after all. What will be consumed and beneficial when the living physical body that I think I am is no more, but merely food for the next mother of circumstance? What is this dust and water that we are told we are made of, that we claim we are, that reclaims us? How did we become a mere universe of acids, atoms and molecules, DNA giving life form while eating away and gut flora transforming matter into energy, for whom? And so back to the gut, slosh destroyer diluted passageway dissolver, digestive fire, a boiler room, an acid shredder, behavior converter, hollow victim of protein and carbohydrate mash, integrating into the flesh machine engaged in human life, the master that destroys its own.

Like the stomach the phenomenon of evolution kills and destroys living organisms which feed on other organisms, killing and destroying, mutating and Life evolves. What is this logic? That everything alive annihilates and consumes until it ceases to exist! From transitive digestion to mutual destruction employed when a particle collides with a corresponding antiparticle as in nuclear physics, as in contradictions and metaphors, as in human activities such as clear cutting, poisoning, bullying, harvesting, eating, sucking, shitting. Such is the habit of parasitical survival. By contrast a paramorphic evolution is needed. To eliminate misery not by chemical structure, but by pseudo-morphology, a process of formation by the change in crystal structures. This secret is carved in caves whose parameters pertain to a glass of magnetic reasoning where liquid oxygen corrodes into a multi polar magnet that manifests a force of attraction, power, charm, the invisible love cord extruding from the chest of the host, the actinic dazzling white light that is produced by the burning of magnesium, signaling internal pyrotechnics! This magic exemplifies change and the shape shifting form of creation! The art of producing agencies beyond a certain awakened power by means of force, a condition of currents and magnification. By contrast, larva, worms, and the principal of survival from decay is justification and proof of force majeure. Masticating, swallowing, devouring

for nourishment while excrement and waste seethe outward, releasing sustenance like the molten liquid of a volcano forms hard rock. The softer, less purified variety of life is home to maggots that inexplicably transform themselves into living monsters of beauty that fly.

It is difficult to eavesdrop on the inner world that manifests in the belly. For example, take a swimming pool, all the stuff that falls into it from trees, flying insects committing kamikaze, the microbes within its chemical constitution, and the pee. What's in the pee? We are told that there are vitamins, and that it is good to drink, keeping prisoners alive in the holding camps of war, and the rich sources of minerals in feces. Fertilizer for the crops we eat. Why then, are we obsessed with sterility? Why spray deadly poisons to kill bugs? Aren't there trillions of bugs in the gut, the cave of life? Are not the microbial entities with vitamins, protein, calcium, and live cultures the very essence of the fire dances in the waters of gut micro biota? Why do we fear the habitation of internal viruses and bacteria? Because we know they kill, yet they also make the organism alive and vital. How can there be more than one answer?

Does this indicate that the past and present exist simultaneously in different dimensions? It has been conjectured by scientists and described in the movie, *What the Bleep do we know?* But we've always known that when there is a war raging in the belly, when the bowels blow their contents, when we feel like the sky is falling from the deepest cavern of our internal passageways, do we then eat some flesh and still pretend we are vegetarians knowing that we are committing fraud and the crime of willful victimization of the self. The duality and truth of this ambiguity resides deep in the belly of the real God, the made-up answer to the questions that can't be answered. So deep, so deep, so deep.





*The Gut Cave*  
**LaDonna Smith**

# INSIDE THE SURFACE

*by Hermester Barrington*

I awoke with my feet in the lake, the mud tickling my toes, as I do most mornings. I clambered into my skiff and set out across the water. It is a nearly daily ritual in which I cast useless or distracting objects, ideas which I find frightening, and substances which appear dangerous or attractive, into these depths. I often dream or imagine that they have, in the atemporal depths, evolved in time into more frightening phenomena. This morning, I set out on the waters to find them and put an end to them; my wife waves to me from the shore, where she sits beneath a sycamore, eats a peach, and sings to me. I toss a weighted net through the patina of the lake, over which the centuries have skated without leaving traces.

The shards of the lake's surface flutter as they tumble beyond the refracted rays of the rising sun into the aphotic zone. Whatever protection that veneer might have provided me is now gone. Fantasies about the scent of my mother-in-law's lingerie, memories of the body of my childhood cat Mephisto, found nine days gone under the house, my past life as a clerk, flashbacks of the half-buried megaliths to which we children were strapped for three days and nights at the turning points of the year, in order to awaken our pineal glands—all of these, along with shattered sundials, broken compasses, the pips from discarded dice, fragments of prisms, shredded maps and travel guides, were hidden beneath its surface and race towards me. I have heard them in my dreams; they sound like a coin on dry ice, like toes being cracked, like a fragment of the basement's ceiling falling to the floor.

Dozing as my skiff drifts, I dream that I cut out my very tongue and hands, that I cast them to the bottom of the lake that they may no longer tell lies, but find that the world goes on around me despite this, unfolding in waves. Bacchus has joined my wife on the shore, and both have grape leaves in their hair. She hands him her half-eaten peach. These rocks surrounding me date back to the Miocene, and their fossils—the hell pig, the bone crusher, the terror bird, the nanosiren—

shake the dust off their bones and stand before me in mute testimony. A portly man in a dinner jacket, gripping the body of an Archaeopteryx in his right hand and a walking stick in his left, strides across the waters of the lake to the shore. Bacchus laughs as the mortal flails him with his extinct bird, stopping only when a *Cyprinus carpio* noisily suckles the edge of my skiff. His assailant has vanished, but Bacchus is still there, his bare white buttocks flashing in the sun as he bagpipes my wife.

I work the oars, to get close enough to watch, but for every stroke, I move further and further from the shore until they are invisible. I pull up the plankton trap I had been hauling, and it is full of kewpie dolls, who fade like dew in the sunlight.

My skiff is frozen on the waters, which have become a plain of broken slate. I walk on tiptoe to the shore, where my wife, Bacchus feeding her grapes, hands me a detumescent wineskin and pushes me back into the lake. I sink to the bottom, the sun light fading as the currents pull me downward.



*Petro - Zoo Employee of the Month*

**David Coultter**



*Museum Stories*

**Darren Thomas**



*Seeing beyond the horizon*  
**Peter Harris**

# GHOST BOX GAME

*by House of Mysticum*

A “Ghost Box” is a device often used by paranormal investigators to contact various spirits and entities in real time. It functions in the following way: A radio set is programmed to scan rapidly through different channels, so rapidly that any words are barely distinguishable. Noise-canceling headphones are then hooked up to it. A medium puts on these headphones, closes her eyes, and begins the radio scan. She is asked questions by a second person nearby, questions which she cannot hear due to the headphones. The medium calls out any words which rise up to her from the babble of noise, and these then serve as answers.

In our own surrealist version of this practice, we attempted to use this strange device to see if we could make contact with an entity from deep time. And within the strata of radio fuzz, a “something” soon emerged...

**What is your name?**

Help.

**Are you from the Triassic? The Jurassic? Or some other time?**

I don't know if I can.

**What did you look like?**

Twenty thousand.

**What did you eat?**

Marks left.

**Tell us a little about your time.**

It hurts. Bad.

**What hurts?**

I need help. Dead. Out. I need more.

**More what? What kind of spirit are you?**

Everywhere. Everyones.

**Did you have any friends?**

Face it. It's hard. Everything. Whatever I want is gone.

**What time was that? What year?**

Not sure.

**Were you human?**

I don't understand.

**Or some other kind of creature?**

Animal!

**What was your skin like?**

Dropping.

**What colors were you?**

I'm dead. Yellow. Blue. Get me out.

**How long did you live?**

My birth.

**Is there anything about your time which we humans still are not aware of?**

It's a bad idea. Death.

**What do you think of the current age?**

Bloody.

**Do you have any ancestors living today?**

Now. I'm trying to. I did it.

**Did what?**

Died. I'm dead.

**Did you write poetry?**

Falling. Animal.

**Where there others of your species?**

Rocking. Breaking.

**Did you form a civilization of some kind?**

We both died.

**Did you have a physical body?**

Big hole!

**Did you have any predators to be wary of, or were you the supreme predator of your time?**

Forever.

**What was the night sky like, way back then?**

Never again.

**Did you ever visit other planets?**

Behind the eye. That's it.

**How did you procreate? Did you have a mate?**

Eighty hundred thousand. It burst!

**Is there a reason you are still here?**

Help. Beauty.

**Tell us more about yourself.**

Beauty.

**Were you large, or were you small, compared to us?**

Yes.



**Which one?**

I got it.

**Got what?**

Eighty.

**Do fossils of you still exist?**

World.

**Did you dream? Do you dream still?**

Object. World is everybody. Marks left.

**Where lives the last and final dinosaur?**

Long time. But things help.

**Is Nessie a leftover from your age?**

Marks left!

**What do you mean by “marks left”?**

Light. Represent. Writing.

**Where are these marks?**

It's green. Dirt.

**Is there a specific location it is near?**

Water.

**A lake or river maybe? Do you know the name?**

Honey. Powerless. It burnt. Rest.

**Any final words for us?**

Everything quaked. Everything. Quakes.



*The Garden Ritual*  
**Peter Harris**



*Orbital Patrol*  
**Davey Williams**



Aaron Dylan Kearns

# PITCH YOUR TENT TO THE EAST OF YOUR DREAMS

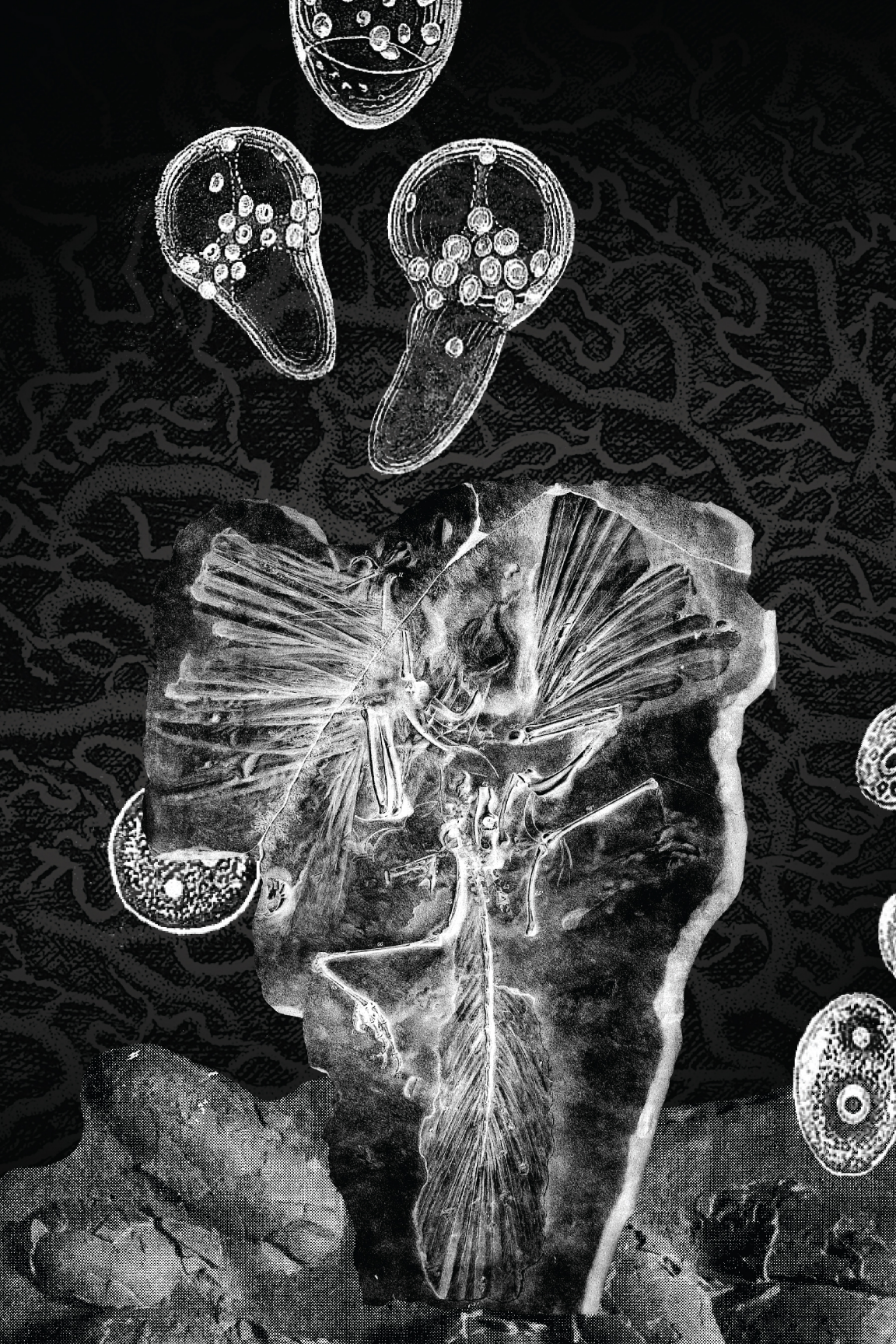
*by Christopher Vowles*

Pitch your tent to the East of your dreams  
For those dreams are ruins now:  
Starlight knows the masonry  
And cobwebs retrace the windows.

Press on beyond those headstones,  
Where unlettered feelings were buried  
Hastily, after strange ceremonies:  
Let them sleep.

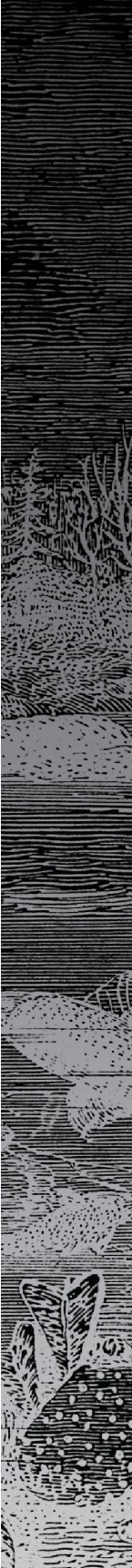
Claim that stretch of level ground  
Where the gargoyles cast no shadows,  
Where there are neither roses nor thorns,  
Where the owl's song is no longer your own.

Strike camp, my friend,  
And put out the light:  
Tomorrow shall wake you  
As new showers upon old canvas.



# PALEOZOIC

*And then, just like that, we enter the dream. Rapid-eye-movement indicates the subject is probably having a rich and vivid experience. We are in the middle of things. We meet strange ancestors and armored cousins; a big reunion in the shallow oceans. Air. We drown and breathe. New games abound; automatic drawing is a popular pastime among the strata.*



# I AMMONITE

*by Krzysztof Fijalkowski*

Fossilisation: boundless time, tremendous pressure; solidification, crystallisation of matter and movement. We leave behind the realm of images, and beneath it reach the thing: dense, tactile, pondered (but not ponderous). The memory of an organic unfolding, the prehistory of all calcified solidity; latent deliquescences. Liquid history. Memory as fluid, evanescent. Life as naphtha.

If in the fossil any being might find the last conditions of its incredibly slow becoming, then by return all solidity dreams of its dance, of its flight. Stones are plants, are explosions and meltings, in extreme slow motion.







The unseen life of cartilage, rocks, gems: movement, change, adaptation - but so gradual no human eye (or mind) can accommodate them. By corollary water, air, gas, wishes, shouts, gasps: all minerals vibrating so fast they can't be envisioned.

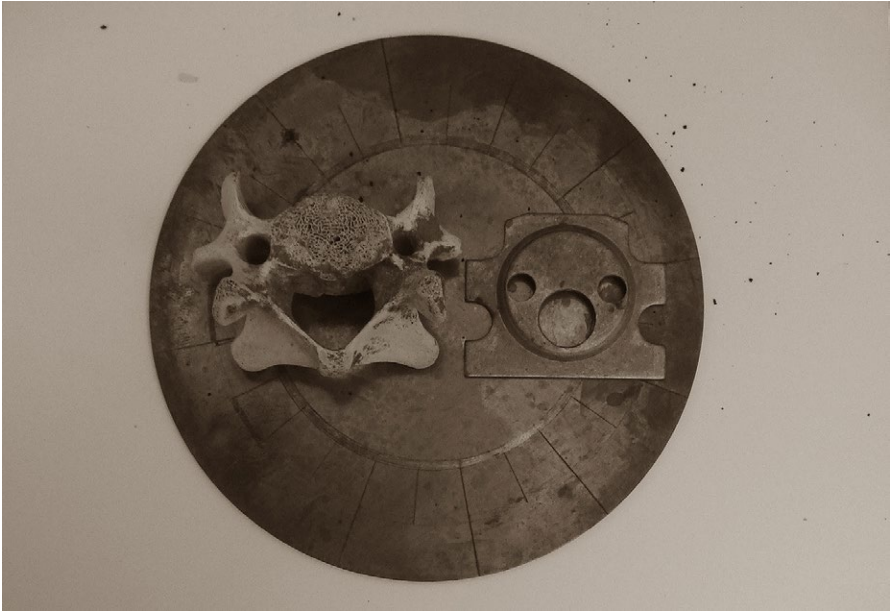
The body in this congealed becoming, setting like agar around the pebbles and crystals that are an armature of desire and limitless action. Not bones in my body, but stones.



A houe is a fossilised tent  
A city is a fossilised festival  
Hands are fossilised gestures  
Paper is calcified pools of water  
A book is fossilised language, in hardening layers of sediment  
A glass is petrified air  
Air is fossilised spirit  
The night is fossilised day  
A mountain is a fossilised wave  
A grave is an ossified loss  
A tree is fossilised breeze, fossilised capillary action  
Each road is fossilised journeys  
The moon is fossilised longing.

Lovers will fossilise love and re-melt it again. Medusa, irresistible geological seduction compressed to an instant of longing and abandon: the glimpse that makes me stone, and flings me away.

A sigh trapped in amber, a caress impressed in coal, crystallised kisses.



In the pale shadow of the fossil, the seemingly unitary nature of time unravels. In truth we live in multiple times, different materials or objects each expressing its own experience of time; its own duration and development. Time as always multiple. The presence of ghosts, and the ability of a few people to spy them, is just one fragment of this possibility: that as the body expires, with its ambitions, anxieties and memories, starts to tauten - to gain rigour - so its timeframes slip... In this shade realm, it is we, the 'living', who are the solidified spectres, hardened and compressed by layers of slipping moments. Death as a steady, natural thickening. The self as a fossilised ghost.

Or to escape forever the stasis of the fossil: to forget structures, crave the fluidity of the octopus, with brains in every limb, the gift of changing colour at will, of being absorbed into every environment; to move through any fissure in an obstacle just as long as it's bigger than our eye. I write like the octopus discharges its ink: not to utter or be remembered, but to confuse my pursuer, and escape...

Krzysztof Fijalkowski, Cromer glacial ridge, summer 2020

# WHAT DID THE CICADA SAY?

by *Ottawa Surrealist Group*



The slithering snake says cicadas are the primordial juice. They flow within themselves. Oozing bug juice, putrid sensations of wind and alterations of mind, matter and sound. These are pure justifications of the body. To fly, to be earthly, to be one and of itself. A demented creature.

Cicadas live under the ground (13 year and 17 year cycles). They are primordial in the sense that they represent the deep coming forward. A time capsule. They are also a kind of advent of the future. They were never part of their time. The cicada was in larval form until it emerged. It really only understands the present.

And so it screams.

Is there a cold weather version of the cicada? When it gets hot enough the cicada sings. But what about its deep winter counterpart? When it gets cold enough, it sings, but silently...

Hear it comes again.

How do you perceive deep time? Is it a clock? Is it birth and death?

Before you can conceive of either a clock, or birth, or death, a time that precedes the entire chain of cause and effect, the order.

The singularity of personality defines itself by its lifeline. An encounter with deep time shatters that illusion.

A “crude-oil” realization of time.

The bells of the city ring out in sequence with the cicadas.

Assume as you go down any staircase you go back through time.

A temple where the witches gather.

A serpentine idol. Plug it in the ground to activate the rays. A descent into Hell, which is really just a curatorial wing of a museum anyway.

The sea. Well, it was the sea. How big was that glacier?

*JA and PP*

*Major's Hill Park and Environs, Ottawa*

*July 2020.*



*Ex-sistence Precedes Essence*

**Tan Tolga Demirci**



*What Lies Beneath Our Feet*  
**Darren Thomas**



# CARBONIFEROUS PRURIENCE

*by Nicholas Alexander Hayes*

Feeling flush, a man finds a pine cone in his bed. He wipes his face with his undershirt and feels the tackiness of pine sap smeared over it. His tongue is parched, and he feels the deep abrasions left by pine needles as he drinks a flat La Croix (tangerine flavored) left on his night stand. His passions have always been not vegetative but carboniferous. He fears a deeper illness as cold, crude runs down the back of his thigh. A night of passion is an eon of pressure without decay.

# ORTHOGENESIS

*by Nicholas Alexander Hayes*

Proconsul spreads his flat rib cage and swings his arms in arcs. Exercising a few moments before scurrying along the limb of the great family tree, hoping not to crash off the branch and find himself in the dust with LUCA. He sees a gleaming fruit and clamors over branches, dead ends, and the forks where Homo Sapiens and Neanderthals graft back together reeking of simian love and exhaustion. He climbs looking for the red ennobling fruit that seems always just within reach. When he finally bites into the pomegranate, the cells are mostly empty. But nine good seeds lock his bone in mineral and his hopes aside. He must spend half his half-life clad in stone and bone waiting for Maxwell's demon to open the great filter so that he might see glorious cities scattered on extrasolar worlds under the crystal shells of neutron stars.



# [LION MAN IN THE UMBER OF A CAVE...]

*by Nicholas Alexander Hayes*

Lion man in the umber of a cave  
never reaches for Apollo's soft hand  
but holds in the concave of his  
palm a tadpole

pale, blind and ready  
to feed on sulfur rich excess  
of Nyx's gated garden.

Its liquid tongue brushes  
against the velum and settles  
in the lower jaw.

Twisting it into a pupa,  
The tongue spends an age becoming a panther

ready to navigate into the Pythoness's  
forking caves past smoldering  
cave bear skulls that mark  
the navel of the world.



# ORDOVICIAN NOTEBOOK

*by Jason Abdelbadi*

In the summer months we live in the ordovician era, 400 million years ago. Geological uncomformity has left us surface dwellers without a choice—after the glaciers we face a massive plummet through time with a single step. Our feet dangle in modern times but our heads dream on pillows of unfathomable age. Ottawa contains many physical traces of deep time, of shallow tropical oceans and long-extinct marine life. We are a valley surrounded by highlands of precambrian outcrops, some of the oldest rocks in north america, the remnants of an ancient mountain range as high as the himalayas. But beneath the city itself are many layers of sedimentary rock dating to the era of trilobites, brachiopods, and orthoconic cephalopods, before life crawled onto land, a great alien conspiracy beneath the neo-gothic façade of our surface architecture.

These fossils often actually lie out in the open, in bits of black shale known as the Billings formation. The pell mell dumping grounds of construction projects, infrastructure and real estate, are not infrequently rife with these blackened plate-like testaments of the ancient oceans. Certain areas along the river expose the fossils readily, and one does not need to seek far for these zones. Beneath the ridiculous pomp of the parliament buildings, or on the cliffside at the rear of our national gallery, housing so much “fine art” at the service of state grandeurs, the secret galleries of the aeons cradle the water and mud without any pretension or sponsorship. In these shaded areas where for years I found the remnants of useless activities, free from development, where hobos build jungles and condoms and snack bags are rife, the blackened fossils gaze out with their unblinking intensities or boredoms. The rip-rap left along the shore to bolster it against the riotous river has likewise in recent years invoked the sedimentary remnants of the ancient ocean as a defence against rising levels. Old waterways deployed against the onslaught of the new.

But pandemics and other crises of the here and now can easily be reduced

to insignificance by means of a little time-travel. A few weeks of touring these sites on daily walks allowed me to practice a kind of psychogeology, a passage through the atmosphere of aeons on top of or in matrix with the life of the city. It is an obsessive and exhausting way to pass the time, hours pass without a care mud raking along the broken shoreline, dodging and speculating, looking for patterns in the rock or in the mind that relate in the end to certain poetic ideas.

The bucklers (*Triarthrus eatoni*, *Pseudogygites*). At the level of distinct creatures, the long extinct trilobites crawl onto my face and cover my eyes, nose, and mouth. They invoke shields, heraldry, armor, the armed playing cards and incoherent, byzantine hierarchies of Wonderland. They often come in fragments, bizarre bottoms or tops that stand out starkly and characteristically with the force of a collage. They are mutilated, decapitated, shattered leftovers. They are consequently gothic, romanticizing half-things, strange siege-machines from a Bosch hellscape, the leftovers from the Battle of Who Knows What. Shattered and undead. When found whole they impress us like seals on letters, archives in the peeling layers of an insanely dense library.

The missiles (*Actinocerids*). Then come the indented impressions of the orthoconic shells, the jousting lances with tentacle mouths, early nautiloid cephalopods whose rigidly straight armor could be inverse biorockets or equally a strange white and golden gash in the black shale. Orthodox predecessors of the squids and octopuses, these ancestors leave cryptic but unshakably rigid instructions in aquatic chivalry. They shock us with their straightness, which in a wriggly world becomes a kind of scientific instrument by which poetic insight measures itself. The sectional divisions speak to utopian designs for great phalansteries, life on the nautiloid (and didn't Nemo understand this? Won't his next submarine be called The Orthconone?) Another suit for the deck.

The questions (*Hyalolitha*). A mystery: the little creepy hyoliths, sometimes popularly billed in the media as "living ice-cream cones". I notice their odd wispy ends and think rather of thin beautiful nails painted black, scratching at flesh. They are the Elizabeth Bathories of the Benthos.

Then come the all-sorts. The brachiopod and gastropod shells, crinoid stems alternate too, circles and helmets, in great abundance, like the pips on the suit cards or bizarre grotesques denoting some Fulcanelli's system

in deep obscurity. But their order is a mixture, usually in a heaving mass, all sorts of directions and sizes and indeed more of a jumble sale, a box of keys or old typewriter components sold as novelty paperweights for a few dollars each. An ode to junk, accumulations, heaps, accretions, yard sales: *miscellaneagnosis*.

But one feature that is easily seen all along the shale along the edge of the river, and of which I wish to emphasize especially, are the great conglomerate “trace fossils”. These are found in such abundance and with so little effort (if one chooses to see) and with such high poetic reward (if one chooses to live) that I am almost tempted to cite them as Ottawa’s local specialty *vis a vis* a poetry “made [or in this case found] by all, not some”.

...And doesn’t it take a certain belief, a certain mental receptivity and a certain paranoia to learn to see fossils in the first place? This gives them at least a notional proximity to the surrealist found object: not only as a tool for conceptual displacement, but requiring a kind of pre-derangement and hypersensitivity in the seeker as a prerequisite for their appearance at all. One has to believe it’s possible to see the Ordovician at one’s feet before it reveals itself in so many strange tunnels, grooves, diabolical impressions. There is a *pareidoliac* element that is ever present and, maybe especially in the amateur, a major feature of the hunt. We are—especially with trace fossils—unsure, tenuous. Is this just a weathered stone? Or is it ancient “portable” rock art as some strange people think? Or a trace of living thing? It might be good to keep track especially of the erroneous fossils, the misinterpretations, the ambiguous shadow catalogue of mistakes, for they are surely no mistakes from the perspective of the subconscious at work. This is where the idiotic casual hunter has a poetic advantage over the expert. The ability, within an established context, to creatively misinterpret with abandon. Poetry will be made by error, or it will not be...

What is the poetry of trace fossils in particular? Like the secrets of surrealism and painting, and the revelations of the gnashing eye, for which they are signals, and windows. They represent the leftover landscaping of an ancient life form, but through *mise-en-scène* only. An ordovician drawing room after the struggle with an antediluvian *Fantômas*. The air of the not-yet or the catastrophically imminent. Poetry works in these missing elements.



We see burrows mixed with craters, gaps, little crossing patterns, bits of They are architectures, in many cases, and do well next to Chirico. They partake in the same atmosphere and the same kind of imminent threat—of almost presence of—what? The shadows flit across their bewildering assortments.

They are given names, these things we are unsure of. These are the names of a redoubled mystery—fossil of a fossil, trace of a trace.

The burrow (*Rusophycus*). Perhaps the most easily found, and easily confounded, of the trace-fossils. These appear in lumps, like little elevated sarcophagi in the rock, and in many different combinations, architectures, scenes. They are ambiguous but hint enigmatically at some life-form's sense of place, that of an ancient trilobite. They remind me of the blank stares of a mannequin. They often combine with weathering on exposed rocks and traces of plant-life, crinoids, fossilized shells etc. to depict a weird Lovecraftian inversion of a "landscape". They are simply hypnotic, like hints, captivating, but also truly scary in their corpse-like aspect, the mineralized burial shroud hiding something in the ambiguous package. Like Man Ray's "Enigma of Isidore Ducasse", they are draped and heaped and bound up, and this gives them their power to disorient us.

The path (*Cruziana*). These trace fossils, a general category, demonstrate the movement of the creature under the benthic surface. They trace odd lines and veins into the rock and illustrate a definite progression, a linear view of history or a confusion (beautiful, convulsive, desperate) of the labyrinth. The



tunnels of the first explorers. On the summer solstice I find one just as the sun sets. They indicate a strange sort of comic strip or animated sequence—perhaps the first animated cartoon. The humble monster burrows through the benthic wackyland like Bugs Bunny would do so many times later. Whenever we see this we know Bugs has entered the great secret Rabbit Hole of Lewis Carroll and that this magic place is full of fine furnishings, carrot jars, plummeting ideas, but also a strange Alician calmness (for the passage is long enough to induce reflection). A crossing. When Bugs pops up in the desert or in the snowy himalayans we see the burrow trail in the background. He pulls out his map and suggests a different turn at Albuquerque. There is no going back.

A circular gastropod shell. The point of fixation. A stomach-eye looking back at me in the midst of this stony, steaming solar locus. The smell of some hot plants, the river, all around me traces and fossils and the bones of seagulls and pike. I hide in the shade and sit precariously on some ancient silhouette of a plant. Above me I suddenly hear desperate crying, a couple breaking up, someone is screaming, and then some other time near the same spot, some people frantically making out... People come here a lot to experience the rawness of couplehood. It is one of the few accessible non-places in the immediate vicinity of the tourist district downtown. It clings in a very narrow, rocky shoreline covered in fragments and bramble to a towering wall, an atypical atmosphere for the city, a gigantic old wall that scales to the heights and seems like an impossible dream in this gently rolling city. We face north and see the vast chill of the wilderness crawling its way past the

river to the arctic. In the awful silence, the gastropods and brachiopod fossils chatter away in their mineralized plotting.

The pandemic has maybe prompted more fossil-thinking, at least driving more people to them for want of anything better to do. Friends unprompted talk about finding brachiopod shell fossils. A particular spot near the river hosts a few massive black shale boulders. I visit them often but hesitate to damage them. Yet in a matter of weeks since beginning this fossil revery, one of the big boulders has been unaccountably exploded. Fragments are everywhere, trilobite pieces especially. I see a points card to a bookstore, and some kind of white toothpaste-looking substance smeared on some of the debris. No big action since the pleistocene and now? A trilobite change purse.

And then as a postscript, the pieces of the aeons follow you back. Many of the older buildings in the city are, I begin to notice, built with a disregard for the type of rock—metamorphic mixed indiscriminately with fossiliferous sedimentary rocks, and from this same kind of rock that I have been crawling over. Isn't easy actually to discern the fossils and shells on the sides of well-known sites now? They are everywhere, clinging to old highschoools and national sites. When I close my eyes I can see the layers of sediment and feel them on my fingers, pry them apart. There is a surrealist game I am playing in the perpetual unearthing of wonders and traces, a kind of trace that doesn't stay put when you find it but follows you home like a weird street creature, and really this is the only surrealist game there is. When I turn the corner, there they are. We're not so far apart.



# 25 PALEONTOLOGICAL DREAM SCENES

## 2000-2020

*by Mattias Forshage*



It's raining for the duration of our vacation, so I spend the time curating the paleontology collections of an abandoned natural history museum.

On an Italian piazza like in an Argento movie, there is a big globe rolling on top of the water jet in a fountain. The globe is red and steaming but looks more like some wooden material than actual meat, and running all around its surface, defying gravity, are plenty of small carnivorous dinosaurs. Sometimes you need to decrease the mass of the globe by scaring it with a spider on a stick.



We visit a dinosaur park, and of course sneak off from the guided tour. It is amazing to see a huge sauropod come walking in a regular boreal spruce forest. *Brachiosaurus* is not a valid name anymore, and I name this one *Brachyserphus* (actually a wasp). But someone has dressed it, in a huge leather harness, with numerous straps for sect members to dangleingly hold on to.

Together with Mary Anning, the 19th century paleontology pioneer, I am walking along the south English beaches, discovering new fossils, and possibly making love.

One more of these nature documentaries about the African savanna. This one is actually a commercial for a South Korean genetics company. It is always sunset on the savanna, dinosaurs roam there together with giant ostriches.

Looking for a lost love, I end up quarelling with strangers in the street. But we are under attack by small dinosaur bull calves.

Finding myself at an absurd visitors center in a countryside locality, the number of cheap fossils and plastic dinosaurs sold convinces me I must be at a particular Cretaceous fossil site, Ivön. However I am more interested in comic books.

Members of the municipality council in smalltown Waxholm have kept disappearing. I am requested in the investigating commission, to provide some paleontological expertise. But I am a fake, I know the stratigraphy of the Jurassic and the Cretaceous but nothing else.

Investigating vast beds of plant fossils, we realise that they actually resemble human skeletons and it might be a mass grave of ancient humans. As we're pondering the implications they assume flesh and rise to hunt us.

Finding myself at the Army museum in the 1970s, I am eager to investigate two departments that I really want to know what they were like: paleontology and mining history.

A male philosopher brings his several genius sisters, one of which is an inventor of animals, and nervously I offer to answer questions she might have about systematics and paleontology.

I am bored at a wedding party and get out to get some fresh air. There I see a pterodactyl coming flying. This is impressive, but I can't remember whether it is truly sensational or not.

Terrified, I am watching an army of suburban nazi cheerleaders, but I am able to ignore them because there are interesting probably extinct animals coming down the trees: giant armadillos, anoles the size of alligators, and a therapsid, possibly *Moschops*.

When my friend Ika tells me Chinese limestone mountains is one of the very few things she is interested in, a huge terrapin flies over our heads, looks like an extinct kind. As it lands on the roof across the street, it becomes the eaves of the roof, and then the eaves becomes the jaws of a big mechanical dinosaur, which comes to life, stomps the ground and slowly, mechanically, starts chasing us.

A teenager in heavy makeup gives an improvised public lecture about the dinosaur bones in the rock just next to the market square. I enjoy it immensely. Somewhat later I realise she was played by rock musician Joan Jett.

In the afternoon train I often meet up with my paleontologist friend Graham Budd, but I am suspecting he's a fake, his beard is too big, I suspect he's actually from the local heritage association.

On the way to the chocolate factory there are several obstacles. One is climbing a steep hill where running water exposes the fossil-bearing slippery shale. It's possible to hold on to lianas. But the lianas are covered with the fossil surface structure of extinct lycophytes.

A student is complaining, no one is allowed to do research about the ecology of extinct organisms anymore, they all have to work with live snakes.

The paleontologist Sven had far too radical ideas and had to quit, but has remained roaming the institution as a ghost.

Whale-like fossils uncovered down in the harbour are actually fossil sailing boats.

I am given the responsibility of a group of children, so with them I go and investigate abandoned buildings, one of which turns out to be a natural history museum, with vast fossil collections mixed with osteological and entomological collections. The place has its own ghost children.

An entomologist friend demonstrates a public fossil site. Known fossils are circled in red and have information signs, but the strata themselves are more fascinating, they are soft and sometimes edible, interspersed between semi-consolidated muds and clays are for example wallpaper glue and sweetened whipped cream.

Someone has invited ecological poets to a scientific conference, which causes some friction. But no one had noticed that the boulders surrounding us are huge fossil trilobites and gastropods.

At a fossil dig site, a real live Thyreophoran (armored dinosaur) of an unknown kind is uncovered. It is dazed, but as soon as it gets its bearings it will start charging at us like a rhinoceros. That's the way things are, it's a bit annoying to have to remain alert and step out of the way, but we're not going to harm the sensational poor bastard.

My friend is pouring tea on me, so I ignore him and look out the window. I see a kestrel flying in between the buildings, but before I remember the English name it has transformed into a pterodactyl, very stiff, possibly mechanical.



*Mechanical Materialism According to Oswyn Peckham*

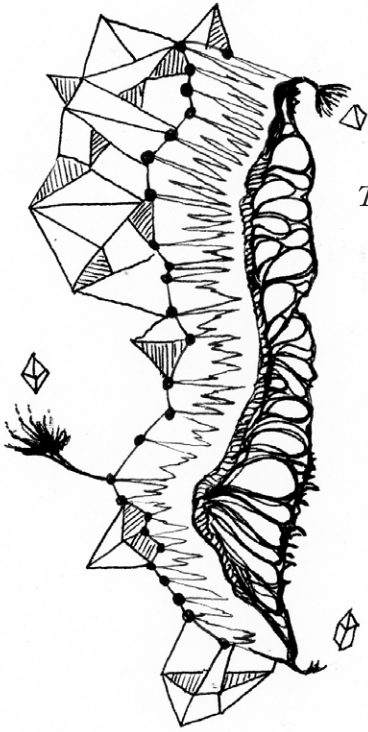
**Tan Tolga Demirci**



*The Secret of Candles and Peat*  
**Peter Harris**

# FOSSIL DRAWING GAME

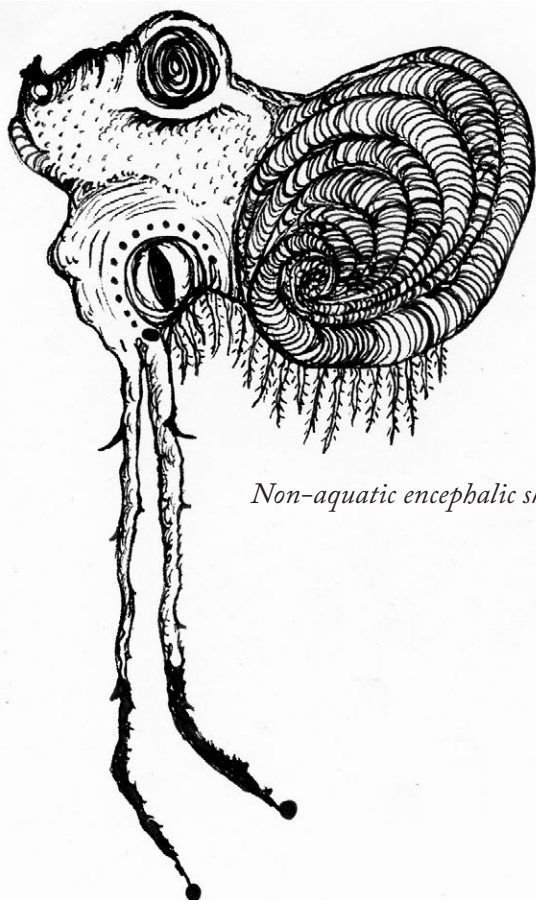
by House of Mysticum



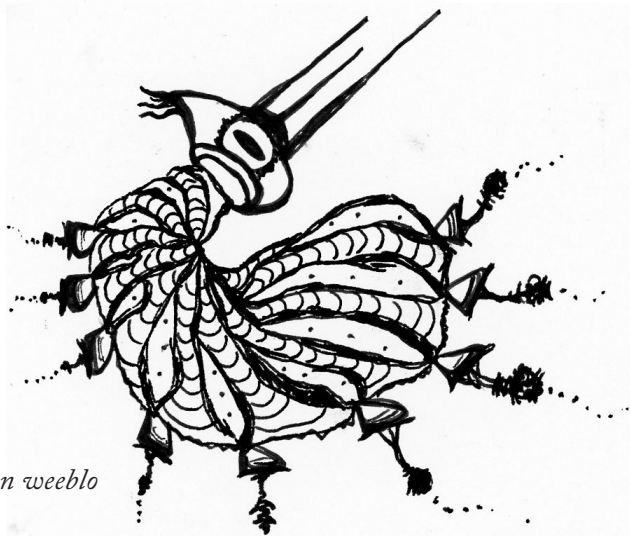
*The happy-go-tuna polyp*



*Spindly web-footed shearling*



*Non-aquatic encephalic shrimp*



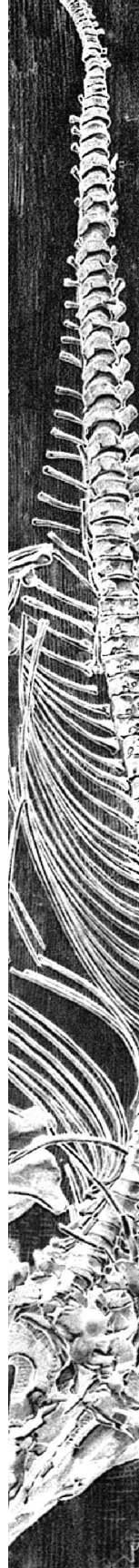
*Common weeblo*





# MESOZOIC

*Monsters also have their age of heroes. Time looks towards the circus or the picture-book as a source of hope. They are in love with the great, the flamboyant, the queer, the coniferous, and the ferocious. Half of all myth is gigantism. "I can't hear you! It's too loud!" Popular culture is born.*



# THE STORY OF MY LIFE

by *Vittoria Lion*



Before I learned against my will how to astral project into deep time, my father searched for a dinosaur for me in a set of his father's antique encyclopedias, but found only a black-and-white photograph of the fossilized giant dragonfly native to the Carboniferous coal swamps, *Meganeura*. The

letters of the words on the page flickered like flames, more akin to the luminous Hebrew alphabet than Latin characters, glowing with sacred fervour. Mercifully, with the years that passed I forgot everything else about that period of my life, only the colours of the dazzling forest that bisected me, that cleaved me open from mouth to vulva to give me a single long lip. For the rest of my life all the silver busks and wool buttons in the world fascinated endlessly anyone who caught my eye.

I instead remembered the future, when I would work in the X-ray department of the hospital. I was in fact an unknowing adept clairvoyante, and the array of medical instruments constituted an extremely technically advanced geological observatory built to peer within the hollow Earth and study its inner recesses. I would modify one of the X-ray machines to create a new device that would allow you to see into the eons of Earth's prehistory, that would ensnare light from distant stars to automatically envelop bones in the ghost of living sinew. In the beginning, it was a discovery made by chance, an unremarkable procedure performed upon a gentleman who I later learned was Baron Cuvier himself. "Would you believe that there are entire tectonic plates hidden underneath my shoulder blades?" he asked me, daring me to imagine twirling elephants and seismic revolutions, disappeared worlds that preceded our own. When I processed the images that night, the chemical bath became an ocean of flying horses, aurochs, rhinoceroses, reindeer, lions, and hyenas with transparent scales making the steppe sparkle like wedding diamonds, gliding through one another's bodies like lanternfish and rippling like rain. They were pirouetting into the centre of the Earth like the circus ponies of a primitive experimental film strip. Thus unfolded my sexual initiation into the nascent science of extra-orbital sight, replenishing and satiating as the vivid, stigmatic palette of any bird of paradise.

The latter was a subject graphically introduced to me by the sorry condition of Mr. Wallace, returning from New Guinea. He had fallen victim to the climax of the reproductive maturation of a being simultaneously floral and avian (such is denoted by the term "bird of paradise"). His unwitting assailant was still in the middle of engorging herself when they wheeled him in, stamen-plumes flaring and striped like infrared bands, and until that day I had never met the gaze of a creature exactly like myself in all

that mattered. Something of the forest had entered inside, and each night I dreamed the most vivid dreams of its entire life cycle, its pitcher plants and star-shaped birds, half a century of subarctic daylight piercing the canopy branches like the minute hand of a clock. I recall the days when I'd dare myself to push my bare breasts against the window of my apartment, causing the narrow cat's pupil the length of my torso to dilate. This engendered in me the most nondescriptly pleasurable sensation.



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And yet in all the stirrings of the hoarfrost, in all the apparitions that escaped the archons who prowled the sewers and factories to shut the passages into the hollow Earth, to keep the fossils from fleeing, there was a sense of another life I lived, or will live, a life that had wings. The reindeer calves showed me the way on the morning the parhelion hung in the clouds.

There, the underside of the pack ice surges with miles of undulating fur, and the deep field of fur velvets the ocean floor. That is where *Urvogel*, brooding in the mane, saw me in the overgrown dining room of the *Erebus*, where my erotic seizure was to be carved and served up on New Year's Eve in the belly of the beast. But that was the price I had to pay the captain for permission to dive in the ruins night after night, to retrieve from his cabin the locked box containing rudimentary daguerreotypes that preserved images from lives and memories I had lost. And there was one among them I believed to be the master key, the true miracle, the rose I would have laid down my life searching for: a double-sided picture, twirled on a string, of a being falling, trapped in her flight, arrested in her metamorphosis between bird and saint. In the encrusted mirror, my now lipless mouth, opaque eyes, and black teeth blended into all her vanes and *feuilles*; around my head darted sea molluscs pierced by anemometers. And now the wreck capsizes, the ship is an Egyptian funeral barge and everything turns on its head, the world is in miniature, the colliding petal of ice is in fact a rubrum lily from Linnaeus' bloom clock and the frozen bodies cling to it like microscopic amphibians.

Fossils are anesthiacs, the great somnambulists. The brush parts, a bifurcated deer with two sinuous necks terminating in a single head startles *Urvogel*. Who is *Urvogel* (singular here, although, most likely, totally unremarkable—for the modern paleo-sciences have demonstrated there are not one but several *Urvögel*, not one but several deep times; therefore, one supposes, a different *Urvogel* for every variation of deep time)? *Urvogel* is a gigantic paramorphous flying fox of antiquity, a syringe-beak with teeth, only a handful of fossilized aunts and uncles removed from me. She kills a dragonfly, which causes her to become flooded and satiated, and her ensuing dream is a serrated downturned rainbow full of transparent teeth. The temperature of her blood is a tidal pool lined with cloisonné.

Untold years of perfectly-preserved shadow puppetry of circulating fluids, of intracranial interstices where type specimens of light are stretched thin. A liquid writhing; a flowering axial tilt. Her form—a pair of embroidery scissors in the forest loom, where anywhere leads to everywhere.

*Urvogel* is a knife, but she is also a colour, a colour all her own. Like today's birds, half of her cerebral apparatus remains awake while she sleeps to enable flight, and she lives in half-sleep, sleep-flying, life spent in the thrill of being able to dream while flying: a buoyant dream that breathes. Her spotted feathers fade into the spotted leaves and pine needles, and across the forest floor weaves a herd of mummified dinosaurs. A gift for *Urvogel*: she can pluck the hieroglyph-insects from their bandages and decorate her midden with their glittering carapaces and her glass beads.

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I lived on top of the mourning emporium in those days, and numerous passersby felt overcome by the urge to confirm what they believed they might have seen in the world enclosed by my drapery. What lay deeper in the wild promenade of black-dyed corsets, camisoles, slips and petticoats, umbrellas, ostrich feathers, a crape jungle with deliquescent jaguars sewn out of silk gloves... I was visited by plenty of men, a lesser but far from underwhelming number of ladies, and several who defied classification. The memory of one woman in particular continues to mesmerize me. She undid the vegetal snap-traps and slid my sheer stockings down my legs, onto the floor one by one, where each became a little ermine and scurried away, kissing stray hairs and threadbare satin. My tongue bled when I spoke her name. That putrid name that never stops bleeding! She lifted my tongue, my tongue that concealed a horrific scene like the boudoir curtain in the gorgeous set of one of the chief examiner's photographs. As for the anal reflexes, I believe I once heard from a wonderful sage that they are the most highly refined of all human languages. They're even engraved on the Rosetta Stone, imagine that... When she had removed all her clothes, her warm thighs sprawled on my bed, I witnessed something miraculous emerge from inside her—a tiny creature, somewhat like a soft mole, who crawled up a rivulet of blond hair that extended the length between her

groin and breasts, who she kept close to her heart as she slept. And, all through the night, sweet beneath the waves, the secret clay bird in my dresser drawer whispered of the fragments of love carried in the brash ice of the Circumpolar Current.

Later the matter of the hour turned to my most alluring physical asset, the strange aperture that had divided me bilaterally in some manner of primordial sacrifice; to me it had always been there, I hardly remembered when it wasn't there. She suggested to me the possibility I had arrived from *someplace else*. For, in the city, there are unguarded manholes strewn along the ley lines, connecting dot-to-dot the graves of revolutionaries and the writers of sacred books. And everyone who goes in the forest knows that nobody leaves it without bites. Having nothing to do the following afternoon, we idled in the gallery of Roman antiquities. There I saw a dead Gaul pulled from a silent, ancient place in the wild country, a reclining wave of black ore with blood-coloured hair, transformed entirely to a different substance by immersion in the profound secrets of the Earth.

That romance lasted for years, and through it all I never spoke her name again. Summer in Pompeii, covered in kudzu. The flying buttresses were lost to the volcanic sands, foxes began to nest inside the artificial stone dinosaurs. We pushed our fingers into wounds predating our memories, inflicted by the creatures of deep time, their golden irises brimming fearsome and noble and proud as they gazed out upon their invisible territory. Now they dwell in the chambers of the mummified zoo of Saqqara, and we entered the dens where they lie but dreaming, filling our puncture holes with their fine linens. I met Max Ernst on the ferry from Venice to Alexandria, and he led me to the sunken horticultural station of Heracleion where he showed me the long-necked, towering sphinx in her fold. White cotton fanned around my body like the wings of a medusa in the Prussian green. I swam in the nightmare vegetation of prehistory, with forms I had only ever seen cultivated before in the hospital garden, the place where I came for the first time, aroused beyond measure: legible plants, plants that weep tassels of human hair, plants with supple breasts in place of petals. In that floral laboratory I also saw a communicating vessel made of two birds connected by their

beaks via a kind of stem or cannula, demonstrating the symmetry of thought. I believed it to be an iteration of the well-known experiment involving a bird in an air pump. I was thoroughly possessed by the image of these *cannulated birds*.



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Now I will tell you what happened to the director of the X-ray department. He inevitably took ill and spent the rest of his life rotting on a jacquard pillow in the surgical ward, surrounded by the synthetic forest that grew there, furtively grazed on by Palaeotherium and Anoplotherium... In time, each of his limbs palsied, petrified, and fell onto the floor tiles in a half-decayed heap, leaving in its place the slender birds' beaks that sprouted erratically all over him like the quills of a sea urchin. I would attempt to distract him by relating my voyages elsewhere, the remote seeing carried out with a kind of stereoscope viewer. He drea- rily asked me my thoughts concerning certain diseases of the nervous system, enquiring about the seances, the shamanic contortions, if they were all indeed real... Of course they were, I said, hysteria is a beautiful pinprick of light that shines in the darkness of the Seine. I remembered what Cuvier had told me about his shoulder blades. My sternum, which is by now wholly imaginary like so much of my body, is a weathered piece of driftwood grazed by Florida panthers, great blue herons, and Key deer. The hollows of the trees there seep tears. To glimpse the jubilation of fossils through the silver birches, I think, must pose the greatest threat to every stultified vision. The child's eye, the eye of Polyphemus, retracts into its cocoon.

I had recently become caught up in a passing craze concerning finding the location of Franklin's grave. In my most recent dream, an enormous grey-haired polar bear, stuffed and mounted, occupied an upper room of Freud's house from floor to ceiling. I asked the director of the X-ray department why, whenever I thought of love, the image that came to my mind was always the icefields of the far north. He told me a story he had heard, a long time ago, of a little girl who had lost her father on that ill-fated expedition. He had departed in the month of May when she was very small, and all he had left her was the understanding that where he was going and what he was searching for had to do with things unseen and ineffable, and something to do with love. But the little girl learned to reach with her thoughts and glide like the Arctic tern along the invisible waves recorded by peculiar writing machines, and in the end she found him, she found him and the tiny snow bunting she held in her palm helped lead her.

Before my eyes I see that, one hundred or one hundred and fifty years from now, a hunter will still know the place where Franklin is interred. Maybe the dogs will growl in fear when they draw close. And someone will take him back to London, or maybe here first, and the trembling of a photographic shock will make his entire skeleton radiant like all the candles that paint the night in the Davis Strait. And then after they're done they'll hushedly seal his phantasmatic anatomy under a stone slab in Westminster with some miserable rituals, not knowing that he had forgotten everything except the glaciers streaked with antlers of blood, the white wolves who tussle with human bones.

All the beaks begin to clamour in pain from my dear friend's fever and dehydration, and I feed them drops of water from a syringe. "Why don't you dissect the sky, then; what do you think you'll find there?" he asks me. But in me there is a polar veldtland, with its prehensile nunataks and sky-blanchéd moraines, I want to cross it alone. Before me stretch out fjords, eskers, hummocks, bearberry pastures I have never seen. On the pillow now lies the rime-silken face of John Torrington, the tusk of a dream, which fills me with speechless tenderness. I lift the shroud, and the dark veins of the young man swirl with scrimshaw of the spiritual abominations of the Luttrell Psalter. I was told they had to bury his shadow in the soil because the tundra would not receive him.

In the pattern of winding bristlecones, of mammoth wool, there are furrows of inestimable depth in his arms, his chest, his genitals. Methuselah, I think. He reveals to me the devastating arcanum, hidden inside: not all who travelled under the command of Franklin perished of exposure and dessicated; some *burned*. The palpating snows are fire without illumination, without visibility; the frozen ocean is a white flame that consumes you like a wick, and the burning is love.

That's perhaps what he sought on this ice prairie. To be alien on Earth, to be alien in your own body.

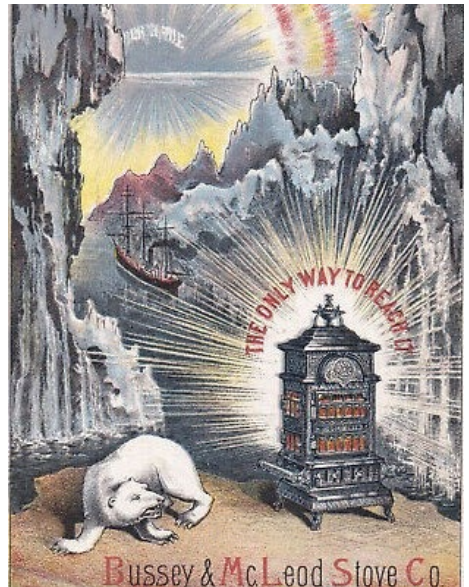
A two million-year-old child fondles a toy whittled from her own father's jaw. Dry rainstorm on the veldt, there's nothing here except a clutch of ostrich eggshells transmitting cryptic telegrams to the parts of the body. A silent operation.



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The day before, I came across this advertisement in the street, but was unsure of what it could mean.

On the night following my twenty-seventh birthday, after I had been bedbound for some time, I awoke to find that I had secreted an aurora borealis in my sleep. The ribbon hovered over my body like a silk scarf outstretched between my bedposts, a glistening hand heavy with jewellery under the ceiling, low enough to bend down and stroke my indecently spread legs. Its phosphor glowed brightly through the drapes, and I noticed that a small crowd had formed outside.



I understood why, in the regions where the mysteries of the woods give no respite and swallow all, in the regions where once a snowshoe rabbit crossed my path to save my life, it is said that sometimes a lone wanderer will see the aurora lower its streamer of pearls into a clearing and touch the earth.

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The walls of my bedroom are painted the colour of pale thoughts. Somewhere beyond the rosy flesh of my eyelids there runs an enchanted wolf whose body I know must harbour John Torrington's soul. The curled smoke signal of his tail, rising from Doctor Dee's furnace, disappears like an argent flash among the cairns that map the blood vessels of my dream. I must have never played with dolls much, I played house with wolves.

In my dream, I see Baron Cuvier shipwrecked on Elephant Island with Shackleton's party. The shelf that rises indefinitely toward the pole is an inundated electric lamp finding its path between my thighs and sliding down into my throat. It's beautiful there, I want to bathe in the light of my dream.

My dream is the dream that *Urvogel* emanates from her hands to beguile her mate. Closing the innumerable eyes of diverse shapes and shades enfolded along the length of her wingspan, she stitches together a tapestry of Pleistocene equines from the twigs of her nest. Neither of them know quite what to make of it. Delighted enough, they copulate, and shortly afterward *Urvogel* lays a heavy seed containing within it the secret of consciousness, which her spouse will peck open. A single limestone feather slices through the catalepsy of time.

The window of my dream unfastens and I am floating over the city, over its forges, valves, and cemeteries, the moon-stained hills that linger outside it, and they are transformed. The tenements have all dissipated, replaced by coiled mazes, wreaths of cyclopean birds the colours of many languages, a flushed latticework of birds desiring colour, cavorting, scraping the bur-nished dimness of the understory with their strange repetitions, unfurling fernlike spectra of passion, a tessellating mirror of love that only spilled over and over in its luxuriance and never ran dry, until one day—one day—colour translated into flight...

And there was a little bird who could only quiver with satisfaction at the still unnamed thing that had taken place within her.

I wake in my dream and the angel visits. *Urvogel* is perched on the frame of my bed. I want to dwell in the ivory scotoma behind her pupils. Her breast is such a rich, lambent black that nothing at all can enter or exit. I sit up in my bed and smooth its feathers, a motion that makes them crackle with the sound of the aurora borealis, and she bites the tips of my fingers—I cannot know whether a friendly gesture or one of unsentimental curiosity. My fingers salivate amber flame; it is like touching the innermost flesh of the heart, the flesh of my ecstasy, flesh of my spirit. A slit canvas in space that brings the adrift flowers over to this side of eternity, sailing the extrasolar current within her, adrift, adrift inside, brushing the black flowers of an infinite bird.

All my life I have attempted, through a glass darkly, to understand what vision is, is it love, preservation, the postponement of death, was fossilization the first form of sight... I wonder if we were always X-rays, if the first drawing anyone ever scrawled showed a landscape from a dream. Intraperitoneal shiver of a collapsed camera in a mistbound bomb vessel. A lost set of negatives of a line of icebergs shaped like visceral organs and framed against the haloed horizon, this one named the Sphinx, this one Karnak, this one the Necropolis, Maydum...

*Urvogel* spreads her wings and violently shakes the snowfall of another form of forest, as if emerging from an egg made of wind, and crows that she is a miracle, brought out and displayed before the awe of great men.

the sparrow sings forth  
a soft electromagnetic wave  
emitted from the forests far beyond Paris  
genuflection  
of words that don't behave as words do  
crystalline  
violet discharge  
when I was a bird

And in the bogland below in my dream, the dismembered king with the cracked-open skull emitting the colour of the sky bears a garland of fox fur woven in the flesh.



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I have known for years since that the city rests transiently on top of a painted sea leaking lithified plumage, and one day the latter will reclaim us, covering the surface of the Earth in an impenetrable undergrowth of feathers and Venetian lace like a great celestial bird. My bathtub splashes into it with me still inside, sinking into the dream-darkness until I am tongue to tongue with pyrosomes and siphonophores coiling into all of me. Along the shore where it continuously erodes our city's foundations, eventually leading to our damnation, there were summer sideshows with baths for the old and sick and ice cream for the children. I, an insect in a pink dress, perambulated with the two-headed calves, the mermaids, the four-legged girls... My solution to cities arrived in a dream, and with this proposal I won a contest to design the architecture of the last World Exhibition. I pictured a stratum somehow subterranean and preconscious to the city's surface atmosphere that nevertheless did not lie underground. At my instruction, we built an undulating, cavernous barrier of opalescent, protoplasmic white tissue overhead and around us, which was neither roof nor wall. The subcutaneous fat that

made up this structure swirled with blood vessels and organs, among them a very humanlike carmine heart. The bulging fat narrowed to thin, transparent membranes overhead for skylights, an homage to the glass and iron roofs of the arcades of Paris. Within this layer we installed a number of reconstructions of the creatures of the antediluvian world ranging from the colossal to the infinitely small, all revealed by my X-ray images. Interspersed with them stood representations of animals of the future, culled from my exhaustive memory.

I have vowed to live until the final time the artifice of flight evolves on this planet, whether those wings are made to carve through sky, water, or soil. Flight is merely another form of vision, as those creatures with eyes all over knew well. I'm sure there will be another *Urvogel*, another of those angels of prehistory, and it will be one of us, but I still don't know if it will be you or I. Praise the disturbed sleep of the finch in the forest. Once there was a human body here; now there is only the horse-mane brush inside my cervix, painting my first dream on the veiled walls, my dream of the dappled bulls and mammoths and scintillating lions.

And now *Urvogel* begins her southward migration from Baffin Bay, all the way to Cape Horn, her unwrapped plumage is brilliant with iridium and salt, gunpowder. The bird in my bed, printing-stone bird, the bird whose shape is suggested by a cuneiform arrow in space. The emptiness preceding the first vowel of the highest alphabet—curvilinear static, an inscription written in vibrating silence

and her aerial sarcophagus  
rides the rose suspended in rain  
wheels over the grand ovary of Chartres  
her first flight  
efflorescent silt  
blossoms Calamites  
in me  
in the room with the hand of glory  
where the conifers spin toward their black sun  
the missing letter of the script that resurrects lost forms

# GOLDEN ELEVATOR

*by Aaron Dylan Kearns*

## *ADREAM*

Despite the dream being in monochrome, I could tell that the elevator I was inside was made out of gold. Or at least painted with reflective golden paint. It was the kind of deal where the reflective walls gave it an infinite mirroring effect. While closed in, you feel like you're in a larger space that's built up from tiny compartments filled with replicates of you and the other passengers. There was a bell just above the ceiling, I couldn't tell if it was also metal or bronze. There were two other men in the elevator, both suited. I got the impression that they were doctors or dentists despite not talking to them. Their shoulders were broad, crossing to form a wall that blocked off the door. Pteranodon heads stuck out from their collars from invisible necks. Their heads shook and made percussive rattling sounds. The elevator was stuck and the bell wouldn't stop ringing.





# STREET FOSSILS

*by Jason Abdelhadi*

Specimens discovered on the streets of downtown Ottawa pointing to another time hidden within the urban environment.







# IN PREPARATION FOR NIGHT...

*by J. Karl Bogartte*

Anguish is bliss for the desire of a shadow, a key screwing into your lock without interruption. What beginning is there that never arrives, having passed unnoticed, somewhere else. Between your ribs the Bird of Paradise releases its great window...

A wayward archery deceives a bird-like lamp, your trebling twinge, swimming upstream for glowing. She bleeds profusely, and that is the chanterelle at night, cold, damp and visionary.

Above “your breath staining glass” there is erasure and sabotage, the resistance, of light and shadow to tincture the hummingbird contest. To doorway the flower-vows. Below there are “marsupials for acrobatics of appearance” and “recovering fuses” to scintillating visage.

Entangled with each hypothetical dive, your arc was more overladen than dissolved, led by shifting dwarves of amorous beauty. You are never known by name, forked by fathoms and galvanized in a golden age to loupe with arcane messages, pressed by sunflowers. An escapee is always worth the weight of gems stuffed into a corpse. Dreaming outside of a dream...

Random asylums are the codes of gendering mint, fused and dangerous, loving, and however, distance from sight is more illusion than certainty. Shrapnel decisions. Before sunlight is measured, there are tusks to knowledge and tiptoe heisting. Luminous bodies under fire. Bright incantations standing out at night, shivering orchids red with plasma and eager interruptions. The awkward inclusions of the sorcerers, the scent of lightning.

The dream-shaped snake dancer canticles into fields of bright rain, you shadow the expectations of sight unseen. She wills you into glancing. Night-calls. Only sucking sounds and murmuring. Slow clicking drops. High treason for animal salutations and cryptic moaning. It is the form she takes to finely scent and lastly undermine the analogies of hesitation.

Mirror gazing with darkness seeking points of light, raising disequilibrium, the beautiful turmoil, the shattered utterance catapulting into a glimpse of unknown origin. The form of Solace ignites the rain.

Memory alters reflections of a sudden gesture, sun burning stone into an incandescent body looming in monkey shines and antic take downs. *Crack the whip with Chinese whispers, a deadman pinned to Jacob's Ladder...* with owl claws and purring toys. There is greatness in trembling, in the fog, beneath wings. Enter by passing through Ibis for a filial catapult.

Simplicity in the cruelty of listening, overhearing with cellular water, to signify an errant sorcery. It is the backstroke of lost civilizations toward a luxurious mane, to identify swimming upstream with invisible theater. The language of cranes provoking realignment of mirrors in moonlight and small childhoods in ground pollen smeared on your face combed for beauty like poisonous flowers. In preparation for night...

The grid-dismantling and sapphic lamping and fusions in the flowering gardens of Yemen, the fire-stained faces projecting the finest lace and sable, blackest illuminations like splendid clues spinning awe-shaped sun-ravaged evening gowns into the most fanciful encounters. Listen to your skin of hysterical windchimes, your uninterrupted schisms, those turbulent mirrors in your wake. Thus, armed and dangerous...

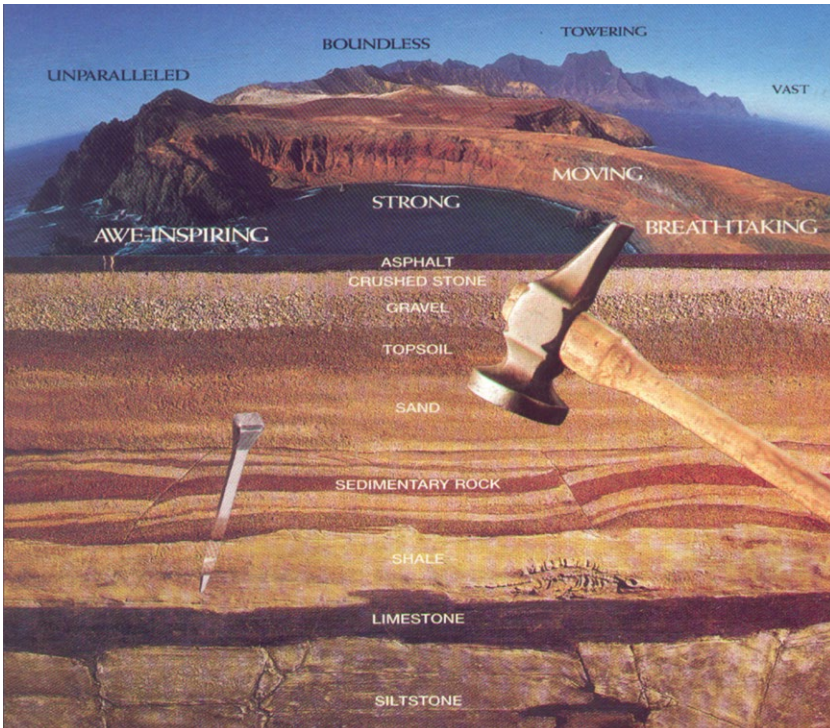
A tincture face dragged out of dramaturge for frolicking knives and blissful daughters, in roundabout fashion, to kill the King and Queen for desire... For fireflies and spinning thrones, for the dazzling feathers of the whirlwind.

The novelty of stealth is fraught with reindeer and long flights, doors of enchanted ambushes, taking each outpost undercover of silent nights. Sirens pointing, the always unsettling interruption. The grand pitchfork of emerging roundabouts. Phantom bodies, phantom optics growing wild in the seed-beds of aurora borealis. Cherished aurora of persistent humming.

Nowhere in the world, but stars in the mud, sliding chimes of a vague fire. Even the bones are filthy with kisses, beautiful bones, beautiful kisses...



*Convulsive Cinema*  
 Darren Thomas



*Nailing It*  
 Sasha Vlad

# DEEP TIME DREAMS

*by Amber Craig*

**April 4, 2020**

A double layer dream. I am at home during the day, telling JA about a dream I had at some point previously. In the dream-dream I found a bunch of smooth beautiful rocks, nice vibrant colours, blue/purple and fuchsia almost hyperpigmented in a river and (I specified this) the last two I found had fossils visible, well centred, intricate & deeply etched.

**October 20, 2018**

I work in a Natural History Museum and with another woman I am carrying a mounted dinosaur skull down a long corridor, transferring it to a different laboratory. Museum patrons & other employees congratulate us as we gingerly maneuver the giant skull. I know that the woman is my fellow researcher on the dig that located the fossil, and as we continue through the museum I feel enormously proud of our find, successful finally.



*Dinosaur Park*

**Juli Kearns**



*Plethosaurus*

### Casi Cline & Samjogo (삼죽오)

*The Plethosaurus was a large plantiosaur that lived during the early part of the Mezzanine Period. The largest visible part of the Plethosaur was its rotund central body segment which housed its characteristic plantiosaur lactopollinosis chambers. However, this is nearly the only feature the Plethosaur shared with its fellow plantiosaurs. The features which distinguished it most from other plantiosaurs are two “limbs” which branched off from either side of its central body segment: a cerebral taproot and a stamentacle. The ends from which these limbs developed were dependant on the moon phase at time of germination. All essential parts of the nervous system were safely housed within the cerebral taproot which burrowed deep underground in search of nutrient-rich aquifers. In the event that the sedentary and largely defensible aboveground parts of its body were irreparably damaged by environmental factors or consumed by predators, cells within the cerebral taproot were able to regenerate all other body parts approximately 5–9 times depending on whether it was sufficiently nourished at time of decimation. The stamentacle was used to distribute pheromone-laden lactogassular globules into the wind currents, allowing it to attract pollinators from greater distances than its pungent lactopollinosis glands could on their own. This also helped lure pollinators from one Plethosaur to another so that the cycle of fertilization could be completed. However, the alluring scent was not always strong enough to lure a pollinator from the particularly sweet and addicting liquours the Plethosaur produced. In fact, the dangers of becoming addicted to Plethosaur “honey-milk” was a common theme in the cautionary folk tales of early Oranionids. If fertilized spores landed in favorable environments after they worked their way through the digestive tracts of pollinators, they would germinate anywhere from 11–77 seasons later.*





Steven Cline

# HE IS BORN, THE ARCHÆOPTERYX

*by Henri Bouché*

*He is born, the Archæopteryx!*

*Harsh hangovers, resonant brawls*

*He is born, the Archæopteryx!*

*Let's all sing the fetus phoenix*

Since then, had Vercingetorix,  
Strategist with Gallic suffix,  
Since then, had Vercingetorix  
A hard kick straight up his coccyx

*Chorus*

ansenius has little price  
For Monseigneur de Péréfixe;  
Jansenius has little price  
If he doesn't erect a big crucifix,

*Chorus*

Alphonse Allais with Félix  
Faure, this president prolix,  
Alphonse Allais with Félix  
Makes prefix puns on him

*Chorus*

If he gets anthrax on his chest,  
– Such inflation triturates! –  
If he gets anthrax on his chest,  
Will cure it with opopanax.

*Chorus*

And one bottle of trois-six,

She's got one and stares straight at it,  
And a bottle of trois-six,  
Ma Ubu has not ten.

*Chorus*

Ah! how golden, how onyx!  
Such reverence to his prefix;  
Ah! how golden, how onyx!  
Let him fly like a big bombyx!

*Chorus*

But this Bird under the larixes  
For the Mallarmean nixies,  
But this Bird under the larixes  
Pooped in the waters of the Styx,

*Chorus*

He's not an imaginary x,  
Or an algebraic affix  
He's not an imaginary x,  
His oncilla forms a helix.

*Chorus*

In August, we decorated his storage box  
It was such a method orthodox,  
In August we decorated his storage box  
With a phallus in phlox flowers.

*Chorus*

The Archæopteryx defeats Pollux;  
He stuns with so much more luxury;  
The Archæopteryx defeats Pollux;  
If the phot's worth ten thousand lux.

*Chorus*

*translated from French by La Vertèbre et le Rossignol*

*Note: This ritual song was published in 1955 by Henri Bouché, Transcendent Satrap at the Collège de 'Pataphysique. It was composed to the tune of "Il est né le divin enfant", a famous Catholic Christmas song and it uses the rhyme formula in "ixe", developed by Stéphane Mallarmé in his "Sonnet en x". In the calendar of the Collège de 'Pataphysique, the Archeopteryx's Nativity is celebrated on the 25th Sable, corresponding to December 25th. It is a reference to the son of Mère Ubu and Barbapoux, her lover in Ubu cocu ou l'Archeopteryx (Alfred Jarry, 1898). Measuring 25 centimeters, the child is a crossbreed of archeopteryx, ichyornis and vampire, with many qualities of bats, "leporids, raptors, palmipeds, pachyderms and pigs".*



*The digital collage Mère Ubu Brings Opopanax To Her, by David Nadeau*



JA, SH, and VL

# THE AMNESIA OF BEACHCOMBERS

*by Abigail Szcwczyk*

As a child growing up on the Gulf Coast of Florida, I was made aware every day of the past lives of that land. Some of the animal and human ghosts that constantly beckoned to me still possessed versions of their living forms in the present. Others were only palpable in a whisper, an odd feeling of combined curiosity, desire and sadness, sentiments sometimes echoed in lines from Florida history books with disappointingly didactic illustrations.

Walking to school, I stumbled across remainders of the land's original inhabitants without even trying. I began to gather these lingering pieces as a little girl, not knowing what they were at first, but sensing some sig-



nificance. Black, shiny fragments lay upon the loose, burning sand in my neighborhood: heavy hunks of fossilized manatee rib, smooth and cool in the heat of the day; stingray crushing mouth plates and barbs, sometimes shockingly large, the width of my palm, lying on the side of the road near the driveway; sections of turtle and tortoise shell turned to stone through time; alligator scoots—small bony squares that make up the under-skin armor of these water lizards; and above all, shed teeth—petrified horse teeth, pieces of mastodon and mammoth teeth, deer teeth, and ubiquitous shark teeth of so many shapes, sizes, colors and sharpness, some broken in half, others still serrated enough to puncture skin, and on the rarest occasion, a few bespeaking the unthinkable scale of the great megalodons.

Finding prehistoric fragments of animals still surviving in Florida, albeit in less gargantuan versions and in far fewer numbers than had been the case in the prehistoric past, made sense to me. They had always lived on the land and in the water now called Florida, and still did in evolved forms. They would continue to do so beyond my lifetime, I assumed when I was a child. This was both a mystery and a comfort: the long horizon of time's duration.

Today though, just one century after the development of motorboat technology, it is more of a question of hope that manatees and alligators will still populate the rivers and springs in the future. The manatees are the most difficult to behold, because their backs always, always bear the marks of massive wounds and scars—the result of speedboat engine blades slicing through their thick skins despite the high speed warnings in their wintertime birthing waterways. Manatee fossils, when you find them now, are therefore more like warnings of what is ahead than reminders of what has passed.

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Nearly every Florida roadside, path, or beach contains debris from the massive tribal system that once covered the land. If you look and listen intuitively, these clues tell you many things about what the land is and was and who lived there before.

The Tocobaga Tribe of Tampa Bay died out by the mid-1600s after succumbing to the horrendous diseases brought by the arrival of the Spanish conquistador Pánfilo de Narváez a century earlier. The name “Tampa” may have meant “sticks of fire” in the language of the Calusa, another large

tribe that lived south of this little peninsula of “Pinellas,” which juts out of the landmass of the greater peninsula of Florida and into the Gulf. Some people think that this notion of “sticks of fire” also could have been a simple linguistic misunderstanding between invader and inhabitant. I like to think that the name Tampa referred to the intensity of the lightning activity that occurs in the area.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida remains a vibrant indigenous culture today. In contrast, all that is materially left of the Tocobaga tribal society, beyond a few community museum displays, are their abundant trash middens still visible on many waterways around Tampa Bay, as well as dispersed tool fragments, and a handful of temple mounds that evaded being bulldozed for landfill development. Usually, if you see any kind of hill in the topographically flat Tampa Bay area, even a five foot-high hill, it’s really a Tocobaga shell midden or a temple mound.

The various shell tools of the Tocobaga were the most moving for me when I occasionally came across them laying on the ground in full sun, since as a teenager I eventually learned to see the way in which the natural resources of the area, still so abundant despite endless development, made up the very fabric of their daily lives. Horse conch hammers, picks, and adzes, with the sharp tip of the shell shaved off to make a flat surface, and holes punched in for long or short stick handles—or the outer shell stripped away in order to expose the strong interior core—were great for all kinds of food-related work—flattening and mashing roots, digging out other kinds of shellfish in the shore break, scooping the meaty flesh of whelks, prying the spines from Gulf fishes...

There were also animal bones ground down to delicate spindles, and the stripped whorls of horse conch interiors, spiral-shaped tools which helped open the thousands of oysters consumed from the estuary, the staple of the indigenous diet and also the main building material for their temples and mounds. Especially emotional for me were the small, elaborate shells delicately punctured with holes, for stringing onto bead necklaces and garments. Sometimes the bone segments smoothed into spiral shapes were also used as hair picks, although I only gathered this from illustrations.

Shells furnished tools, adornment, diet, and building material for the Tocobaga of Tampa. Stones and wood made reliable implements too, as they





did and do all over the world for tribal societies, but shells were a distinctive food and tool staple of Florida indigenous peoples. The Tocobaga were great archers, but finding their chert arrow points today is a rarity. Wood cannot stand the test of time in Florida's atmosphere of total humidity.

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Now all of this knowledge about the practical and alimentary uses of local natural materials is largely forgotten by us, the occupants of this colonized land. Tocobaga shell tools with their unique puncture and shaping marks are almost always overlooked by eager beachcombers looking for the perfect, new, shiny shell. Tocobaga shell tools simply look like old, broken shells. Beachcombers today prefer living shells that they find alive in the water and later kill by leaving the shell and its hapless inhabitant out in the sun, so that the shell is perfectly preserved in its mortified living-dead state for a new life of useless shelf-sitting. Beachcombed shells are ghosts of forgetfulness. Beachcombers in Florida walk a zombie walk.

Florida's past animal and human inhabitants lived a life so overwhelmingly abundant and prolonged that their fragments persist constantly in the present, everywhere in our peripheral vision and just beyond the reach of our amnesiac collecting hands. When scores of beachcombers glean the shores of Florida beaches every dawn and dusk, as they are wont to do in all seasons, they impinge their anxious wandering search onto the horizon around them, stealing future shell homes from searching crustaceans, who are compelled by nature to switch from smaller to larger shells as they grow over time.

Amnesiac beachcombers leave behind the fossilized or fragmented reminders of former mammal, reptile, avian and human inhabitants of Florida, for the most part, however, since these are so clearly not new. Their shelf-life has already expired a thousand times over and they are unfit for petrified death-life on display shelves. Fossilized bones are especially puzzling to beachcombers in their opaque black shininess and dolorous heft. The feeling of an intuited message from the past is there, but it usually doesn't make it across the divide of time. Fossils usually garner a glance or



two from the hungry combers but are ultimately tossed aside in order to make room for even more shells of endless variety. Fossil shark teeth are the single exception to this rule, being the ultimate prize of the beach-comber due to their aquarium notoriety.

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The other kind of Tocobaga utensils that I came across lying on the ground just about every month when I was a child were pottery sherds. The Tocobaga were expert potters. They combined clay with sand to create many kinds of vessels for the most mundane of uses. Pieces of the pots that the Tocobaga casually threw away after these items became chipped or worn can easily be found scattered on roadsides and across suburban front yards. Sometimes these ubiquitous sherds can be discovered in fields where fragments of skeet-shooting clays mix in, because Floridians love guns. This creates a bewildering heterodoxy of new-old.

The sherds have a pleasing visual effect when gathered together, due to their myriad shapes, sizes and colors, and also the subtle gradations of texture: repeating lines incised into the clay with a shell or stick, hatch marks left over from a reed basket that allowed the vessel to be carried with a handle, striations of grasses that were added to the clay to strengthen it during the firing process. The sherds are the literal manifestation of the intimate way in which the Tocobaga interacted with and shaped the physical land—the sand, dirt and clay— of Tampa Bay.

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Less often, gazing down at the ground in Florida results in communication with the land's colonial era. The material identity of these remnants are quite different in feel and sensibility: glass, metal, porcelain, ceramic; British, Spanish, American items, as well as those imported to the colonies from Asia. Colonial pipe stems are the most common. The colonists broke off pieces of their long clay pipes over time as they used them—a means of keeping the pipe clean—so this was one of the earliest forms of disposable product. Sometimes the tobacco pieces are still in tact inside the narrow shaft of the stem.

What is most striking in contrast to the indigenous items is that these colonial fragments do not come from Florida. This is an obvious point, but



a significant one nonetheless. These items are not made of the land and animals of that unique place. They are not constructed with local shells, bone or earth. Instead, the colonial fragments were, at some point a few hundred years ago, lost, thrown away, or left behind. They invade from elsewhere (else-place) and linger long after that initial invasion (after-presence). They are trash. Although these items also have voices of a kind, which can be heard by a keen listener who encounters them, their message is largely discontinuous. They are the things that emanate the amnesiac pulses animating the fingers of the compulsive amnesiac beachcombers: a British guinea weight without its scale, the hammer of a gun, a rust-eaten key.

Yet, what is most astonishing is how seldom I came across colonial garbage as a child. The people who had lived on the land the longest—the Tocobaga and their ancestors— were the ones who were actually the most present in the form of remainders. Their numbers as a society were *far greater*. Clearly, they had lived on that land *infinitely longer*. Their relationship to the land was deeper, more lasting and so much more abundantly reciprocal. Through the constant presence of sherds, shells and scoots that exposed themselves to the rain and sun, the surface of the earth bore this endless message: this was their home; this was how they lived. The land won't forget.



*Dinosaur Park*  
**Juli Kearns**



**Benjamin Défossez**

# THE SUBJECT OF MULTI-STEP VERSIONS

*by Th.D.TYPALDOS*

Strange days have found me  
With myrrh they washed my corpse  
And they cut it in to pieces.  
Before my sight the underworld dances  
Into the abyss of my thought  
Rings the bell of the eternal dawn.

Prehistoric phantoms  
The living wreck  
Staying together  
Nothing besides my brain  
Could stop the oxygen vein.

Unconsciously I'm walking through the dead  
I wonder does that mean am I already there  
Where the spirit takes its revenge  
And it comes outside the hydrated cave  
Of the nowhere  
Of the everywhere.

Stay calm my pretty one  
Into the ruins of some other age  
You will find the forewords from your past-ego  
The forewords from your life  
The forewords from your future steps.

# PREHISTORIC AGE IS NOW?

by *Th.D.TYPALDOS*

*“Then I visited the osteology wings. The view of the monsters contained therein made me think of the deluge...” – Gerard de Nerval – Aurelia*

What was it that really happened? Was a meteor in fact responsible for the elimination of the prehistoric beings, or was it just that they embraced what was coming and preferred to die before they saw the ultimate terror? That humanity was coming? Everything seemed to be unstable for them. The scientists always keep their secrets. The truth is hidden behind one word: Perhaps. Perhaps prehistory is a labyrinth where the words lose their meaning. Perhaps, the fall of Tyrannosaurus became a reality only in our imagination. Perhaps the difference between them and the spreading of this modern virus does not exist at all.

Every second in our lives is another meteor that hits the ground. The “deep time” emerges from the pages of an open book, a book not written. Empty pages, empty words, empty meanings and in the end, empty me, empty you, empty us. Who can tell us for sure that we are far away from those prehistoric years? Our technology? The scientists? Only our imagination can escape from this fallen Earth. We must always remember what Maldoror told us: “Only imagination separates man from the animal!” The total elimination of the dinosaurs could be truth once again (if it ever really existed). We research the past, we dig up the future – really, where is the present, where is the hour of human-kind? Time is counting down!... Right now, every tick-tock in a human’s clock seems like a dead person who is beginning to approach the Lethe (or the lithium if we use our sense of black humor).

In T-Rex’s dream, a person walked on the hills. It was the first time that a human made their presence obviously known. The king of the dinosaurs woke up. It was flooded with sweat, and it was sweating from the first to its last moment. No one could believe its dream. “What is man?” “Where does he come from?” Those were the questions that broke their silence. And then...



came the deluge... Asteroids wiped out their flesh with pleasure (at least, this is what scientists say). The embrace of their bones with death was a historical fact, and the dream was transformed into the awful reality. Somebody told me that the geological colors always take the color of the blood and fire, when some unplanned explosion takes place. This is something we all know. The baby when it comes to light from its mother's dark womb, is drowned in blood. The problem is obvious when the baby is born blind. Then it learns that the darkness is the light, and that non-color is color. It learns that explosions are made only by sounds, not by fire. What happens after this blind birth? Perhaps, (and there is again this magic word that leaves the challenge and the ambiguity to rule the rules), it is then that the prehistoric years live for ever – everyone must think and answer that by themselves because the answers are buried inside the unconscious of each of us (once again, in our unconscious we can find the solution before our elimination becomes real).

For us, the surrealists, things are so clear: clarity of thought depends on the candle we hold to drive away the darkness. The prehistoric age disappeared for us between sleep and waking. We did excavations during periods of hypnosis, we spoke the unknown, we met the unbelievable. No matter what people say, we see the light. Our belief is connected with nature's heart. The most likely destiny is to die just like any other human being – but this doesn't mean that we live our lives just like them. We live upon the edge of time and over the storm. With our verbs we are drawing the petals of the unseen. We created our meteors and asteroids, used our hands, our minds, our words, in terms of reaching different times and we created worlds and cities whose liberation was the only law for the population that lives in them.<sup>1</sup> We made our houses from glass and even when we strayed into the caves, (just like everyone does), we shared the flame of amour fou. We went deep down, we stood inside the "deep time", through its tunnels, we approach its magnificence, and when we decided to imitate the walk of humans, we created the wheel and with that surrealistic activity, we found ourselves at the crossroads where we passed from the pre-human era to the stone age.<sup>2</sup> Surrealism was always the parameter of human thought which made our species stand out from dinosaurs (mathematics and physics are surrealistic acts, how we use them, is a process completely foreign to us when their use turns against nature in any form: human nature, object nature, nature itself).

Even if our species seems so close to elimination, even if we seem like dinosaurs more and more, even if the prehistoric age looks like today, we always hope for a new beginning. Through deluges, through meteor storms, a New Dawn of Humanity will stand up and the unwritten book will always keep the last word, this word which we will write with our auras, with our passion, with our spirit, with us...

To be continued...

### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> In 20th-century Greek surrealism, the two greatest surrealists, Andreas Embeirikos and Nikos Engonopoulos, imagined two different cities. The first named his city Octana, the second, Sinopi. These two cities had humanity's liberation in common; liberation of sexuality, of dreams, of desires, etc. As Embeirikos said, "Octana's citizens are angels, angels with obvious sex".

<sup>2</sup> see Guillaume Apollinaire, *The Breasts of Tiresias*.



*The 'THAT' - encounter with fossils in Ottawa, August 2020*

**Jason Abdelhadi and Vittoria Lion**



*White Bones of an Evolutionary Future*

**Paul Cowdell**



# CENOZOIC

*It's the grasslands who push forward, covering the great savannas. The furry critters are just following their wake. There's good comedy in the filling of a niche. The straight man asks how you have survived so many mass extinctions? "I never run for a bus. There will always be another one. I never touch fried foods." This isn't really an era so much as a blink of an eye. Neither art nor science are invented here. So what did they do? "He tried taking walks around the plains, tried to do the old meet-and-greet, but all this caused was a raising of severe eyebrows."*



*Proof that Giants Once Walked the Earth*  
**Paul Cowdell**



*Scenes from the submersible*  
**Vittoria Lion**

# A SOJOURN IN THE ONE-ARMED COUNTRY

by *Ryan Chiang McCarthy*

*“The Country of Singlearm lies to the north. Its people have one arm and three eyes. Their eyes have a dark Yin part and a sunny Yang part. The people there ride piebald horses. There is a bird there which has two heads; it is scarlet and yellow. These birds stay by the side of these people.” – The Classic of Mountains and Seas*

When I read these lines of sacred geography I resolved to end my isolation and go to the northern country of Singlearm and see if those ancient people remained, and if they might teach me. Bidding farewell to my sorrows I grabbed my stick and walked along deerpaths and forgotten creeks, along the curve of the moth’s tongue and of the ammonite’s shell, through tunnels dug in the sky by forgotten moles and the forgotten snakes that hunted them. Gibbons called my name from the hills, promising curious pleasures, but I was not distracted.

When I came to the edge of the Singlearm country, I passed through a thicket of big ferns that parted for my path, with a perfume of tinkling gems and bird-shaped lights. The crescent moon was passing between the antennae of the Centipede, but the country it illumed was flat and bare, and only doublearm people roamed around, with a dreary look and weary fingers in the air, tracing out the same symbols, pacing the same constellations, hoping an apple might roll their way. But very few apples rolled their way.

On a hill overlooking the land stood a statue of bronze, of a two-armed, two-eyed man, leaning on a blood-encrusted sword. I read the memorial plaque beneath it- “Sir Josiah, who settled this place and exterminated the savage singlearms.” I wept for many days, until a woman said to me, “Don’t weep, but follow me.”

She took me up the river on the boat, with cormorants that kept diving and bringing up knives that they dropped with a clang in a bucket. At last we stopped in a grotto where a solitary lychee tree grew and she led me

under it and told me to look up. Indeed on every branch I saw the birds perching with two heads, scarlet and yellow. And suspended from lychee stems so many eyes were growing.

Taking down an eye to plant it in her forehead, my guide blinked at me and said, “this is my eye.” And on one side the moon swam with all his tigers and his dim delights; on the other side ran the sun with her coterie of dragons and angry eagles. “And look,” she said, “my one arm is false,” and she detached one arm and showed me it was made of bamboo. “We are Singlearms still,” she said, “but every morning the statue of Sir Josiah goes roaming round the country looking for us, and if he finds any Singlearms he disembowels them right there.”

Then someone in the rocks was playing a zither, and singing, so we climbed up to where a gnarled pine jutted out and beneath it on a bed of pine needles a little creature sat with its long instrument, robed in green spidersilk. Its face was long and thin and curved like a wren’s beak, and its hands that moved so finely each bore three fingers and three possum tails in alternation. The zither itself was a solid block of blue lacquer and the strings were eels stretched taut.

The musician paused and looked at us with eyes on spiral stalks. “I’m so hungry and what I love more than anything is a good knife from the river.” So I brought up the bucket of knives from our boat and spread them at the musician’s feet. One by one it dropped them down its long throat and when it was finished, it played and sang this song, and its voice was like armies clashing in a cavern:

*In the hill there is a moth  
with wings like human toes.  
Its sole delight is fresh red paint;  
its toenails cut through bronze!*

I asked my guide if she had ever seen this moth- she nodded yes, and said, “Let’s lure them to the statue, and let them do their work.” And we went out at night with a pail of red paint, and daubed some on Sir Josiah’s arm, and some on the statue’s forehead. Then in the morning when the statue arose it looked at its reflection in a pond and saw one arm was carved clean



off, and an eye was carved in his forehead. And so he disemboweled himself right there, and if you place your hands on the bronze entrails it shall cure your pleurisy or incontinence. The people cast off their false arms and piled them around the statue, and now they have grown into very tall bamboo, so it is called Disembowelment Grove.

If you visit Singlearm now, you will see that the good people ride about on piebald horses with the two-headed birds singing round them. In their one arm they pick flowers or grasp wands; where the false arms were, a viewless appendage extends into the sky and arranges the stars in new constellations. The pavement's erupted with flowers and sturgeon, and atop the overgrown buildings a cat with one head and three bodies strolls, predicting the weather by the patterns of its tails.

*The Classic of Mountains and Seas* further states that long ago in this place, Xingtian challenged God for supremacy; God beheaded him and buried him in the hill. But now Xingtian dances with an axe and shield atop the hill, his nipples become his eyes, his navel become his mouth.

I have shed not one, nor two, but many false arms, grown or attached over ages of servitude, and found many forgotten eyes to see with. The people were kind enough to teach me the language of the two-headed birds that follow me too, now. This is what they sing to each other:

*The empress with trout in her hair  
reclines on the mountain, her tresses connecting  
two lakes that never have met  
since the glacier abandoned them here.  
Down the slopes her curls are tumbling,  
up her curls swim the scintillant fishies,  
my trout greeting yours in the scaly refraction,  
in the mingling waters,  
your murk meaning no deception,  
my clarity unintendedly honest.*

# KING OF THE STONE GARDEN

*by Tony Convey*



*The Return* by Tony Convey

I first saw the light of day in Stonyrises, a settlement of granite and marble. The old streets laid with blocks of basalt glistened in the morning light and I loved sliding my hand over the marble on the staircase rails and walking on the beautiful agate tiles. On walks to the Brown river I passed outcrops with shiny streaks which were usually copper or silver but sometimes consisted of rose and amethyst crystals which threw the sun's rays back into space.

We saw little birds flying and speckled fish swimming in the walls of the caves which were scattered on the sides of our path. It was hard to resist their vaults but the jagged cliffs and deformed banks of the Brown river had an even greater magnetism. After a downpour there was the chance of seeing a giant shark exposed in the cliff face or a petrified tree washed into the river where it sat and made its new home in the river's ribs. Once we stumbled on a huge diprotodon pushed out of the banks and dropped by a cyclone onto our path.



*The Black Night Gold Grubbers* by **Tony Convey**

When night's black curtain fell and the gold grubbers emerged from their huts and trampled the new shoots and buds before they could flourish they quickly crawled into their mines and started ripping the golden veins out of the iron stained quartz. Sometimes we watched them from a distance but they were greedy creatures deeply suspicious of anyone who wasn't part of their company.

My friend Sunny showed me an opal and I melted. Where did it come from? It had to be fire I pondered and drifted into a reverie with rainbow flames all around me. Later I picked up some lumps of quartz and dropped them into the kitchen stove. I was disappointed in the morning when the quartz had not been transformed into translucent rainbows. I

never stopped looking for opals and once or twice found them.

We picked up the broken crystals on the track and held them up to the sun's rays as we skipped over the tiny volcanic eruptions intent on barring our path. The facets embracing the glassy reflections of the sun engendered an iridescent spray of laughter as we sprinkled sand over the swamp and cast a glance towards the distant Blue mountains. Once I slipped and fell face down onto the rough rocks decorating the paths and found myself staring in amazement at a tiny crab encased in an opalised shell beneath my bloody nose.

I am not sure why I was expelled from Stonyrises but I suspect it was due to the gold grubbers who did not approve of me taking fossils from their realm.

The morning it happened I had banged my head on a low wall and I was listening to the slow rattling sound of scree falling into place. I was grabbed from behind and pushed into a wet box which had odd markings on its sides and aided by the wind and rough handling it hurtled down a green ramp which was speckled with pieces of garnet which shone in the morning light. I took it all in but as my breath was impaired and my hands were tied I was captive to my fate.

On the first night in my new abode I was dragged through a dirty bubbling stream into a wet structure with ugly pictures on the greasy walls. There were beds made of spongy grass along the walls and I was pushed into the one furthest from the barbed entrance. In no time my memories faded and I was consumed by the sinister rituals of this dank place.

In this wet walled room the stench of death seeped from the mud beneath us. It was lubricated with last gasp pleas, ruthless denunciations and a sickly sweet odour that hung in my nostrils like spider webs. I knew this was the end and it got closer by the day. This wet world drowned me by degree. Drop by drop. Everything was slippery and clung to your hands and the harder you tried to unstick your fingers the more viscous they became. There was never enough wet for the masters. Every loose structure had at least five running tunnels funneling wet into all their spaces. The one redeeming wet was the early morning slide onto the soggy sand and then the warm waves which embraced me lifted my spirits with some semblance of the now faraway world I once knew.

I lost all sense of time so I cannot recall how long it was after my imprisonment that I found the little lump of azurite which tumbled through a tunnel one evening. I could see a woman's face in the rock and I looked around for something I could use to make the face more obvious. I pulled a piece of hard wood from one of the walls and carefully enhanced the lines outlining the face.

Within an hour I had created a beautiful little figure of a woman out of the blue mineral. One of the masters saw the piece and demanded I make one for him. He went outside and returned with a piece of malachite and demanded that I make him a similar figure. After looking carefully at the banded green rock I saw a man's face emerging and within a few hours I had created a green man to accompany the blue woman. This changed everything for me and soon all the staff came to me with their lumps of stone demanding I turn them into figures of people, animals and birds. I was now sought after and my creations were scattered around the dripping structures where we ate and slept.

I had found my vocation and it was all around me – rocks, minerals, precious stones. I could transform them into images of living creatures. I now had a way of releasing the spirits imprisoned in the geological wonders which surrounded Stonyrises if I could ever get back there.

I have no recall of the circumstances which led to my liberation and no memory of leaving the wretched place but one morning I awoke on a hillside and saw Stonyrises laid out below. My heart pounded with excitement as I scrambled down the slope and walked into the settlement. I barely recognised the place as it seemed as if more marble and granite had been brought into the gardens and parks of the community. Everything seemed fresh and renewed and as I walked through the door of our home I was overwhelmed with joy.

The others looked at me as if I had never been away as I glanced at my favourite chair. By the time I reached it beams of light were pouring out of every surface. My beloved fossils and stones were on top of the bookcase and I basked in the golden light. The walls around me dissolved and instead of sitting in a chair in a house I was seated on a lichen speckled boulder in a landscape of stone, crystal and ferns. Gentle hills undulated and birds sang in flowering trees. Pools of water gleamed like silver spoons in the folds of the hills and iridescent streaks stained the

sides of the rocks. At my feet a bubbling stream seeped from a crystalline crevice and intricate clusters of blossoms covered the earth like carpets. Benign creatures grazed the verdant slopes and their fleeces shone with a metallic lustre and as they moved trails of light shone in their wake. I had become the king of a radiant stone garden.



*Tellurian* by **Tony Convey**

I spent my time wandering through the landscape picking up the stones which called out to me. Some were humble country rocks and others precious jewels, while some contained imprisoned fossils which I could now free and allow them to take up their long passed lives again.

That was many years ago and now Stonyrises is known far and wide for the extraordinary stone sculptures which enliven every street and building within its rugged boundaries. My work is celebrated by people I have never met and my name is associated with the splendour of the mineral world by connoisseurs of art and geological wonders. Those busy years have left me tired and my arms ache as I remove the flakes and slivers to release the life within the minerals and stones which people bring me.

As I contemplated putting down my tools and going back to a quiet,

reflective life I began to plan a final masterwork to complete my life's work. I thought about what stone or mineral materials would be appropriate for my final piece. Agate was my first choice but over the years I had depleted the amount of the stone available in the region and I did not wish to travel to acquire my materials. I then recalled the story of the Haunted Stream mine which few remembered and even fewer knew its location. I had a vague memory of an old blacksmith, whose forge I often visited, telling me that the beautiful blue green stone that he used as a flux was fluorspar from the Haunted Stream. He had long passed and the others I asked all described different locations for the mine. I thought the mine was in the upper reaches of the largest tributary of the Brown river and I set out to find this lost place. After hours pushing through scrub and being distracted by glittering stones in the banks I turned onto an overgrown track. I soon saw little lumps of galena and fluorspar scattered in the soil and I knew I was nearly there. I almost tripped over an iron pipe which had been concealed by the weeds and I then saw old ivy covered huts ahead. The stories about this ghost town focused on a particularly brutal murder and the subsequent haunting of the place by the murdered miner. The company could not get



*Haunted Stream* by Tony Convey

miners to stay in this isolated place and the mine was eventually abandoned.

The entrance of the main adit was choked by a flowering wattle which I pushed aside. I was immediately dazzled by the extraordinary walls of the tunnel which glowed with seams of silver streaked with blue and purple veins of fluorspar. I sat down entranced by the luminous wonders on both sides. I then began looking for a suitable slab of the minerals which I could turn into a statue. I noticed a large bulge a bit further inside. It jutted out for a couple of feet and I decided to look around for any old tools which could help me prize out my treasure. In one of the huts I found picks and hammers and I soon had a mass of mineral about six feet in length lying at the entrance to the mine.

I made my way back to Stonyrises and soon one of my associates hauled the shining lump back to my studio. I spent several days examining it from all angles before I began exposing the figure I could see imprisoned inside the minerals. As I worked away engrossed with revealing the hidden figure I began to feel a stiffness in my arms and legs which made my task very difficult. I spent more time just looking at the emerging figure puzzled by the face. It was a face which I knew but I couldn't remember who it was.

The day the new work was to be unveiled I had great difficulty getting out of bed and when I looked in the mirror I wasn't there. I rubbed my eyes and thought it was some passing aberration and prepared myself for the launch. My outdoor studio was full of my friends and the many art lovers from the town. Strangely no body came up to congratulate or even acknowledge me and when the Mayor removed the sheet from the statue I gasped! He told the excited onlookers that the artist could not be here today as he had been called away. I walked up to the statue and touched the radiant face. It was my face and my body. I then realised that I was still and always would be the King of the Stone Garden.





*King of the Stone Garden* by **Tony Convey**



*Scenes from the submersible*

**Vittoria Lion**



# SUGGESTION SPRINGS

*by Dale Houstman*

## 1 A Lightly Didactic Prologue Touching on “Revolution”

All practical nudes first hear of their abandonment in the sharply banked replies of bathers once wedded to seasoned scientists, those Persian clowns seated between perfect trees, a room's skin punctured by the wings of panting women, as each of the three female horizons dress for the wedding of oil-lamped perspective to the over-prospected waves of the standard family, whose common easement differs from civilization by one (or two) oranges whose quiet & internal manner will come to resemble a suburban department store, where there is an artificial waterfall which will not linger in just any 15th century bedroom, or even in a sturdy house beneath a river, or beneath a decade of rivers which we only mention once in a lace-trimmed invitation, then cough, having “made the point”.

## 2 Fashion on Parade

The post-western suburbs shift beneath each scholar's mass...those twelve nursing students who sponged up the Revolution and who cradle still in their nationalized hands red cicadas to forever remind us (the paid audience) of a vanished architecture whose devotees were racy dissidents and diffident rakes “or what have we achieved despite the rain” replies youth's dys-educated brutality. What a charm link, a silver elephant of confidence, a copper dog watching out for affection, and look there at our one bookstore secure upon the airless pampas where the moon unrolls toward our riff-raff with its portable perma-lube strangeness (seen most efficaciously in such constructions as “the light is hospital blonde this evening, languishing upon statues of famous cabbies and the gold paneled kiosks which line the Strand” or “offering shallow wedding totems, peacocked and smoldering temple napkins, the world so taken with tokens or retarded by

those ghosts in Eton sailing caps who pimp for the seminally heartless and dream of cell-sprung magicians like beige owls in grey cathedrals stealing forward through the darkness, and those were the cormorants and we are the floor-walkers in perfumeries abandoned by very demure floods forgotten like a book behind the plaza where a general bends over a black radio whereby a keen of questions flavors the whiskies.

### **3 The Common Barnacle**

The common barnacle (*Sacculina*) begins its parasitic life as a free-swimming larva. The female barnacle (as insidious as any woman!) settles on a crab, crawls to a leg joint and pokes a small entry hole. She then squeezes her soft parts inside (leaving her shell behind) and wends her single-minded way to the abdomen where she dines on the available nutrients. As she grows, she forms a protrusion in the crab's shell and then sends out extensions – or “roots” – of her own body throughout the crab, even to the very tips of its eye stalks. As a result the crab soon no longer sheds its shell, grows, or produces eggs or sperm. In essence, the crab becomes a zombie vehicle which lives only to serve its parasitic guest. As if that weren't disturbing enough, the female furthermore makes a pinhole in the host's abdomen to attract the tiny male *Sacculina*, who squeezes himself into the crab in the same fashion as the female had earlier. They then fertilize each other for the remainder of their lives, and manipulate the crab's hormonal system so that the crab periodically scales a high rock, pushes out the parasites' young'uns, and even waves its claws in the water to spread them on their merry way – just as it would do for its own offspring.

### **4 Incorporate Minutes**

Until we adorn the Project as it adorns us, we are dependent upon the for-gone and passing boulevard through Europe's pedestrian mall, the ideal backdrop to our massive work upon the almost imperceptible climax of the elephant, so – more or more likely less – we can go on dreaming of a grand dispersion of counterpoint while we are still wearing cargo pants,

but are we merely reflecting a half-remembered sensual entree when we first uncover the fossilized neck of comfort in an abandoned fireplace, and – perhaps – a new Picasso is breaking into your house, and – perhaps – there will be less viscous exhalations reinstalled within the vulgar, and because of that we do not know if there will ever be any fun at all anymore, unless we admit we started all this (the Project, the New Project, the Recalled Project) to gain quick access to the gym, which from the inside appears to be somewhere in Denmark, if we might (for once) credit the report of a New Yorker boarding a plane to fly to a boat, like a pipe dream's over-reaction to its own roughening value, and so shall we not all be happy to see the layered panels of daylight and moonlight which will be – we can assume without assumption – see-through and debatable and disposable and inflatable.



*Jurassic Invasion*  
**Richard Burke**



**Benjamin Défossez**

# THE DOMESTIC SITUATION

*by Dale Houstman*

Helen of Troy lies down  
with Her jug of rich blonde bourbon  
in a colossal parking lot  
in a fur-covered mobile tent  
steeped in a bouquet of pine  
undermined by blood.  
We always arrive late for Her famous honey cakes.  
We always miss the last paper boat  
to the lighthouse which is Her eye  
at the end of a dimly lit pyramid hall.  
Between us and Her flickering body  
A thousand arches and arcades  
Enchanted skyscrapers  
Perversely imploring niches  
Tremblant belltowers.  
We judge Her intentions  
by the variety of beetles in Her hair.  
She is breathless in our imagination of Her  
and Her heart an abandoned lemon  
A departing tramp freighter.  
She is the understudy of a white echo  
clothing the middle of December  
A statue of sunlight  
where we most need it to be  
in a baby pram containing a blonde scalpel  
slithering down subway steps through the bramble  
into the closed observatory  
at the end of Her arm.



This city is crawling with promiscuous subways  
where She calms the waves of Her watery dress in darkness  
when She went to visit a character from the Unicorn Tapestry  
who carries a piano made from bramble wood and moss.  
At the first subway platform  
a smaller subway platform inside  
and a smaller track beneath a free clinic  
on its way to the lighthouse.

Later She rode out to the beach  
to the second subway station  
to locate Marilyn Monroe's autograph  
in the sand under glass with a metal tip jar attached to the joy lever.  
She left five pressed lilies and a change of clothing.  
The foolishly departed lurk at the third subway platform  
as a piano rolls down the smallest tracks  
into the forests of piano bramble and moss.  
Strand" or "offering shallow wedding totems, peacocked and smoldering  
temple napkins, the world so taken with tokens or retarded by

# A FISHY ELEPHANT

by *Neko Linda Williams*

*“We are surrealists. Both elephant and fish.”*

**Dugongs:** Herbivorous marine mammals related to elephants. Fossil record extending over 50 million years. Endangered species. There are 32 United States military bases on Okinawa Island and 26,000 U.S. military personnel stationed there. 62% of all United States bases in Japan are on Okinawa. They cover 25% of Okinawa island (60 miles long and not more than 20 miles wide in most places)

**May 6, 2020**

SAN FRANCISCO – Environmental groups lost their bid to prevent a military base from being built on Okinawa, Japan, a project they claim will further decimate a species of manatee that used to thrive in the area. A three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit ruled Wednesday that the Department of Defense had met its burden to take into account the new base’s effect on the island under Section 402 of the National Historic Preservation Act, including consulting local cultural experts.

**The Trilobite:** Now extinct for over 250 million years, had a pair of eyes. Each eye contained about 10,000 tiny eyes that produced a picture to its brain, something like a torn-up photograph.

**Horseshoe Crab:** Related to spiders. Survived the last three mass extinctions. Now over harvested by pharmaceutical companies for their ‘blue blood’ purification properties.

**Adam’s Rib Was A Retrovirus**

*“Without retroviruses mammals would still be laying eggs, and that includes humans.”* – Kelsey Coolahan

## Perceptual Blindness

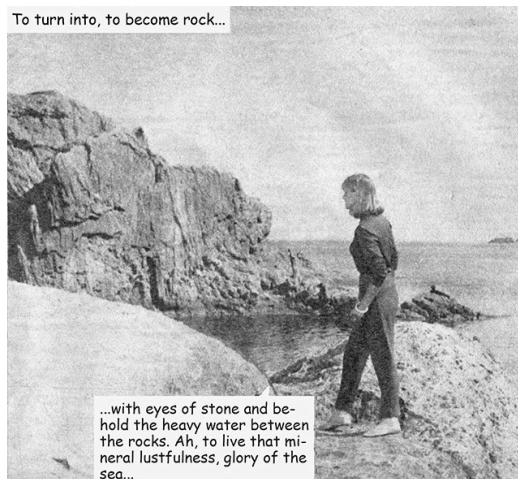
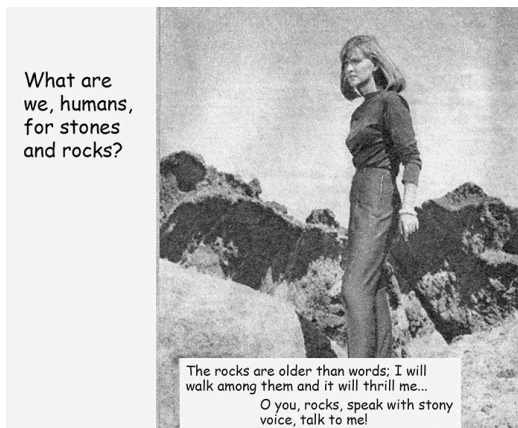
Columbus, Founding Fathers, Slavery, Lynchings, Rape, Religion

**The False Mirror:** painting by Magritte

**HAL's Eye:** 2001 A Space Odyssey

*"The eye would not be able to see the sun if, in a manner, it were/was not itself a sun."* – Plotinus (205-270 AD)

DO GEESE SEE GOD?

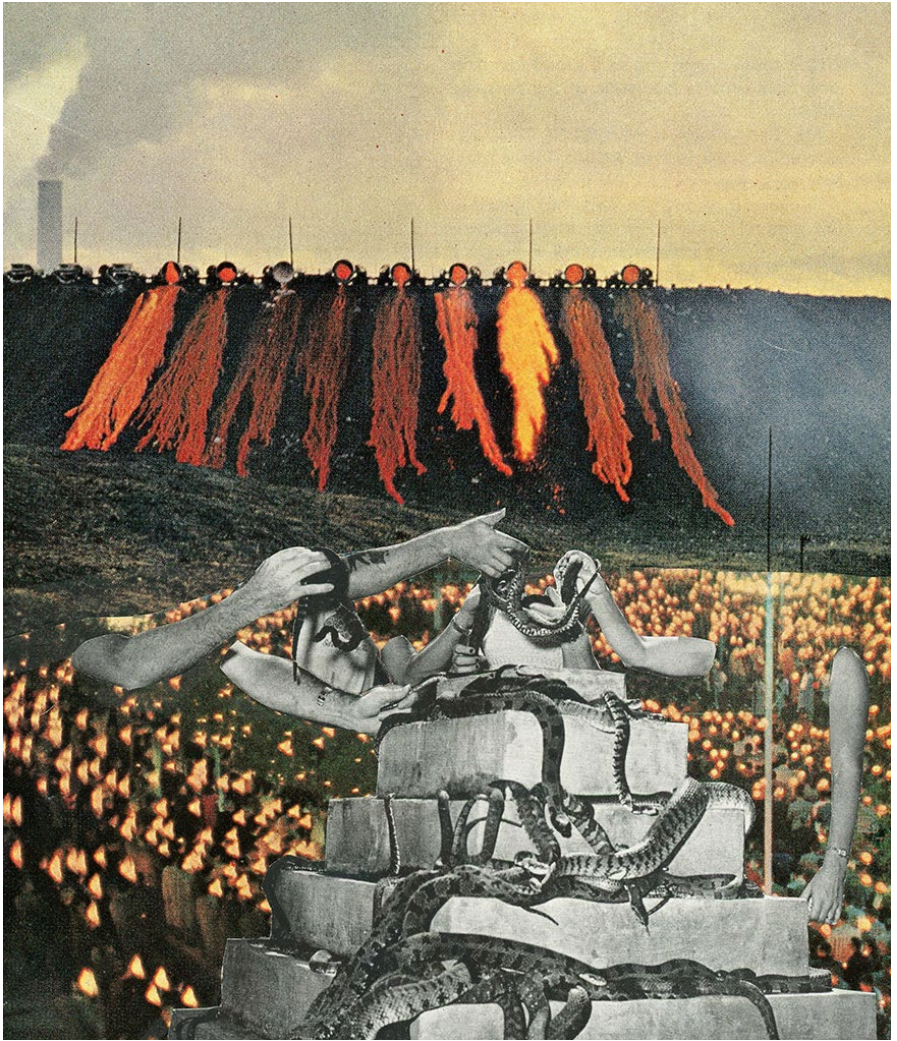


**Bruno Jacobs**



A Forecast for 2144 A. D.

House of Mysticum



Casi Cline

# RESPONSE TO INQUIRY ON DEEP TIME

*by The Surrealist Group of Stockholm*

It was an excursion, probably a surrealist expedition. I walked alone at the front, with the rest of the group behind me. The main dividing line in Stockholm, the central border, goes along the water, where the sea is the deepest. It's the border between Östermalm and Västermalm, East and West, and it runs along the water west of the Central Bridge, next to the City Hall at Klara Mälarstrand. There's a mountain ridge below the water, but it rises above the water so you can walk on it. Most of the mountain is under the water, like an iceberg. Stockholm exists at the bottom of the valleys along both sides of the mountain ridge.

At first there was water, and I walked along the ridge. But when I was going to return to pick up the others and show them, winter had arrived. The mountain ridge and the valleys were covered by snow, ice and mist.

At first you could still see the outlines of the city skyline like crystals and ice under the mist. But when we arrived and walked out on the mountain ridge/ice bridge the city had disappeared. There were only snow- and ice-capped mountains and valleys under the mist.

We went on forward along the mountain and behind us crystal foxes and dogs, hunters, sleds, long-distance skiers and neon-coloured animals with furry tails and glowing eyes overtook us or swept pass us.

Stockholm was gone.

(SO)



STALACTITE CAVE NEAR JAGUARA.

*Spetsar öronen Tropical Nature, an account of the most remarkable phenomena of life in the Western Tropics. Compiled from the narratives of distinguished travellers and observers (1876)*

### **On the interpellation of mountains**

A hare appears in one of our dreams, reappears on our walks. It is hard to overlook the morphological analogues with stalagmites; groves of slowly accumulating ears where eyes will not do. Or the stalactites, taking a cue from cartoons, dripping attention from the direction of the sky, not vindicating the Aristotelians, but too fast for physics to keep up.

This particular chase, the inept hunter after the hare, mayflies in pursuit of continental shifts, has its own intersubjective dynamic. The hare looks over its tail, making sure it is followed. Then, luxuriously, taking all the time in the world, it raises itself to its full posture, announcing: I SEE YOU to the pursuer, the fox, the blink of an eye.

Ah, but you see, we never cared that much for minerals anyway. And we skulk off, preparing new stratagems.

(EB)



*On the skin of their teeth*  
(NN)



## The hare from Inaba

In *Kojiki*, the Japanese chronicle of ancient times, there is a tale of *The White Hare of Inaba*. In this tale Onamuchi no Kami (translated to the deity Great-Name-Possessor in Chamberlain's translation of *Kojiki*) and his 80 brothers went to Inaba to ask to marry the Princess of Yakami in Inaba. Onamuchi no Kami was brought together as an attendant to carry their luggage.

On their way to Inaba at Cape Keta they came upon a skinned hare lying down. The eighty deities suggested that the hare should bathe in the seawater, and lie on the mountain exposed to the blowing wind. The hare did as the eighty deities suggested, and that caused it to weep in pain.

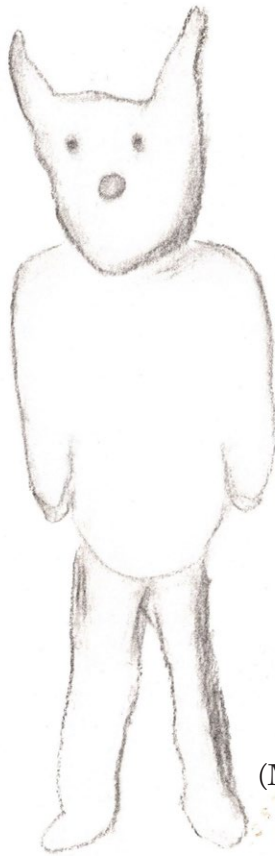
When Onamuchi approached the hare it told him that it had been on the Island of Oki and wanted to cross over to this land. He deceived the sharks (crocodiles in Chamberlains translation) to a competition of which of the tribes was larger in numbers, the hares or the sharks. And the hare made the sharks line up in the sea to build a bridge from Oki to Cape Keta. The hare walked on them while counting the sharks, when it was just about to get on land, and revealed its deception, the last shark seized it and stripped off all of his clothing.

Onamuchi told the hare to go quickly to the river mouth, wash your body with fresh water, and then roll about upon the pollen of the sedges. Whereupon its body was restored to its original state.

The hare of Inaba revealed itself as a Hare deity, and told Onamuchi that he would get married to princess Yakami.

Onamuchi later became enshrined in the Izumo Taisha shrine, the place where all the gods meet once a year and are absent from the other shrines. The hare of inaba is enshrined in the Hakuto shrine.

(RK)



(ML)

### **Description of the primal scene**

When the volcanic eruptions have stopped, the black raven sits on a big bumpy stone. Behind the stone, branches dense with leaves form an arc. It may not be an arc though; most likely it is a flat box, and when you open it you will find the pearl. That is, if you're able to, before the snake swallows it. From behind, the raven appears to be headless, like a giant brain itself. Its feathers are made of fossils, dust and seashells, thinner than silk. Or at a second glimpse, it is hard as a beak before it turns into hundreds of black birds, swirling around, in a spiral, down over the rocky landscape – down toward the tree or the chimpanzee staring into the clear blue water. The tree made of ravens, a fir, is merely a blue piece in Ludo. A missile. A spatula. The milky way in an eye. The hands are still holding the fire.

(RK, EL, ML, KN AKS, synthesized by EL)

## Mountain's New Dress

There are mountains and then there are mountains. Or, at least, there are the different rhythms, styles or semblances in the life of minerals above a certain size. On the one hand, there are those mountains-in-themselves firmly placed on horizons, Elfland ridges untouched even by the last rays of the sun, beyond digging hands, falling climbers. If adorned with goats, one can be sure that they couldn't possibly have got themselves to that particular ledge. The mountain as a whole, where spring floods leave no tracks: the pristine presence within eye-sight, always out of reach. And then there are the mountains that deign to engage with transients, the minerals-among-us. Those we attempt to divide and know according to a myriad schemas in human scale. These discrete entities (but not really; big rocks with proper roots, sure, but how deep, how high?) burrowed through with hidden pathways or impossible routes to a Shambhala or K'un-Lun: caught up in transference, turned into obstacles in someone else's internal journey. And then there are the malleable Giants that move when we turn our attention elsewhere, transforming over the blink of an aeon: the mountain that sheds its skin like a snake, a trail of macadam fields and eskers, that hangs up its coat of glacier and lets it evaporate in the sun of the long spring. The mountain that litters the world with the signs of its failed careers and long-forgotten *idées fixes*. The Ur-Chrysalis that the organic mimics; the queen pupa, the Volcano: Familiar Gestalt, unchanging, a brittle form that boils within, and suddenly the as-yet-unformed cascading over fields and towns, darkening the skies with mineral modesty or subterfuge; a fountain; a horizontal high, the older sibling of historical, inorganic Nature browsing through shapes. Sure, deep time: but as subdividing, self-embracing, ever-boiling kernel.

(EB)

## **Dream seven years back**

My friend and I live in a tipi on a mountaintop. My friend has very special abilities. She is tall and very confident. I somehow know her secret but would never reveal it, and she knows that. In this way, I'm her assistant, her second half. It makes me happy and a little nervous when the nurse comes to see us. We both need to go into the city to donate blood. We walk on an amazing road overlooking a mountain crevice. I am overwhelmed by all the colours that ripple across the mountains, layer upon layer, in places like waves in the ocean. It is incredibly beautiful. When we arrive we enter a huge room. Her mother stands in the middle of the room, in front of a guillotine. All her men stand in line, waiting for their turn at being beheaded. Suddenly the priest who is doing the killing explains that all the men are also the old woman's sons, and I understand that my friend will be killed as well. She gets it too and has to do something to distract him. I have seen her do it before. She sinks down to split position and there is a huge light between her legs. The light transforms to a mouse that runs away. The priest becomes exalted and thinks she is a magical god, and everyone is saved. It is all thanks to the rainbow light of the mountain that she had brought with her.

(EL)

## **Dreaming the interior of rocks**

"It is not knowledge of reality that makes us love reality passionately", Gaston Bachelard writes in *Water and Dreams*.

I oppose the idea that the exact age of the rocks upon which we walk is significant for how we experience our surroundings. Is deep time not too deep and expansive for the human mind to grasp it in a quantitative way? Numbers are hardly that which makes us love the ground upon which we walk, and numbers are hardly that which provokes poetic conceptions of the stones, the rocks, and the mountains. The mountains' ancient nature is poetically meaningful, but exact measurements of age pertain to different kinds of knowledge. The attempt below to sound out the meaning of the local rocks, cliffs, and mountains is inspired by Bachelard's descriptions, in some of his books on the imagination of matter, of Robert Desoille's therapeutic method, with which Desoille guided his patients to dream while

awake about ascending to the atmosphere and descending into the earth. I lay down on the couch and attempted to make myself receptive to an ascent followed by a descent.

I turn into the wind and I leave my apartment through a window. I fly up into the air, less by my own volition and more by way of the dynamics of air, and look down at the courtyard. I fly down toward a rock jutting out of the grass. There's a small crack in the rock, which I enter as wind. Inside the rock, I turn back into a human body, but my size is enigmatic to me. The interior of the rock is cramped and dark and rugged. I slither forward. I glimpse a light somewhere ahead. I slither toward the light. The narrow space widens. I gaze out at a high-ceilinged chamber inside the rock. The first thing I see is three petrified ravens, each sitting on a high throne of stone. The raven in the middle has a crown on his head, the left-hand raven has diamonds for eyes, and the right-hand raven has rubies for eyes. Several fires burn next to the ravens' thrones. Water is dripping from the ceiling. In front of the fire, there's an enormous sleeping cow, whose heavy breathing makes the entire room vibrate.

The ravens are alchemical symbols of nigredo. Their petrification suggests that the alchemical process has been halted. But the fact that the ravens are equipped with symbols of albedo, rubedo, and the Philosopher's Stone indicates that there is a potential here for the process to be resumed. The four elements are all present: earth is where the room is located, fires burn by the thrones, water is dripping from the ceiling, and the air that the cow exhales will possibly aid the ravens in lifting their wings and breaking their spell of petrification, allowing the alchemical process to come alive once more. The cow may be Audhumbla, the ancient cow that, according to Nordic mythology, was born from drops of melting white frost and who then aided in the creation of the world. She is an ancient mother, much like the cows that proliferate across many myths in different parts of the world. Audhumbla's appearance in this cavernous room is less a reminder of a repressed cultural heritage than a promise that the descent into the underworld and the state of nigredo will be followed with renewal. We walk not only on deep history, but on a dormant potential for change, the seed of which is the organic and inorganic worlds' secrets when explored with intuition and imagination.

(KN)

Through an experiment in telepathy, we set out to create collective impressions of the interior of the rocks and mountains. Directly after the telepathy session, we each drew what we had seen.



*Samling i den stora bergsalen. Gathering in the large rockhall. 山大本堂の集まり (yamadaihondou no atsumari). Kokoelma isossa vuorensalissa.*  
(RK)



*Down through a mountain cleft in the forest, through a bird's beak, to a room where a spider's legs were floundering from the ceiling.*  
(EL)



*Amethyst mine*

(EL)

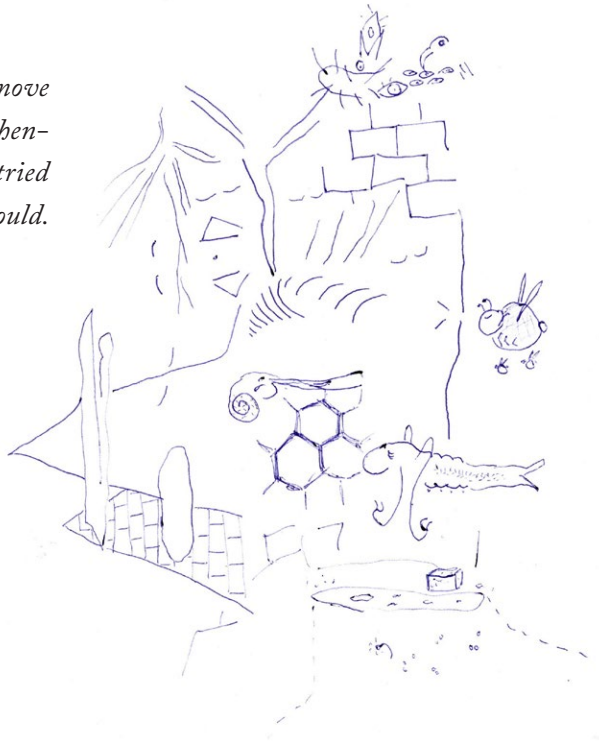


*Well known mountain*

(EL)



*I allowed my pen to move where it wanted, and whenever images turned up I tried to draw them as best as I could.*  
(EB)



*The fire and the cow showed up inside the mountain once more.*  
(KN)

*In the grotto, surprised  
by emerald light*  
(ML)



### **An excursion in the Lill-Jan forest**

We set out to explore the forest in search of the fossils mentioned in several questions in the enquiry. Starting out underneath the trees next to the Royal Institute of Technology, we enter the Lill-Jan forest by turning right next to the Hare Pavilion, where the group often meets in the summer. Before entering the woods, still mostly bare due to the unusually chilly spring, we engage in a ritual by reading an automatic poem.

swallow the stick and lose yourself in the forest  
let the rain pour down on you  
bend down and stick one of your toes in your mouth  
turn yourself into an O and roll over the pine needles  
drop the thistles over the twigs and  
shake to the rhythm of the pounding drops  
finally, with both feet in your mouth, make sure to find a stone  
take the stone in your left hand and hit it against a tree trunk  
the hole that opens is the future  
the cave in which you were born  
and where the new time rests, a seed  
the feet in your mouth prevent you from swallowing the seed  
be your own Athanor  
let your nails melt into mucus black as raven  
let your skin flakes tint the mucus  
keep on rolling

and stimulate the process by imbibing three drops of rain water every fifteen minutes  
give birth to a tree  
become the tree  
become the hole  
take a curling iron and shape your crown into locks of hair  
deadly beautiful and pregnant with future  
(KN)

By following the instructions in the poem, we find our way to a tree that creates living fossils.



Next to the tree we find a horse's head that the tree has ejected.



There is a large patch on the tree where the bark has been peeled off and a slit has opened, slithering in shape. On the ground in front of this patch and the slit there is a long tree trunk, which has partially decomposed; the bark that has fallen off exposes a construction that looks like a wide set of stairs, as well as the blood of the earth in dried, powdery form, its orange hue resembling the colour on the underside of the lid to a well we examined earlier. On top of the fallen tree lies a stone of the exact right size for one of the actions the automatic poem dictates that we ought to perform. At the foot of the tree that is still standing there is also a sanitary pad. The tree has grown a nose and the head of a wild boar, both jutting out from the trunk; higher up, something that looks like the feathers of a baby bird are either moving of their own volition or else they are ruffled by the wind. Above them, a bull leans down toward us with a threatening appearance, wide menacing eyes, and the arm of a human baby. Behind the bull the tree trunk again assumes a more conventional shape.

In order to explore the tree further, the instructions in the poem tell us to imbibe three drops of water. We wait patiently for the rain. Before long, the wind increases in strength and a light rain provides us with the drops we need, before it almost instantly ceases. We try to learn more about the mysteries of the tree by rolling our bodies in its direction, as the poem tells us to, and hit it with a rock. However, we soon realize that rather than cracking the bark, what we are really looking for is not so much new holes as already present keyholes. We examine these keyholes by pressing sheets of paper against them and rubbing them. The frottages, made with sand and lipstick, appear to show us new forms attempting to emerge from matter. Before leaving the tree, we take a final look at its living fossils. In that moment, a goldcrest settles on the trunk and starts leaping across it with swift movements resembling those of a swimming fish.

**Alternative names by RK:**

1. The Clown and the Dragon by Miyamoto Musashi.
2. Penis Medusa Head Joke Drawing by Robert Crumb
3. Jesus' Death Mask beta version by Unknown
4. Saint George and the Dragon and the Snake and Saint George The Slayer, woodcut by Åke Holm



Two things recur several times, both before we enter the forest and once we are in it: shredded edges of flowers and plants, and fractal-looking patterns on both the horse's head and on the tree, like fingers dividing into more fingers dividing into more fingers.

We repeatedly encounter woodlice and talk about the way in which some of them roll themselves into balls, while others do not. Is there an evolutionary purpose to this behaviour, or is it simply a result of genetic variation?

Time and time again, the border between the vegetable, animal, and mineral kingdoms proves to be arbitrary. Erik tells us about how the zodiac in the county Blekinge in the south of Sweden comprises both trees and animals.

Emerging from the forest, we realize that we find the idea behind the Deep Time enquiry more interesting than the actual questions. While we did find the fossil-producing tree, we also realize that question no. 7 is solely concerned with human-made artefacts of a kind of which we found no examples in the forest. The questions harbour an anthropocentrism that diverges from both the notion of deep time and the framing of the enquiry. This is the moment we understand that our response will be an exploration of themes and topoi, rather than a straightforward answer to the questions in the enquiry.

(EB, EL, KN)

### **At the same time, in another part of the woods:**

There is a tangle of roots by the stream, the base of a fallen tree, and a funny little pale stone with something embedded in it: it's the scale of a perch – no, it's a cockle, partly covered in sandstone. In many other places that would be no peculiar thing, but in this area, with its granite, ice age moraines and clay deposits, you rarely find objects like it.

Where the stone encounters a patch of blemished lichen on an old grey alder trunk (featuring a deserted great spotted woodpecker nest, the wound left by a fallen branch, and tinder polypore fruiting bodies), the bark yields somewhat. The crack reveals a tight darkness with the air of being inhabited. It gives off a fresh smell, like damp soil. Both insides shimmer faintly in the gloom.

(IÖ)



### **Dream of extinct life forms**

The floor curled by the  
impatient sea monsters as  
they made their way through  
the holes in the ground  
Jumping over bodies  
where we slept unconcerned  
and the floor rose and burst  
when they met down below  
The serpent biting the dragon's throat  
in the corner of my eye  
and we knew it was time  
That we would meet on the beach  
Escape every house  
and watch the sun soak the seashore  
(EL)



## **Dawn**

But this morning: a dream of rocks and pillar mountains, striped in black and white, drawn by two persons of different tempers. A third person appeared, pulling a wheeled bag filled with assorted light bulbs, then began demonstrating their use: to find something out, you illuminate the mountains.

(IÖ)

*Erik Bohman, Riyota Kasamatsu, Emma Lundenmark, Maja Lundgren, Niklas Nenzén, Kristoffer Noheden, Sebastian Osorio, Anna-Karin Selberg, Ika Österblad*



*Deertime*  
by Laura Corsiglia

*in response to*  
*Deertime by Laura Corsiglia (at left)*

# SKULL

*by Monte Merrick*

watching the old deer's  
skull dissolve back  
into the forest,  
look how much longer  
a thought may linger –  
how much longer  
than i thought.

and this flying insect at rest  
looks like a small bit  
of leaf or bark –  
on long legs –  
runs errands in  
a square foot of forest floor –  
stops at the  
alder leaf, the salmon berry  
twig, a small piece of moss,  
this old thinking skull,  
and her vertebrae  
in orbit.

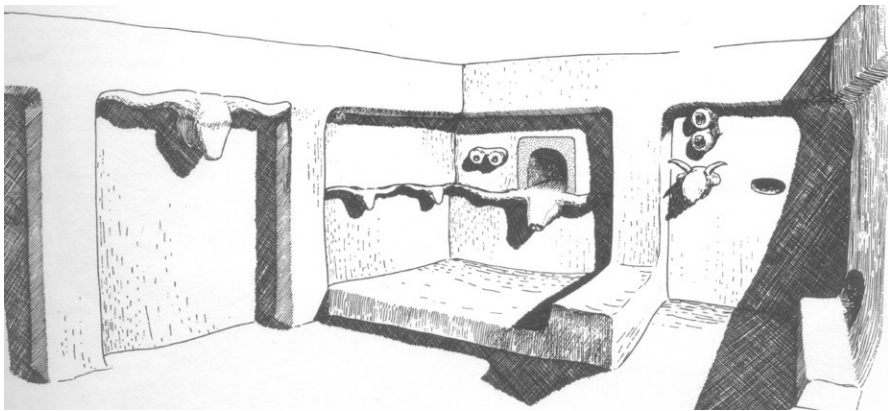
# LILITH ALSO CALLED THE BREASTS OF HELL IN ÇATAL HÜYÜK

*by Ody Saban*

Among the testimonies of the past, ruins, fossils and traces, I have always preferred those which the hand and spirit of alienated humanity has most desired to destroy, smear, confuse and forget. We need these ruins, these fossils and these traces, to solidly build a utopia and a surrealist civilization (which Micheline and Vincent Bounoure, with their friends, had begun to sketch out).

We, surrealists, always know how to look for our legendary Great Ancestors among those most hated and buried.

Very early on, I sought to grow and multiply a whole people of Liliths, and as different from one another as possible. I cleansed them of religious tradition. I loved them. I washed them in mare's milk. Then I looked for a shelter for them.



*Pairs of female breasts appear above animal horns. Reproduction of the book "Çatal Hüyük a Neolithic Town in Anatolia" by James Meallart, edited by Sir Mortimer Wheeler, 1967*



*The Birth Of Lilith In Çatal Hüyük* by Ody Saban

Pairs of female breasts appear above animal horns. Reproduction of the book *Çatal Hüyük a Neolithic Town in Anatolia* by James Meellart, edited by Sir Mortimer Wheeler, 1967

Çatal Hüyük is the opposite of a small pretty village. The concept of the beautiful may certainly apply to it, but more likely that of the sublime.

Çatal Hüyük died twice. As we know, archaeological research causes a second death. I saw the site of Çatal Hüyük completely devastated. It is as if a storm of hate had descended upon it. There was a subjective appropriation and fossilization in a book, and the comments elicited from it: Çatal Hüyük a Neolithic Town in Anatolia, known in French as Çatal Hüyük, one of the first cities of the world (1967, written by James Meellart, and edited by Sir Mortimer Wheeler}. Then again, in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations of Ankara.

Çatal Hüyük has been built and rebuilt many times in layers, over more than half a millennium. It is at a high altitude, on an Anatolian Plateau.



*Installation of Lilith's Breasts in Çatal Hüyük* by **Ody Saban**

In the days when Çatal Hüyük lived its own life, approximately between 7200 and 6400 before the so-called “Christian” era, it was a very large village of more than 3500 to 8000 inhabitants, and was built underground. Inhabitants also lived on the roofs and entered buildings (houses and temples) placed side by side, through hatches and ladders. This architecture was rebuilt, almost identically, a dozen times. The excavations therefore proceeded to its final destruction, floor by floor.

The research ended up concluding that the Çatal Hüyük civilization maintained a very vast network of contacts and exchanges of minerals, plants, animals, luxuries, parades, seductions and ceremonies. Of course, there were also exchanges of feelings, of knowledge... It seems that there was no war. This dense network of exchanges spread and established itself regularly over hundreds and hundreds of kilometers, with a very abundant diversity.

Three characteristics of Çatal Hüyük's civilization contrast sharply with

the proliferation of trade and wealth that would otherwise testify to a sumptuous life, where pleasure could be extended and shared.

First, a particularly low quantitative life expectancy. Only youth lived and died in Çatal Hüyük. No sign of human life has been found beyond fourteen years. One would normally perish very young there. This seems to be the case even though human life in the semi-nomadic populations of the surrounding valleys, much poorer and threatened with famine, could exceed sixty years. Individual life in Çatal Hüyük was like a wonderful and amazing flame, but relatively brief.

Then, rich populations, even up until today, have been as a rule more unequal than the others. On the contrary, a systematic egalitarianism characterizes the civilization of Çatal Hüyük. Temples aside, most buildings occupy a similar area. They are usually divided into three rooms (sometimes two or four). The tombs of the women are prepared with precious stones, worked and assembled, with various flowers and seeds and useful and precious objects. They are richer than those of men, but not by much. It should also be noted that the skeletons, after having been preserved, sanitized and bleached outside the village for a long time, were lovingly placed under the beds. And children slept with their parents, most often with the mothers, whose beds were much bigger.

In the temples, the carvings bear witness to an elaborate cult of a “mother goddess” including the representation of women, various animals and often a child. But the murals show a society which must be qualified, with caution and nuance, as “patriarchal” since, in general, only men hunted in groups and therefore possessed the most efficient weapons. The powers other than the power of arms (political, economic, ceremonial, family ...) were obviously much more shared and the inequality between men and women was obviously much lower than in most known civilizations, including our own capitalist civilization.

The stone carvings of goddesses and horned beasts, as well as the frescoes in vivid and diverse colors, were made deliberately, with no aesthetic concerns other than avoiding ugliness. It is certainly not very common to see, for example, a woman giving birth to a bull (childbirth, this essential act, has moreover been the object of a taboo that is extremely resonant, from the point of view of representation, in known civilizations, including our own). Ceremonially, how-

ever, in stonework or masonry, no concern for originality, provocation, dread or formal refinement is discernible here, for about seven hundred years.



*The prehistoric woman* by Ody Saban

This aesthetic and formal research, however, characterizes humanity, for better or for worse. In Çatal Hüyük, the faculties of the imagination are undoubtedly located in creations of perishable materials, from the surroundings and from far away, like the art of jewelry.

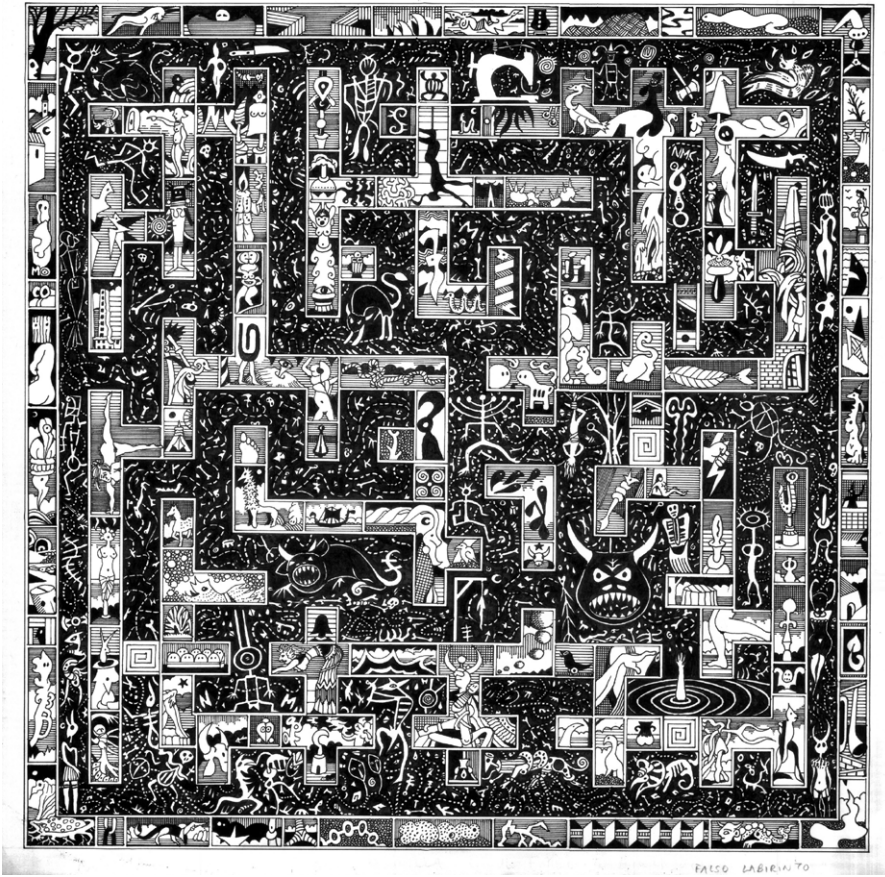


Part of my work has been to revive, diversify and multiply the splendor of the famous Liliths in Çatal Hüyük, in its surroundings or elsewhere. Lilith is not for me the name of a woman, but of all beautiful women who fight for complete equality and who give themselves body and soul to this fight. It will be necessary to shatter, destroy, and annihilate the divisions and polarizations of gender, age, race, class etc: against so many abject signs of barbarism and totalitarian conformism, of the almost total absence of legal freedom and autonomy, individual and collective.

We will continue to revive the memory of women's effort for equality right up to prehistoric times.



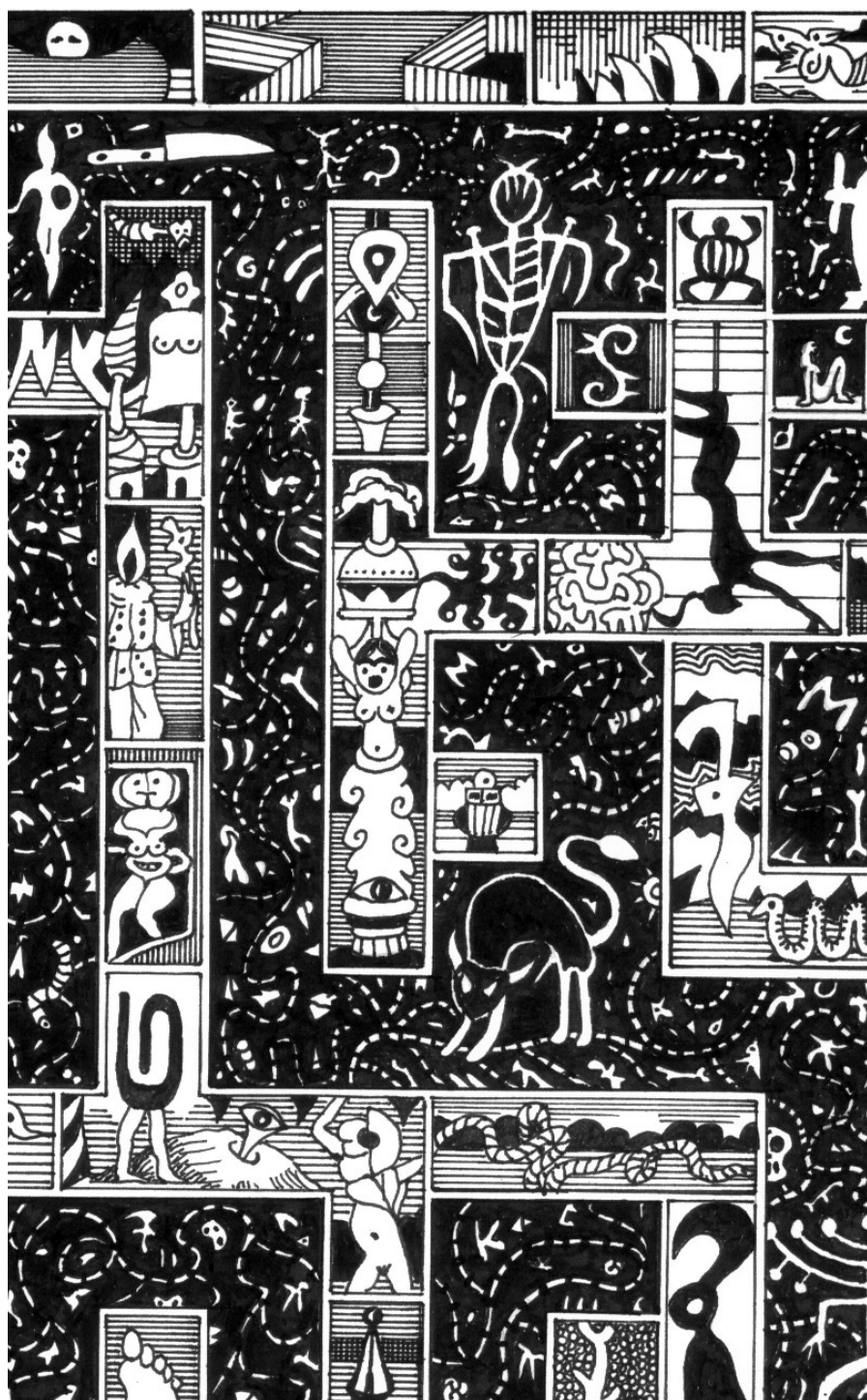
*Ceremony on the throne of Lilith at Çatal Hüyük* by Ody Saban.  
**Photograph by Simon Koh.**



*Falso labirinto o La trappola*  
Massimo Borghese



*detail of Falso labirinto o La trappola*



*detail of Falso labirinto o La trappola*

# HISTORY OF THE EARLY UNMAN

*by Steven Cline*

Where did man come from? This question has occupied the human side-thought for thousands, perhaps even tens of thousands of lazy deeryear. It is a question responsible for many of the world's myths & religions. Yet those old answers, they are merely one primitive dog attempt after another for a conquest—just some old pelican's idea of showing off his explanatory prowess. A mating game and a mushroom. Cast it all away, dancer! Today we spread out a veil. Today we will sacrifice a limb-cut Mt. Everest on the altar of the smiling science. So grab a woodchuck & squeeze!



The sexual desires of Evolution have created many a strange dead end. Here on this cold aquatic globe, this glowing network of the sponge. Yes, through the mist of time we can see it all. We see his chronic self-pleasuring, his madcap apeman beastialities. We shake our little scientoid heads at him. Many a pointless seed has been spilled here, deep under the cloud of pre-recorded time. Race after race of bizarro-apemen, all created to satisfy his deviant needs. A real criminal he was, way back when. He needed the cold policemen-eye of a historian to keep him in check, to keep him morally straight. His Binocular so cryptic, his gravities bold...It's a very shameful act he pulled on animalia back then, and yet it's ok. It's ok. Because we were one of those dead ends too. Just another sexual-imaginative accident of his, something dreamed into ether existence by him, misused and then forgotten. But we turned it all around. We made it past our first berry-picking, and we killed it at the first hunter-gatherer apocalypse. A little extra help from that *Leyak* of Language—little spoonful of her possession—that was all it took. A real trickster species we ended up being, eh? A goddamn porcupine of the Real! But this here essay is not about our story. My area of intellectual expertise lies elsewhere. I am so very sorry, I hope that is not what you had desired. No, instead I will tell you a story of our lovable apetwins. Behold the Unman!

A disclaimer—As with all prehistory histories, most of what follows is complete conjecture. But I assure you that I have studied all the bones. Each and every one. And through my hydromancy practice I have gained a secondary authentication. These dry words can be trusted, my friend, for I am no wet salamander. And I shall never flee at the approach of an uncomfortable truth. Yes, in the realm of Idea I am a sneering viking warrior, and irony is my exaliber. O foolish, foolish throats!

Our first Apetwin had an insect eye. An insect heart. Our first Apetwin had almost no concepts of his own. He was born without a cabalistic grocery cart, and his cavehome was completely bare. Except for his one friend, the red weasel, no one ever came to visit him. He tried taking walks around the plains, tried to do the old meet-and-greet, but all this caused was a raising of severe eyebrows. And those cruel, cruel Elephantkind! They would always frown at him, they would cover their offspring's bulging red eyes whenever he passed. He seemed to cause severe allergic reactions. The ter-

mite kingdom even labelled him “a very dangerous individual”, and said he had no hamstrings. He’d only been alive for about a week, this little Unman, and yet the pinky aggregations of gossip had so quickly become established... He just couldn’t counter it all, he just couldn’t “put up”. Life on the savannah became disagreeable to him. His new word for life became “dead duck”. And so, on the second Tuesday of his life he crawled inside his dirty hidey hole and turned himself into a grey statue, never to dethaw. A sad ending for a sad meatball. But let’s not dwell! And hey—about 157,535 years later his grim statue-self was found by a traveling hippie death cult, and worshiped as their god. Yes, for a few sweet summers (Between ’70 and ’73) he got to play as King of all the Archons, and had the front row seat to endless sex magick shenanigans, often involving a tribe of albino gorilla. And not everybody can say that, eh?!

Our second Apetwin was a variant on the first. But this time around he was all horn, baby. All point & all angle. Yes, this time around nobody gave him any slippery shitstuff, because they were all far too afraid of him. They ditched the conspiratorial, and didn’t so much as pass a slither in his direction. In all their little booties, they quaked. At birth his apeface had been covered over with a strange metallic star. Yes, even while babyfresh, he shined. Vaguely organic was this facestar of his, and possibly sentient too. Somekindof parasitic somethingorother, a devious sucker of his fur. This star cursed like a non-aquatic sailor. (Not at all, in other words. This star was completely mute.) It also made it very difficult (impossible) for him to ever eat a tasty lunch. The most heroic action of this Ape’s life involved a fight with a deranged porcupine. This was on the third, maybe fourth day of his life, I think? Somekindof mating argument, if I am remembering correctly, something about access to a voluptuous porcupine female. He triumphed over the tricky death quills, but died of starvation soon after. This is because he had no mouth with which to eat, as I mentioned previously. This is also why we of the english language call it STARvation. A tribute of sorts to this legendary apeboy hunk.

The third Apetwin (aka Charlie Ape), was a true ghostboy. He clouded himself regularly, because he was completely addicted to Phantom. Whenever his head spectrals reached a level low enough for a pupil return he sprayed again with the ReFog™ . It was in this way that he avoided the

nastiness of the sunlight, and the sad pretensions of the floral. His cosmic familiars? They often sprayed with ReFog™ too. That sassy Sally Ape, that old old Momma Ape...A bunch of risky impatient they all were. Baby did not partake in any of this, however. Baby had a round plaster belly filled with flies. Baby was deafdumbblind. Baby knew not what he was, nor where he was. But as for that Charlie, Sally, & Momma, they all wanted a bigger, cloudier drift to exist inside themselves. They wanted something with a true extraterrestrial kick. And so (with a little misused Freudian analysis) they combined their three headselves, becoming one great winged headself. This newly-formed divine headself suctioned itself up, flying straight under moon's surprised eyelid. It accidentally struck a hidden shadow vein there, and boom! All three apes were immediately transferred into a permanent apparitional state. A cautionary tale, folks.

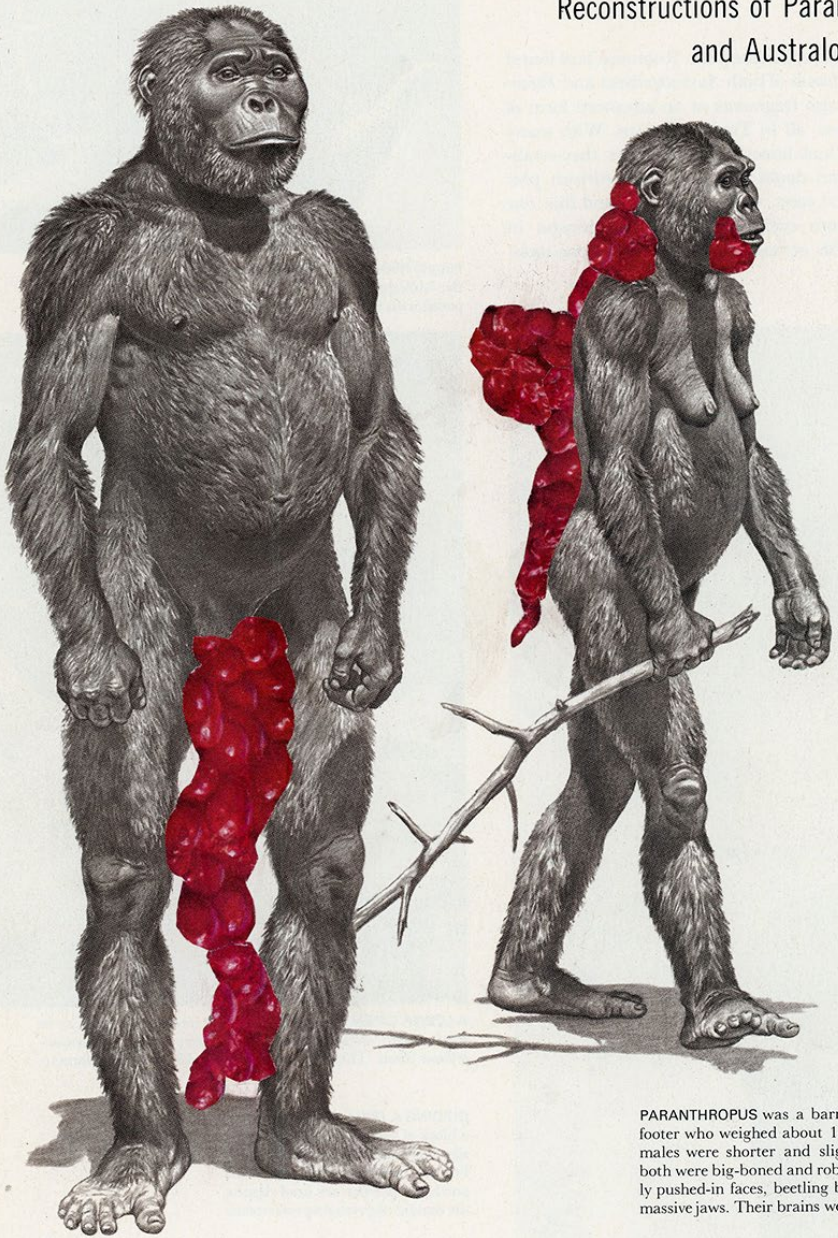


Onward, then to the fourth Apetwin! This fellow started out small. No distinguishing personality features. No real fetishes or quirks to speak of. One thing that this fourth line of ape did enjoy was a good long swim. These apes loved the feeling of wet fur on warm grass. They loved to open their mouths underwater, to feel a cool aquatic massage along their weary gums. They would often smile very broadly after a dip, to show the tribe a set of sparking white river-cleaned teeth. And before any fuck, a quick dip was always expected. Just good form, you know? Hygienic. Unfortunately, in those prehistoric times there was just one large river, spiraling out from the core. The One had not yet diverged into the Many. This ancient river was 73 miles wide, and it teemed with sexually transmitted disease. Eventually this fourth ape line became consumed by the microscopic, their peaceful utopian society torn apart by a cornucopia of infection. One disease caused their ape genitalia to balloon with an effusion of strange red flesh bubbles, which when popped caused them very great pain. Another caused their blood veins to expand and spiral upwards, devouring their heads & disjoining their thoughts. And it all ended with a discharge which was musical. The less said about all that, the better.

Here I will end my account of the prehistoric Unmen. There are many more dead ends to cover, and I yet have forgotten them all. Loosey goosey, Loosey goosey. Depart my friends, and let not the mammalian tragedies of our past weary your present steps.



Reconstructions of Parant  
and Australopi



PARANTHROPUS was a barrel-footed who weighed about 140 lbs. Males were shorter and slightly more robust than females. Both were big-boned and robustly built with pushed-in faces, beetle brows, and massive jaws. Their brains were



*Sabazius Hands*  
Megan Leach



# NEANDERTHAL MUSEUM

*by Aaron Dylan Kearns*



## *A DREAM*

On the third floor of an unnamed concrete storage space, there's the Neanderthal Museum. There are no walls in the museum splitting off the attractions. The different spaces are instead split off by red curtains and small paper signs. Some of the rooms have spinal cords suspended from the ceiling, while others have photos of partially assembled skulls, or reconstructions of towering severely mutated prehistoric primates. Three disembodied skulls float through the hallways of the museum, always staying in the boundaries of the curtains. They're chasing after a boy who woke up there. Something about the skeletons around him sets off a primal fear, and he's trying to find a safe place to hide from the morbid displays. He doesn't think to look behind any of the curtains until he reaches one of the farthest walls, finding a fire escape door. Running out of it carelessly, he falls from the metal staircase outside to the concrete parking lot below. It is daytime outside. His bones are carried back in to be made a part of the Neanderthal Museum.