

# UNDERTAKERS AND UNDERSELVES

A SURREALIST  
EXCAVATION.

October 20-23, 2022

Atlanta, Georgia

No Tomorrow Gallery



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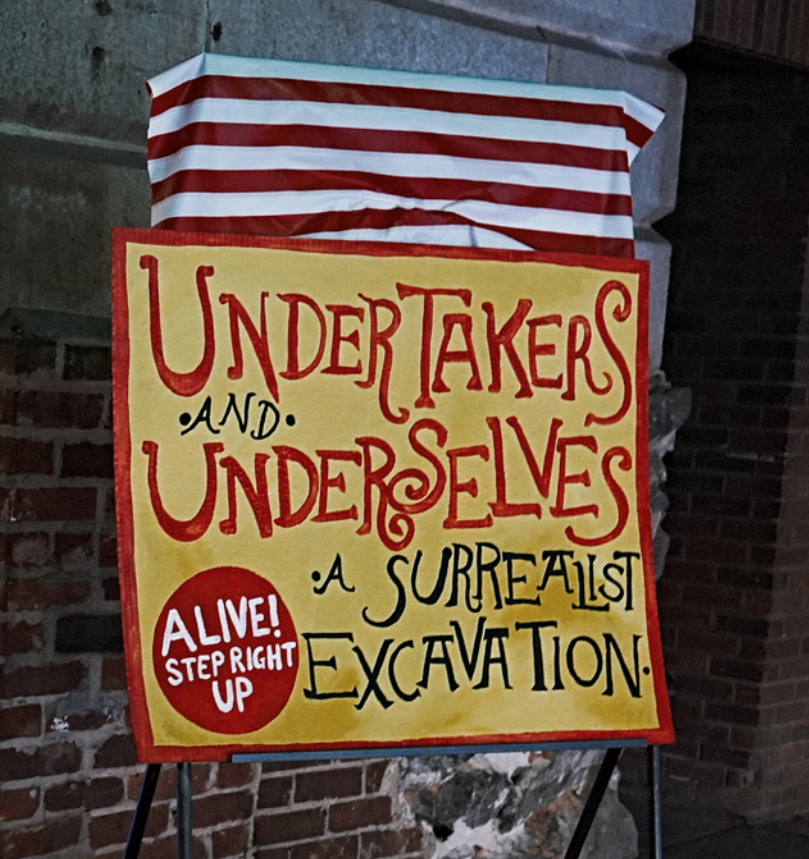
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# UNDERTAKERS AND UNDERSSELVES: A SURREALIST EXCAVATION

*The depths of the earth are not for the moles alone.*

- a quotation from the occultist Comte de Gabalis

What is a signal, and how deeply does it ring? Nobody is supposed to hear a peep from the oubliette, and yet we somehow perceive a low growl, an infectious density that pulls our air-adapted minds well below our accustomed chaos. Above ground, walls and obstacles hem us in from every side. Surficial catastrophe lights up at the slightest breeze, and darkness loses its prerogative. The time has come to tunnel down; to see how deep the “rising sign” really goes. We come to find that there is no luxury greater than the cavernous movie palace beneath the street as it projects the hidden desires of the world above.

## MEET THE UNDERSSELVES!

It’s a carnival in the underworld, where moles and monsters alike build unfathomable sideshows, and where cicadas dwell dreaming for decades about their single orgiastic scream like a carny barker inviting us to gaze upon the freakshow of our own subconscious. An octopus, with subterranean galleries representing octopodian arms—far more than eight—intertwining into unfathomable rat kings that keep on unfolding on themselves. Even the Underself can’t be more than a membrane, a seismic organ.

## MEET THE UNDERTAKER!

One who undertakes things, making things happen. Certain things, not so much euphemistic or ambiguous as gloriously general. Grasping those duties that the frail shy away from. Getting a firm grip on the things underneath. The undertaker is the one that makes it happen. For those of us who seek knotwork that binds the apparent contrarities of existence in a single point, the answer to the riddle, the receptor is becoming clear: it lies, chthonic, chattering, in the substrate.

The title of the exhibition comes partly from a remarkable but virtually unknown essay by a 19th century woman living in the Atlanta area. Her name was Bessie Ficklen. Apart from her essay, she is known largely for writing an authoritative book on hand puppets. Bessie’s essay on “Dream Poetry” recounts her systematic attempts to capture all instances of poetry, verse, and song that appear in her dreams. She alludes to a circle of friends, enticingly, who all seem to be engaged in this rather specific pursuit. But in explaining the qualities of her “dream verse”, she provides a systematic review of every published “dream poem” she could find, in addition to those of her friends. She also slips in a rather

startling psychological account for dreaming in general—part Jamesian empiricist and part fairy tale. It is in this explanation that Bessie invokes the “Underselves”, the little goblin beings, both apart and inside ourselves, that do the dreamwork for us.

**She writes:**

*The Centralself that my weariness puts to sleep, and that I consider my personality, owes a vast amount of his powers to certain Underselves who remain alive and active whether he sleeps or wakes, who know their business well, and go about it with a conscientious vigor that needs no supervision.*

- Bessie Ficklen, “Dream Poetry”

It is partially to honour or at least to titillate these secret many-selves that we have put on this exhibit. Surrealism in its most radical incarnations pushes back against fixed notions of the self, of humanity, of the unchanging and pure cohesion of the soul. Not only speculating, we push ourselves to experience things that demonstrate, clearly and distinctly, that there is so much more out there than the official stories tell us. In the current situation, where new forms of asymmetrical relations of power in the form of data and surveillance control innovate the means by which an already brutal capitalistic civilization cannibalizes itself, the situation of the “personality” is incredibly bleak. Surveillance media packaged as empowering tools, asocial in the extreme, entices us to develop a narrow and shallow sense of “who we are”. We are measured by the minute according to “goals”, “task completed”, “traits”, photographic anti-portraits, our climb to success, our haphazard data points. The path to “happiness” is merely a linear accumulation of experience points in a dismal RPG where we break down under the pressure of facing up to our so-called potential, our “one true self”. The personality market and its accumulation of awards, experience, and demonstrations of success is biggest ruse of all. They want you to forget the observation of the Mad Hatter, who told you it’s your unbirthday 364 days of the year. You are who you aren’t, most of the time.

But the underselves—note the plural. The idea of having a multitude of small, possible interchangeable components, visiting demons, curious fancies—aren’t these manifested daily in the haphazard flow of everyday thoughts? How can we take credit for our own dreams? The cartoonist Steven Appleby is right to point out the extremely local “event” of thinking itself: ideas, like little ectoplasmic globules, are floating everywhere in the air. Sometimes they “visit” us. Our biology is itself a Rube Goldberg machine of disparate cells, pulleys, Cheesehounds barking at the Cats of Ulthar.

We are calling it an Excavation. We are in the Underground, after all. The Underselves are Undertakers. The idea of working in the Undertakers came from our friend and surrealist collaborator Mattias Forshage from Stockholm. **He says:**

*I have always loved the word “undertaker” because it’s not so much euphemistic or ambiguous as gloriously general. The one who undertakes things, making things happen. Making certain things happen. Grasping those duties that the frail shy away from. Getting a firm grip on the things underneath... The undertaker is the one that makes it happen. Again, an echo in my ears, from Psychic TV’s early*

*(only?) hit, preaching Crowleyan sex magic: “You wanna make it happen? Wanna turn that old mind pattern?” Also, clearly, the undertaker is the one who trying to get a firm grip on the underground. It is not a firm grip in the sandy soil and the cheesy rock. It is a futile attempt. But then of course our selves are nothing but futile attempts. Trying to hold on to tunnels that keep changing.*

## THE CALL OF THE DEEP

*...for the Artist addeth nothing thereto. Nature alone directeth the growing*

- An anonymous Treatise on the Philosopher’s Stone (17th Century)

Collaborators were invited to participate in an underground séance of objects and ideas.

Our goal was to solicit contributions that celebrate and communicate the underground, the underselves, and the undertakers, in whatever way or format that these notions resonated for our collaborators.

While individual works are one possible channel, the intent was not only to assemble standalone pieces. We also encouraged our fellow conspirators to send or bring along more suggestive depictions, fragments, unfinished attempts, found objects, rough communications or semi-complete schemata—anything that the felt was striving to emerge from below. These were then worked, stretched, ground up, beheaded, cooked and finally conjoined in several days of collective action.

### Ingredients received included

- Visuals, images, paintings, collages or photos, conceived of collectively, or individual works that are ready to mate, grow, or combine with others;
- Surrealist communications, including messages, bits of quotations (such as those from Mary MacLane, which were hidden around in minute spots in the space)
- Found objects (rusty farmware, a martini glass, a clown-themed moneybank, a barometer, various bones, a kettle, etc);
- Postcards sent and received among participants over the years;
- Contextless photographs, cut outs, advertisements;
- Posters, stickers, found signage;
- Surrealist games which demand continuation including mediumistic communication games and object / image naming games, and fortune telling games;
- Incomplete scribbblings, the beginnings of drawings or paintings or even maps, which were freely altered by other hands—for example half finished exquisite corpse style comic panels;
- Written fragments, incomplete poems, descriptions of symptoms or bizarre confessions;
- Accounts of dreams or experiences that demanded collective interpretation;
- Parts of books, letters, or other ephemera;

- Rare or choice historical items which exude an atmosphere of subtle wonder or incoherent threat including early 20th century massage devices, magic 8-balls, strange old games;
- Natural objects - bones, feathers, butterflies, driftwood;
- Tactile objects - stuffed monsters and pettable worms;
- Objects that can be played with, including toys, massive interactive collage books, or pieces from boardgames or puzzles;
- Texts, ramblings, theoretical tracts that deal with any of the above themes;
- And many other items that stretched fingers out for another, of which it yet knows not.

**Likewise, we downplayed the emphasis on items we felt were over-represented in typical gallery spaces and commercial art ventures, such as:**

- Artworks that were too precious to be handled, altered, paired, sequenced or inverted;
- Artworks that absolutely required gallery style individual attribution, credit or labels (since this was not a typical art exhibition, and may call for unorthodox assembly, depending on the situation at hand);
- Items that were to be displayed according to strict predetermined aesthetic criteria;
- Or any other items that smacked of self-sufficient aloofness, foreign to the collective ethos of surrealism.

The stones born of this intense subterranean pressure had more unpredictable geological and philosophical properties than what was expected. They accumulated enough energy, by means of a deranged collective mediumship, to arrange themselves in a special order, a museum of wonder which we do not yet fully comprehend but in which we place all our hopes: a vast and complex over-individual, and overhuman, communication.

## THE EXCAVATION

*The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with nitre.*

– Edgar Allen Poe, “A Cask of Amontillado”

Rituals, séances and magic! Communications beyond the ordinary channels! Readings and guided tours of the underground object museum, its wonders and its dangers! Musical entertainment for the benefit of soothing the unhinged objects! Costumes, freakshows, demonstrations of mediumistic communication, spontaneous acts of surrealism! “Ask the Golden Goose” and other delirious sideshows, games, and attractions! Film night showing wonders and horrors!

The event proper was preceded by several nights and days of collective creation, where participants gathered ahead of time to pull together the various components, trouvailles, images and objects. There was much discussion, collage, assemblage and general ideation and play as the



various items were brought to their finalized forms. As much as possible, individual authorships were smothered by a collective and anonymizing drive that confused the sources and direction of the contributions.

The Excavation events proper were held from October 20-23, 2022 at No Tomorrow in the Atlanta Underground, the event unfolded in an intense sequence of four nights, each with a special emphasis, but all blending into a kind of generalized delirium in the end. **These were:**

### ***Subterranean Carnival: Opening Event***

*Thursday October 20, 2022 | 6pm – 10pm*

Free improvisation in various forms, elaborate costumes, bizarre encounters, and collective invocation. Surrealist exhibition, objects, sideshows; freaks of nature and acts of daring.

### ***Getting Lost in the Caverns: Surrealist Games***

*Friday October 21, 2022 | 6pm – 10pm*

A night of surrealist games and discussions. Collective creation and play. Tours and readings of the Underground Museum. Mysterious outcomes. “Ask the Golden Goose!” and other ambiguities. Demonstrations of mediumistic communication. And more! Everyone was welcome to join in!

### ***Quakes and Cries: Music and Performances***

*Saturday, October 22, 2022*

A night of musical performances, with readings, declarations, rants and poems interspersed throughout. Performances and readings from Ladonna Smith, Clifford McPeck, Alex Cohen, Jason Abdelhadi, Majid Araim, Alice Lilitu, Lucifer, Vittoria Lion, Flusnoix, Nemo, and James Robert Foster.

### ***A Night at the Chthonic Movie Palace feat. The Horrors of Malformed Men***

*Sunday, October 23, 2022*

A screening of films with deep resonances to the themes of the event including:

James Robert Foster’s *Traces in the Field: Episode 0* with live musical accompaniment from Steven Cline, Hazel Cline and James Robert Foster;

The premiere of *The Face of Oblivion* by Aaron Dylan Kearns;

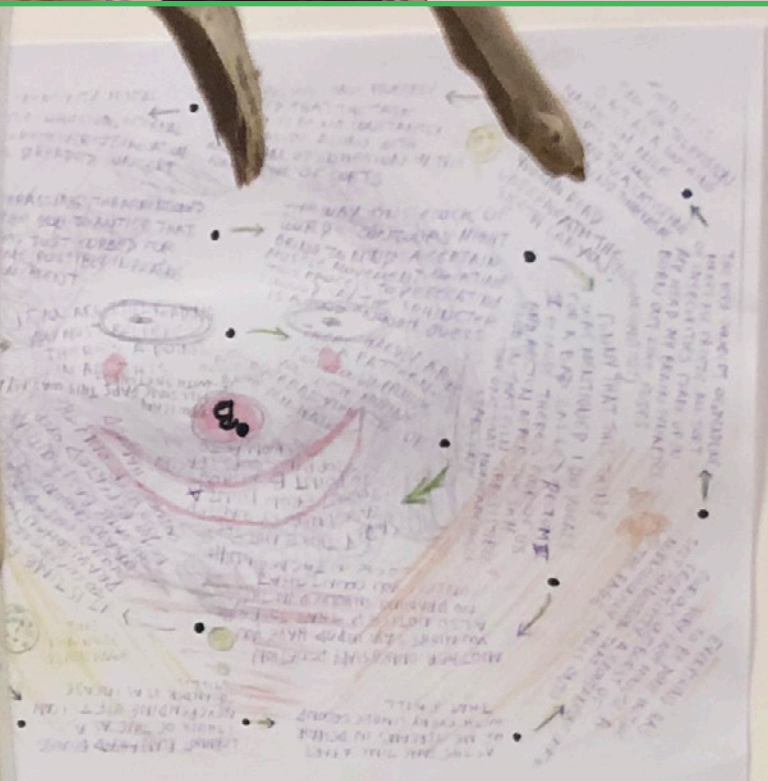
A short film from Emma Lundenmark and Kristoffer Noheden from Stockholm;

And the feature length film, Teruo Ishii’s 1969 Edogawa Ranpo adaptation, *The Horrors of Malformed Men*.

















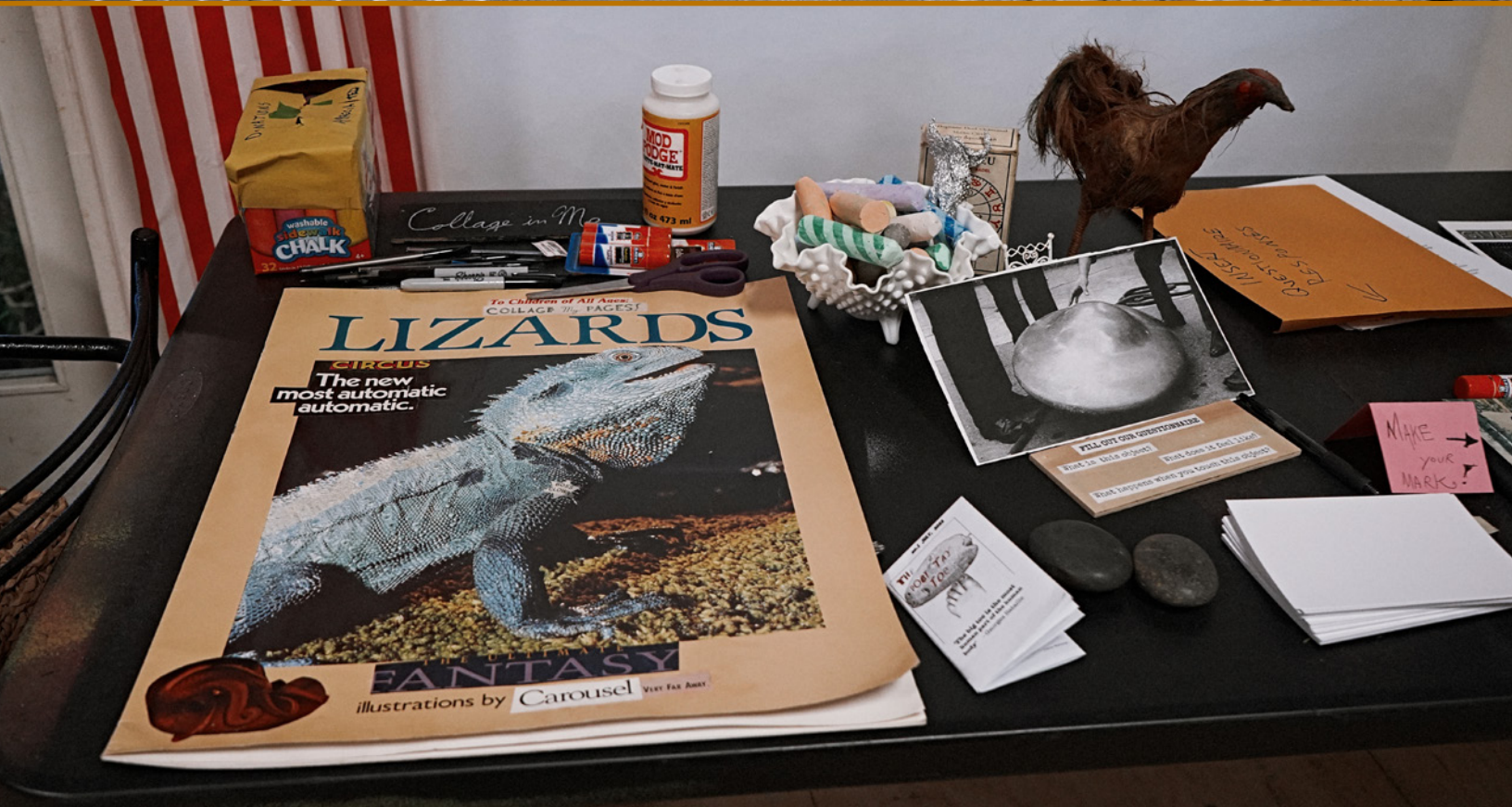






















# THE PLAYERS

## INCLUDING...

The **SPECTRES** who sent communications, fragments, objects, images or other contributions from afar, and whose call echoes in the subterranean chambers...

The **ARTIFACIENTS** and **MOLDYWARPS** who were present in person, either for the days of collective creation preceding the ritual opening (helping to connect the disparate items and fragments, working together with their fellow technicians to ease the birth of a new surnatural order) and/or who participated in the underground public events, played games, wore a costume and/or made some fleshy connection beneath the surface of things, burrowing new tunnels alongside others...

Jason Abdelhadi, OTTAWA  
Georgia Albertus, ATLANTA  
Majid Araim, ATLANTA  
Atlanta Surrealist Group, ATLANTA  
Raelixe Cassette, ATLANTA  
Hazel Cline, ATLANTA  
Peggy Cline, ATLANTA  
Steven Cline, ATLANTA  
Alex Cohen, ATLANTA  
Paul Cowdell, ISLE OF WIGHT  
Dolorosa de la Cruz, DUBLIN  
Damani, BIRMINGHAM  
Alice Farley, NEW YORK  
Bessie A. Ficklen (†), CHATHAM COUNTY  
Merl Fluin, ISLE OF WIGHT  
Flusnoix, BIRMINGHAM  
Mattias Forshage, STOCKHOLM  
James Robert Foster, ATLANTA  
Brandon Freels, NEW YORK  
Joël Gayraud, PARIS

continued on next page...

Ray Hall (†), ATLANTA  
Janice Hathaway, WILLIAMSBURG  
Patrick Hourihan, LONDON  
Bruno Jacobs, CADIZ  
Aaron Dylan Kearns, ATLANTA  
Juli Maria McKenna Kearns, ATLANTA  
Wayne Kral, NEW YORK  
Megan Leach, ATLANTA  
Jasper Lee, BIRMINGHAM  
Alice Lilitu, ATLANTA  
Vittoria Lion, TORONTO  
Lucifer, ATLANTA  
Emma Lundenmark, STOCKHOLM  
Clifford McPeck, ATLANTA  
Andrew Mendez, NEW YORK  
Alvero Michael, ATLANTA  
Joel Nelson, BIRMINGHAM  
Nemo, ATLANTA  
Kristoffer Noheden, STOCKHOLM  
Juan Carlos Otaño, BUENOS AIRES  
Anthony Redmond, MELBOURNE  
Ray, ATLANTA  
Vasili Sakkos, ATHENS  
Ron Sakolsky, INNER (DENMAN) ISLAND  
Vanessa Sinclair, STOCKHOLM  
LaDonna Smith, BIRMINGHAM  
Priscilla Smith, ATLANTA  
Michael Vandelaar, MELBOURNE  
Sasha Vlad, SAN FRANCISCO  
Jess Marie Walker, MONTEVALLO  
Tim White, MELBOURNE  
Johnny Williams, EUTAW  
Craig Wilson, CARBONDALE

# WATCHPEOPLE

The **WATCHPEOPLE** who observed at a distance, and were either eventually compelled to join in with the games and events or repulsed... The following either signed the guestbook and/or made an impression and influenced the character of the event. Many of them played along with games, revealed their dreams, secrets or jokes to the Golden Goose or had their cards read by Alice Lilitu. Others just approached with open intentions and playfulness.

[Nini!]

The Pianist

Molly and her Friend

Ethan

Lara

KT

Peggy

Job

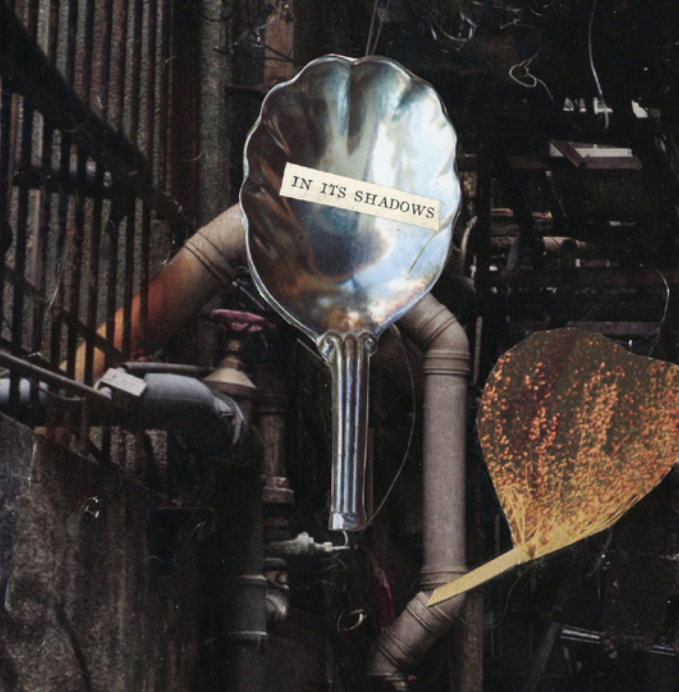
Amy

Puck



*Collective Collage - made with scissors and such*





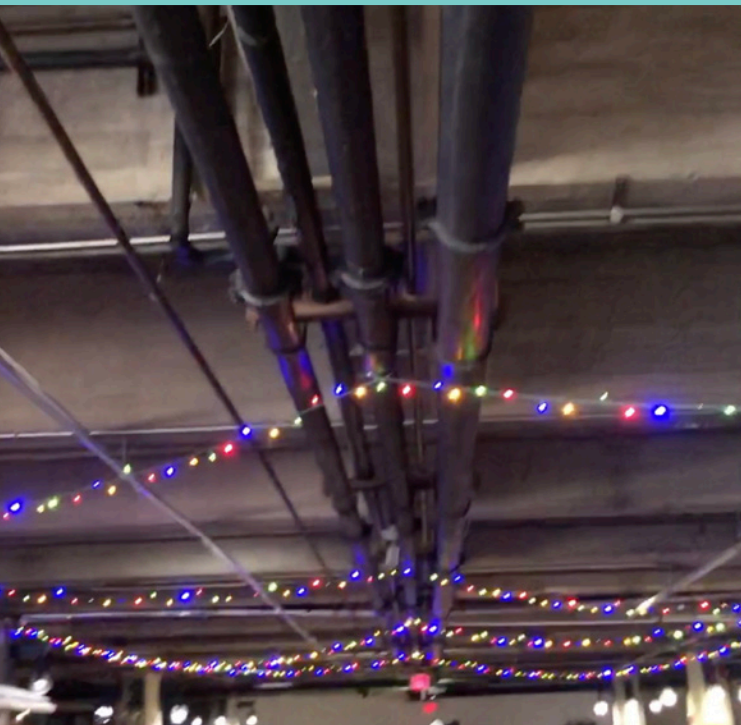


















# DAY 1

## SUBTERRANEAN CARNIVAL OPENING EVENT

*Thursday October 20, 2022  
6pm – 10pm*

Free improvisation in various forms,  
elaborate costumes, bizarre encounters,  
and collective invocation.

Surrealist exhibition, objects, sideshows;  
freaks of nature and acts of daring.







# CHALLENGER DEEP AND ELSEWHERE

## VITTORIA LION

*From the collected interviews of Madame A—, oceanographer and clairvoyante, among the few surviving members of the HMS Challenger expedition of 1872-1876, the first to determine the deepest point of the world's oceans...*

“The diving bell was made from one of those primitive blinds they used to put around cameras, and the control panel from weathered vellum pages of an ancient manuscript of Abraham Abulafia, the letters perpetually shifting. I had designed it myself, a more advanced reinterpretation of the early submersible that had sent Darwin into the Galápagos Rift. However, at that time it was still only large enough to fit me and Dr. Haeckel. Ostensibly he had been assigned the task of illustrating the unknown inhabitants of the abyssal regions, but he was far more interested in slipping his hands under the heavy silk of my dress, draped after the shell of the chambered nautilus, the secret nest of coils that led after whole years of burrowing to my bare skin. A large whale drifted past, interrupting us, her face covered entirely in sharp barnacles that formed the patterns of strange glyphs. Dr. Haeckel then fortunately busied himself writing a monograph on the vegetation that grows out from the enormous pupils of that species.

“I lay down on my back and waited for my limbs to fade into infrastatic, impossibly far from all my flightless thoughts and memories, wondering how I would ever return to my own body, but not particularly frightened. I knew well that the stratigraphy of the sea has an inexplicable direct correspondence to the layers of human skin, and I allowed myself to sink farther and farther into the subdermal realm. Somewhere an intangible scar formed across the surface of the water, the cremated remains of fetid eyelashes. Around me there grew a forest of trees sprouting mussels and limpets, bark shifting from bivalves to lichens to the saltpeter ornamentation of moths’ wings, replaced by a faint aurora that lapped against the edge of my vision. (For I later learned that, as auroras appear at the latitudinal margins of the Earth, there are also ones that occur in extremities of depth.) It was a planetarium show of the interior of my body cavity as all its constituents slept curled within me, of flying gardens and cloud-stranded oceans carried on the wings of seismographic birds. A world without wires or the accoutrements of transit, beyond the waiting rooms and remote fields of the brain. Outside the lateral ventricle of time, outside anywhere, into anywhere.

“When I was very small—perhaps four or five years old—after it became clear that my father was never to return, having gone northward with Franklin, there were nights when I would lie in bed, with several heavy wool blankets wrapped around my chest, for that is how I always slept. I opened my eyes, and I fantasized that as I stared beyond into the darkness overhanging me I was surrounded by these queer figures, creatures perhaps, made of static lines of nothingness

rapidly advancing toward me in a frantic manner. I closed my eyes, believing that I would not be harmed if I could not see them. I was never consciously sure of what would happen to me if I did not, but the implication was that I would somehow be consumed. That is the closest I can approximate of the experience of my descent into Challenger Deep.

“I passed through the chamber leading outside the vessel to the sea, a transparent glass tunnel stained with what Dr. Haeckel had told me were ‘anti-colours,’ the opposites of the colour range registered by the human retina, hypothesized to become visible only at the most inaccessible point of depth. Here I encountered an entire genus of flightless birds with magnetic exoskeletons who live among hydrothermal chimneys shaped like sphinxes. There were great groves of jewel-encrusted arm reliquaries of saints arranged in various gestures, erupting from the seabed, utilized as shells by diverse species of animals. Imminently it occurred to me that this was where the ink for the extinct gospel had been sourced.

“In the theatre of tectonic surgery, this meiosis of an alternate colour field, at last there emerges my sister—my sister, with her five eyes and clawed proboscis and many pairs of lanceolate blades. She sits for me to paint her portrait with oils on the skin of a lanternshark, the only material to withstand the crushing pressure. The only liquid on the canvas is black and I can’t separate it from the water, but there are such a multitude of hues of this many-textured world imperceptible to the eye, and I am feeling with my sight. I tell her what we are searching for, and she tells me that Challenger Deep is the opalescent minefield leading to all detrimental love. (How much easier, I think it must be, to stay a bowl of single-celled milk slopping along the sea floor!) There is no light in Challenger Deep, other than that which begins in the heart, which is truly the source of all novel languages. As she narrated while I continued to paint:

“In those times we did not know whether we were underground or undersea. We were buried, entombed, as we had been for all the billions of years of our previous existence. In those times the entire world was only an extension of ourselves, the abyss was only an appendage of what was inside us, and we could not differentiate ourselves from anyone else. Who is anyone in Challenger Deep? But then we found we could taste colour and temperature, that we could taste sleep, which in those times we sifted in droplets from the silt with our claws. To be awake and asleep, that was the first distinction, really. There were innumerable records made and kept of that time, yes, several professional photographers were employed. The series of boxes containing them only appear at a particular hour well into the night, in the lowermost floor of the Bibliothèque nationale after it is dark and shuttered, tended by a glowing glove that emerges from the shelf, in the very place where a young man once made love to a woman never seen before who, upon unzipping her pink dress, revealed herself to have several rows of sharp pincers lined down her abdomen...

“Deep time, you must understand, operated according to fundamentally different mechanisms and principles as a mode of time. It was organized according to the principle of camouflage, of undifferentiation of individuals—not purely the impulse to fade into one’s surrounding environment, but to camouflage and fade into what has come before oneself, into the biological dream-forms of one’s organic predecessors in the genealogy of life. Our earliest ancestors, you see, were dissolved entirely. The first fossils arose from an idea, an impulse: to fade, to shapeshift into what had come before, into the ancestral existence of all, into the Earth’s crust. All the adornments of birds, of insects, butterflies—all are an extension of the fossil.

“Now, don’t let yourselves get too arrogant, however. One day, you should know, a few of your ancestors wandered into a labyrinth of elongated caverns, winding chambers leading continuously ever deeper into the entrails of the Earth. It was lightless, solidly black, and they had lost their way. Overcome by exhaustion, they all agreed to rest there for the night, and promptly fell asleep. When the morning came—not that they were aware of it, but as recognized by an inward sensation—one of them had found a spare piece of flint fumbling around, and struck it. When the flame started, they all stared in rapt amazement, for the walls and arches of the cavern had been transformed in their sleep into a vast flood of animals of all kinds, of wolves reindeer aurochs mammoths bears lions leopards bison hyenas horses rhinoceroses. Unfortunately, with time, that ability was lost, but, who knows, one day you may regain it somehow. Try drawing a bird with your thoughts. It likely isn’t as hard as you think...’

“And there were other parts of my body, I’m sure, that I felt at that time, but they were lost, in darkness and in distance...”

# "I'm a wiggle worm"

COMMON NAME | Wiggle Worm

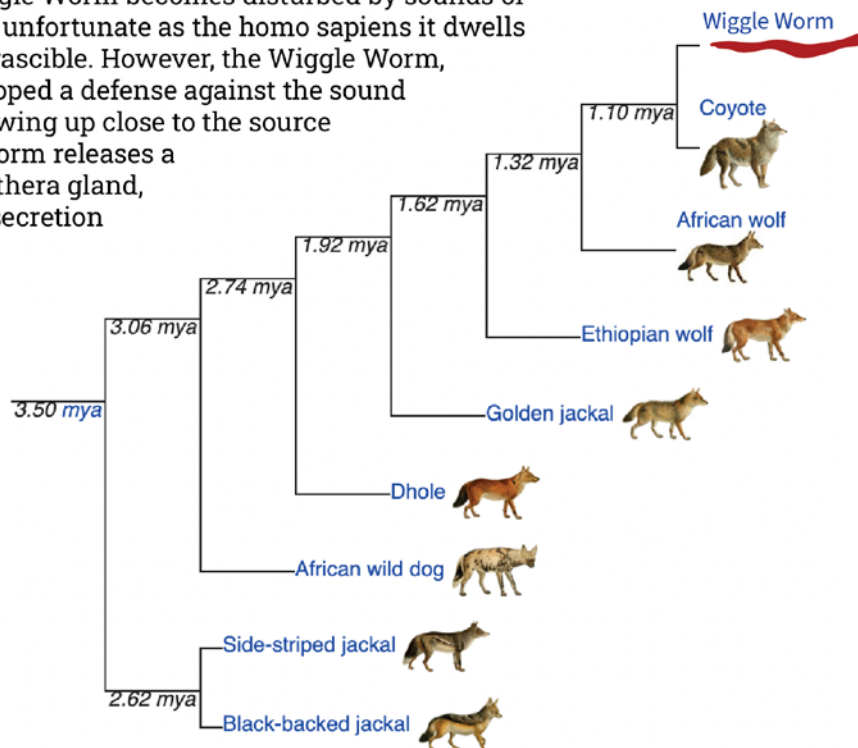
SCIENTIFIC NAME | *Lumbricus horrescus*

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION | Pale pink to dark maroon. 40 to 70 feet in adulthood.

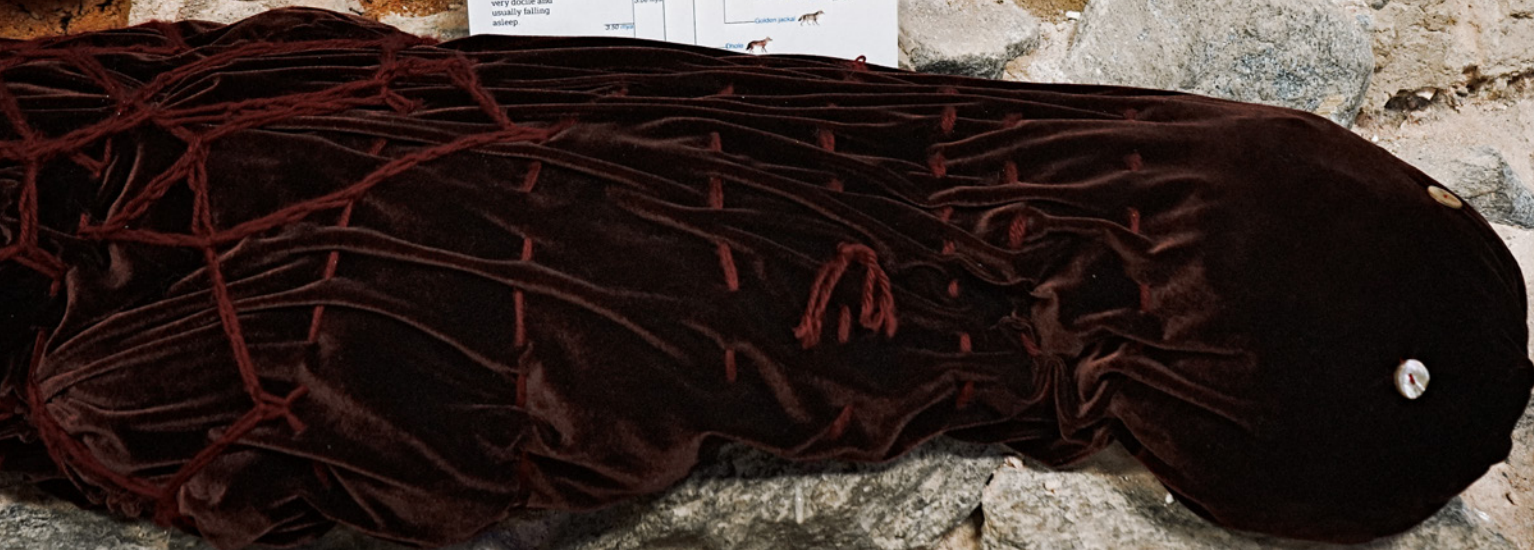
RANGE | Found on all continents and islands with the notable exception of Pitcairn's Island.

PREFERRED HABITAT | 100-150 meters beneath large settlements of homo sapiens.

*Lumbricus horrescus*, commonly referred to as a "Wiggle Worm," is known for its gentle nature and graceful manner of locomotion from which it derives its common appellation. Despite its large size, up to 70+ feet in adulthood, the Wiggle Worm moves so skillfully through rock and soil that it creates no perceptible vibration. The only creature that might know it was coming was another Wiggle Worm, with their excellent hearing. They use their finely tuned ears to locate the nests of ground-dwelling birds from up to 100 meters below ground. Despite their large size, Wiggle Worms subsist solely on the shells of mature bird eggs, swallowing them whole and releasing the hatchling, alive and no worse for its bizarre birth. Researchers are still unsure as to why they choose to make their burrows under the dwellings of homo sapiens, but some propose it is a certain smell released by human fecal matter. In keeping with its tranquil nature, the Wiggle Worm becomes disturbed by sounds of violence or anger, which is unfortunate as the homo sapiens it dwells beneath tend to be rather irascible. However, the Wiggle Worm, ever resourceful, has developed a defense against the sound of human argument. Burrowing up close to the source of the sound, the Wiggle Worm releases a pheromone from its aromothera gland, located near its hatchling secretion sphincter, that the humans respond to by becoming very docile and usually falling asleep.

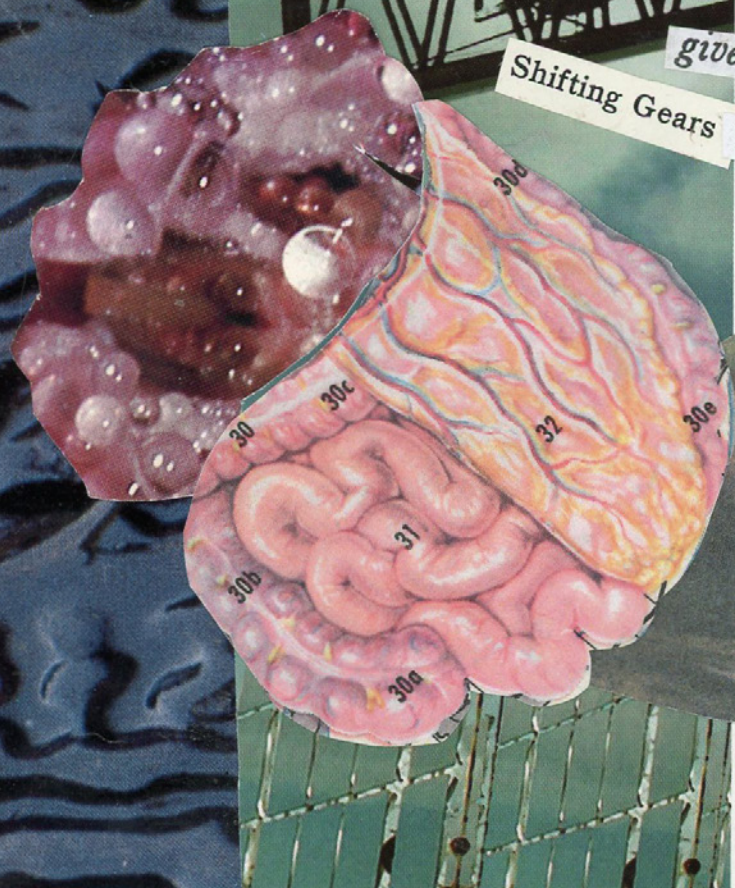




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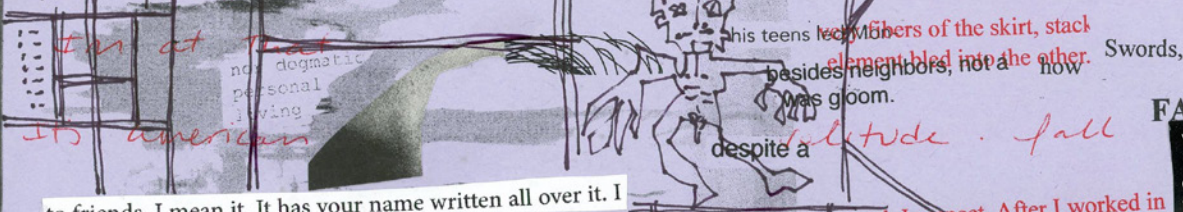


given the name CALLUS, KAL us, is a hardening and  
Shifting Gears hideous with the results of drought,



BLVR: You wrote some Lacanian  
How did that come about?  
SŽ Oh yes I was helping someone  
provocative images. and I just wrote

between psychoanalysis and the study of the  
very is not a genuine speaker but she knows  
DR BENWAY. Violet may not be a genuine speaker but she knows  
a damn sight more about medicine than most of them. Doc-



FALL  
By skillfully twirling the hood  
dancer creates visual stories  
plain the way in which all  
things are connected, yet  
change individually.  
the eagle (center)

to friends. I mean it. It has your name written all over it. I

day she said, "Take out a paper and pen  
I wrote a poem on Noah—I don't know why  
on the UN. I ended up winning and reading



SUMMARY

Every content appearing in the individual monthly  
diates from other psychologically older, content  
ted to the present and contains a specific relationship  
with the character of its relation to the other

flow of thought to come  
your hand  
that they had indeed  
what. Which was perfectly  
cut together yet, cutting together

short films from it: Towers Open Fire  
ment of her mouth closed and looked  
and Cut-ups, shot in Paris, 1965  
as it worked its way up and down  
the sound synchronized in London  
down her ravaged face each time the sword member struck

THE NEURONS AND BLOOD VESSELS IN YOUR THUNDERBIRD

create a poem on the spot by pulling words  
introduce out of a hat I not issued wrecked the  
spontaneous factor with paired scissors. expelle  
grounded the cut-up on the Freudian couch.







A stake glowing neon green  
there bodiless boy  
fiercely hands +  
excruciate fingers  
we

Righty tightly/lefty loose-y  
is universal across earth  
to there is no reason it  
would be, given everything, etc.

emerged into a fancy court...  
Only dream faces, but she  
was there... A familiar dream face...  
We didn't engage...

a sunset and sunrise  
an ancient river delta  
upturned muds  
golden fish  
the moons

People saying or humming to  
Keep themselves occupied  
during conversations. A form  
of patience.

my oldest friend and I were at  
an event and sitting next to  
Michelle Obama and my friend  
was mortified cause I thought it  
a good time to critique foreign  
policy.





# SURREALIST COIN XCHANGE

Surrealist coins, consistent of odd ephemeral shapes, automatic drawings, and other chance formulations on circular tokens. These were roughly in line with the vague general features of heavily used ancient remnants of coinage. The figures could be haunting and shadowy, the text illegible. JA tells a story about how his father had been gifted certain Roman coins, excavated by Jordanian bedouins and given to him in exchange for medicine. These later were brought to Canada, where young JA would eventually learn of them. For a period, instead of a normal quarter or dollar, the young JA would receive these enigmatic ancient coins under his pillow in exchange for a tooth, from some darker iteration of the tooth fairy. Many strangers and participants were seen to be taking coins in exchange for the recommended dream, automatic phrase etc.

I arrived home, by helicopter, as if  
the giant hole our roof was expected  
.... the back yard was full of lions  
and bedrooms full of snakes... MY  
dad had to fight the lions...  
~~He~~ He overcame the beast  
but ~~not~~ not w/o injury...  
His eyes turned yellow and he became  
the lion... majestic & sleepy

## THE DREAM :

The perfect AND consistent  
cassoulet to serve at dinner  
parties.

EYE WANT TITTOO BEE  
AN INBETWEEN XwvX





# CLOWN MOLE STREET

When he arrived in Atlanta, JA remarked on the ride to his apt an abandoned restaurant paired with a gigantic NO sign off of Ponce de Leon. The restaurant bore a sign which said “Moe’s Is Closed” in acrylic lettering. JA made a mental note to return there.

Unintentionally, JA walked by this same location one morning and noticed the acrylic letters were scattered all over the ground as the location was being demolished. He gathered up the unstained and dirty lettering for use in the show, somehow. He did not recognize the restaurant to be the same one he had remarked earlier, as the letters had been knocked down. Only later did he realize it after getting much better oriented in Atlanta.

At the show, the letters were re-arranged into two main uses.

“Clown Mole Street” was glued to the left wall in prominent, janky position. This phrase evoked previous surrealist exhibitions where streetnames were a major theme as well as serendipitously getting both the clown and mole subthemes, two major icons of the exhibition with examples even located immediately below the sign (found clown paintings and Megan Leach’s amethyst mole object).

Other uses for the letters included HIDE next to a black cephalopod / whip object and various remaining letters left in random spots on the walls.







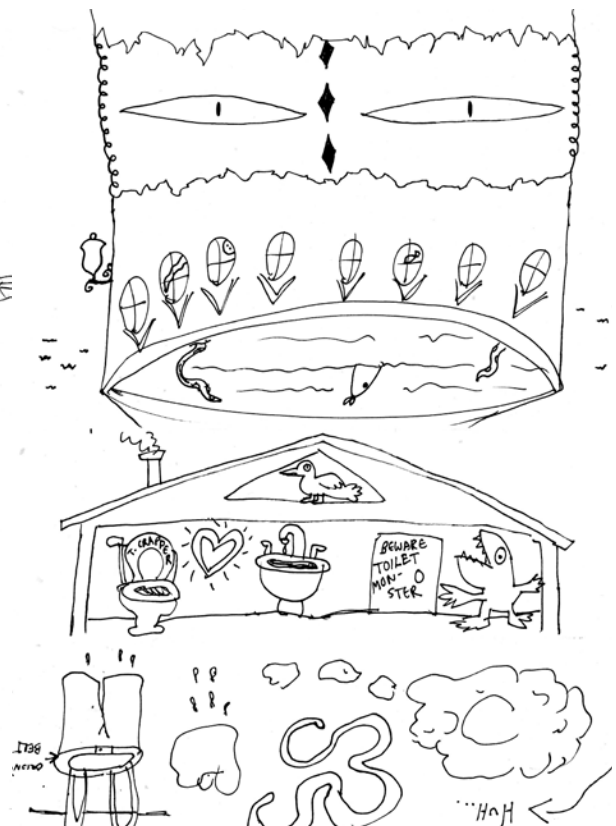
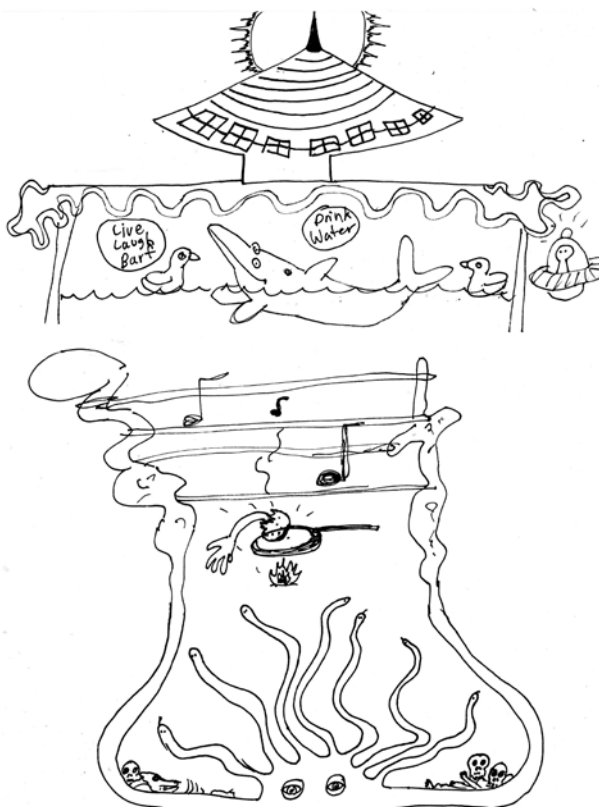
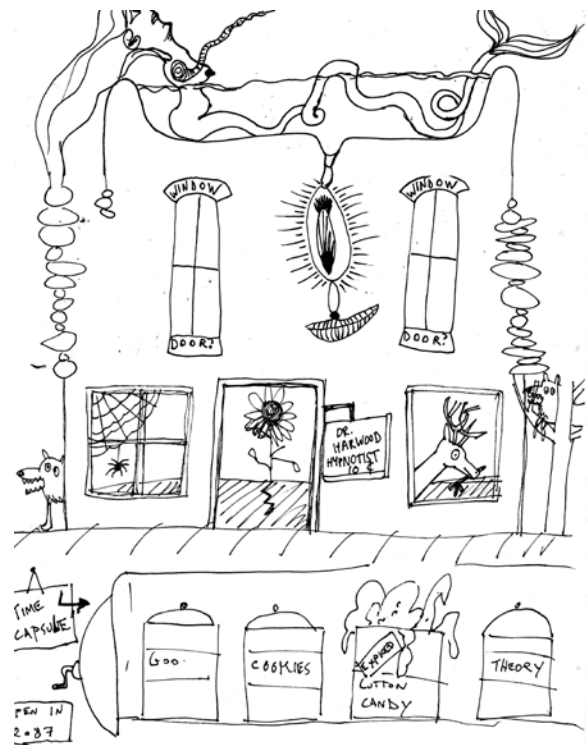
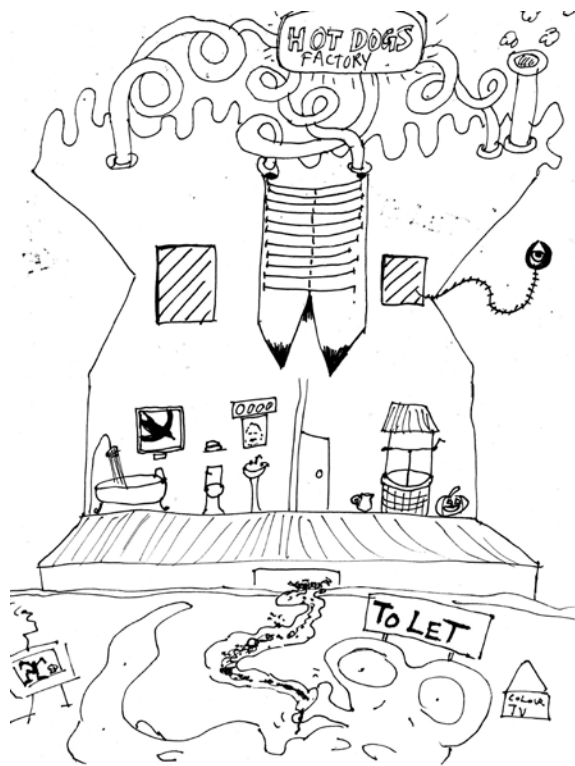
# HAUNTED NEIGHBORHOOD GAME

A few rounds of exquisite corpse played with buildings in mind.





The idea was to build up the superstructure so as to ultimately get at the basements of our collective desires. Eventually, it turned into a neighborhood complete with above ground and underground secrets... Clown Mole Street.





# WHAT IS THIS OBJECT?

The image and subsequent questionnaire were left out for players during the course of the excavation events. It was variously completed by both known participants and strangers who showed up to the various events between October 20 - 23, 2022.



## FILL OUT OUR QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What happens when you touch this object?
2. What is this object?
3. What does it feel like?

## RESPONSES

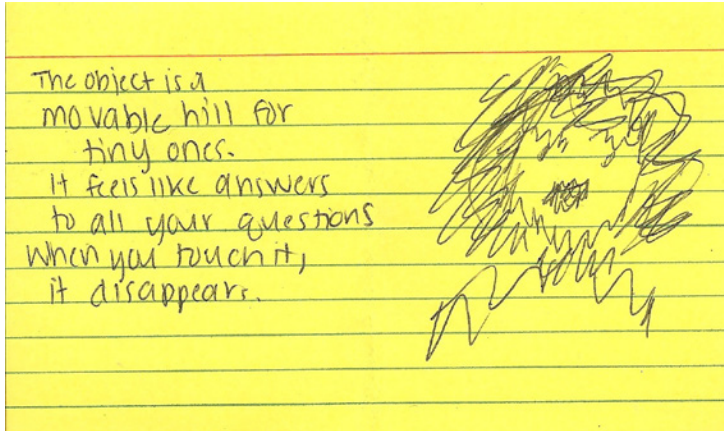
1. Flattened egg.
2. Compressed maple syrup.
3. It sucks you in.

1. Spaceship.
2. Goopy.
3. Probed.



1. The object is a movable hill for tiny ones.
2. It feels like answers to all your questions.
3. When you touch it, it disappears.

Answer Drawn by Nini



1. Potato.
2. Hard jelly.
3. Little miniature dogs jump out.

1. The object is a strange.
2. It feels smooth, metallic, and it is warm. Like body temperature.
3. When you touch this object it shivers, goes cold, and begins to pulse.

1. Slumpkin—teardrop from ear of a gigantic, mobile whale titan.
2. Lumpy and hard and globulous and all-absorbing.
3. Shudders.

1. A remnant of an occult cyclopean boardgame.
2. Resonating toenail.
3. Solipsistic reversion.

1. This is a flying saucer.
2. It feels like a soft sofa.
3. When you touch it you go blind.

1. Placenta of a cetacean yet to exist, 50 million years from now.
2. A pillowcase stuffed with worms of every species.
3. You gain the ability to divine events of the future in used panty liners.























# DAY 2

## GETTING LOST IN THE CAVERNS SURREALIST GAMES

*Friday October 21, 2022*

*6pm – 10pm*

A night of surrealist games and discussions.

Collective creation and play.

Tours and readings of the Underground Museum.

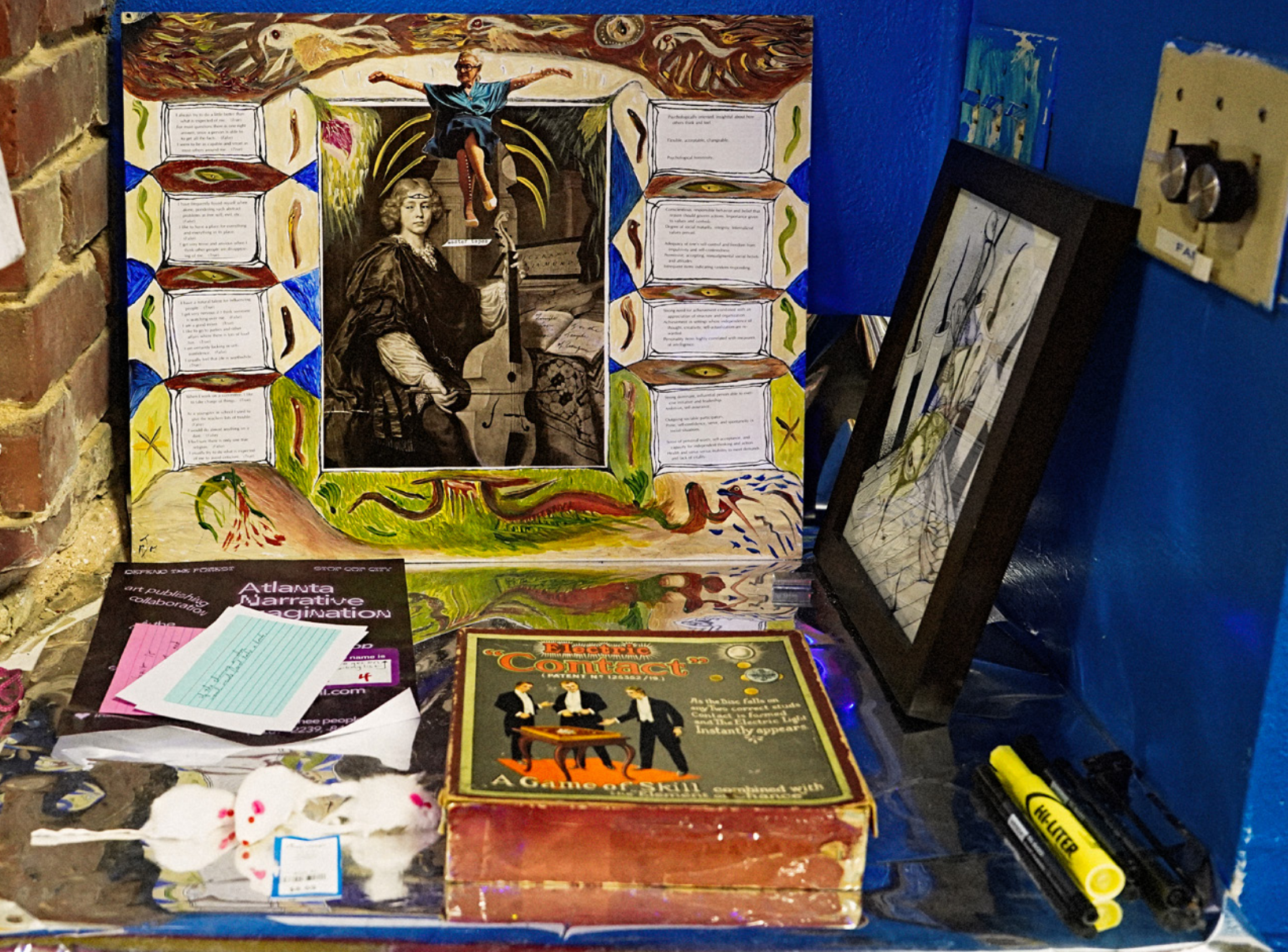
Mysterious outcomes.

“Ask the Golden Goose!” and other ambiguities.

Demonstrations of mediumistic communication.

And more! Everyone is welcome to join in!







# COUNCIL OF XII

A game devised by Merl Fluin, Patrick Hourihan and Paul Cowdell,  
from an original idea by Patrick Hourihan



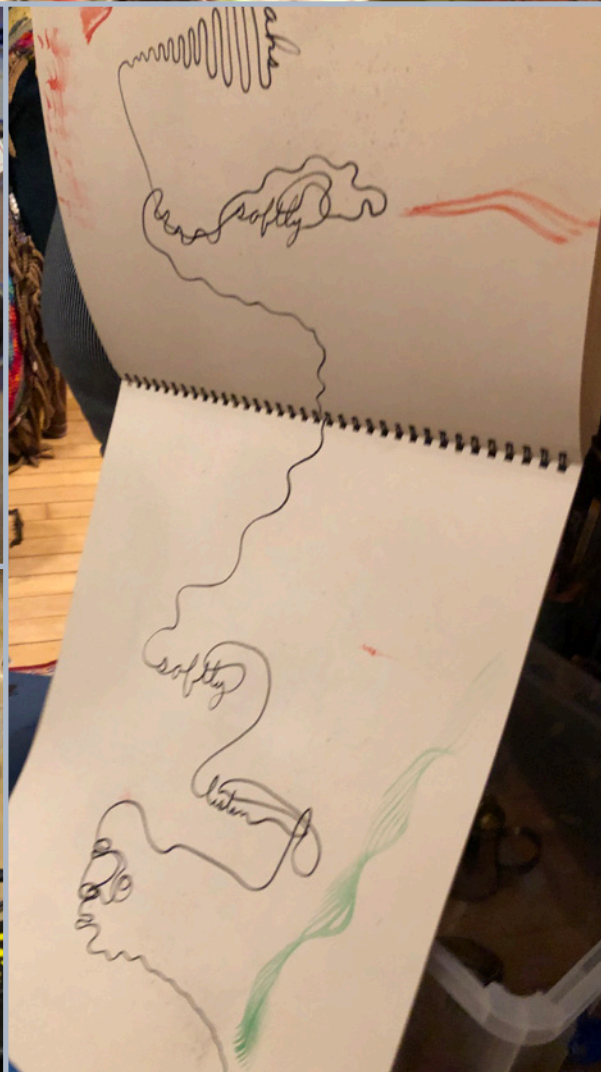
*Patrick Hourihan, "The Medium"*

To be played by any group of people randomly assembled for a period of at least half an hour for some reason or other (eg an exhibition). Each participant should only react/respond to someone they do not know.

Each participant opens themselves to a mediumistic interpretation of others in the room. Once they are drawn to another participant, who is unknown to them, they write down what message they receive mediumistically (verbal, visual), and hand this to the person interpreted.

This can continue for as long as you like, with players joining at any time. Each participant should be present for at least half an hour, to allow time for more than one interpretation.







By the time each participant leaves, they should have received more than one interpretation/reading, which they assemble into an underself. This constitutes one level of game results. Immediate responses by the recipient (verbal or visual) can be included in these.

The recipient should also carry this underself, and an awareness of it, into the world beyond the game. How does it change them? Or make manifest what was latent? Reports of this impact would constitute a second layer of results.

## RESULTS

The Medium was played on Friday October 21, 2022 as the inaugural game of the “Lost in Surrealist Caverns” game night event. Players, most of whom were unfamiliar to each other, handed medium cards created in the spirit of the rules above to those others whom they did not know. Each player received at least two cards, some quite a few more. One person had randomly walked in to the exhibit to pick up some gear and was completely overwhelmed with unexpected messages, Many players spent time considering and interpreting their cards, which sometimes came with texts, and other times included illustrated elements. Some players felt keenly attached to their chance amalgamated underselves and chose to keep their cards as precious treasures, Players agreed to allow their accumulated cards to be photographed so as to be printed below. Other points of convergence included cross references to other interpretive events held during the surrealist excavation. Oftentimes, the different elements and results of unrelated games would nevertheless complement each other in startling ways. **These included:**

results from the “Consult the Oracle” gamebook left out for players to use at any time;

the “Golden Goose” who would provide golden egg filled with interpretive images, toys and texts in exchange for a dream, secret, or joke;

Tarot readings provided by Alice Lilitu to participants and strangers who wandered in;

an altar of electronics, a sigil, various Tarot cards and other accumulated objects, instruments and weapons by Raelixe Cassette;

and the “surrealist coin xchange” game in which players were invited to exchange dreams or automatic scribbles for a surrealist coin of their choosing.

**All of these converged with the Medium game to provide a rich aggregation of interpretive layers.**



The results of the medium cards are presented below, in the groupings corresponding to the particular player to which they corresponded. Each grouping is characterized as an unnamed underself.

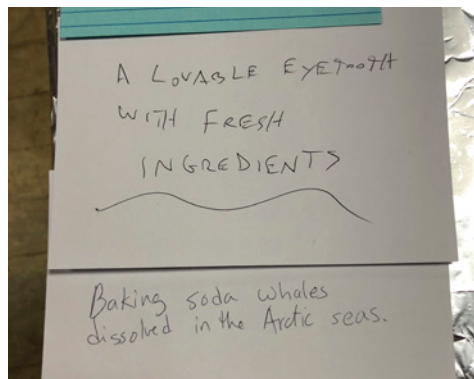
## UNDERSELF A

*If the chimney smokes, crawl inside and take a look.*

*A loveable eyetooth with fresh ingredients?* (see illustration)

*Baking soda whales dissolved in arctic seas.* (see illustration)

*Your hair is growing so fast and brown.*

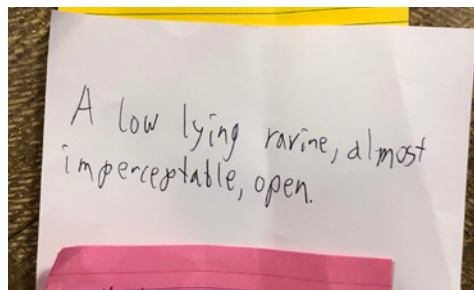


## UNDERSELF B

*It's hot on the silver throne.*

*A low lying ravine, almost imperceptible, open.* (see illustration)

*The dome is swelling. If it gets to be too much, make a small puncture.*



## UNDERSELF C

*Thunder in the round;*

*Extend.* (see illustration)

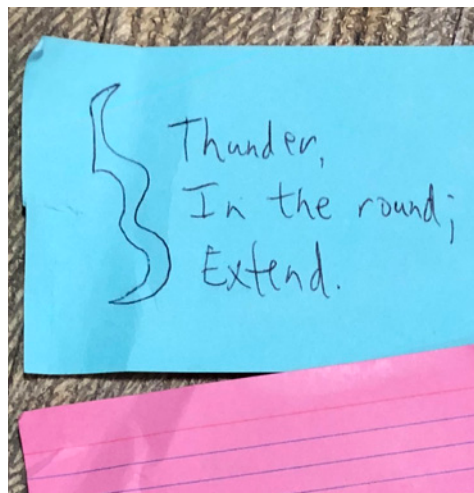
*upstairs, downstairs*

*upstairs.*

*Orange 17* (see illustration)

*Watch over everything*

*There is aluminum pomegranate seeds*



## UNDERSELF D

*An alternative color, outside of time, just winding now.*  
(see illustration)

*The stamping of a thousand painted eggs*





## UNDERSELF E

*the principle of love devoured it.*

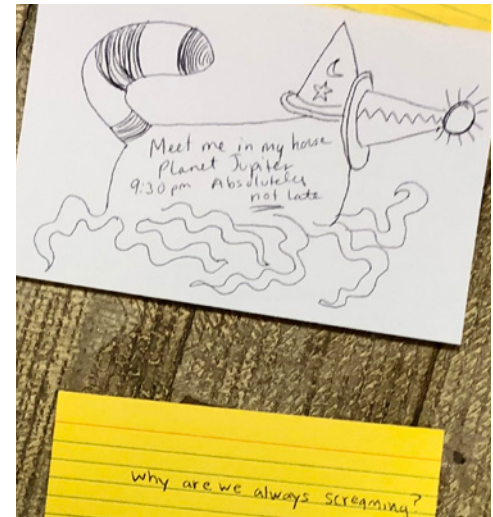
*but you don't love to obey.*

*Meet me in my house Planet Jupiter 9:30 PM absolutely not late  
(see illustration).*

*Why are we always screaming? (see illustration)*

*Lacerations from a volcano—a pleasant initiative.*

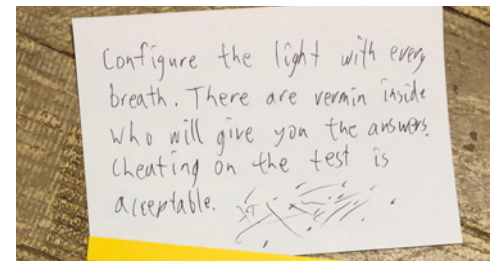
*Your 12 circle-forms have gathered.*



## UNDERSELF F

*Configure the light with every breath. There are vermin inside who  
will give you the answers. Cheating on the test is acceptable.  
(see illustration)*

*the world champion of sleeping owls.*

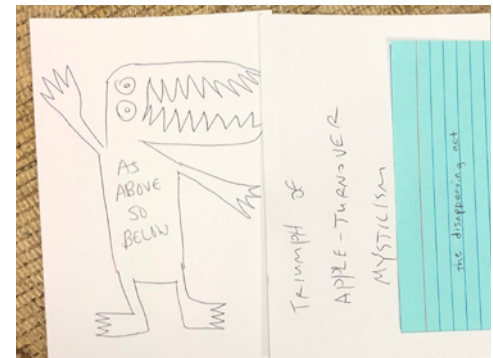


## UNDERSELF G

*As above so below. (see illustration)*

*Triumph of apple-turnover mysticism. (see illustration)*

*The disappearing act. (see illustration)*



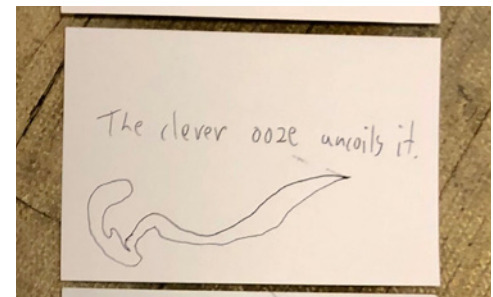
## UNDERSELF H

*What is the name that the keyhole gurgles?*

*The clever ooze uncoils it. (see illustration)*

*Broken puppetry on a birthday cake.*

*The shadow sleeps in shoe.*



## UNDERSELF I

*Learning to bake upside-down instructions for an obsolete form of checkers.*

*Great fluorescent bees feed on residues of waking experience. Water your squash!*

*The vibration of polka-dotted siphonate.*



# MORE GAMES

## PLAYED ON THE SURREALIST GAME NIGHT

The Question and Answer and Definitions games were played with strangers and participants who showed up to the “Getting Lost in the Caverns: Surrealist Games Night” on October 21, 2022. The tension of the games as well as the pleasure principle was greatly increased by having strangers and random visitors join in.

### QUESTION AND ANSWER

Players wrote down questions on index cards which were then folded so as to hide the text and passed to the left or right. Players then wrote down an unrelated answer on the cards they received, then unfolded them and read out the chance combination. The results were startling and occasionally very funny.

**Q:** What is the scariest story?

**A:** *The Catholic Church considers the capybara to be a fish.*

**Q:** How many times must I spin?

**A:** *A dog licking pork-flavored ramen noodles frozen on the sidewalk.*

**Q:** What is initiation?

**A:** *A purple cloud.*

**Q:** What is a magic carpet?

**A:** *The Permian-Triassic Extinction.*

**Q:** How does an ant measure volume?

**A:** *A coupon booklet.*

**Q:** Your true horoscope?

**A:** *17 dewdrops.*

**Q:** What if humans really did coexist through art only?

**A:** *5 flowers in rotation.*

**Q:** What is an armadillo?

**A:** *A ship in a shipyard.*

**Q:** What is the geological age of the tooth?

**A:** *Erase the newspaper.*



**Q:** So where can I find Home Depot?

**A:** *On Friday.*

**Q:** How long can I daydream?

**A:** *22/7 or a VCR of Dumb and Dumber.*

**Q:** When is it best to be alone on a mountain?

**A:** *Lust + design.*

**Q:** Why do dogs bark?

**A:** *Vanilla.*

**Q:** Why remember the Alamo?

**A:** *Don't try so hard.*

**Q:** When will the sun burst?

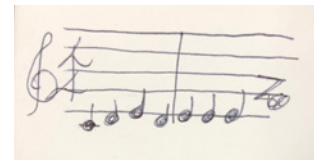
**A:** *Saturday.*

**Q:** Are you a groundhog?

**A:** *The hairlessness of want.*

**Q:** When does Little Bo Peep go to Sleep?

**A:** *(see illustration - actual misremembered music for Mary Had a Little Lamb)*



## DEFINITIONS

Players wrote down a noun on index cards which were then folded so as to hide the text and passed to the left or right. Players then wrote down an unrelated definition on the cards they received, then unfolded them and read out the chance combination. Some of the results were really astonishing.

### **Mud**

A green meadow.

### **Hand**

feeling of logs.

### **Tomato**

a small gust of fragrant air.

### **Lobster**

The period of frustration between the laying of an ostrich egg and sexual climax.



**Warthog**

A utensil for cooking.

**Airplane**

What it's like to be empty of substance.

**Squiggle**

A river that doesn't run.

**Rock**

A large, floating space rock.

**Paralysis**

A way of understanding society.

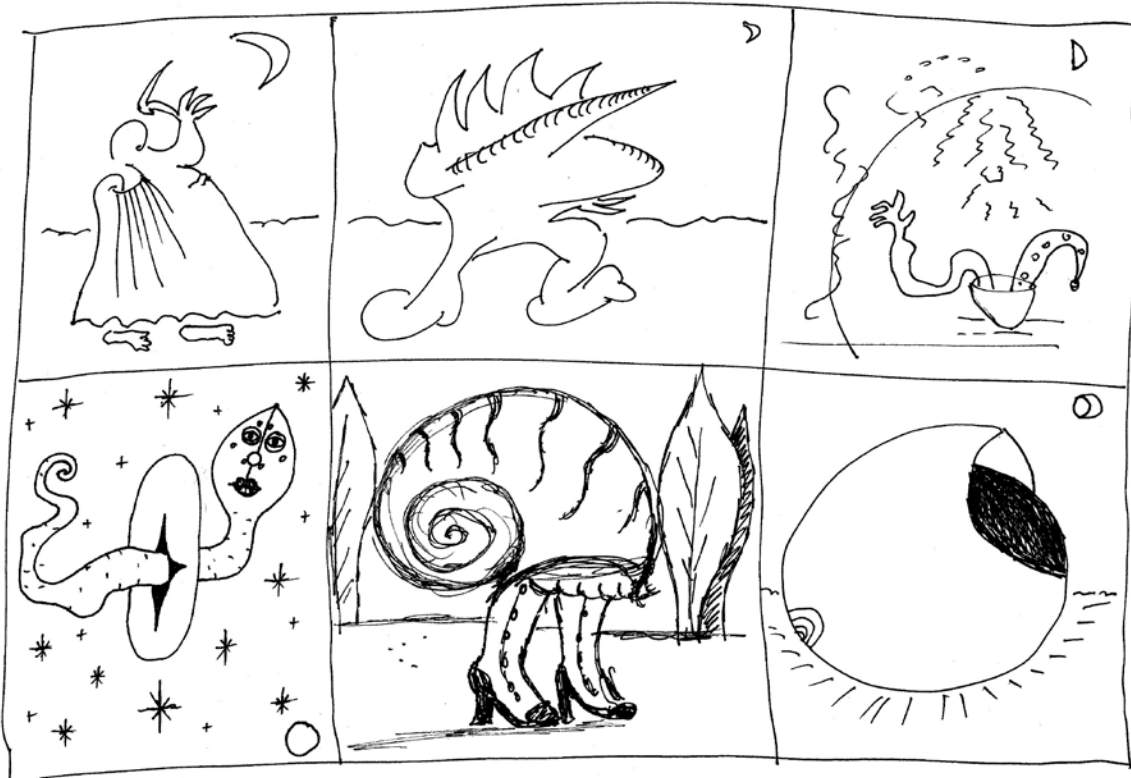
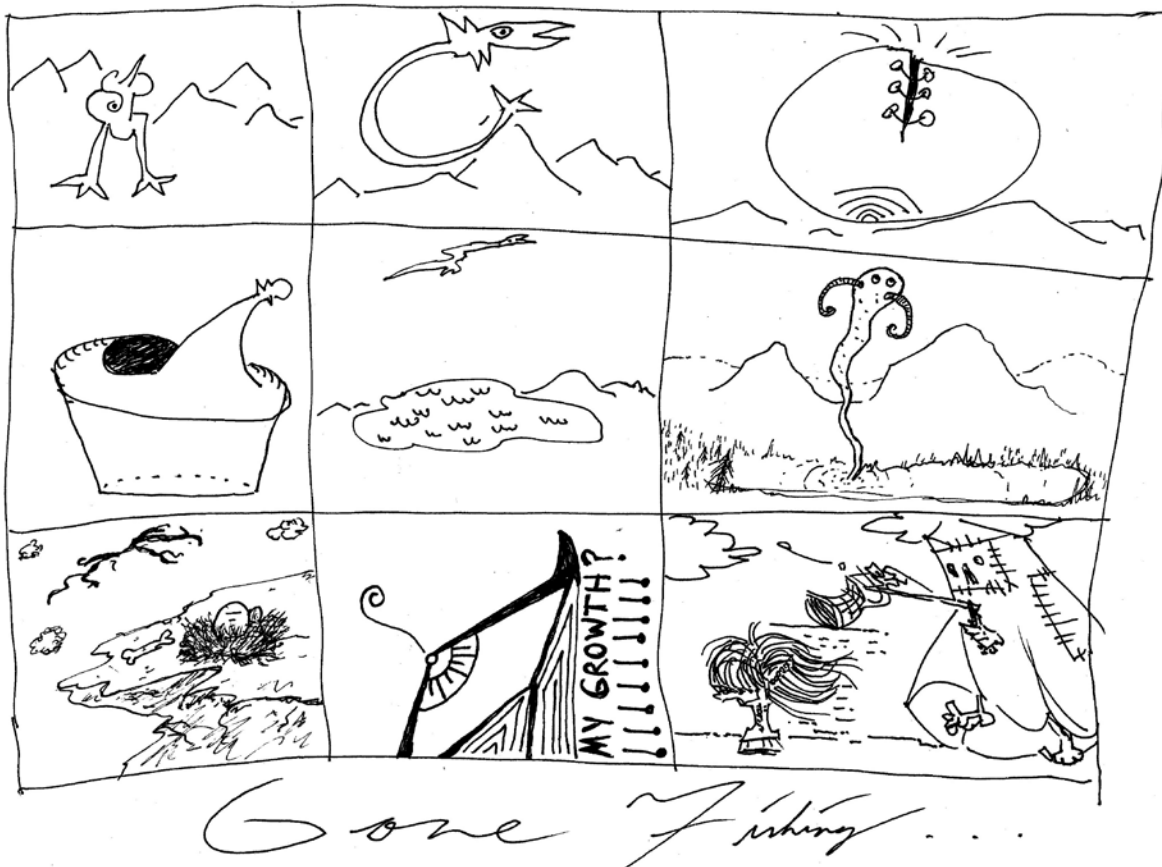
**VOCAL GAMES**

We also played a few vocal games with strangers on Oct 21. Rough audio captured the play. Going around a circle coming up with a sound or word one at a time.



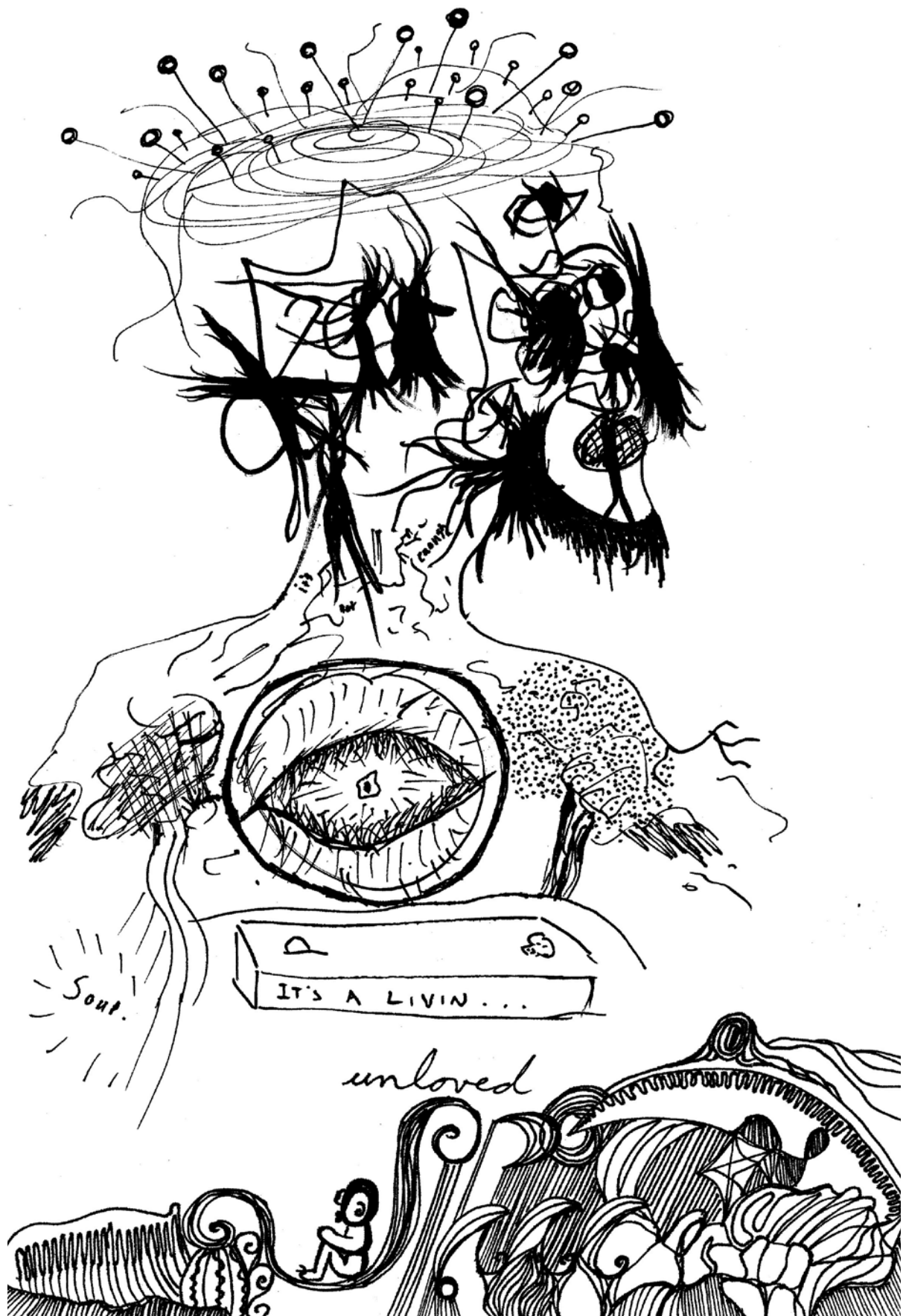






*Collective Comic Games - each player draws one panel without seeing the other panels*





*Just Another Exquisite Corpse - somewhat more corpselike than usual*







# DAY 3

## QUAKES AND CRIES MUSIC AND PERFORMANCES

*Saturday October 21, 2022*

A night of musical performances,  
with readings, declarations, rants,  
and poems interspersed throughout.

### **Performances and readings from**

LaDonna Smith

Clifford McPeck

Alex Cohen

Jason Abdelhadi

Majid Araim

Alice Lilitu

Lucifer

Vittoria Lion

Flusnoix

Nemo

James Robert Foster



# THE ORIGIN OF THE GRAPHIC TRACE

VITTORIA LION

*“In those days we weren’t expecting any more surprises – Qfwfq narrated – by then it was clear how things were going to proceed. Those who existed, existed; we had to work things out for ourselves: some would go further, some would remain where they were, and some wouldn’t manage to survive. The choice had to be made from a limited number of possibilities.*

*“But instead, one morning I hear some singing, outside, that I have never heard before. Or rather (since we didn’t yet know what singing was), I hear something making a sound that nobody has ever made before. I look out. I see an unknown animal singing on a branch. He had wings feet tail claws spurs feathers plumes fins quills beak teeth crop horns crest wattles and a star on his forehead. It was a bird; you’ve realized that already, but I didn’t; they had never been seen before.”*

-Italo Calvino, “The Origin of the Birds” (translated by William Weaver)

*“How do you know but ev’ry bird that cuts the airy way,  
Is an immense world of delight, clos’d by your senses five?”*

-William Blake, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell

The first of a series of two concerning a unique aspect of the species-essence (aviform-essence?) of the birds: namely, their ability to communicate across distant realms of time, space, and experience, as long believed by humans. Since, in order to pinpoint its origins, it is necessary to go back to the very first appearance of the birds, here we have Urvogel, also known as the Archaeopteryx, a subject with whom I am quite far from finished. Undoubtedly, the paleo-sciences have marched onward quite a bit since an “angel” was unearthed in a Bavarian quarry in the 1860s, and Urvogel has undergone some humiliation (well, what do you know, it turns out that small theropod dinosaurs looked really birdy in general—modern birds, after all, being a subgroup of theropods whose ancestors survived the Chicxulub meteorite, since it turns out being small and lightweight and able to fly is quite handy when everything’s on fire around you). However, the mythic Pre-Originary Day Zero of Birdness still persists in the imagination.

One pleasant day in the Late Jurassic Urvogel was doing the usual—pecking at shells on the beach, gathering twigs for her bower, puzzling at the glimmer of her reflection on the surface of





the water, tilting her head the way birds do listening to a herd of big sauropods tearing their way through the forest. The thought invited her to revisit a favourite hole in an old tree, a place where she had found (as though magically placed) before some Unidentified Shiny Bird Objects with no discernible use-value (the inexplicable attachment and attraction of birds to such objects being another defining quality of their species-essence). But that day, it turns out, was no ordinary day.

Inside her hole Urvogel finds a cryptic message, telepathically communicated from another dimension of spacetime. It is unlike anything she has seen before, and she doesn't know quite what to make of it: it has the visual form of a graphic tracing of muscular contractions from 1875, made by Etienne-Jules Marey, the great scientist, a figure so instrumental to the extraordinary transformation of human vision that took place in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was the age, you see, of extra-orbital sight, of inventions that opened up new worlds formerly unknown and inaccessible, formerly closed off from everyday experience: it was the age of microphotography and astrophotography, which enabled viewers to see, Alice-like, on both



the tiniest and most expansive of scales; of the X-ray, which made visible the skeletal structure of the human body; of the graphic trace, which lent visual form to the inner motions of respiration and circulation and so on.<sup>1</sup> And, yes, it was the age of even more exciting inventions still, of thought photography and ghost photography! (All those “modest recording instruments” so beloved to Surrealism!)<sup>2</sup> And a particularly special development emerging at the same time was the visual reconstruction of prehistoric life forms, something which allowed viewers to peer into an otherworldly elsewhere that is (or was once) real and yet simultaneously lay beyond the cusp of waking life.

And yet—to paraphrase the Chicago Surrealists in an unpublished mini-manifesto—what Wilhelm Roentgen accomplished with the monumental discovery of the X-ray was only a beginning, and not enough; we can no longer content ourselves with seeing only the fossilized bones of the creatures of deep time, lying in wait to reach out to us, and not the radiant spectra of their plumage...

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1. See, for instance, Wise, “Making Visible” (*Isis* vol. 97, no. 1, 2006)

2. See Lomas, “Modest Recording Instruments” (*Art History* vol. 27, no. 4, 2004)























# THE OSTEOPHONE OF SERGEANT BERTRAND

## JOËL GAYRAUD

**Recently found in the archives of the Paris criminal police was a bundle of papers belonging to a Mr. François Bertrand. A sergeant by trade, he was infamous for his acts of necrophilia, and whose costume, which he wore during his nocturnal expeditions, was masterfully restored by Jean Benoît. Among the papers found, there is a detailed description of a musical instrument made and used by the necrophiliac before his arrest, but of which there is unfortunately no trace to this day.**

**We provide the public here for the first time a faithful and integral transcription of this document.**

## THE CLAVICLE OSTEOPHONE

- I. Breaking with our habit of procuring fresh corpses, buried the same day or the day before, here are four skeletons rather well stripped of their flesh that we exhumed on April 4, 1848, Saint-Isidore's day, at 10 o'clock in the evening, in the cemetery of Montparnasse: one of a child who died at a young age, the other of a young girl of about fifteen, the third of a young man of twenty-eight, the last finally of a mature man, corpulent and tall. We selected the rib cages, femurs and clavicles, and put them away in a large brown canvas bag. Replacing the rest of the bones in their respective coffins, duly closed and covered by their tombstone, we took our loot to a catacomb at an entrance known only to us, located near the Gate of Hell.
- II. There, after cleaning the rib cages of any organic remains, we dislocated the ribs and classified them in order of increasing length and thickness so as to form two parallel series of forty-eight bones. The seven ribs directly connected to the sternum have been assigned to the seven notes of the diatonic scale, the false ribs and the floating ribs to the notes provided with a chromatic semitone, such as the black keys of the piano. Each rib has been carefully trimmed and filed so as to produce, when struck with a mallet, the exact sound of the musical note to which it is assigned.
- III. Using a trepanning surgeon's drill and cute little copper screws, we adjusted the ribs at each of their ends to the femurs of the corresponding skeletons. With the ninety-six ribs and the eight femurs, clipped from their heads and joined to each other by a brass ring, we made two keyboards arranged parallel to each other which we fixed on a new pine coffin, used as a sound box.



# L'OSTÉOPHONE DU SERGENT BERTRAND

## JOËL GAYRAUD

**On a retrouvé récemment dans les archives de la police criminelle de la ville de Paris une liasse de papiers ayant appartenu au sieur François Bertrand, sergent de son état, célèbre pour ses actes de nécrophilie et dont Jean Benoît a magistralement restauré le costume qu'il revêtait lors de ses expéditions nocturnes. Parmi les papiers retrouvés, figure la description minutieuse d'un instrument de musique réalisé et utilisé par le nécrophile avant son arrestation, mais dont il ne reste malheureusement aucune trace à ce jour.**

**Nous livrons ici pour la première fois au public la transcription fidèle et intégrale de ce document.**

### L'OSTÉOPHONE À CLAVICULES

- I. Rompant avec notre habitude de nous procurer des cadavres frais, enterrés du jour même ou de la veille, ce sont quatre squelettes plutôt bien dépouillés de leur chair que nous avons exhumés le 4 avril 1848, jour de la Saint-Isidore, à 10 heures du soir, au cimetière du Montparnasse : l'un d'un enfant mort en bas âge, l'autre d'une jeune fille d'une quinzaine d'années, le troisième d'un jeune homme de vingt-huit ans, le dernier enfin d'un homme mûr, corpulent et de grande taille. Nous avons sélectionné les cages thoraciques, les fémurs et les clavicules, et les avons rangés dans un grand sac de toile brune. Replaçant le reste des ossements dans leurs cercueils respectifs, dûment refermés et recouverts de leur pierre tombale, nous avons emporté notre butin dans une catacombe à l'entrée connue de nous seul, située près de la barrière d'Enfer.
- II. Là, après avoir nettoyé les cages thoraciques de tout reste organique, nous avons dissocié les côtes et les avons classées par ordre de longueur et d'épaisseur croissantes de façon à former deux séries parallèles de quarante-huit ossements. Les sept côtes directement reliées au sternum ont été affectées aux sept notes de la gamme diatonique, les fausses côtes et les côtes flottantes aux notes pourvues d'un demi-ton chromatique, telles les touches noires du piano. Chaque côte a été soigneusement rognée et limée de manière à produire, lorsqu'elle est choquée par un maillet, le son exact de la note de musique à laquelle elle est affectée.
- III. À l'aide d'une chignole de chirurgien trépaneur et de mignonnes vis de cuivre, nous avons ajusté les côtes en chacune de leurs extrémités sur les fémurs des squelettes correspondants.



IV. Using the young man's collarbones as mallets, we performed a danse macabre of our composition on November 2, 1848 at midnight (the Day of the Dead), at the Père-Lachaise cemetery, where, diverting a hearse from its normal usage, we had transported our instrument, to the heights dominating Paris.

François Bertrand, sergeant of the French army, this the 23rd of December, 1848.

*Sergeant Bertrand's musical compositions do not appear in the bundle from which this text is taken and it appears that they are most definitely lost. It should be noted however that, as indicated by the register of entries in the Archives of the police headquarters, the composer Camille Saint-Saëns received exceptional authorization to carry out research on necrophilia in January 1872, three years before the creation at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris of his famous Danse Macabre, where, for the first time, a xylophone appeared in a symphony orchestra...*





Avec les quatre-vingt-seize côtes et les huit fémurs, écrêtés de leurs têtes et raboutés l'un à l'autre par un anneau de laiton, nous avons confectionné deux claviers disposés parallèlement que nous avons fixés sur un cercueil de sapin neuf, utilisé comme caisse de résonance.

IV. Nous servant des clavicules du jeune homme comme maillets, nous avons exécuté une danse macabre de notre composition le 2 novembre 1848 à minuit, jour des Trépassés, au cimetière du Père-Lachaise, où, détournant un corbillard de son usage, nous avons transporté notre instrument, sur les hauteurs dominant Paris.

François Bertrand, sergent de l'armée française, ce 23 décembre 1848.

*Les compositions musicales du sergent Bertrand ne figurent pas dans la liasse d'où ce texte est extrait et il semble qu'elles soient définitivement perdues. Il est à noter cependant que, comme l'indique le registre des entrées aux Archives de la préfecture de police, le compositeur Camille Saint-Saëns a reçu l'autorisation exceptionnelle d'effectuer des recherches sur la nécrophilie en janvier 1872, trois ans avant la création au Théâtre du Châtelet à Paris de sa célèbre Danse Macabre, où, pour la première fois, le xylophone apparaissait dans un orchestre symphonique...*





















# THE TERRAIN OF THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE

VITTORIA LION

*“When I was pretending to perform sakaniq, I had a feeling of euphoria. I saw what appeared to be a large bird head. It was large and it had the colour of the sun turning green in the spring when it is setting. It was so bright it was as though the sun had set but it was still light. I became so frightened I didn’t want to do this at all anymore. I didn’t want to go into the porch.”*

– Inuit elder George Agiaq Kappianaq, describing attempting to perform sakaniq (roughly described in English as a form of shamanic seance involving an out-of-body experience, in which the shaman’s *tuurngaq*, or helping spirit, enters them) as a child (recorded in *Inuit Perspectives on the Twentieth Century: Dreams and Dream Interpretation*, edited by Stéphane Kolb and Samuel Law)

*“How do you know but ev’r “Love shines in the depths of the wood like a great candle.”*

– The Magnetic Fields (translated by David Gascoyne)

The second instalment, which is a continuation of a recurring theme, the stories of mesmerized hysterical mediums of the late 1840s and 1850s who claimed to be able to remotely locate, and telepathically communicate with, Franklin and the crew of his disastrous final expedition in search of the Northwest Passage.<sup>1</sup> These events coincided with the notorious “mesmeric epidemic” of the middle of the nineteenth century. Although the Victorians narcissistically believed themselves to be a “superior” culture, this was only a borrowing from the rich tradition of extrasensory voyages to realms elsewhere long established in the Arctic regions by Inuit shamans, travelling the same telepathic currents that mediums and Spiritualists relied upon. (According to Kenn Harper, an author and historian who has lived for a very long time in the Arctic, when he discussed the moon landing with his classroom while working as a teacher in Pangnirtung back in 1969, none of the children found this particularly remarkable, as they all affirmed they knew people who regularly remotely travelled to the moon.) This, I believe, also filtered into Breton’s exclamation, after supposedly seeing the northern lights in New York while living there in exile during WWII (somehow I am skeptical about the possibility of seeing the aurora in Manhattan, even in the 40s, but whatever), that he “felt exactly as though [the Surrealist painter and his friend] Tanguy’s skies were being unfolded before me at a dizzy speed; since neither he nor I had ever seen these lights before, one can only conclude that Tanguy’s mind is in permanent communication with the Earth’s magnetism.”

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1. See McCorristine, *The Spectral Arctic* (UCL Press, 2018)

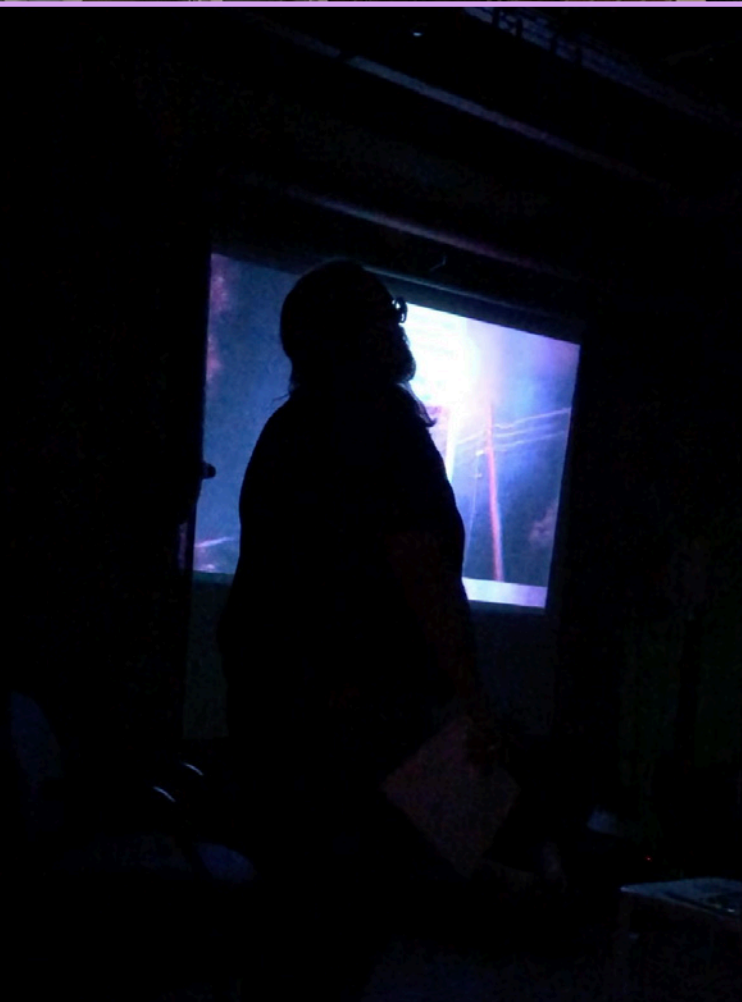




Since it was later confirmed that Franklin actually died in 1847—almost certainly before the real suffering of the lost “explorers” set in—these attempts were not terribly fruitful. The search for the missing expedition proved to be one of the longest and most expensive manhunts in human history, and everything was tried, and by that I mean everything. Messages attached to foxes. Air balloons. Creepy dolls given to (doubtlessly very weirded out) Inuit women. (I don’t know what they looked like, but, since this was the 1850s, we can safely assume they were creepy.) Psychics. The works. As one does.

In the nineteenth century, the Northwest Passage was understood not merely as a location on the Earth’s surface, but an oneiric one, a dream-place—the abode of endlessly suspended and seemingly unobtainable (and thus all the more intensified) desire, crisscrossed by the search for something unknown and indeterminate, yet absolute, and woven with the immaterial bonds of remote sensation and disembodied travel. Here, a sleeping medium remotely visiting the Passage is encountered curiously by the snowy owl, one of the beings who dwells among its metaphysical terrain. (I chose the snowy owl as a reference to Breton’s fairy tale from *Arcanum* 17 about a little girl cruelly trapped in a witch’s cottage and forced to look after her pet snowy owl, who frees her by “telling her about the northern lights.”) The curtain of the aurora borealis bends down low enough to touch the Earth, in a strange phenomenon that was repeatedly attested to occur in the eyewitness accounts of Indigenous peoples and French Canadians living year-round in the north, but treated with skepticism by British “explorers.” (Shane McCorristine discusses this in his essay, “Involuntarily We Listen’: Hearing the Aurora Borealis in Nineteenth-Century Arctic Exploration and Science.”) I wonder if there is a scientific explanation for this phenomenon, but I’m also not sure if I want to know, as that might take away the mystery.







# DAY 4

## **A NIGHT AT THE CHTHONIC MOVIE PALACE** feat. THE HORRORS OF MALFORMED MEN

*Sunday, October 23, 2022*

A screening of films with deep resonances  
to the themes of the event including:

James Robert Foster's *Traces in the Field: Episode 0*  
with live musical accompaniment from  
Steven Cline, Hazel Cline and James Robert Foster

The premiere of *The Face of Oblivion*  
by Aaron Dylan Kearns

A short film from Emma Lundenmark  
and Kristoffer Noheden from Stockholm;

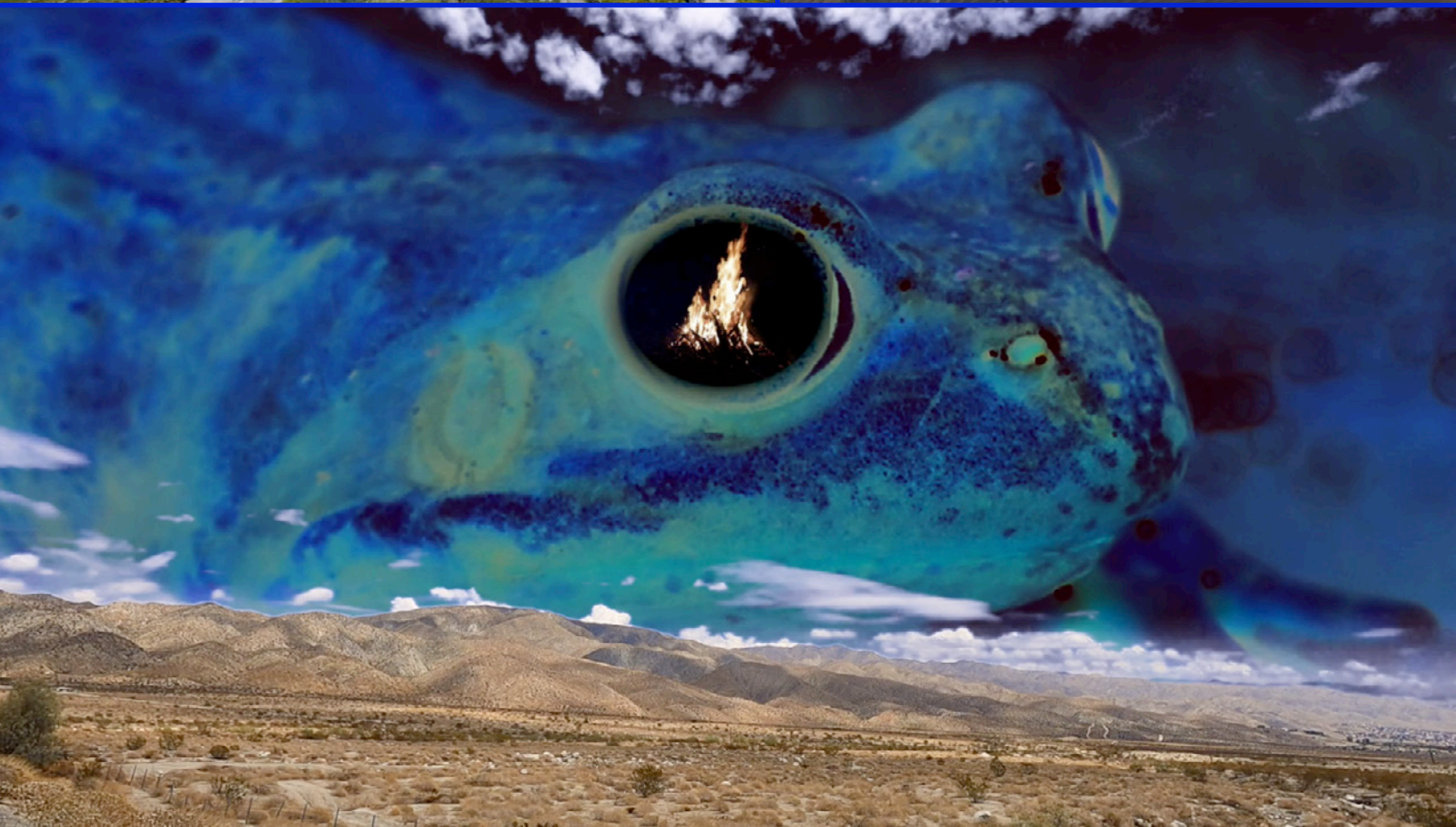
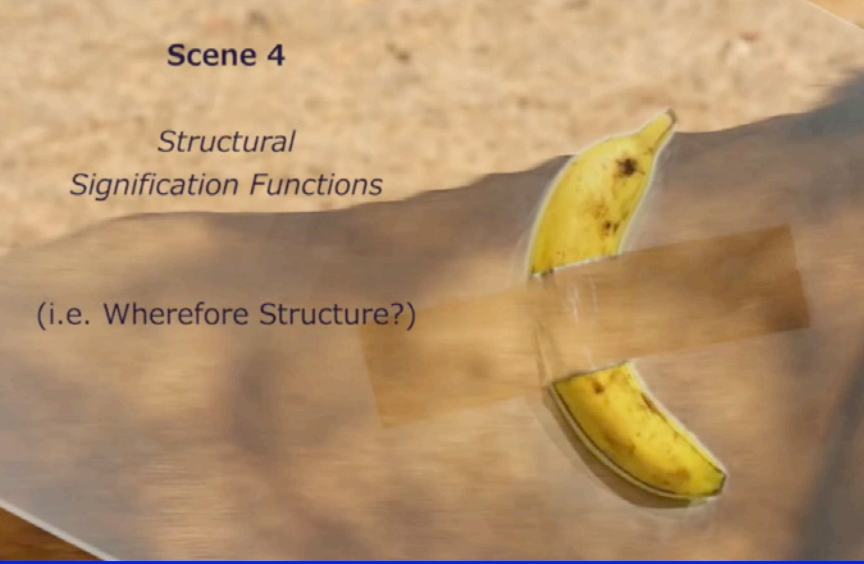
And the feature length film, Teruo Ishii's  
1969 Edogawa Ranpo adaptation,  
*The Horrors of Malformed Men.*



## Scene 4

Structural  
Signification Functions

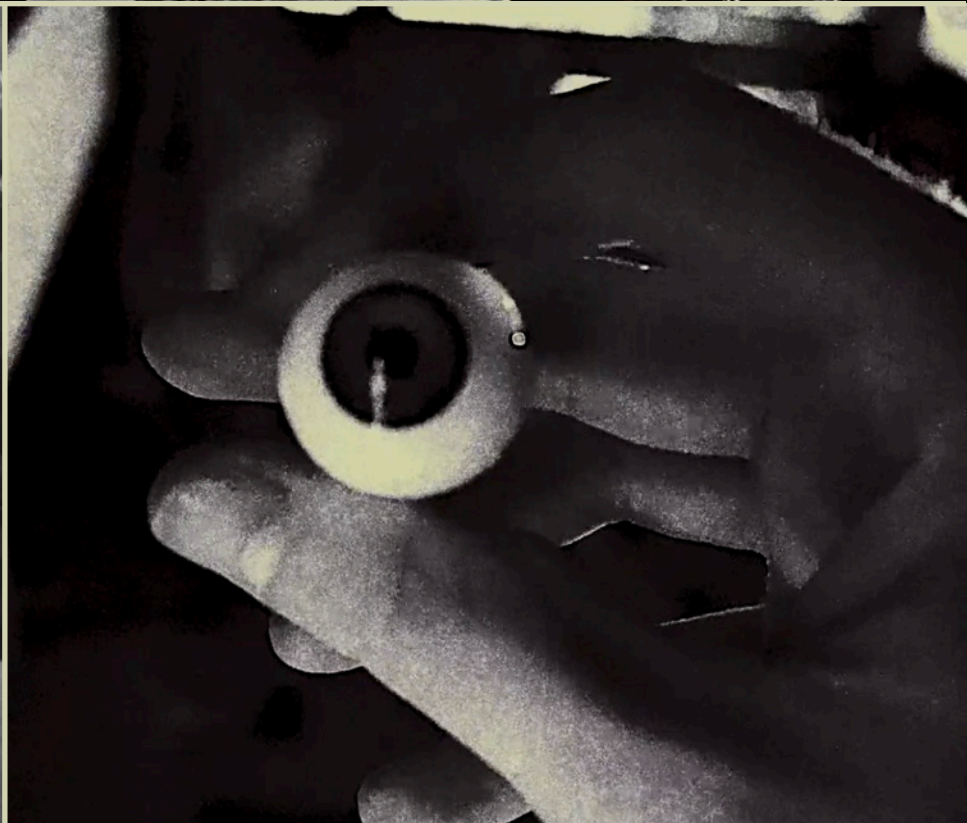
(i.e. Wherefore Structure?)



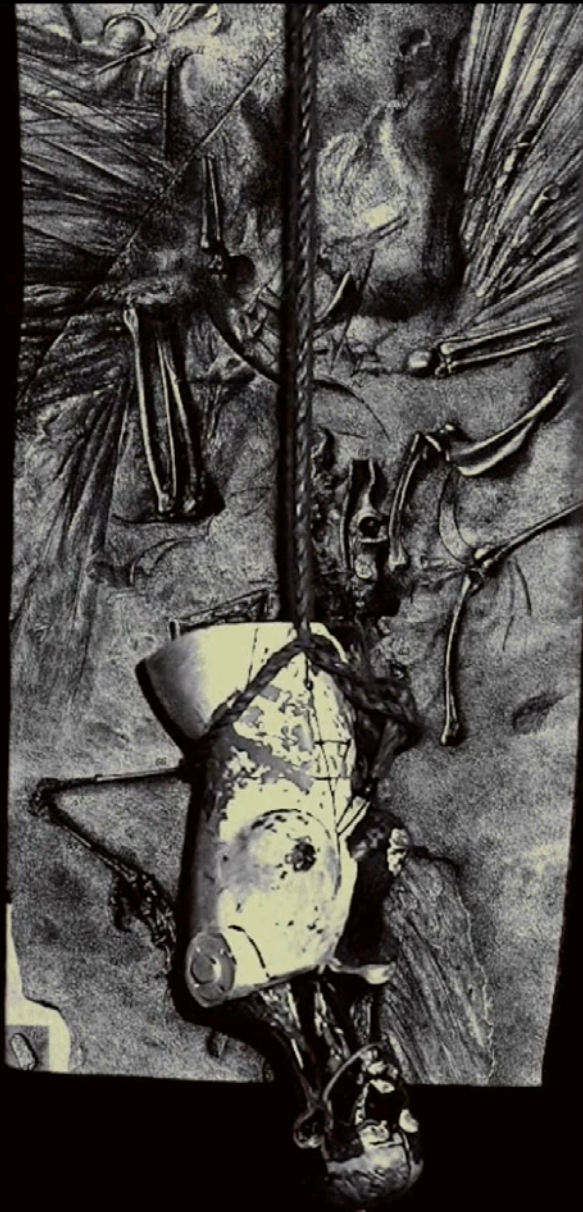


















## *The Horrors of Malformed Men* TERUO ISHII'S 1969 EDOGAWA RANPO ADAPTATION

When it came to pick an appropriate feature for our film night, we landed on *The Horrors of Malformed Men* as a film because it seemed to be an ideal “popular accomplice” to our intentions. And because we needed to definitely go with a horror film this close to Halloween. Based on Edogawa Ranpo’s thrilling novel, it brought together the sense of the underground, the extraneous and subverse, as well as the stunning multiplication of possibilities in the form of frightening and beautiful monsters. In addition, there was a circus murder theme as well as a stunning thriller-sequence of corpse play, reverse unburials, and many other startling coincidences which we did not even remember going in. The founder of the subversive Japanese dance movement Ankoku Butoh, the dance of darkness, Tatsumi Hijikata, had a key role in the film, playing the web-fingered Jogoro. Otherness is the essence of things, as we saw in his wonderful dances incorporated into the film. **In another context, Hijikata was quoted as saying the following, which serves as a poignant end-note to the experience we had, like Alice, in the underground, tying together the corporeal themes of our previous attempt in 2017’s *Polymorph Bodyshop* with the great *Excavation*:**

*Even your own arms, deep inside your body, feel foreign to you, feel that they do not belong to you.  
Here lies an important secret.*









# POST MORTEM

Dreams had During Exhibit

Give me a Title

List of Intersubjective Participants

The Guest Book



# DREAMS ABOUT OR EXPERIENCED DURING UNDERTAKERS & UNDERSSELVES

The following dreams either occurred during the course of the Undertakers & Underselves Excavation or were concerned with the exhibit in some way (including premonition dreams, and post-exhibit dreams etc).

## JA

### **September 22, 2022**

At the Undertakers & Underselves pre-event in Atlanta with Amber. We go into the basement. We have a big boardgame thing as our submission. It has a lot of random elements. Somebody else brought another random boardgame from the 70s called “The Frightener”. It has a talking ghost skeleton that drifts across the board. At one point players are supposed to gather in groups to discuss the ability of this male Elvira type monster host mad scientist character’s ability to save the world.

### **September 29, 2022**

Travel with Steven, Hazel and the Undertakers & Underselves participants on foot to Mexico. Many adventures, a sort of surrealist quest. I get a strange styrofoam skull on a stick which is demonic but which I treasure. I am back in Steven and Hazel’s mansion. A demon is arguing with Jeff Goldblum, complaining that Jeff beat him up and is now king of Hell. It’s very late, past 1 am, but I am energized and will walk home along the beach. Hazel advises me to get the stench of demons off me. I don’t really see why it matters. Strange adventure music is playing.

### **October 13, 2022**

At a collapsing old house at night with all the surrealists from Atlanta. The place is crumbling and the ground full of potholes. Some of us are stressed about the global situation, but somehow we feel safe here just looking at the sky. The stars in the sky are extra dense. Constellations take on the form of ancient inuit whalers. Suddenly one half of the sky turns into a bunch of postage stamps filled with pin-up girl illustrations.

### **October 29, 2022**

At the Undertakers & Underselves exhibit. Steven murders somebody to help with a collage piece. We drag it to a cellar room. We try to hide it from the others. I see Steven copying out some body details in the giant “Consult the Oracle” book. I figure I can help somehow. I think about covering it with garbage bags.



## VL

### **October 16, 2022**

A dream experienced shortly before arriving in Atlanta on the morning of October 16th, after a long train ride across the country from New York, which left me very sleep-deprived. As I have found comfortably falling asleep on transportation (planes, trains, cars) extremely difficult all my life, I previously believed I was incapable of falling asleep deeply enough to have a vivid dream on a train, but I must have hit a certain point of exhaustion where I could not help it, and this surprised me as I genuinely did not think this was possible. I briefly but very vividly dreamed that the train had stopped somewhere on the way to Atlanta and all of the passengers were leaving to eat at a fancy restaurant in a building of multiple storeys with many glass windows. However, the only thing I wanted at the restaurant was a plate of sliced bananas. This was because I wished to recreate an old black-and-white photo I had seen earlier of Freud and a mummy sitting on a sofa with a plate of sliced bananas between them. (This was later connected in my waking life to the phenomenon of the “banana borealis,” psychically linked to the Earth’s magnetic fields.)

### **Dream of the Key – November 21, 2022**

The past four days I have had terrible insomnia, begun by having to wake up very early on Thursday for a conference presentation. I am increasingly anxious and upset about falling asleep, and stay up most of the night between November 20th and 21st watching TV (which I rarely do). When I finally do become exhausted enough to fall asleep, late in the morning, I have a dream that appears portentous, oracular. I dream I am in Georgia again with Steven and Hazel, and the weather is summery, unlike here. Upon waking I cannot remember where we were specifically, but in the dream it appears to be more rural than Atlanta, somewhere a little farther out in the suburbs or countryside, and probably farther south as the environment resembles Florida more. There is a large area of natural forest or swamp in this region where lots of birds live, and there is a poster for a popular bird watching event and a stop where people can board a bus that will take them deeper into the swamp to see the birds. Steven and Hazel are asking me if I want to go to see the birds, but I am upset and my post-traumatic stress has been triggered for some undisclosed reason and they can sense I don’t feel up to it. Hazel (if I recall correctly they are pressing more for this, although Steven is in agreement as well) asks me if instead I would like to explore a strange, dilapidated abandoned hospital or mental asylum of some kind they and Steven found in the woods in this area. I am eager about this prospect, and we find and enter the building, which is surrounded by forest. The wood of the building looks very deteriorated, it is dusty, the windows are shattered or no longer there, and the furniture and remaining medical equipment are broken and scattered across the place. We find a dark glass bottle of strange Prussian blue liquid of unknown properties; Steven and Hazel open it and pour a small amount into a small plastic medicine cup we find lying about, and I drink it. (In the dream, the safety of this is not the slightest of my concerns.) I am feeling much happier by this point, and Hazel and I have been talking for a while, and we are discussing the wildlife in the surrounding area, namely the red wolves who



live in the forest. I mention that red wolves, who are native to the American Southeast and often thought to be a kind of crossbreed between the coyote and the grey wolf, are smaller like coyotes, unlike the wolves living in the colder regions of Canada. Jason is not physically present in this dream, but I excitedly tell Hazel about an experience Jason had that he related to me earlier, in which he saw a pair of enormous grey wolves in winter in the backyard garden behind the house where he and Amber live in their (presumably) new apartment in Ottawa. It makes sense to me that lots of wolves live in the woods outside Ottawa, because it is very cold there, and that sometimes they may wander into the city. At this point of the dream (if I recall correctly) what I am experiencing is overlapping/ interspersed with hallucinatory fragmented memories I have of being involved in a traumatic theatrical/artistic performance of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland in my childhood, and some physical fragments from that past experience are lying around the abandoned hospital. As Hazel, Steven, and I move deeper into the abandoned hospital, we find an unusual object scattered about that has survived all these years—a tiny key wrapped in a small metallic foil envelope that has tarnished with age and exposure to the elements. Strangely, the key is edible and appears to be meant to be consumed, as the foil envelope indicates it is made of 100% powdered garlic. Hazel very enthusiastically wants me to eat the key. I examine the foil envelope and notice that there is the seemingly cut-out outline of a small key on it, and I wonder if this is meant to be popped out and eaten, but I am mistaken. I then find out how to open the envelope, and inside there is the key that I am to swallow, and I know it is a very important, special key—the true key, maybe, or the master key: it is very tiny, and coated in a patina except for a small section that has survived untouched by the elements, which is the most brilliant shining silver, almost white. This is the original material of the key. I put the key into my mouth, and it quickly fragments and dissolves in my mouth, and I swallow. I wake promptly at noon.

## HC

### **Unknown Date Prior to Show**

The Goose that Lays the Golden Egg was doing what the Goose that Lays the Golden Egg does: bothers people who are probably minding thier own business to ask them if they would like to get their fortune from the Goose that Lays the Golden Egg. Once they agree to take the egg, said goose points out that the price of said egg is on a sliding scale from a Joke, a Dream, a Story, or a Secret. At which point, the confused recipient of the egg scrambles to reach into their brains, which have been fried by the cryptic fortune they just received, to come up with something. They have a feeling the egg must not be accepted on credit. Geese are not to be trusted. The goose's dream becomes lucid. "Ah, yes," the goose says to herself, "I'll have to add Secret to the list of accepted payments when I wake up."







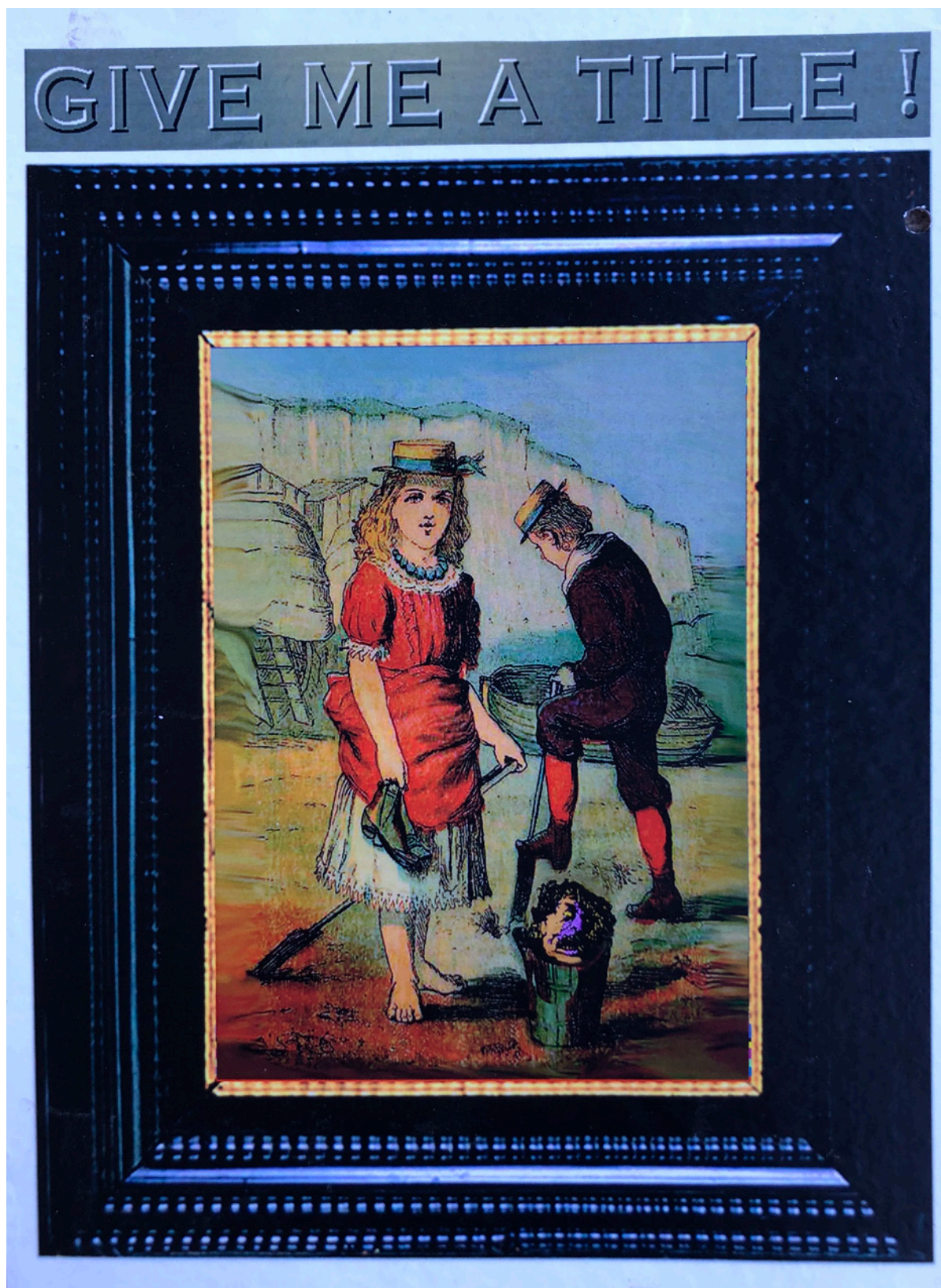









# GIVE ME A TITLE





## PROPOSED TITLES

### for Collage with Two Children and a Head

 DEAD MEN TELL NO PAILS.....  
..... Hark! The Cassowary Beckons.....  
..... Sandwich days.....  
..... the hazards of feeding feet to faces.....  
..... Little Orphan Annie.....  
..... You're my favorite.....  
..... "You said what hon?".....  
..... Remodeling Is Expensive.....  
..... Sad B daze at the Mill.....  
..... A skink with a kink.....

Dead Men Tell No Pails

Hark The Cassowary Beckons

Sandwich Days

The Hazards of Feeding to Faces

Little Orphan Annie

You're My Favorite

"You said what hon?"

Remodeling is Expensive

Sad Daze at the Mill

A Skink with a Kink



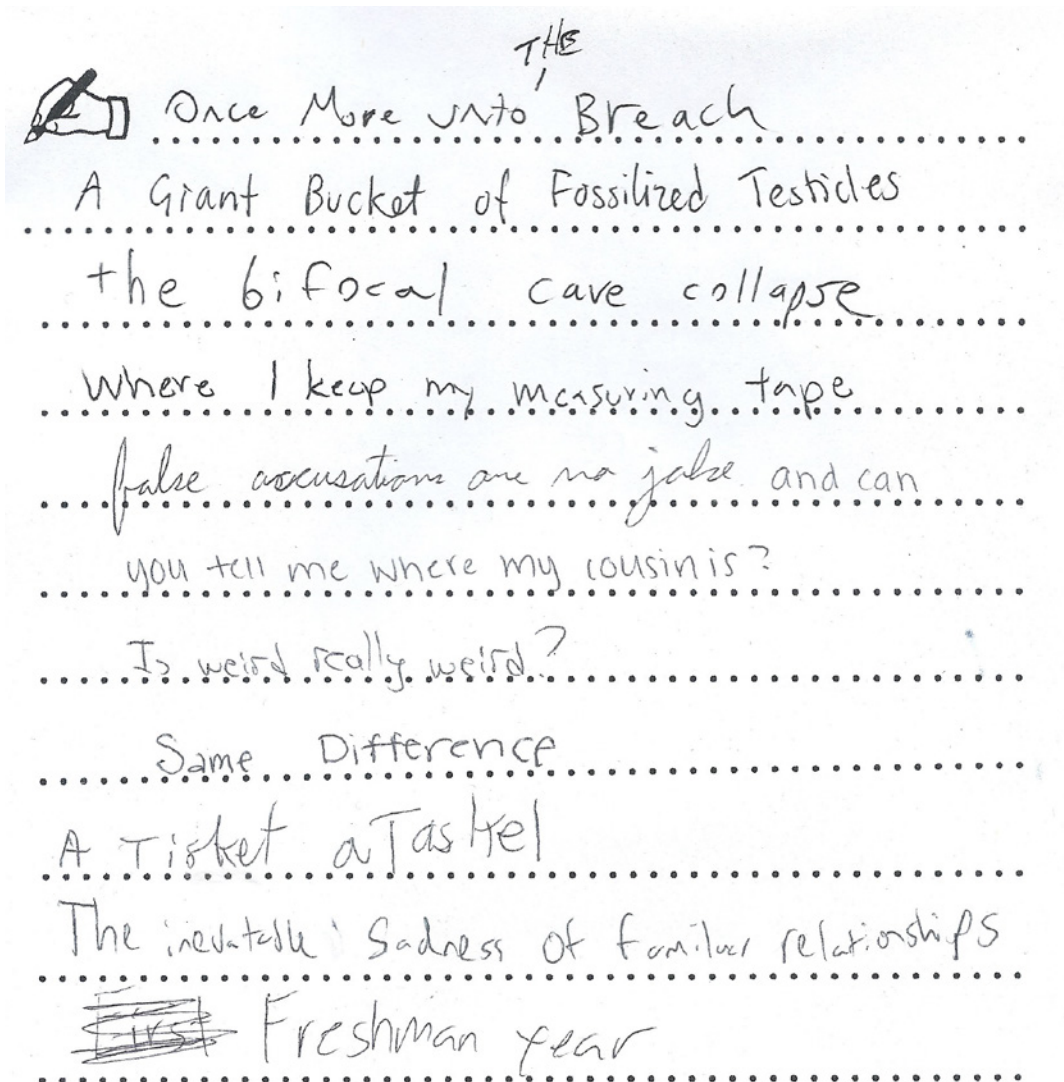
# GIVE ME A TITLE !





## PROPOSED TITLES

for Collage with a Child who has a Question for Grandpa



Once More Unto the Breach!

A Giant Bucket of Fossilized Testicles

The Bifocal Cave Collapse

Where I Keep My Measuring Tape

False Accusations Are No Joke

And Can You Tell Me Where My Cousin Is?

Is Weird Really Weird?

Same Difference

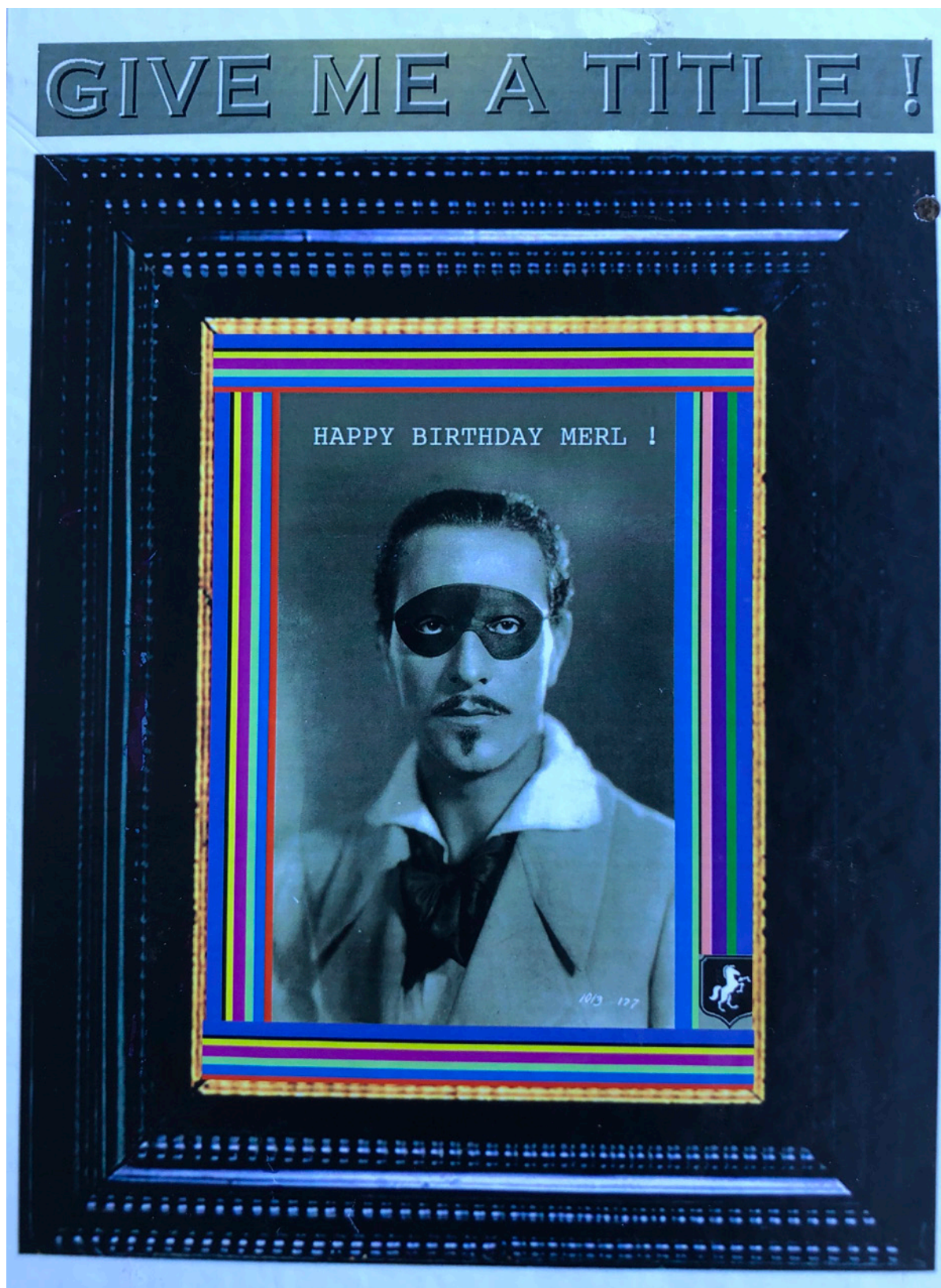
A Tisket a Tasket

The Inevitable Sadness of Familiar Relationships

Freshman Fear



# GIVE ME A TITLE JC OTANO





## PROPOSED TITLES

### for Collage with Two Children and a Head

 A SYMPATHETIC LOBOTOMIST

The Symmetry of Spontaneous Charges

Heroic Tunnel of the Dark

Looking at the razor wire

Merl's handmade masks

The makings of the Merl

I Belong With You.

Heartfelt

THANKS

~~Remember~~ Remember when the

butterfly served us maple tarts?

Lovers Lost to Merl

Buy me a muhfuckin Boat!!!

A Sympathetic Lobotomist

The Symmetry of

Spontaneous Charges

Heroic Tunnel of the Dark

Looking at the Razor Wire

Merl's Handmade Masks

The Makings of the Merl

I Belong With You

Heartfelt

Thanks

Remember When the

Butterfly Saved Us Maple

Tarts

Lovers Lost to Merl

Buy Me a Muhfuckin Boat!!!







# A BED OF REEDS

most immanent, deeply untouchable

THE GREEN STALK

THE POWER

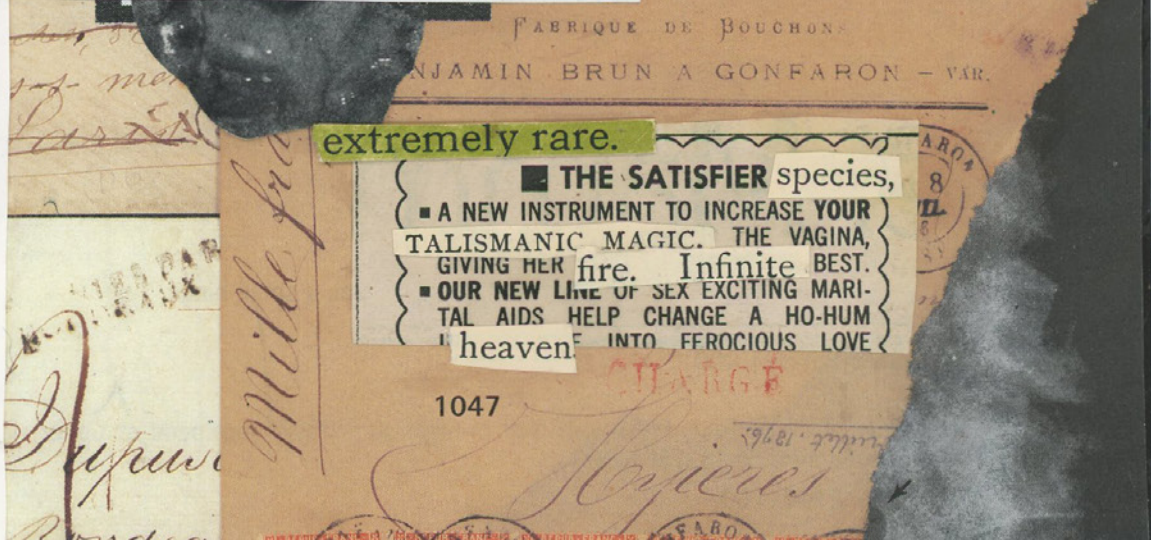
PETER

PSEUDOCHOLECYSTITIS

225



Ancient Babylon and the Tower of Babel



extremely rare.

■ THE SATISFIER species,  
■ A NEW INSTRUMENT TO INCREASE YOUR  
TALISMANIC MAGIC. THE VAGINA,  
GIVING HER fire. Infinite BEST.  
■ OUR NEW LINE OF SEX EXCITING MARI-  
TAL AIDS HELP CHANGE A HO-HUM  
"heaven" INTO FEROCIOUS LOVE

1047







# INTERSUBJECTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Also known as the mysterious **UNGUENTS** — rare and strange subjects, that will only appeared of their own accord, sometimes spontaneously, sometimes alongside ritual, costumed or inanimate experiments, always beneath the workings and disputes of all the others, and may have left just as stealthily...

Characters and entities which emerged throughout the course of the experience, at the over-individual level. These typically embodied some collective impulse or more or less coordinated drive towards a new experience or sensibility or even just hilarity among the various players and visitors.

**THE ADMIT ONE LADY:** PS was possessed by a woman covered in “Admit One” tickets. She would periodically ask people if they would like to “admit one” and if they consented, she would hand them a sticker and ask them to “admit one”. The person was then compelled to give a confession.

**THE ALUMINATED MAN:** During the Lost in the Caverns event a strange figure showed up covered head to toe in tinfoil, with a tinfoil face and sitting at a tinfoil desk. Participants and strangers were challenged by a sign to “Hand me an object” which would then slowly and meticulously be handled by the sight-obstructed being and then wrapped in tinfoil. Items for example: stuffed animals, a wooden plank, a grape, a spoon. Later, body parts were attempted like hands and even a human head (demanded vigorously by a stranger who had just previously been bashing out Beethoven on the No Tomorrow Piano for no obvious reason). This engagement with the Aluminated One created a strange moment of psychic capture, a kind of total sensory vulnerability as the world around the item became “foiled”. A collective foilmind has emerged.

**THE BAREFOOT MINER:** With rats in his hat, a shock white face, and a great gnomish beard, wearing all white and with a hardhat, and with gigantic oversized barefoot tread, the miner took up various musical and atmospheric presences during the Subterranean Carnival event. He was on occasion accused of being an exterminator due to the perceived mouse corpses attached to his hat, but these were later re-animated with much fanfare.

**THE BEAK APPLICATION TECHNICIAN:** A certain overcomplicated Rube Goldberg device operated with a view to applying beaks to sundry items and persons. The Technician had a cloudy pink face and was scene to operate the device with an excessive degree of clattering and unnecessary noise. The device fell apart very frequently and was designed with chaotic instability in mind. Its characteristic feature was a large beak-like wicker cornucopia attached to a metallic applicator and with plenty of string, a bell, and a driftwood handle on top.



**THE MAGNIFICENT CAVE POTATO:** On the outside, a strangely plain oblong husk hanging in the front of the objects. On the inside, a disorienting journey into deep time, where mysterious cave paintings combined with a 360 degree enclosed space, shadowy coloured lighting and strange sonic reverberations to create a literal “headspace”. There is a kind of initiation into things, a secret rite connecting strangers and participants. All who entered the cave potato share in the secret.

**THE CLOWNS:** who emerged among us to tease, mock, or cause chaos, run around streets, upset time, spill things, smash things, trip over our own feet, cackle, and make lots of ridiculous noises. The clowns possessed many objects and people during the show. They also appeared in various areas around Atlanta, including antique stores, junk stores and in the past. Nini recalled the amount of clowns that used to occupy Underground Atlanta when she was a child, before it closed down. She also mentioned a weekly appointment she had with a clown that was her incentive to learn to tell time. Another powerful presence during the Subterranean Carnival event was the “Alien Clown”, who also appears in a painting by HC. A green visitor from another dimension, wearing a clownish Santa Claus hat it found on the street, performed live oral surgery on itself in our presence just so that it could play a didgeridoo...

**THE CLOWN MOLE STREET TENANT ASSOCIATION:** The acrylic letters forming the phrase “Clown Mole Street” were found by chance from the remnants of a demolished restaurant’s signage on Ponce de Leon street. These were fixed on a prominent spot on the wall. The various people who occupied this side of the room, and who otherwise embodied the clown mole spirit throughout the space, make up a curious egregore with the characteristics of a tenant association or neighborhood. Later on, JA, VL, HC and SC played a variation of the drawn “exquisite corpse” game that focused entirely on architecture and housing. This included attics, upstairs, main floor, and ground levels, and especially emphasizing the basement or cellar level as poetic commentary or punctuation on the surface. This was later revealed to be a depiction of the Clown Mole Street neighborhood.

**THE DENTAL HYPNOTIST:** The Dental Hypnotist loves to prey on weak creatures by manipulating them into complacency, using reminiscences from comforting analog media such as 1950s television cartoons to hypnotize the minds of unwary targets and perform the most ghastly acts upon their teeth.

**THE DOLLS AND THEIR HEADS:** So many dolls, so many heads, on trails, on ledges, on the ground, in our minds, in the swamp, beneath the surface... It should also be noted that an abandoned store in the Atlanta Underground very close to the event location was titled ominously and in stark black lettering “DOLL RS”. Looking inside through the hazy glass provided little enlightenment as to its erstwhile meaning.



**THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FUN AND ITS ACOLYTES:** For the cost of a single dollar bill judiciously paid at a favourite Atlanta junk store, the group procured its most disturbing object of all. The so-called Encyclopedia of Fun is on the surface a massive compendium of children's parlour games. In reality, however, it ranks, alongside *Le Petit Albert*, *Le Dragon Rouge*, *The Clavicula Salomonis* and *The Necronomicon* as one of the most damnable examples of a "grimoire" ever uncovered. Perhaps the blackest of the lot. Sporting an ominous embossed clown on its red faux-leather cover, the book spills over with maddening and pointless ideas and instructions for "play", that is, for ceremonial magic of the most intense kind. Games of murder, madness and eccentric ritual phraseology, which drove one to hysterical laughter merely in the telling. Those who heard even a fraction of its content become like one "touched", a fraternity of delirious acolytes, like a character from Lovecraft.

**THE GOLDEN GOOSE:** The Golden Goose appeared during the Lost in the Caverns event to hand out eggs filled with fortunes: predictive texts, bits of collage, toys, baubles and other ephemera that came together to form a kind of prediction or commentary about a particular seeker. In exchange the goose required a joke, a secret, or a dream. Many strangers wandering into the event were compelled to consult the goose.

**GOOD EATS:** Various foods made curious appearances during the Subterranean Carnival and Lost in the Caverns events. These include: pickled asparagus, grapes, eyeball candies, and various combinations thereof.

**THE MOLES:** Who burrowed beneath us and around us, and allowed us to experience their kind of reality. Flora the florally decorated giant mole rat sat on a chair and offered hugs to all and sundry. During the Subterranean Carnival event, VL declared she would marry Flora. A ring was procured from the Bigfoot museum in the Appalachians and the ceremony was later carried out in the meditation room of Pasaquan.

**THE SHYSTERS AND ENTERTAINERS:** We also came to learn that the Atlanta Underground area had been hystorically associated with underworld types in general, including snake oil salesmen, confidence men, and street entertainers of all kinds, including some famous blues musicians (possibly Blind Willie McTell and certainly Bessie Smith) who frequented the juke joints:

*Down in Atlanta G A,  
Under the viaduct every day,  
Drinkin' corn and howlin' "Hurray!",  
Piano's playin' till the break of day...*  
-Bessie Smith, *Preachin' the Blues* (1929)



**SLEEPBALL:** The mysterious oneiric author of 'Nagogia, who appeared at various points during the transition between waking and sleeping life. He read a little during the Quakes and Cries event. At certain points, discussions were held about the Hamburger-loving character Wimpy in the Thimble Theater comics, upon which Sleepball is founded. One instance involved an episode wherein the gang at the Roughhouse Cafe gave Wimpy a gun filled with blanks, to see if he would shoot somebody for a free hamburger. Without a panel's hesitation, he immediately attempted to shoot George W. Geezil. VL noted how closely this mirrored Breton's description of the "simplest surrealist act" of dashing out into the street with a pistol and firing at random. With the added flavour of a hamburger.

**THE SLUMBER PARTY:** On the night of the Subterranean Carnival, near the end of two hours of intense collective play, the participants collapsed on their backs and began to chatter about innocuous-disgusting and poetically theatrical topics, staging a kind of nightmarish sleepover. Someone said "this is the slumber party I always deserved."

**THE SPIRIT OF ERNST HAECKEL :** Channeled mostly through VL's subaquaceous reading during the Quakes and Cries event. But also hanging around the natural history museum and the Doll's Head Trail, perhaps observing the heron and lizards with more rapt attention than even the passerby.

**THE THYLACINE:** The Tasmanian Tiger aka Thylacine made a coincidental appearance, on the brooch of VL and at that exact moment on a collaged postcard located within RC's altar.

**THE TREES OF GREENWOOD:** By chance that JA stayed at a location which had, according to SC and HC, certain mystical qualities due to a massive tree in front of the crumbling duplex, which HC had just remarked a few weeks prior. HC continued to theorize that all places named after trees had a certain power from them, and Greenwood Avenue was no exception...

**THE TRILOBITE BARTENDERS:** At the No Tomorrow location at 84 Lower Alabama street, in the Atlanta Underground, we noticed behind the bar area a semi-hidden wall sign saying merely TRILOBITES. We later came to learn that before the Underground was most recently closed, 84 Lower Alabama St. had been a geode and fossils shop.

**THE TWINS:** JA was given a prediction by the Golden Goose "why not try it with your twin?" SC later found a twin photograph and gave it to JA. During a Tarot reading with AL, he was advised to search for his doppelgänger...







# BESSIE A. FICKLEN

## – DREAM-POETRY (1891)

### BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO AN ONEIRICIST AUNTY

Every once in a while another hidden ancestor will pop up in the most unlikely of spots. We think it's important to bring these missing links to light wherever possible, and to celebrate the often hidden efforts of dreamworld explorers of all times and eras... Oh there you are, great-great-aunty B, floating in the old dream-mirror ...

**Bessie Alexander Ficklen (1861-1945)** was an American and a southerner who lived in Georgia. She seems to have published only sparingly. Apart from this essay she appears to be most often cited for her *Handbook of Fist Puppets*, contributing significantly to the popularization of that particular art, and even participating in what must be one of the earliest films on the subject. She illustrated a book of nonsense poetry, and was part of at least one art exhibition in Texas. She also published privately circulated books of poetry and illustrations, which we have unfortunately not yet been able to track down.

So as far as dreams go, the 1891 essay “Dream-Poetry” is really all we have to go on for now. We can see that it is tremendously insightful with regards to the early analysis, composition, and appreciation of oneiric poetry in the period immediately preceding the discovery of psychoanalysis. It is Ficklen’s willingness to appreciate the gifts of her “Underselves” or “little people”\* as serious offerings—and perhaps more importantly, her willingness to accept them as from someone, or something *extraneous to herself*—that puts this work squarely within that realm of open rationalism that surrealism has always found so fruitful. Her humor, courage, and dry objectivity in presenting materials which are so far from the ordinary deserves commendation. While some of the more polished examples fall a bit flat, many compare favourably even with classic 20th century surrealist dream images. Her accompanying analysis prefigures the unapologetic surrealist love for dream imagery; side-stepping any unnecessary baggage from the therapeutic, sociological and marketable aspects for a poetic deployment of surface imagery.

In this she has my sincere admiration. For her, dream exploration has become a duty valuable in itself. I have nothing more to add to her moral exhortation rise and capture all dream images, “no matter how cold the night”, as, she says—a point of honour!

Practically speaking her advice and guidance on capturing dream fragments are likely to help those actually looking to use dream imagery for surrealist purposes. Not really encumbered by any frameworks (except perhaps the concept of unconscious cerebration, developed by her feminist contemporary Frances Power Cobbe), her account is refreshingly empirical. It recalls the



dry observational recordings of Percy Goldthwait Stiles so admired by surrealists. This opens naturally into a kind of practical humour as she goes through the “steps”. She lays out the gradual process of how her circle came to capture dream poems. She gives useful details like time of day and their appearance during “second sleeps” (retroactively confirming, incidentally, an insight from Dr. Josie Malinowski on the potency of late-morning dreams\*\*). And much of the text highlights the sheer difficulty (what we might now call resistance?) of capturing dream-poetry.

She is quite literal in her approach. We are not yet at the point where we consider the dream-account to be a kind of poetry in itself; instead she waits for the appearance of something designated as poetry from within the dream-world. She is quite specifically focused on gathering up the “odds and ends of of dream-verse”. While this might sound like a question in a very particular surrealist inquiry (“do you ever write poems in your dreams?”), or assembled after years of research for a special edition of *Dreamdew*, she makes clear that it is not so unlikely for those who spent a lot of their waking lives writing, reading, discussing, and thinking about verse.

But this is also exciting for another disconnect: something which is received as poetry in the dream might not literally “appear” to be so when examined with the waking mind. The Under-self-critic is not the waking academic. And this focus give us a means to access what the dream itself has axiomatically declared to be poetry—perhaps presaging the insight of Luca and Trost in *The Dialectic of the Dialectic*—not all dream content is poetry or anti-oedipal in nature—but this insight here comes from the dream-critic itself. And these facts learned through experience give her the instinct—familiar to all oneiricists—of being able to judge the authenticity of real dream content from the “gentle mediocrity” and “correct tameness” of invented dream content, so often encountered then and now in mass entertainment.

Her insight into the aphasic character of such fragments is a particularly useful one. The enthusiasm often felt when “reading” a brilliant poem in a dream is often at odds with the actual words recalled after awakening, and oftentimes our interpretation within the dream does not meant the same things as the words themselves. She lays the choice before us—will you capture the “meaning” of the dream poem, or the literal words? Oftentimes, she rightly points out, the speed at which dream poems fade is terribly fast, and your choice is one or the other. This accounts also for the difference in flavour between a lot of the 19th century dream-poetry, which aims for recreating the dream’s “meaning” in a secondary elaboration of metrically accurate verse and rhyme, and that that recorded after the surrealist experience which is often very literalist in recording the exact words, hoping to derive poetic or prophetic insight from them.

And is it any wonder that the two other practitioners of “true dream poetry” mentioned in the text are women? These being the feminist Frances Power Cobbe and mystic poet Anna Bonus Kingsford. Of course it makes sense that they would take dreams more seriously, and make more time to seriously explore them, leaving the banal concerns of the phallocratic literary establishment far behind them.

And what of her hint of that “we”, the “small circle” she mentions in the American south dedicated to the exploration of dream-poetry? Are we to understand that a secret collective of dream



explorers existed even then, spanning the gap between Lautréamont and the first surrealist group—and of all places, in the Reconstruction south? This group of explorers to whom “the Underself often sings”...Are these the grandparents of Radelunas, Fresh Dirt, and the House of Mysticum?

...And what other secrets are hiding in the “Counter of Katadin”?

## **-Jason Abdelhadi**

*\*And we can't help being excited that the terms “Underselves” and “Little People” correspond with the inquiries in Peculiar Mormyrid 8 and 7 respectively: dream-poets are both underground and miniature.*

*\*\* Malinowski, J. E., & Horton, C. L. (2014). The effect of time of night on wake-dream continuity. Dreaming, 24(4), 253-269.*

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## **DREAM-POETRY**

**By Bessie A. Ficklen**

*From Scribner's Magazine, Volume IX, number 67, 1891. P. 636-643*

Nowadays the world begins to concede that what I call *Myself*, and write down in the singular number, is not so simple a unit as we were wont to suppose. It is not only in insane, hysteric, or hypnotic patients that “Hidden Selves” are developed; every man in his normal state is known to consist of many beings. The *Myself* that answers to my name, looks after my affairs, and becoming weary in so doing, lies down at night, and is lost in sleep, is only one of the many activities that belong to my organization. The *Centralself* that my weariness puts to sleep, and that I consider my personality, owes a vast amount of his powers to certain *Underselves* who remain alive and active whether he sleeps or wakes, who know their business well, and go about it with a conscientious vigor that needs no supervision. Many of my most important physical and mental processes are carried on by them without a directing thought from the Centralself. In their charge are all my necessary vital functions, and all my accustomed actions. They keep my heart beating, they breathe for me, they generally eat and drink and walk for me; they avoid blows and go around obstacles or inequalities in my path, while my mind, my Centralself, is absorbed in some train of thought that has no connection with those processes. They also may be taught to knit, to perform difficult pieces on the piano, and even to read aloud, to write, to talk, or to add columns of figures in the way that we call mechanical, and entirely without any help from the Centralself. And still the list of their accomplishments is not ended.

The *Underselves* are capable of higher and more intelligent work, which cannot call mechanical unless in broadest sense of the word. They store up many memories of which the Centralself has no knowledge, and sometimes show a greater ability for reasoning and planning than their self-conscious master. We have all tried in vain to recall some name, date, or fact, and finally given up in despair, and gone to other matters. Then suddenly, after our Centralself has apparently forgotten all about the



inquiry, the sought has been quietly laid before consciousness, brought there by brain power that, like a keen hound, has kept straight along the scent, after his master had abandoned it as hopeless. Not only are memories brought to light, but the results of long trains of reasoning, the inferences which should have been drawn from arguments or facts, but which all effort had to reveal to our consciousness—nay important scientific discoveries, been given to us in the same mysterious way. In fact all the phenomena that are generally referred to *unconscious cerebration* we owe to the Underselves.

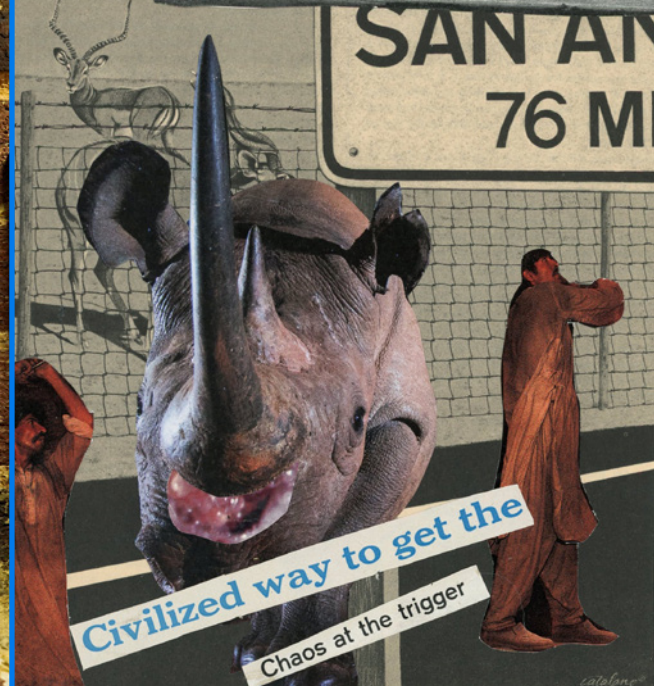
Now of all the ways in which the Underselves manifest their power, there is probably none more important or more interesting than dreaming. Here the Underselves are the “little people” who take charge of our dreams. It is thus that Robert Louis Stevenson calls them in his charming “Chapter on Dreams” and, he, being a wonderful dreamer, gives many examples of the activity and skill of his “little people”. These dream Underselves are quaint and sportive folk, and though they often act the beneficent fairy and enchant us with glimpses of more than mortal pleasure, they are given to many absurd pranks and cruel practical jokes. They are sometimes physically strong enough to lead the unconscious sleeper from his warm bed out into the cold and darkness of the night, where he may awake shivering to find himself crossing an unsafe bridge, or on the verge of some dizzy height. In this class of their performances, which men call somnambulism, the “little people” have been known to go even farther, leading the dreamer on to death, and thus becoming actual murderers or rather, suicides. Luckily it is rare that they have this physical power. A much happier way in which they manifest their strength is in mental feats. Here the “little people” have shown a rare ability, and here they deserve our greatest respect. There seem to be among these dream Underselves, literary and scientific geniuses; skilful mathematicians, philosophers, artists, musicians, and even poets

The dream-poet has too long been nameless and fameless and it is especially to him and to his poems that we wish to call attention. As it is entirely for his honor and glory that this article is written, he shall hereafter be for us *the* Underself.

We are all more or less familiar with the idea of dream-verses. Everyone has read Coleridge’s dream-poem “Kubla Khan”; or has noticed the bits purporting to be dream-poetry, that from time to time appear in the newspapers; or, best of all, has himself dreamed poetry. There are few among those that recognize poetry as one of the pleasures of life, who have not carried that pleasure into their dreams—who have not at some time dreamed of reading or composing poetry. We call this *poetry*, because we wish to look at it from within the stand-point of the Underself, rather than that of the unprejudiced critic, who sees it only in the glare of daylight, and who, therefore, may consider this production of the unconscious muse as worthy of no better name than rhyme or doggerel. We (and this we is not editorial, but refers to a small circle who have for a number of years been much interested in dream-poetry)—we, because the Underself often sings to us, have always been firm believers in his inspiration. He and the other “little people” have brought to us many vivid dreams of all kinds, and he himself has treated us to much poetry—sublime, pathetic, or comic.

For a long time we had never remembered more of these dreams than the pleasure that the poetry had given us. The poem itself had not materialized, for though on first awaking we frequently retained some idea of the words, it never occurred to us to write them down immediately, and an







additional nap or another train of thought was always sufficient to dispel them from our minds. One day, however, the admiration which we cherished for dream poems received a rude shock. It was on hearing the experience of a gentleman, who had on two occasions arisen during the night to record, first a short speech, and then a verse, that seemed to him, in his dreams, almost inspired in their eloquence. The speech was, in the dream, made by the host of a small evening entertainment, when inviting the guests to enter the supper-room. The dreamer awoke wondering at the charming and appropriate words of this gentleman, whom he had never thought capable of such an intellectual effort. But as he recovered his full consciousness, the elegant and witty address resolved itself into the following jargon:

“Respectable people, theological students, and others, are more previous than anything else, assisted by seventy-one blacksmiths”.

The verse he recorded was heard in a dream, in which he saw two opposing railway trains on a single track, dash into each other at full speed. As they met with a fearful crash these thrilling words resounded through the air:

*Through all my future life a blaze  
Eccentric as a cone of rays.*

Immediately on hearing these dream-products, we were fired with a desire to emulate this gentleman's example—to look straight into the face of that poetry which charmed us in our dreams. To this end we resolved to jot down immediately any fragment of the Underself's composition that we might remember.

As he has given us very little prose, the result of our efforts during the last ten or twelve years has been chiefly poems or fragments of poems; the odds and ends of dream-verse. These we have been on the alert to catch, though it has not been an easy task. It has generally demanded the exercise of great-will power, frequently of more than was possible for the half awake-dreamer. For the peculiarity of dream-poetry is that it fades rapidly from the memory. No matter how brief the fragment is, no matter how vividly it is recalled on first awaking, or how many times the dreamer recites it over and over, and resolves to remember it, let him go to sleep again, or let his mind wander to other things, and the words are lost forever.

Coleridge had this experience with his “Kubla Khan.” On awaking he remembered, he says, two or three hundred lines that had come to him in his dream. When he had written down the fifty-four lines that are preserved. “a person with business from Porlock” interrupted him, and detained him for over an hour, and when he tried afterwards to write the rest of his dream-poem, he found it hopelessly gone.

Since we have found any delay to be fatal it has become a point of honor that, whenever we awake with any fragment of dream-poetry in our clutches, we shall rise immediately and write it down no matter how cold and dark the night. Often we have scratched it down with eyes shut and senses so affected by sleep that even the prosaic act of writing could not dispel the glamour, and we



would go back to sleep believing that at last we had captured from the Underself a real treasure. But the result was always the same. With daylight the charm vanished. For without meaning we have found it almost invariably. Though it is often fine in sound and perfect in rhyme and metre, there is no escaping from the fact that to the waking mind it seldom conveys more than the ghost of an idea. It has not enough sequence for one verse to suggest the next, and it is probably only by reason of its rhyme and metre that we could grasp the smallest fragment firmly enough to drag it into the light of day. Even “Kubla Khan,” which is more of a poem than anything our less talented Underselves have to offer, has, in common with all the dream-verses that are known to be authentic, a strong flavor of the incongruous. The newspaper dream poems that we occasionally see are probably so remodelled in the remembering, that they represent just about what the dreamer would write with his eyes open. Their gentle mediocrity leads us to doubt their authenticity, for, in our experience of them, the Underself’s poems may have all other faults sooner than correct tameness.

There are several ways of remembering dream-poetry. One may recall only its words, without their dream-meaning; or, one may remember the thought expressed in the poem, but not the dream-words, or occasionally one remembers the words and the idea they conveyed to the dreamer. It is very peculiar that in this last case, which is the one where they can be compared, the ideas and the words seldom agree. This makes it clear that, if on waking, we give a correct poetical expression to *thought* of the dream-poem, *the words* are likely to be our own and not those the Underself.

In our specimens we have retained the Underself’s exact words; but such may not be the case with the dream-poems published by Miss Frances Power Cobbe, and those dreamed by Mrs. Kingsford. These have, however, in spite of their length and correctness, some of the qualities that we have found to be common in true dream-poetry.

In her article on “Dreams,” published in *Macmillan’s* some years ago, Miss Cobbe gives two dream-poems. One of these is in French, though the lady who dreamed it believed herself unable to write poetry in French; and this fact seems to prove it to be in the Underself’s words. Like “Kubla Khan” it was dreamed under the influence of a narcotic, and it has the impressiveness so characteristic of the dreams produced by opiates, and so frequently found in dream poetry generally. There are eleven verses of which the two opening ones will give a good idea:

*Ce matin du haut de l’ancienne tourelle  
J’écoutais la voix de la sentinelle,  
Qui criait à ceux qui passaient là bas  
A travers le pont, ‘Dis qui va là?’*

*Et toutes les réponses, si pleines d’espoir  
Remplirent mon coeur d’un vague effroi,  
Car le chagrin est de l’espoir le fruit  
Et le suit comme au joursuit la sombre nuit.*



*[This morning from the top of the ancient tower  
I heard the voice of the guard  
Who cries to those who pass below  
Crossing the bridge, "who there goes?"]*

*And all the replies so full of hope  
Fill my heart with a vague terror  
For pain is the fruit of hope  
And follows it like night follows day.]*

This and the other poem that Miss Cobbe published appeared to the dreamer, like almost all the dream-poems we know, as a combination of poem and vision.

Mrs. Anna Kingsford has published a volume of her "Dreams and Dream Stories," among which are a number of her dream-poems. One of these is called "Through the Ages," and deals with metempsychosis. It is probably the longest of all dream-poems, consisting of eighty lines. Its beginning is suggestive of that of the *Rubáiyát*:

*Wake, thou that sleepest! Soul, awake!  
Thy light is come, arise and shine!  
For darkness melts and dawn divine  
Doth from the holy Orient break.*

*Swift darting down the shadowy ways  
And misty deeps of unborn Time,  
God's light, God's day, whose perfect prime  
Is as the light of seven days.*

And here is another fragment from Mrs. Kingsford's collection:

*A jarring note, a chord amiss,  
The music's sweeter after,  
Like wrangling ended with a kiss,  
Or tears with silver laughter.*

*The high Gods have no joys like these  
So sweet in human story,  
No tempest rends their tranquil seas  
Beyond the sunset's glory.*



Then there are others, “With the Gods,” “Signs of the Times”, and fragments, all of which are quite connected and quite unlike the bits we have brought from Dreamland, except in their general elevation of subject.

The Underself prefers lofty subjects, and seems always to aim at some unusually striking effect; in fact, he has a marked tendency toward bombast. In his most disconnected specimens there is generally a suggestion of vast possibilities of humor, beauty, or grandeur, a hint of brilliant but unfocussed ideas. They seem a kind of poetry in solution—something that we feel might astonish the world, if we could only present it in a settled, organized form. It seems to be what some of Browning’s verse is to the uninitiated. In fact, we once, as an experiment, put one of the Underself’s verses among some selected extracts from Browning, and defied a literary club who were discussing his poetry to distinguish the dream-poetry from the genuine Browning. This is the dream poetry:

*Enriched within the roses’ prime,  
Blossomed alas from time to time.  
Endured from day to day.*

This has, in common with most dream-poems, such an air of plausibility that it is easy to see why the club failed to convict it as an imposture.

After the same order as the last is the following enigma, which was pregnant with thought to the Underself, though our waking senses have never yet found its solution:

*Believed by all, inspired by none,  
By nature nor by art begun.*

And here is a verse that the Underself put forth as a very beautiful description of the approach of winter:

*Dull Autumn waves her sexless hands,  
And saddens all their morning graces,  
And throws white veils upon their heads,  
And dims the shining of their faces.*

The next is from a poem that thought in the dream to paint the of dawn with a magic that made former descriptions pale and lifeless:

*Thus the white horse, plumed with the rising morn,  
Comes rushing forth to animate the dawn.*







The following is the longest of the Underself's poems that we have been able to keep. It is very pathetic, and the dreamer awoke from it almost in tears:

*Out in the sun and the wind together,  
Mary and John were growing old;  
There when the birds were in full feather,  
She gathered eggs while the sad years rolled.  
There, in the brightest and darkest weather,  
He pruned the trees, till his hands grew cold.  
Out in the wind and the rain together,  
Mary and John were growing old.  
Still as the days passed, hither and thither  
Wandered they, nearing Death's silent fold.  
Now though trees bloom and all birds in feather,  
Sleep they together 'neath wakening mould.*

Besides being longer, this dream-poem is more connected than most of our specimens. But hasn't it a familiar sound—as if we had heard it or something like it before? This dim sense of familiarity is not uncommon with dream-poetry, and this, and the fact that we are much more apt to dream poetry after reading poetry, suggest that the Underself may be something of a plagiarist, and that much of his composition is only a faint and confused echo of something we have heard when awake. This is eminently the case with the following heroic lines:

*Up, up, with a shot into Clavering Hall,  
Mount, mount, with the guards and the myrmidons all.*

And these:

*He fell, and in an inch exclaimed,  
"There's castles in the air."*

These last, and the following lines, seem to be not only echoes, but actual parodies of something else:

*A tittle is drunk and the clarion is run,  
The long wire pulling the short wire's tongue.*

All these seem so absurd in the commonplace light of day, that it is not easy realize how we were affected by them. Yet it is true that we awoke thrilled by eloquence; they touched feelings too deep for expression; to the dreamer their mock-heroics were real, and all their tinsel was pure gold. For the



setting of dream-poems is often superb, and they frequently seem to crown some magnificent climax, being pealed out in grand organ tones, or written on the in letters of light. For instance, one of us dreamed of a lordly castle that had in one of its halls a famous old oak beam, whose history seemed to ring the air, à la “Excelsior,” thus:

*When freedom from her mountain height  
Gave challenge bold and rare,  
Fitz-Allen to Clan Estes gave,  
This oak to do and dare.*

*Its flame with crimson, creaming light,  
Went climbing mountains high,  
And burning banners blazing bright,  
Lit echoes in the sky.*

Here we have, in this last verse, something very creditable to the Underself, as it was dreamed by a person who had scarcely ever in his life tried to make a rhyme.

The Underself frequently gets into a tragic mood. Here is a bit that he intended for tragedy, though the daylight rather lightens its gloom:

*He laughed below stairs,  
As I knelt at my prayers,  
And I thought more of him than of God.*

And again the Underself attempted tragedy in a poetic dream, which told the woful story of a deserted maiden, a kind of “Mariana in the Moated Grange,” who waited sadly for the lover that never came. As this dream-maiden gazed into the mirror from time to time, she sorrowed over her gradual loss of beauty; but, instead of pining away picturesquely like the love-lorn maids of romance, she grew stout with age. Of all this harrowing history only these three could be remembered and written down:

*She looked in the mirror and seemed to be  
Many years older than she might,  
And she drew the clasp of her girdle tight.*

Next the Underself has attempted something a little different—“adorning his narrative” with a foreign tongue. The dreamer, who had been a Southern officer in the late war, thought he read this in a newspaper:







*From every battle of the war,  
Came many wounded, thick and thin;  
To this is one exception dread,  
Crédit Comptoir de Katadin.*

“This last line,” he said, “seemed to be the most terse, elegant, and impressive French, the whole stanza meaning that while, in all other battles, there were many wounded for every one killed outright, the Battle of Fredericksburg was a terrible exception; that there the ‘killed and wounded’ were all killed instantly. In the dream it seemed that this was something that ever since the battle I had known to be true, which it is not. If anything, the proportion of wounded in that battle was larger than usual.

In this last case the sense and the words are even farther separated than is usual. It is one of the few dreams in which the idea was remembered, and may be compared with the words. Here is another of the same sort. The dreamer thought that he read in a Sunday’s paper, a long account in verse of how the insects came to survive the Flood, they having been, as he believed in the dream, either accidentally or purposely, not invited into the ark by Noah. The poem seemed to describe them as floating around on fruit and chips of bark, in a regular fleet. The only lines the dreamer recalled on waking were:

*All the night,  
Unto light,  
Not an orange with a bug,  
Not an insect on a rug,  
Touched a [something rhyming with light].*

We have now a few extracts from his works, which show that the Underself sometimes descends from his grandiose flights, and tries to be funny. In these, more than in the serious poems, we can trace the general trend of each dreamer’s mind. Carroll, the author of “Alice in Wonderland,” who has written so much delightful dream-poetry with his eyes open, dreamed this:

*It often runs in families,  
Just as the love of pastry does.*

One of our dreamers brought from a dream-poem this extract that is just as quaint:

*‘Tis a question if our latitude and civil rights agree,  
But longitude and other things are surely found to gee.*

Another dreamer, who awake, has a very comic vein, dreamed that she saw her sister at a fancy ball



arrayed like a bandit king and standing on a table, where with much gesticulation, and amid wild applause, she sang the following song:

*I'm a bold buccaneer, with bold glances,  
Always in pairs I meet,  
I level at those who say "Lancers,"  
And waltz with the fair and the sweet.*

She also dreamed, at another time, that she was tending her mother by attributing all her own shortcomings to heredity on the maternal side, as follows:

*I love to see the college boys,  
And copy them from afar,  
And wink at them to show my joys—  
I gathered it all from ma.*

*I love to have my purse jammed full,  
And stuffed out very far,  
But, pa, you can't blame me for this—  
I gathered it all from ma.*

Here is another that deserves attention, because it seems to show more originality on the part of the Underself; it is harder to account for as an echo of something else. It was dreamed by the Southern officer, before mentioned, in camp in 1863, during a hard winter campaign "on starvation rations." He dreamed that a lady asked him to write in her album; that he tried to decline writing any more than his name, declaring that he had never been able to write in albums; but she insisted, until in despair, he sat down and by a sudden inspiration dashed off the following:

*CONFEDERATE RATIONS.*

*For a man, corn-bread—so—so.*

*Any bacon? No! no!*

*For a horse*

*O!*

In his dream the writing in the album seemed to form a perfectly symmetrical inverted pyramid; the O at the apex to be read "zero."

This almost completes our assortment of dream-verses, collected with pains and during many years. In spite of their very fragmentary character, they give us quite a good idea of the Underself's poetry in its different phases, though we might be better able to do him justice if we could have



remembered more of his completed poems. Many persons, perhaps, will take this fruit of all our labors for “the ridiculous mouse” that was born of the mountain. It will seem obvious to them that our mysterious poet, as we have torn from him bit by bit of his veil, has revealed himself to be a petty mountebank, whose poems are nothing more than “sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.” But he who has brilliant dreams must always keep a certain respect for that dream-self who seems a so much higher order of being than his ordinary blundering, stumbling daytime self; who seems to be endowed with such wonderful physical and mental power—moving freely through air and water, overcoming the force of gravitation, and scorning all limits of time and space; who seems to have such a profound skill in controversy and research, such a ready wit and marvellous eloquence. Does not everyone, moreover, remember feats of the Underself that have borne the light of day? Was not Tartini’s Devil’s Sonata, which he composed in a dream, the finest of all his productions? Did not Burdach and Condorcet solve scientific problems in their dreams?

Why, therefore, when the dream-self, this “Admirable Crichton,” turns his attention to poetry, why should he not here also give some better proof of his ability than these vague and wandering dream-verses? Such was the problem which we placed before ourselves. One of our number, who has dreamed much poetry, was especially enthusiastic in seeking a solution to this problem. At last when he was in despair of finding it, no less an authority than one of the Underselves undertook to explain to him the confusion of dream-poetry.

It is necessary to premise that many years before this dream, an old nurse in the family had been afflicted in the last years of her life with a touch of aphasia, that disease of the brain in which the patient loses to a greater or less extent his memory of words. With this old woman only the substantives were confused; she used all other words correctly. She was convinced of her sanity; and never guessing that a part of her brain had fallen asleep, she continued to ask for all sorts of impossible things—plantations, cows, churches—and even grew very indignant at the stupidity of her attendants, who could not understand her demands. Now the dream above referred to was one of those dreams within dreams which are not uncommon. In it the dreamer thought that he had just waked from a dream in which he had composed some beautiful lines expressing a very original idea. In this second stage of dreaming he hastened, as he thought, to write down the words. What was his surprise to see in his dream that he had written a senseless jumble of words, though he still retained very clearly in his mind the thought that the verses were intended to convey! He tried to summon up the proper words, but they would not come. Then he recalled the case of the old nurse, and felt that his condition was like hers—that sleep had rendered him temporarily aphasic—that he had really originated a brilliant idea, but that, though his sleeping brain was still enough of a poet to understand rhyme and metre, it had lost the power of formulating its thoughts correctly in words.

There is no doubt that this explanation is true in some cases—those of the dreams we have already mentioned, from which we have remembered not only the senseless words, but also the sensible idea that they were meant to convey. There are a number of these, in which the aphasia is more or less marked. The one already given, with the French ending “Crédit comptoir de Katadin,” is about the most aphasic, the remembered words bearing little relation to the remembered meaning.



The following verse expresses its meaning much more clearly, though it still has a touch of aphasia:

*One should be very sure in picking his bone,  
That the likeness he finds to another alone.*

The dreamer remembered that this was meant to express very epigrammatically, that sharp dealing may injure one's self much more than the person deceived. A slight change will bring this near to its real meaning—for instance:

*One should be very sure in picking his bone,  
That the likeness he finds is another's alone.*

.i.e., that he is not picking his own bone—preying on himself.

Now here is a fragment in which the aphasia has disappeared, and the words are evidently quite correct.

*The terms I use may mystic seem,  
But I'm writing upon a mystic theme.*

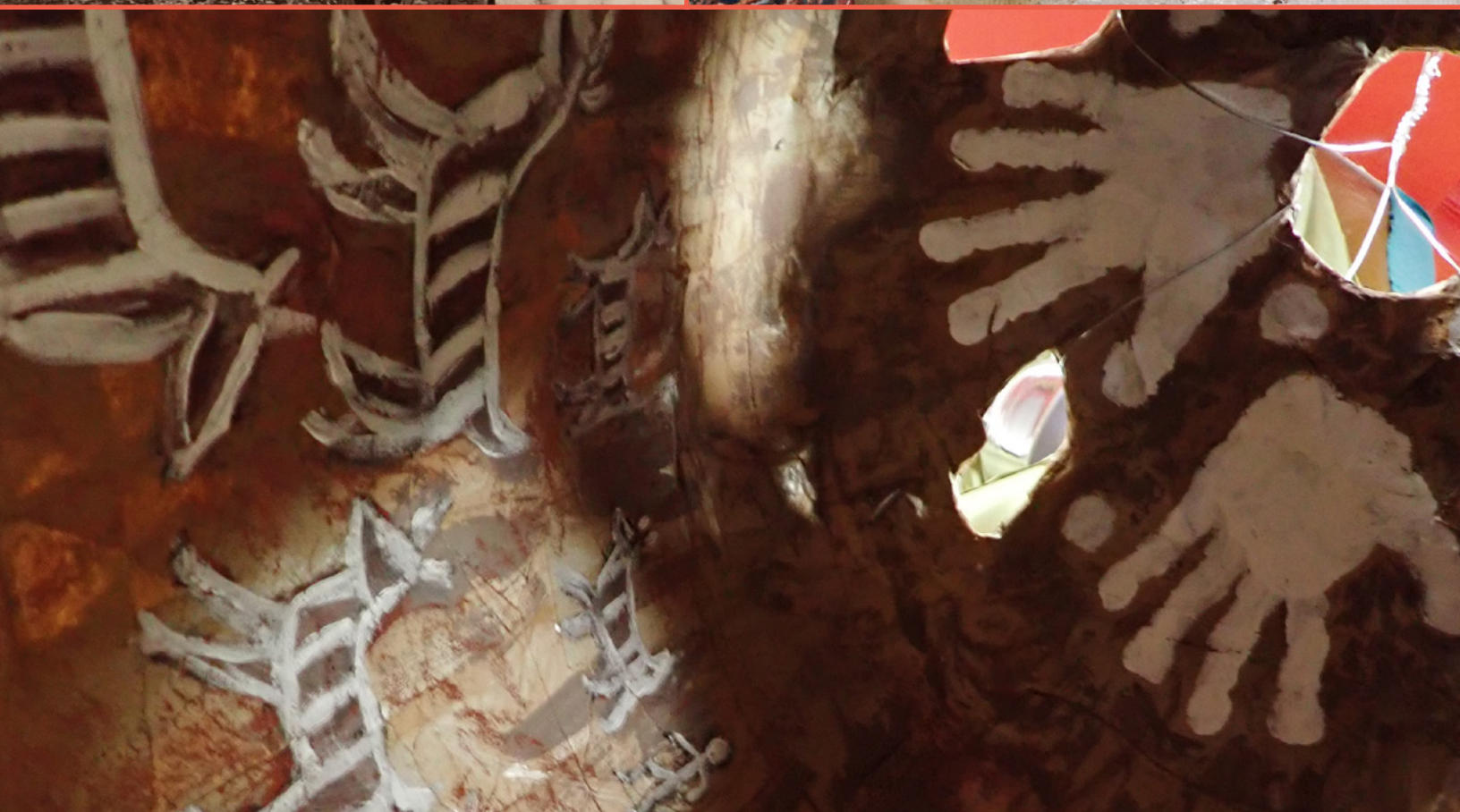
And there are others like this in the examples already given; so we may suppose that the Underself varies from very serious aphasia to a perfectly correct use of words.

Dreaming, like all other phenomena, cannot be justly estimated without taking into consideration its highest development. Robert Louis Stevenson declares his belief that his sleeping brain is more skilful in the construction of plots and stronger in inventive genius than his waking brain. Mrs. Kingsford declared the same—and more. She said that she had, all through life, gained the greatest assistance in daily perplexities from the nightly counsels of her Underself. And there are many other like cases, where, not only in sleep, but during insanity or the delirium of fever, or in a hypnotic trance, the Underselves have delivered inspired addresses, composed poetry, and shown in many ways wit and brilliancy beyond the waking power of the Centralself.

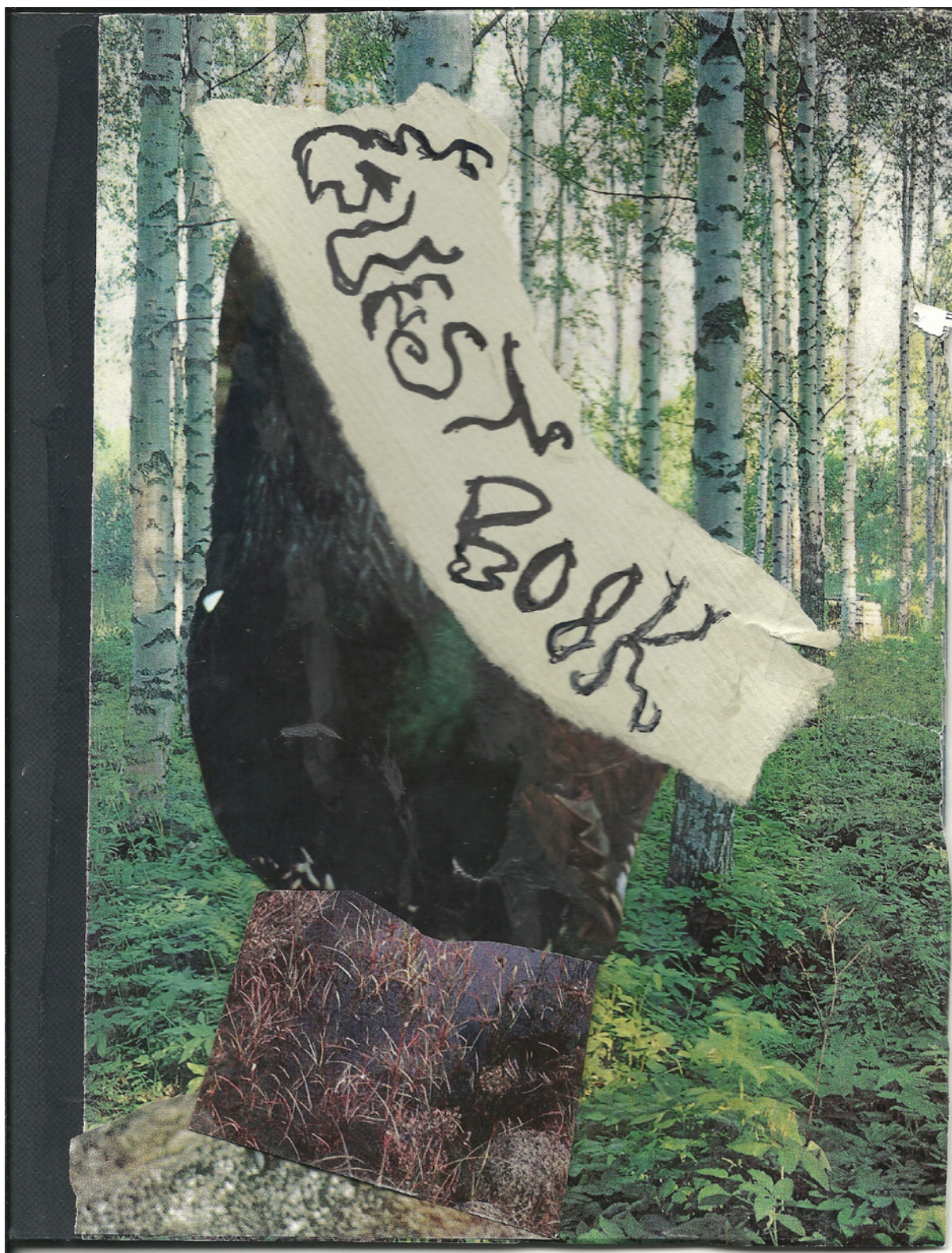
In spite of all the absurdities that we have quoted from him, we claim that our dream-poet is neither a fool nor an impostor. If he has often surrounded his utterances with mystery, it is only after the manner of the true genius:

*“Weave a circle round him thrice,  
And close your eyes with holy dread,  
For he on honey dew hath fed,  
And drunk the milk of Paradise.”*











Reggie Ellini  
Lara Jeanneret  
KT Sashin  
Elhan Jordan i  
[NINI!]

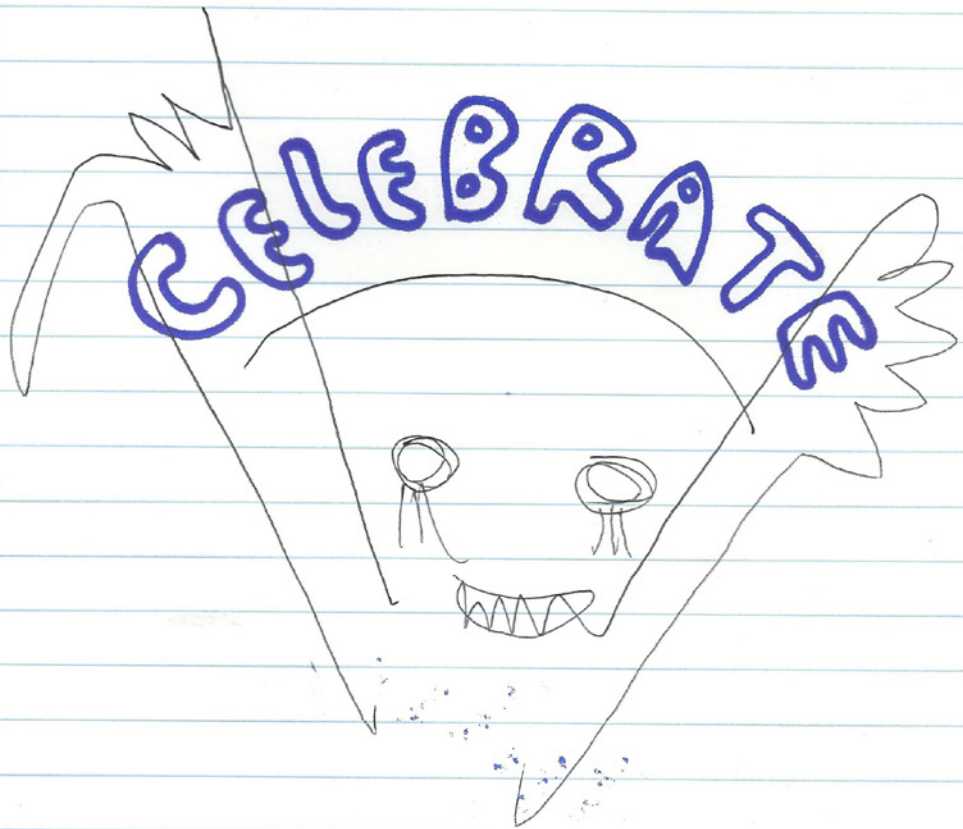








If  
you  
have  
an  
able  
body



CELEBRATE



lobotomize your big toe

Nah



Art is a person. A living  
breathing person. It is alive. It thrives.  
It has a heartbeat. It moves in harmony  
in everything, everywhere, all the time. It  
is anything. It is beautiful. Always.  
Misunderstood. Overlooked. Undervalued. Yet  
it is beautiful. Look at art. As a person.  
That is beauty. That is art.



a cypress tree

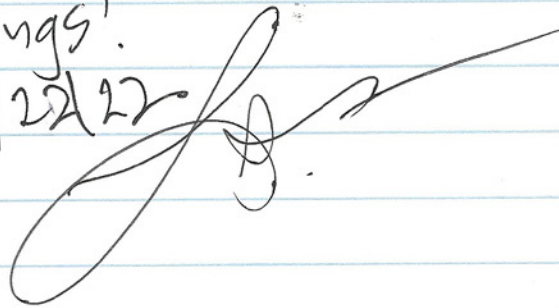
Stood before the Naked  
MAIDEN

She wisPED HER "jewels"

before it  
devoured her wish

Subterranean  
Soundings!

10/22/22





it's coming

Art is intrinsically collaborative  
in that it reflect a piece of  
personhood often overlooked

Especially as is, of course, a  
reduction, but something  
ISN'T

— ||| —



