

# HER ROYAL MAJESTY

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ISSUE 11 - FALL 2011



# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

There is a nearly infinite amount of examples of Doubles<sup>1</sup> that exist but for me, the theme was initially inspired by, and still resounds most strongly in, questions of division and duality: that there may be two worlds, two divergent natures within each person, and between these opposing forces, a spectrum of gray.

I have always been drawn to the story of Faust. It's not really fascination, more like approval: I instinctively agreed that there are two souls –simultaneous and conflicting desires and instincts – in each person. Faust, conflicted and beleaguered, cries out in despair:

*“In me there are two souls, alas, and their  
Division tears my life in two  
One loves the world, it clutches her, it binds  
Itself to her, clinging with furious lust;  
The other longs to soar beyond the dust  
Into the realm of high ancestral minds”*

—  
*Goethe, Faust, Part I, II. 1112-7)*

Faust, a frustrated scholar, realizes that he cannot be fully gratified by either the natural or the intelligible world: he knows his knowledge is finite and accounts for nothing if there is no action or ambition to propel it. Faust decides that what he needs to do is try, to always keep moving, so he sells his soul to the devil in a gamble that comes down to the idea that he will never, ever be happy.

A study by the World Health Organisation (WHO) released in August 2011 reveals France to be “the world’s most depressed nation,” and many commentators, most of them not French, suggested that this is because French people are too intellectual for their own good. These commentators are suggesting that, like Faust, the French are trapped by the confines of their own knowledge, and that without action or some kind of concrete consequence, intellectualism has no benefits. What, then, to do with all those thoughts?

HAPPY	SAD
UP	DOWN
ALIVE	DEAD
HEAVEN	HELL
HEAVEN	EARTH
BEAUTIFUL	UGLY
NORTH	SOUTH
INTROVERT	EXTROVERT
OPEN	CLOSED
CLEAN	DIRTY
RICH	POOR
LIGHT	DARK
OPTIMIST	PESSIMIST

If, as Goethe (and many philosophers and writers before him) suggests, there is an ideal world that is mirrored by our natural, tangible world, then in which sphere should we pass our days?

Baudelaire muses on this division and, in an essay called “The Painter of Modern Life,” provides a few possible solutions to the happiness problem. He describes modern man as being “for ever in search...looking for that indefinable something we may be allowed to call ‘modernity’...you have no right to despise this transitory fleeting element... nor to dispense with it. If you do, you inevitably fall into the emptiness of an abstract.” The search for self-knowledge provides the opportunity for growth and self-awareness. Baudelaire’s goal is to conquer sadness and emptiness either through drunkenness, or the making of art (or, perhaps, both at once). “If you are not to be the martyred slaves of time, be perpetually drunk!” he proclaims in his poem Get Drunk. Drunkenness, however, is fleeting: Baudelaire decides that the more permanent and concrete way of overcoming the “ceaseless plot of time” is to create.

Gray is the colour of truth, according to André Gide. It is true that if you mix white and black, you get gray. But if you see white and black as pure light and its absence, then what lies between is every single colour we’ve ever seen. The content selected for issue 11 of Her Royal Majesty explores the idea of Doubles, and the infinite spectrum that exists between poles.

*Harriet Alida Lye*  
*Editor in Chief*

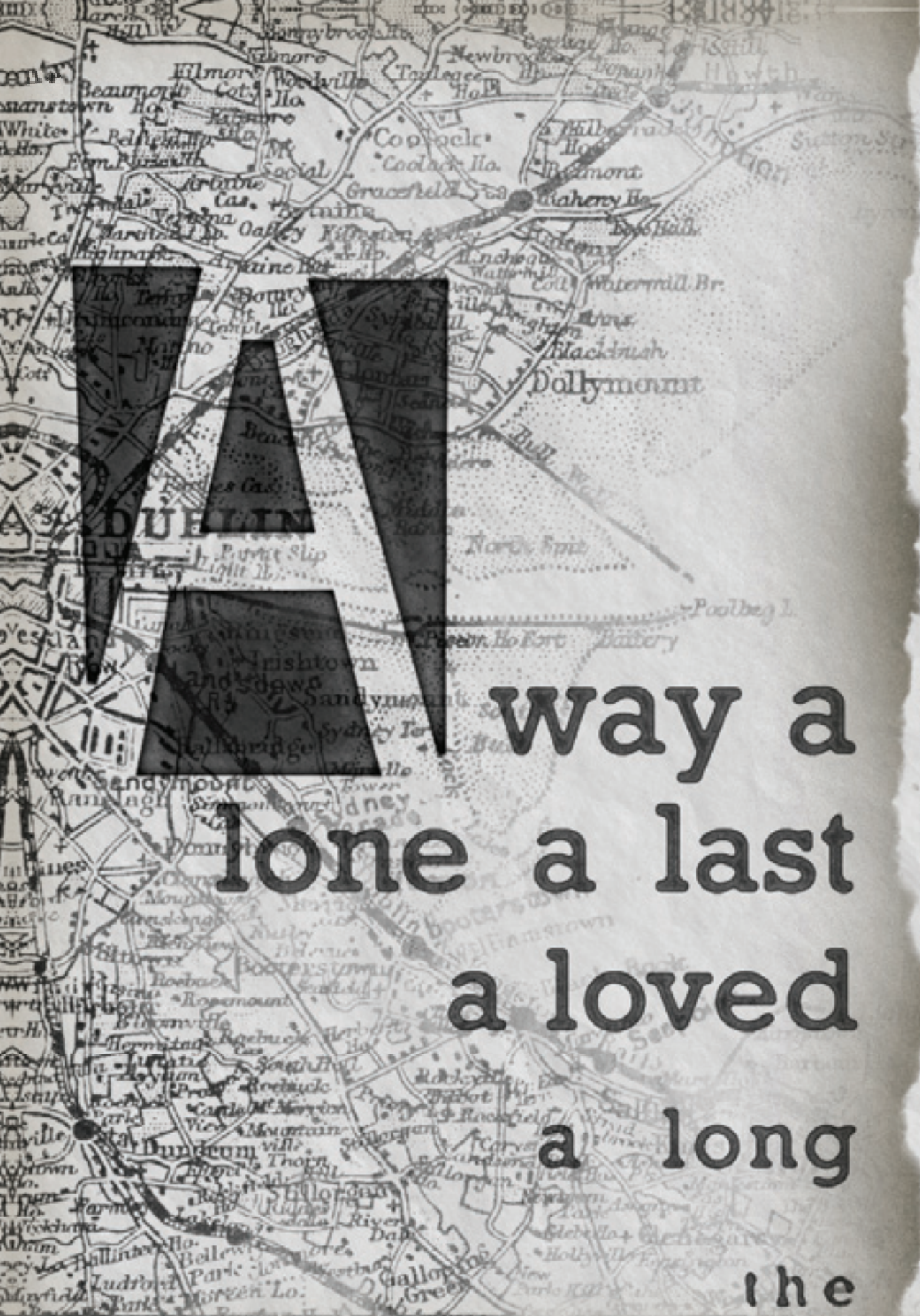
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<sup>1</sup>*And our submissions covered many of these options, including: Biblical stories (the animals arriving two by two); imagined letters between Vincent van Gogh and his brother; love stories told in stereoscope; depression; and tales of conjoined twins and hypothetical doppelgangers. All of these are valid for the theme, of course, and some of these examples are published here. There were also lots (really, lots) of stories and poems about love, which is something I had not foreseen. Draw from this what you will.*

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× COVER ART BY BADAUDE, WWW.BADAUDE.TYPEPAD.COM × PAGE 74 (NEXT PAGE) BY STEPHEN CROWE





AND ENVIRONS.

way a  
lone a last  
a loved  
a long  
the



riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from



swerbe of shore to bend of bay, brings us



by a commodius vicus of recirculation



back to Howth Castle and Environs.





# CHRONOS STROBOSCOPIC

BY MICHAEL FOLLOW

It draws bees to plastic  
and fish to the ocean floor

—the past in stars,  
future its opposite:

winter, the dark parkade  
shocks after matinees

—waking after a nap  
to dusk; sleep well and know

flowers will bloom again.  
Some don't, and wake tomorrow

or see a double show.  
Some flowers bloom at night.

Day it hovers above,  
wick stopped in waxen foam.

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× M' IKOMA BY KEVIN TADGE

# ADELINE + ANNABELLE

BY ALEXANDRA WILDER



× UNTILED TWINS BY DAN ESTABROOK

## (I)

We sit, cross-legged, concentrate until cross-eyed on building indestructible sandcastles on the shore—wear morning coats of runny blue with buttonhole flowers, dream of bloodless blond suitors who will love us from a distance like tree leaves that droop to catch us when we fall. Narrow paths weaving weedy growths underfoot lead to the broken railing of the overlook. The vision sits on the tree stump staring at us—I can't concentrate with its eyes on me. Adeline says if we ignore it, it will get weaker, then leave, shadow trail of tail between legs. The quiet mountain sits differently now, slumps more to the left than before. The immaculate mazes we walk replace each other when one gets too easy. The hedges rise behind our backs—we get shorter, our eyesight worsens. There is no water we can drink here.

## (II)

This whole town is made of wood. (Mother says trifles are elegant, pitiful things.) We fill a miniature world with tiny people, houses, dry-cleaners, butchers and bus shelters. The faces are smooth and blank. Adeline and I imagine ourselves smaller every day. (Mother says elegance is a pitiful, trifling thing.) We pillow each other's falls when we hear hollow footsteps approach, shelter our plastic hearts and hands. Every day, there are attempts made to cut us well-through with words and silence. I make clocks out of paper plates and colored construction paper, we mend our broken eyeglasses with red string wound round and round. (Mother says pity is a trifling, elegant thing.) Outside, we pile into the wind like we can't even feel it. A persistent rain retreats us into rear-view mirrors and wool scarlet capes. Our gloves are too tight, our shoes are too big and on the wrong feet—but here we are brisk, and bright, and strong.

## (III)

No one knows how to be something else. Prime numbers march through our brains—we make up names for them, colors. Each level indicates a greater degree of danger. There are rules for everything here: sneezing, smiling, saying goodbye. At dinner, we try not to chew. Let dumplings melt in our mouths, then swallow. Our dolls sit propped up by stacks of paperbacks. We carry scenarios from paintings into life. Collect nickels and dimes in piles to shine. Hide things we'll want later. Our fetching felines read recumbent in cold anterooms. We lie on our backs on the worn rug, dazzled by ceiling fan blades, wake to find the holes in our pockets have been mended in the night. We make a pact that whoever dies first will soon be followed by the other.





# YOU & ME

BY LENDL BARCELOS

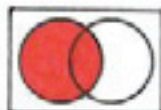
THERE ARE 16 POSSIBLE RELATIONS THAT 'YOU' AND 'ME' CAN ENTER INTO. THE TINTED AREAS ARE AFFIRMED BY THE RELATION AND THE WHITE AREAS ARE NEGATED. THIS IS A HUMBLE ATTEMPT TO COMPREHEND ALL OF OUR POSSIBLE INTERACTIONS.

× RED BALLOON BY HARRIET ALIDA LYE

NOTHING



YOU



ME



STRANGERS



US



IT'S NOT YOU, IT'S ME



MY WORLD DOESN'T INCLUDE YOU



YOUR WORLD DOESN'T INCLUDE ME



IT'S NOT ME, IT'S YOU



SUICIDE



MURDER



SEX



LOVE



MARRIAGE



JOINT DENIAL



TRUE LOVE





× POLAROID, BY ALLISON HIGGINS

# THE PROCESS AND PRODUCT OF A COLLABORATIVE PERFORMANCE

BY ALLISON HIGGINS + JAMES FRANCO

Allison Higgins began to make work using James Franco's image as a way to explore the question of celebrity, sincerity and identity. Her work draws a parallel between her leaving art school and entering the art world, small and seemingly invisible, and Franco being so visible as he enters the same. Ultimately, Franco's image wasn't enough; she needed to work with his work.

The Polaroids on the following pages document a performance originally done by Franco that Higgins re-enacted for her show at the Anna Leonowens gallery in Halifax. In the performance, she blends all of the food that Franco eats in a day and then feeds it to a paper mache "James". She then stabs "James" and eats as much "food" from his stomach as she can.

The paintings are a list of weekly activities done by each artist with the corresponding amount of the time spent (in hours) doing so. The amount of coffee consumed by each artist daily is then poured onto the paintings.

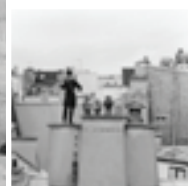
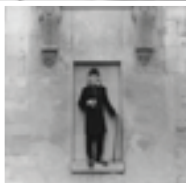


# UNTITLED #22

*Two words,*







× IL FAUT QUE JE SOIS, ROELAND VERHALLEN

# COURTLY LOVE

BY IAN ATKINSON

“*L’amour courtois. Qu’est-ce que c’est ? C’est une façon tout à fait raffinée de suppléer à l’absence de rapport sexuel, en feignant que c’est nous qui y mettons obstacle. C’est vraiment la chose la plus formidable qu’on ait jamais tentée. Mais comment en dénoncer la feinte ?*”

Jacques Lacan





## EPISTLE

When you were king and couldn't read, I sent you letters every day. Your scribes and clerics in stiff white collars would puzzle over messy, desperate manuscripts and stutter out my pleas of love aloud. To you.

I spent decades at the post office, rechecking the address, watching bumbling bureaucrats scan barcodes and the price of postage rise until a fistful of coins no longer bought a single stamp. I sealed each envelope of perfumed paper with a kiss and passed it on to someone wearing livery who rode off in the direction of your darkened palace on his Vespa or on horseback.

And what was the point? I always knew you were illiterate.

But did you long to hear my voice as I desired yours? Did you wonder what my naked writing meant?

And so you learned to read. You learned the classics and the Bible. You read my letters slowly, but heard the echo of yourself where I should be.

And never did I get an answer.

Did you spend hours with a plume, drafting decrees, wondering whether "cherish" or "adore" was the word you sought? Did you—like Charlemagne—keep tablets near your bedside, tracing soundless, tender characters you couldn't understand? Did you mutter Berber, Greek, or Latin to your servants as they adorned expensive parchment with ornate labyrinths, hoping to render your simple, silken voice in inky blots?

You wanted sounds but got mute hieroglyphics. Tears turned into I.P.A. You spoke without pause but looked down to see the wordsmiths transcribing arbitrary spaces. Blanks and holes filled the blackness of your prose. And you were furious.

Who was sent to slaughter the sheep? How many gave their lives and rotting hides for missives I would never read? And did you ever wonder—ever ask yourself—if still I waited?

I waited.

You sent me troubadours carrying songs of love. But they were eaten by the wolves and caught by foreign armies. They were tortured till their tongues were still. They lost their hands for acts of petty theft and could no longer play their lutes. Their record labels dropped them. You sent me telegrams in thun-

derstorms, but there were power outages and no one in the village who could understand Morse code.

You learned to write. You took a quill and made death into a delta and life into the drawing of a tree. You placed my face within the vacancy of every "o." You saw my body lying still behind the shadow of your "I" and called it "L." And you looked into the illegible forest of symbols you'd created and knew I'd never read it. That I could never understand.

When they saw your scrawls they thought you mad.

But it wasn't like that. Not at all. For never did you read my letters, nor did the scribes. And you'll never read these words I've long been carving in soft stone. I've been carving your name—having long ago forgotten my own.

I've been waiting here so long that eternity is fathomable. Sometimes I think I've almost reached it. They'll put me in the north end of the cemetery, and I will be forgotten—not because I left no written trace, no paper trail, but because there was no one there to find or follow it. For you were king, but never learned to read. And the name now fading on my tombstone will be yours.



## DEDICATION

When the invisibles do battle, it's all a matter of patience. Two opponents step (unseen) onto the cobblestone square, ringed by a crowd of tourists and vendors, and face the void before them. Strategies are many, but—in the end—one combatant must always be the first to betray his position. If no sound is made, there can be no aim; no aim, no injury. The first of the invisibles to show himself is at great risk: a risk no greater than the second, who reveals himself in an attack. When blood is drawn, the tourists cheer.

But perhaps there were no invisibles, no hidden weapons, no battle. Perhaps the tourists and the vendors were headed to a corrido. Perhaps this rustling is only wind.





# ALLEGORIES

BY A.F. MATLOCK

This is the way the world works, here and everywhere else : every person does what they're good at until they die. The hard part, of course, is less often discussed. First you have to find what you're good at, and then you have to make other people need it.

There is a man who's set up shop on a small dirt road going uphill from the rue du Hassan II, drying other people's tea-towels. He doesn't wash them, he leaves that to the specialists, but he's found a sunny patch of road and a fold-out metal hanger on which he lays the cloths. He turns them attentively, flipping and rotating so the colours don't fade – or they fade evenly, at least. He swats the flies away, and if the weather turns, he takes the whole folding contraption inside, keeping a careful eye to the window, monitoring the patterns of the sky. His folding makes creases as precise as an iron and he stacks the towels with affection; he remembers always which belongs to whom.

Another man here has made a name for himself as the dirt collector. Dirt is free, you may say, with reason, and any able-bodied human can collect their own dirt for any variety of needs. This man, however, sifts through the piles you walk by every day on your way to work, to the grocery store; he gets rid of the roughage, the twigs and garbage; he collects the nice rocks that collectors might treasure and he gives these away for free; he can tell who will enjoy them the most.

As my father always said, a job worth doing is worth doing well, but he also said: time is money.

× AN AFTERTHOUGHT, BY LOUISE LAPLANTE



# A NATURALIST IN THE FAMILY

BY LAUREN ELKIN

A breath of air inflated the café as the door swung open and the boss swung out. It was too close, much too close, with the heat on full blast, and Cédric felt perspiration dampen his shirt under the armholes. He lifted his shoulders to ease some room between his skin and the fabric and the bit of cold helped. He uncrossed and recrossed his legs under the table and took another drag from the cigarette he'd lit just moments before he informed the boss that he had had it with being an errand boy and was becoming his own man.

If it were not impolite he would stretch out his legs, stack his feet on the chair, one ankle on the other, lean back, and let all the air in the place dry out his godforsaken wet underarms. Who did the boss think he was dealing with, all these years keeping a bright young man like Cédric to himself, pretending to train him? Threatening him. Keeping him near and keeping him down. The Apple account, all the magic he had worked with the Jesus phone, putting one in the paws of every Parisian under 40, it was genius. The kind you reward. But no—the boss kept it all to himself. Really, he was afraid, the old man. So afraid of being out of touch. Afraid I'd take it all away from him. That I'd cut off his legs below the knees. (Cédric took another long drag). Ha. The boss would have to get used to walking out of cafés with his ankles on the ground.

« Monsieur, j'ai pu m'encaisser, s'il vous plaît ? » the waiter droned, immune to ambition.

Cédric exhaled and laid down a fifty. The waiter counted out his change.

Time for everyone to cash out.

The cold air thwapped Geoffroy de Saint-Hilaire as he swung out of the café. The indignity of the conversation he had just withstood made his nostrils flare and his face red. The backstabbing twit. Turn around on Geoffroy de Saint-Hilaire, and undo everything he had worked for, all these years? That upstart, pretty little thing with his long slim cigarettes, that inky hair, never tidy, too-thin ties, too-tight jackets—the manoeuvring! The manipulating! Stuffed in a fitted shirt with monogrammed cufflinks! Son of a gun! He must have been going out nights. When I thought he was chasing girls, he was chasing my clients.

At the thought of his clients, the eminent Public Relations man Geoffroy de

Saint-Hilaire began to tremble, and feared his twattish former employee had pushed him into the arms of the heart attack he had always known would be the end of him. His heart felt warm and liquid, as if someone had sliced open a hot bag of soup into his chest cavity. Is this what it felt like? What was that pressure? And that ringing? And was that a sharp pain? Yes it was! Right under his ribcage! This was the thanks he deserved, for picking this parvenu out of his second-tier *école de commerce*. Nothing would ever have come of him were it not for me, Geoffroy thought. I made him, I made him, I made him, Geoffroy repeated to himself, changing the emphasis every time. *C'est moi qui l'ai fait!* Repeating this mantra, his heartbeat slowed to a more natural rhythm, slowed to match the beat of his Westons on the pavement, the only regular sound their hollow thwok, thwok, thwok. He was the only man in the street at this hour. The lights in the windows above glowed warm with Wednesday evening dinners. He thought of his own foyer, Marie-Laure most certainly not at home cooking, in the kitchen was very likely Julia, the au pair who looked after his twins. But let's be serious, he reasoned. Cédric would have made his own opportunities no matter what he had done. He was gifted that way. Rather like myself at that age, although goodness knows I certainly had a more correct start in life than that young snip there. Son of a butcher! Summers in some carnival town on the Atlantic. Tiny house in the suburbs. Mother a seamstress. He'd have taken advantage of any man who'd groomed him. Son of a butcher. Had to be, the way he carved me up. Approaching the Grand Café de l'Armée on the corner of the great boulevard leading to the unspoiled town of Neuilly, Geoffroy de Saint-Hilaire decided not to return home just yet, but to have another drink in a café that would never serve the young upstart Cédric Bouillier.

Cédric strolled out of the café on the long legs which had always served him well. Not only did any pair of pants hang from them in exactly the drape envisaged by the designer, but they brought Cédric half a head above everyone he met. Tall people are most successful, he repeated to himself frequently, this is true and there are rare exceptions, like Napoleon, or Sarkozy. Tall men lead the world. We see what is above and beyond. We see what the smaller people cannot, and what we do takes place out of their range of view. Thus did Cédric qualify his success as inevitable. Through his own sheer force of will he had shot up past his diminutive parents. If he could will himself to such a great height, what could he not do?

And who'd have thought it? He had not made great studies, had not attended any of the grands écoles, HEC, Sciences-Po, Polytechnique, unlike the boss, whose family connections surely got him into the Ecole des Mines. It was true he was ne-

ver a brilliant student, he reflected, striding down the rue Balzac towards George V. Much more the type who gets by on charm alone. He had charmed his French teacher in troisième, that's how he got around Balzac. All the lycée parents found Madame Morisset shocking, with her blouses that were sheer when the sunlight came through the window. Her blouses did nothing to inspire him to concentrate on Père Goriot. Luckily, she gave him extra-credit work after school, at which he excelled.

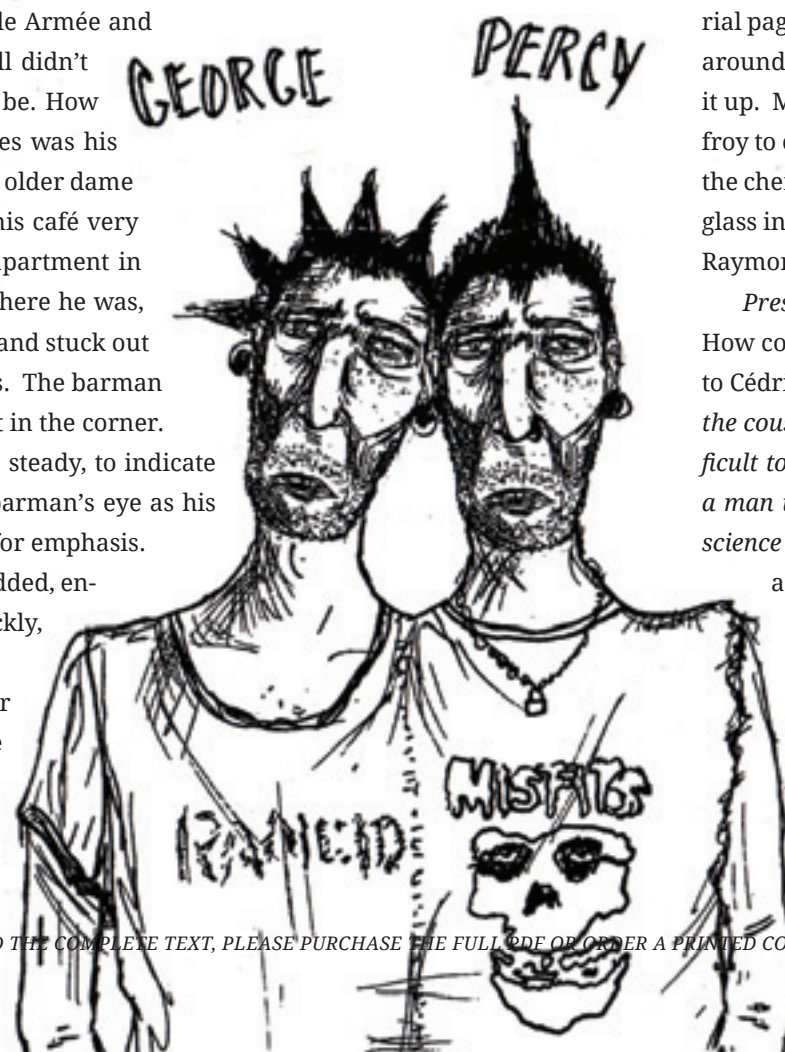
A woman approached from the opposite direction, striding on tall leather boots, her trenchcoat open, her hair undone, falling past her shoulders like some climbing plant off a trellis. Cédric met her eye, and held it until she had almost reached him, then abruptly turned and entered the lobby of the George V, willing her to follow. He strolled in the direction of the bar, and paused. Sure enough, the woman entered behind him, looking around. He turned and went into the bar, and she followed after.

Geoffroy de Saint-Hilaire pushed into the Café de la Grande Armée and nodded to the barman. Ten years of coming here and he still didn't know the chap's name. If it was the same chap. It looked to be. How could he have neglected to introduce himself? Knowing names was his business. But then, Geoffroy excused himself, brushing past an older dame on her way out in a thick haze of Chanel, he didn't come to this café very often, located as it was rather oddly between Etoile and his apartment in central Neuilly. Usually he drove past this café in taxis. Well, here he was, and there's no time like the present. He strode over to the bar and stuck out his hand, the way he would greet any of his business associates. The barman gargled something about the daily grind, and gestured at a seat in the corner.

«*Merci Monsieur*—» Geoffroy held the timbre of his voice steady, to indicate that, here, the barman was to supply his name. He met the barman's eye as his throat curved around the «*sieur*» and he raised his eyebrows for emphasis.

«*Trouin*,» the barman replied, his voice steady. Geoffroy nodded, energetically, with relief. «*Geoffroy de Saint-Hilaire*,» he said quickly, and gestured that he would sit now.

People passed by outside his window, arm in arm, or on their cell phones. Geoffroy remembered the copy of *Le Figaro* he had shoved in his briefcase. It was the literary section from the previous Thursday. He had not had time to get to it all weekend, but he greatly enjoyed reading the analyses of the



newest books. The history ones, especially. Geoffroy was an amateur historian of the First World War. He would have liked to dabble in botany as well, but he never had any free time for that sort of thing. And Marie-Laure oversaw the flowers on their balcony, afraid of the monstrosities he would attempt to raise in flowerpots. His great-grandfather (several times removed) had been a legendary naturalist. He had led a gentleman's existence and could dally in such interests. How times had changed, Geoffroy sighed. These days, aristocratic lineage didn't count for very much, and neither side of his family could afford to maintain their chateaux, neither the Brières de Mondetour, nor the Saint Hilaires. They had resorted to letting German tourists through to see the tapestries and oil paintings. He had thought to leave the business to Stéphane, who was eight years old. Time to wean him from his Wii and school him in the arts of entrepreneurship and interpersonal relations. Adeline too. Of course. She beat her brother at «*Texas Stakeout 2*» whenever she deigned to play. He opened his newspaper with such fervor that he promptly dropped it. He leaned over to pick it back up, and, opening it to the editorial page, turned the broadsheet around on itself. As he folded the newsprint back around, the center insert slipped to the ground. Geoffroy leaned over and picked it up. Monsieur Trouin brought over a glass of scotch and stood, waiting, for Geoffroy to collect himself. «*Your scotch, Monsieur*,» he said finally, setting it down on the cherrywood table, along with a bowl of peanuts. The newspaper finally tamed, glass in hand, Geoffroy settled in to chewing nuts and reading a review of the new Raymond Poincaré biography.

*President of the Republic during the First World War, Raymond Poincaré was—* How could he have done it? But then, it would not have been so hard. People took to Cédric—*a meteorologist, and the brother of renowned physicist Lucien Poincaré; the cousin of the mathematician Henri Poincaré, he of the famous Conjecture so difficult to solve it took one hundred years and the promise of a million dollars to get a man to do it, it could be said that a history of Raymond Poincaré is a history of science at the turn of the century—*Not because he was friendly, though he was affable enough. But because he was—*In his biography of the great President, Desforges perhaps over-stresses the importance of the family relationships—he was—* it had to be admitted—*Poincaré himself was elected to the Académie Française in 1909—even if it implied one had been otherwise—making him one of five French heads of state to become an Immortal—a beau gosse.* How the thoughts do wander. He closed the newspaper.

People assumed beauty made no room for brains; but Cédric had a



handsomeness that inspired interest. There was something in the fit of his clothes and the cut of his jaw that people respected. Cédric had it. Whatever it was. Where Geoffroy had had to work hard to earn a name for himself, in spite of his family name, Cédric was already legendary. He appeared older than his twenty-six years. He came across as responsible and experienced, calm in any situation. Geoffroy had been in the business since the days before Etoile and Roissy had been suffixed “Charles de Gaulle.” Years before Cédric was a speck of dust in his mother’s eye, Geoffroy had opened telegrams, smoked in his office, squeezed the firm fesses of his secretaries. Cédric had missed all that, came to work for him in an age of email and sexual harassment lawsuits. Crying shame. The boy would never know what the public relations business had really been, its founding values. Now it was all about making people buy things they didn’t need.

And it had all changed so quickly. No, that’s not right, it wasn’t quick, the run of years from that thin, late 1960s self to this portly, early 60s self. It happened while he was waiting for something good to happen. Take email. What an innovation! The Minitel, that was something, but email was a revolution. He basked in the improvement of the technology. Soon you could attach documents, and then photos, and then you could actually place those photos and attachments on the internet, held in some limbo, hosted by some hypothetical computers he supposed were somewhere out in Arizona. And now they went on the Jesus phone! But somewhere in between welcoming the onset of technology and now, his life had ceased to be his own, and now life transpired between his line of vision and his Blackberry. Well! What line of vision! What a joke. He needed his spectacles to peer into the tiny screen. He spent more time squinting at the Blackberry than doing anything worthwhile. Where the new had once seemed so great and good, it was revealed to have been a Trojan Horse, ushering in nefarious time-wasting apps, and a sense of his own age. Then, the lithe girls, with their long pretty hair, the étudiantes, so determined and so proud. And now, Marie-Laure, rubbing lotion into her feet in the bed at night. «With that woman,» Cédric told him not long ago, «You’re the victim and not the executioner.»

The Poincaré forgotten, Geoffroy stared out the window into the street, where the dusk made the world a study in blue, smudged with aureoles lit like candles.

Cédric’s future was lit by optical fibers.

The bar of the George V was dim and meant to convey a stolid sense of nineteenth-century clubbish entitlement. Cédric settled into a leather club chair and ordered a glass of scotch. She entered, sat in a seat near his. Her skirt draped just

so, as jersey does. He used an index finger to loosen his tie, ran his tongue over the tip of an incisor. He had come here with the boss many times, felt at home. But he could stop calling him the boss, now. Now he was Geoffroy. Not Monsieur. Not Patron. Poor, balding Geoffroy. His own father had a thick head of hair. That man had blood in his veins. blood makes the hair grow. Cédric regarded the young lady perched on the edge of her seat with her legs crossed. They each sat and sipped from a crystal glass, taking in the fire, the lighting, the other members of their club as they came and went. And at the end of the glass, they rose and went out together.

His parents, Monsieur et Madame Etienne-Isadore Omnès de Saint-Hilaire, were whimsical people, and, inspired by the great naturalist whose portrait hung in the parlor of their small chateau near Bourg-en-Bresse, had named their small son Geoffroy. Over the centuries the family had added the particle «de,» as the name of Saint-Hilaire became renowned in France and even in England, since the great Charles Darwin had seen fit to reference the French biologist in his *Origin of Species*, thanks to, as far as Geoffroy could make out, his namesake’s theories of form, typology, and morphology. (Geoffrey Saint-Hilaire clearly had a good PR man.) In any case, it was a subtle iteration from Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire to Geoffroy de Saint-Hilaire. The names were just close enough to confuse. Paris, especially the fifth arrondissement where Geoffroy had done his cours de prépa, was riddled with references to this illustrious ancestor and his colleagues: there was the rue Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire, in which that lithe young thing had given herself to him under a name plate, so ill-advisedly, in the dark of an early seventies evening; rue Cuvier; rue Berthollet; rue Daubenton. Without forgetting the magisterial Museum of Natural History which stood in the Jardin des Plantes, where Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire had once been a professor, and in charge of the menagerie.

His great namesake had had a modest beginning, like Cédric. His father had had to beg a favor from his friends in the clergy to obtain a scholarship for his son to study at Navarre. The young Etienne-Geoffroy could have been a great theologian, but his interests turned to law, and then medicine, and from there it was a small leap to studying science itself. Rocks, animals, plants, all the non-human natural arts, were his domain. How many times had the modern-day Geoffroy looked at a rock and wished he cared what crystals it held inside. He tried to become interested in plants, but there was Marie-Laure, hands on hips, blocking his path to the balcony, saying she would take care of it. So he left nature to the naturalists and looked after his clients and his contacts, who had more in common with the

animal kingdom than they would ever admit.

There was a family story according to which in 1790, aged 18, Etienne-Geoffroy saw his favorite professor dragged off to prison by the revolutionaries, and Etienne-Geoffroy helped free him. He arrived at the prison on August 15th, but the older man, a priest, refused to be set free on the Feast of the Assumption, and elected to stay an extra night in prison.

Geoffroy had never cared for a teacher as much as that.

Young Cédric, on the other hand. Yes, he was a nurturer of the young, not an admirer of the old. He was modern, was he not? 1968, on the barricades, *sous les pavés la plage! Il est interdit d'interdire!* They had blazed a revolution, he and his classmates. He had never thrown anything at the CRS (too scared) but he had been really good at getting the word out about the manif of the day, making sure the papers reported the right numbers about how many people attended the marches, keeping morale up, informing the younger ones of the evildoings of the Gaullists controlling the country's wealth and resources. But things had not turned out the way they thought they would, though Geoffroy had never been naïve enough to think they would, and Geoffroy, when all was said and done, wound up getting the word out about commodities. Soap. Frozen foods. Aspirin. And then, and that was when the money came, computers. Gadgets, gimmicks, out with your old and here's the new. He had not been content to be a glorified ad man; he had had to get in on the action. And here he was. In the action. He entertained billionaire American computer geeks when they came to visit their tiny French offshoots whose managers' eyes gleamed at the presence of such innovation, such daring, such lucrative wedding of technology and entrepreneurship. And Cédric made sure Les Inrocks had a big story on the Jesus phone. «Cédric» and «Jesus phone,» forever linked in the annals of technology PR. Geoffroy's mind reeled at the implications. He signaled for another glass of scotch.

Cédric draped an arm around the shoulders of his new dinner companion as they strolled from the George V to Fouquet's. It was here that Sarkozy had come to celebrate his presidential win: Sarkozy had leveled the field, and then celebrated at Fouquet's. So would Cédric, with—

«What's your name, kitten?»

«Pauline,» she purred, like something out of a Godard film, all tight sweater and pert breasts.

—with Pauline. The maître d' knew him. They were led to a power table, and



Pauline knew it, and Cédric knew it, and everything was happening the way it was supposed to.

«Evolution, my dear M'sieur Drouin—»

—»Trouin,» the good barman corrected for the third time, his patience waning—

«—Trou-in, evolution,» slurred Geoffroy de Saint-Hilaire. «That is what changed the world!»

«Evolution? Like monkeys?» Monsieur Trouin hazarded a guess as he leaned a hand on the back of a chair, consenting to discuss great matters, as he always did, with his drunken clientele. But Saint-Hilaire—this was the first time Trouin had seen him drunk. Usually held it quite well. One of those vieux types who knew better than to let it all hang out like this. Who thrived on containment and ironic distance.

«Precisely! It happens all the time! All around us! Have to try to keep up,» Geoffroy burbled into his scotch. «But we didn't know. It was happening. Till we knew. And then everything changed!»

Pauline was from Paris. Cedric could tell from that rapid way she spoke, but he asked, to be sure, and she said yes, she was from Paris. Ah, the women of Paris. So meticulous about their person, and about the person of their dinner companions. She had thrice enquired his exact position in Saint-Hilaire's firm. Each time he had been cagey. «I'm in whatever position I want.» «An enviable position.» «Let's just say, la boîte, c'est moi.» As he got progressively more and more drunk, he stopped dancing around his actual position and began to brag. «You know Geoffroy de Saint-Hilaire? The PR man? Beat Publicis out of the French Jesus phone campaign?»

«Mmmm...» the name sounded familiar, but Pauline could not say why. «No, I don't think so,» hoping it did not turn out that she ought to have heard of him. «But I have a Jesus phone.»

«Ah. Well. Geoffroy is my boss. Groomed me straight out of business school. No idea why he chose me but he did. And gave me the Apple account.»

«That's very impressive,» she murmured, sipping her wine and calculating whether she would let him sleep with her that night. «He must have believed very much in you.»

«Geoffroy had me doing all the legwork, but I pulled it off! I pulled off what he was too afraid to do. Geoffroy is inept and out of touch. I did what I had to do. The situation practically begged for it.»





# FROM THE METAMORPHOSIS OF EURYDIKE

BY A. ONOMA

“Je vous livre le secret des secrets... Les miroirs sont les portes par lesquelles la mort vient et va. Du reste, regardez-vous toute votre vie dans une glace et vous verrez la mort travailler comme les abeilles dans une ruche de verre.”

Jean Cocteau

## EURYDIKE:

I, Eurydike, daughter  
of water, daughter  
of Liriope who slept with Kephisos  
the river, I, Eurydike,  
knelt at the edge of the Lethe and knew  
another. I  
saw a woman in the water,  
her face was paper-white, her eyes  
were the sorrel eyes of want and she saw  
only me. When my breath distressed  
the stillness between us, I witnessed death  
flickering like a black and white film  
on the river’s screen, churning  
like a plague of bees  
in the glass hive of her cheeks.  
She rose to meet me when I leant  
to kiss her, and I drank dark nectar,  
pistil milk and liquorice from her mouth.  
Leaving my clothes on the shore,  
I dressed my hands in red gloves and waded  
into the river where no current stirs,  
and she laid beneath me, her bare thighs  
braced against mine and I went down,  
ground my knees in the angry sand,  
thrust my hand into the water  
and felt her fingers find me, gasped  
as she gasped, taste of salt and molasses, hot pomegranate sap,  
clenched flesh and the unending trembling of horsehair  
and metal, plectrum and harp-string, and the swell  
in the pelvis, the pulse in the sacrum and ilium, the cusp of the swell—  
I fell into the crest  
of myself—  
the Lethe received  
the rain.<sup>1</sup>

## ‘ORPHEUS:

The shepherd of seals, Teiresias  
grieved. Aristaios, lover  
of Eurydike and shepherd  
of bees, slaughtered the heifers  
and bulls whose fields he shared,  
and the hives of his friends  
were flooded with disease.  
Eurydike’s sisters wept and shrieked,  
Kyane cut Arethusa’s hair  
and Arethusa cut Kyane’s hair  
and they twined their hair together and gave  
the braid to Persephone, wife of Haidēs.  
Persephone laughed. Orpheus  
became bones and the bones  
became stones, a hand  
of granite, ants at its wrist,  
and Eurydike’s rhapsody rang  
and echoed among the stones,  
and her sisters came and scattered  
the skeleton in the river Hebros.  
Eurydike, my second wife,  
daughter of water,  
daughter of Liriope  
who slept with Kephisos the river,  
Eurydike  
knelt at the edge of the Lethe and knew  
herself.





# LEIF

## PART 2 OF A STORY\*

**T**he bright September sun, though unable to connect with Leif's hotel room – extraordinarily expensive for a white-walled box in a quiet part of town that was untouched by tourists and therefore, to Leif, of little interest – is bright in the real world. When he emerges at the top of rue Rodier onto place Anvers, his shadow is cast long over the trimmed hedges. It is late morning. It is always late morning before he rouses (he dismisses this flashing sign of depression with the modern socialite's excuse: jet-lag).

Now, Leif wanders the neighbourhood at the butt of the Sacré Coeur. He waits, for the fourth day in a row, for the Hotel Corona's café-bar to open at eleven o'clock.

He walks uphill. Hopeful Italian restaurants, sculpture studios, and covert strip clubs are scattered along the road. No café looks more appealing than any other. The Thai Relaxation Spa two doors down from the Hotel Corona has pen and ink diagrams depicting a man with a beaded headdress and henna tattoos all over his chest sitting atop a woman, laying on her stomach, her legs bent at the knees and her feet coming up to touch his shoulder. The man is facing the viewer and pressing one hand onto the perfect mounds of her ass while the other reaches around underneath her body, where it cups the breasts that press into the rug, a nice Persian rendered with surprising detail. The glass in the door is frosted and, between that and the sheer white curtain, he cannot see what kind of 'relaxing' is going on.

Catching his reflection in the opaque window he registers the same sequence of emotion as he always does – surprise, doubt, embarrassment. In his head, he is always more Botticelli, less Caravaggio.

He is about to continue up the hill when the door opens. A pretty girl with long red hair comes out and he is startled. She doesn't look like she belongs there. He doesn't really know where *there* is, or where it leads, but with her clear pale face and wide-set eyes she looks like she came from the moon. God.

Leif belatedly registers the embarrassment he should feel at being caught in front of the windows, as if he were trying to peer through the cracks in the curtains (which, of course, he was), and bows his head in the pose of the shamed. He doesn't move. He is directionless. He is wasting time. And yet...She hasn't moved either. She reminds him of – yes ! A red-haired

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*\*Part 1 of this story is available in issue 8 of Her Royal Majesty*

× **FIGURE STUDY** BY DAN ESTABROOK

Sylvia. She looks at him and looks away, her eyes not sticking anywhere. Maybe it's the red hair that's the surprise, the bright pulpy colour of a pumpkin. And yet...something about her face, her jaw-line, the plump apples of her cheeks...

"Salut," she says, breaking their static silence, and finally turns to walk up the hill.

He feels his pants tighten around his groin. He turns the other way, descending, and as the distance grows he is filled with an inordinately large feeling of regret.

Walking, leaving, continuing – he fails to associate the slackening of the mast in his throat, the growing distance between his vessel and his home continent, with her, and her tangled red hair.

At the bottom of the hill he remembers that he had been on his way up.

At eleven o'clock, he enters the hotel café, takes his seat at the bar and nods to the owner, who brings him what has become his 'usual.' Then, having no need for him, the owner continues to tinker with bottles and wires. Leif is the only client in the café and he sips his weak, too-sweet coffee with abandon and then slides his empty cup to the lip of the counter to signal his request for a second.

The man nods.

Easy.

Elements of basic survival no longer present any problems for him. This, however, makes him worry that his other, regular worries are now no longer noble enough. His inevitable slide towards egocentricity disappoints him, convinced, from his momentary elevation to a fundamental living, that he had gotten over that kind of thing.

He notices with surprise that it is noon, and that nothing at all has happened. A woman is sitting in the back of the café, peeling potatoes. The pile of peel is larger than the pile of potatoes. A young man sits in the back of the café eating two steaks and a plate of French fries and mayonnaise with a speed indicating something more than just hunger.

All of a sudden, as if on cue, the regulars begin to arrive in a steady stream and completely obliterate the silence which preceded them. All of them, even the men, kiss the owner on both sides of his black-broom moustache. The woman, whom Leif recognizes as Whiskey Woman, arrives, as expected, shortly before 12:30. When she enters, Leif feels her harness all the attention of the room, though nobody looks directly at her.

"*Un coca,*" she nods.

The man with the moustache pulls a cylindrical glass from the shelf and uses silver tongs to drop three rounded ice cubes into the glass. He pours in about four fingers of whiskey and then fills the last two fingers with Coke. The woman already had the twitch and, after her first sip, she begins to walk around the bar, her stance open, her toes outward. Noticing Leif, she acknowledges him with a nod and a big breaking smile that exposes her craggy teeth.

Leif reacts with something between smirking and shrinking back into himself. He worries that the stool he is sitting on belongs to her. Whiskey Woman walks to the pile of potato peels and picks up a handful of the dirty coils. She brings them to her face, smells, smiles. Pulling a piece of her blonde and black striped hair from behind her ear, she brings it to her mouth and sucks on it.

"*Alors, le courier, est-il arrivé ?*" she asks, half-grunting, walking back to the bar.

The owner – the thin line of hair round his head like laurel leaves ennobling his bald spot – rifles through the white envelopes next to the espresso machine and withdraws one. She opens it, drops the envelope, and runs out of the back door of the café holding the leaf of paper.

Leif gets lost without a map and so he carries around a little *Paris Plan* that he bought at the place where they also sell magazines. He consults this map regularly. On the map is also a list of things he would like to do in the particular arrondissements, in case he forgets his options when the time comes.

The day, no longer the morning's miraculous blue, is now so thick with fog Leif feels like he is walking around in God's great nostril. He finds little pleasure in his mission, his day's task, and walks up and down the metered paths of the Jardins de Luxembourg. He had been rejected – well, excluded – from the chess games the men were playing in the far corner, near the Senate. He could not have seriously expected to play (though he, sixty-five-percent-seriously, did) if he could not even properly pose the question; even his miming skills were inadequate, and, feeling too embarrassed to just watch, he walked quickly away, backwards. The men, wiry, wizened, and warty, had left him partnerless; they did not even laugh as he retreated. His heart was broken.

His fingertips become moist and heavy as they hover in the thickening mist and he imagines that, were he to try to look at them, he would find them invisible behind a gray veil. His thoughts can not prioritize his surroundings in order to select what information to retain; his mind scats along the surface of the image – with the fog, more like a black and white photograph. The plane trees planted at an even rhythm, the flow of people on the gently curving paths, the children – each one looking like Napoleon – with their yellow and red sailboats in the pond: there is no room for him. Even the chairs are scattered in a perfect pattern, so perfect it seemed not just impossible but somehow unfair.

Sylvia had, at one point, loved him – first for, then despite of – his obsession with chess. Then she, too, left him partnerless.

Now, as he walks along the tree-lined pathways, he begins to compose a letter to Sylvia in his head. He thinks of her legs, a little thick around the ankles, and the way she bit her lips – he hadn't yet figured out which of her feelings was associated with this adorable tick – she





Humph is in his doge. Words weigh no no more to him than raindrops to Rethfernhim.  
Which we all like. Rain. When we sleep. Drops. But wait until our sleeping. Drain. Sdops.

had a lot of feelings.

*To Sylvia.*

*Dear Sylvia.*

*Hello.*

He sits down on a hard green chair, disrupting the perfect pattern in the mildly-wooded area near the bust of Baudelaire.

*I'm in Paris.* No.

He thinks of her in New York.

*It's nice here.* No.

*Paris in the fall is as temperamental as a bleeding girl – don't believe what those jazzy romantics tell you.* No. Of course not.

He thinks of her knotty red – no, no, mahogany – hair when she woke up all tender and confused in the mornings.

Not : *I miss you.*

The fog materializes and the sidewalk develops dark gray spots; if he focuses, he can see the thick drops plaiting around leaves and legs and splatting on the ground. He looks up, following the drops, and welcomes the roiling sky.

A woman walks past him, away from him, catching his attention; he looks up to follow her as she walks around the pond in the centre of the park. She has Sylvia's cylindrical calves, her waist, her long fingers, and then, her hair – red.

He follows her, this girl he feels some small possession over, through the field of raindrops, follows her into the café Maupassant on the place du Luxembourg, at the foot of rue Soufflot.

She, the girl, is not there. A red-haired decoy has replaced her.

A little bewildered at this loss, he sits down in a wicker chair on the terrace under a warming lamp, cuddled and sweaty like he is about to hatch.

Leif has learned quickly to delay the satisfaction of his desires. He has learned that here, you can't fulfill all your desires at once if you want to keep, not just enjoying yourself, but existing.

The waiter comes, white towel on his arm and everything. Leif braves it: "Un caf-ay-oh-late, et...(here he gives up) an almond croissant please."

He pours steamed milk from a miniature ceramic jug into the large nearly-empty cup in which lays a thin layer of strong, burnt coffee. His appetite properly tantalized, he just about shivers with delight as he pulls little bits of his butter-sogged pastry, rips those bits into even smaller pieces, and tugs them apart in his mouth.

The next day, a Friday – he returns to Toronto on Sunday – Leif goes to his hotel café later than usual; he'd been to see Versailles that morning but hadn't stayed long. It is shortly after

*in thick silhouettes, bending light into blues*

four when he arrives at the place Anvers.

The reverse-sewers are spewing water which streams down the hills, gathering cigarette butts and detritus until it collects in some filth pool, somewhere. He feels anxious and hopeful as he walks from the métro at the top of rue Rodier down the hill to the café. Like something is going to happen.

The café is not empty. Leif finds the speed-eating man – Italian? – now slumped in a puddle-like lump over an empty cup. On the table is a litter of little white papers, one receipt for each of his double gins. He is mumbling to himself as though it were some midnight heartbreak; his words are flaccid with alcohol and sorrow.

From left to right, there are: the large square man drinking a beer, the large burly-circle man drinking his girly-pink wine, Whiskey Woman sucking her hair, Leif himself, and a woman with skin frosted with a thin layer of grime.

Un café; a nod.

With the café, the old moustached man brings out a loaf of bread and a plate of paté still shaped in the cylinder from which it had only recently been ejected.

Whiskey Woman, already finished with her second drink, eagerly spreads the pale pink chunky paste on a slice of bread, and offers it to Leif the way a mother would: "*Tu veux une petite tartine?*" He doesn't ask what the flesh-coloured guck is but eats it gratefully; he understands the fragile conditions of initiation. It is salty and edible. It is good. The door opens and the red-haired girl walks in (the real one). She looks at him. He approaches, smiling.

"I don't know why I'm talking so much, I never talk this much."

Bewitched, he lifts his glass to his mouth, and misses.

"So it's not prostitution?" he asks.

"God, no. I would never...did you think I - ?"

"I thought the Relaxation things...and the diagram on the window..."

"No, no. It's an Eastern art centre. We get naked but it's for art."

They've drunk their drinks – rum and coke for him, bubbly water for her – next to each other at the bar. The bartender gives Leif a funny look, nudging his eyes over to the girl next to him, making suggestive gestures with his enormous eyebrows. He knows that she recognizes him, he knows it. They pace their sips so as to finish at the same time and, when they make to leave, both walk towards the courtyard towards their hotel rooms. She seems surprised but he had already divined it. She invites him to hers for tea.

"So...What do you think about when you're doing it?"

"Nothing, really."

"Really?"

*against the ancient sky.*



She pauses for a long time. “Really.”  
He loves this about her already – the way that, thoughtful and soft, each time she speaks she is speaking for the first time.

“I mean, yeah. I don’t think about my body, or art, or nakedness, or anything poetic, really. I don’t really need to, you know, because enough people are doing that for me, about me. My body is being elevated into art just for being there, sitting there, still.”

Bullshit, he thinks.

“And do you like the stuff they make?”

“I don’t know. Some of it. It’s mainly beginners figuring it out for themselves, and I don’t like looking at their work. It’s not about that.”

“Have you done this a lot? Is that why they hired you?” It’s starting to feel like an interview but he doesn’t know where else to move the conversation. He doesn’t even want to know the answer to his question.

“No, no, not at all. I met an artist and she asked me to, and then introduced me to other people, and, well I just have the shape of a woman instead of a twig. Which works for them. French women tend not to make very good artist’s models.”

She takes a sip of mango juice. Her freckles fade as her skin reddens. She touches her neck: “Francesca,” and then his, like a question.

“Leif.”

“A pleasure.”

“It’s mine.”

Leif continues: “How long have you lived here?”

“In the hotel?” she flicks her hair behind her ears. “Just a few weeks. I moved here, from the 5th, when, when I...” She trails off, blushing again.

“I like what you’ve done with the place,” he says, but his joke flops: the hotel room is as empty and impersonal as his own. “And in Paris?”

“Since I graduated – June.”

Coming to understand the nebulous nexus where choice meets chance, he does not ask why she had come in the first place. She offers more, though:

“Do you want to see something? This is another reason why artists like to use me as a model.”

She lifts her shirt. He laughs again, still genuinely, but less comfortably. He puts his finger to



the part of her abdomen just below her left ribs.

“This?” He feels the sickle-shaped scar there, the size of a finger, nearly invisible to the eye.

“Yeah. I had a twin, a parasitic twin. Do you know what that is?”

He shook his head. “Not really.”

“It was removed at birth. It’s a conjoined twin frozen in its beginning stages of development that is not alive, but ‘lives’ off of its host until removed.”

“...”

“What? Are you interested, repulsed? I can’t tell what you’re thinking,” she says.

“I have never been more interested in anything.”

“Stop.”

“No I’m serious, please. I don’t know anything about this, it’s fascinating. I’m fascinated by everything you say.”

Leif is stunned. This woman is a magical creature, landed here at random, from afar, for his pleasure alone. And there might have even been two of her, if things had been different. He puts his mug in his crotch to hide the swelling.

“It’s not a big deal, really.” She adjusts herself, crosses the left leg over the right, places her jaw in the comfort of her palm. “It wouldn’t have lived. It wasn’t a human, really.” This doesn’t make him feel any better.

She starts to speak again but he stops listening at a certain moment. Though he has just

met this girl who is the shape of a woman – thick in the thighs, pouty in the mouth – with tangled pale red hair, a girl whom he is too scared to kiss, whom he will not ever get to know any more than this (as he’s leaving the next day), he knows that he loves her. At that moment, that is enough. He imagines her heart beating its fresh new blood at the same time as echoing, just repeating, the same patterns it has always followed. He looks at her, propped on the bed, and moves towards her diagonally, inadvertently, like a Knight drawn to his Queen. As he puts his head to her chest, he thinks of how the light of old stars takes years to reach the earth, and how that doesn’t matter.

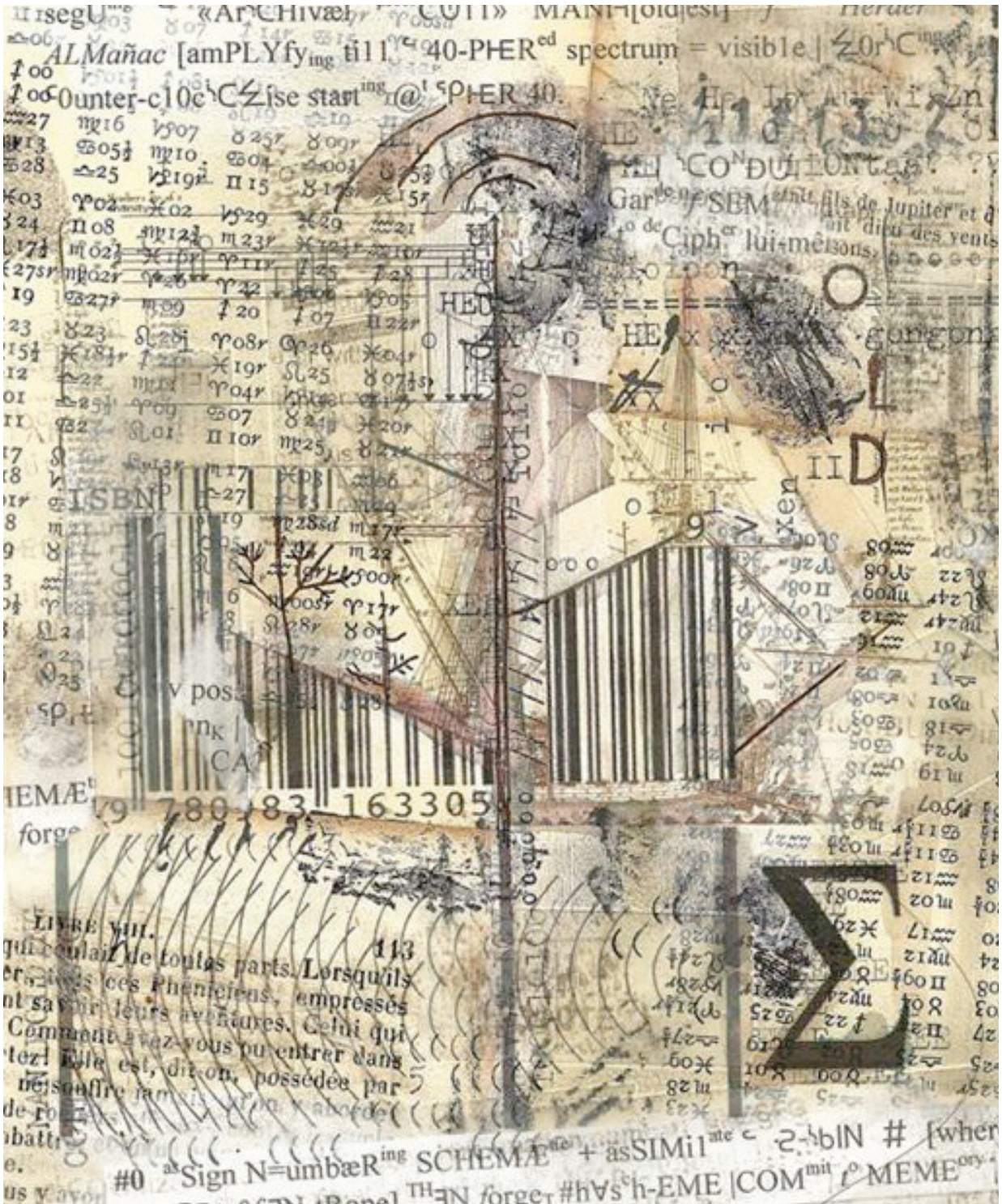


# SYNECDOCHE

“The bones of the inner ear  
cannot hear themselves tap;  
themselves hearing, they  
can’t themselves hear.”

from Andy Verboom’s “Synecdoche”

× ARK CODEX 0:3:16



## I. hammer

we remember one girl who came kissing  
when we clacked our teeth together, thrusting  
her tongue into us like an animal  
meant for sacrifice. Two others whose clefts  
would twinge to asterisks when we nibbled  
our bottom lip. A woman who would clutch and lick  
our arm as we concertoeed her underivories. Three  
who bowered in our eyes. Later, one  
who wuvved our “nakee widdle bumb”—  
every last one of their pink porcelain hearts  
with a smooth arc we bankrupt

## II. anvil

a peach pillowcase stuffed with a snake.  
His snout undulates like that kind of bedding  
prodding for his own the limbs on you. This tinkerer  
tinkers with your digits. Eyes you in your sockets  
like an equal. Batters down his iron on your face  
another face, every flaw facsimiled—you’d like to pretend  
he purses his ears as you clang, clops off into night  
having slumped a notebook on your gut, wraps  
you in butcher’s paper and waits. He doesn’t.  
He scrubs your skin hot as his come dawn  
a recantation, an abnegation, a denial

## III. stirrup

it begins as half an itch. Coffined up since yesterday in naps  
I yawn me open.  
I start at my common work.  
A quick breakfast of bacon I cook up, and broken water.  
I tug outward my tack from its chest.  
I strap it to the squealing earth.  
I slip one foot—derive my thighs—  
and then other in. Anticipate the giggle of meconium.  
Legs spread to its razory back,  
I ride the world;  
in riding it out an open window, there is no danger



# CITIES AS SISTERS SISTERS IN CITIES

BIDDY  
LIVESEY

Concurrent with the development of sister cities has been a spectacular growth in international tourism and sport; the pen pal movement; the formation of a planetary community of radio hams; high-level scientific and cultural exchanges; the Peace Corps and programs such as the Experiment in International Living; the efforts of the World Federalists, the Universal Esperanto Association, and likeminded organizations agitating for international amity

1 Wereldkaart Staatkundige indeling - Wereldverkeer

2 Noordpoolgebied Arctis

3 Zuidpoolgebied Antarctis



Map image (above) shows cities of residence of the sisters of selected women living in Rotterdam in 2011.

Map image (below) shows official sister cities, partner cities, and sister ports of the City of Rotterdam, 2011.

1 Wereldkaart Staatkundige indeling - Wereldverkeer

2 Noordpoolgebied Arctis

3 Zuidpoolgebied Antarctis





According to the first chronicler of the sister cities movement, Wilbur Zelinsky, in his paper ‘The Twinning of the World’ (2), sister-city relationships are generally motivated by ‘friendship between nations’. Other writers have characterised sister-city relationships as driven by a desire for peace, exemplifying ‘the human condition of Love’ (3, p.281), and allied with idealist movements that stress the common humanity of all peoples, including attempts to promote the ‘universal language’ of Esperanto and the Experiment in International Living homestay programme (2,4). Sister cities are a ‘...partnership of two cities from different countries which is based on cultural and social understanding to achieve cultural dialogue’, and in some cases, humanitarian and development goals (5, p.1).

The city of Rotterdam has thirty-three sister-city relationships<sup>1</sup>, which is significantly more than the number of relationships held by other Dutch cities. In 2009 the City of Rotterdam published a comprehensive policy entitled ‘Rotterdam World City: fixed directions, new ambitions’, which sets out Rotterdam’s Programme for International and European Activities (6). ‘Rotterdam World City’ describes Rotterdam’s existing sister-city connections, and identifies priority areas for new international relationships. Analysis of cities historically linked with Rotterdam reveals two themes: geographical links based on the Rhine/Maas river as a conduit of trade and cultural exchange through Western Europe; and humanitarian/political relationships with cities outside ‘the West’. More recent ‘sisters’ illustrate another set of relationships, based both on connections from the Dutch colonial era and on contemporary migration patterns. This project considers these relationships in the context of Rotterdam’s role as a ‘city of immigration’, and the debate across western Europe regarding the integration of immigrant peoples into receiving societies.

× TITLE PAGE DESIGN BY LUCAS RAMPAZZO

## ROTTERDAM, RECONCILIATION AND THE RHINE

Rotterdam’s identity is based on two things – shipping and struggle. Rotterdam’s first ‘sister city’ was Kingston-on-Hull, a city in the north-east of England which signed a formal agreement with Rotterdam in 1935. This link recognised the Rotterdam-to-Hull passenger ferry connection, which still operates (6). As shown in “De gemeente-wapen van Nederland” (7), the crest of the City of Rotterdam shows two lions balancing a shield above the words ‘Sterker door Strijd’ (Stronger through Struggle), a motto given to Rotterdam after the city was bombed during the Second World War. Most of the city’s centre was destroyed, and seventy years later the central city is still full of building projects constructing ‘a new heart for Rotterdam’. Following Germany’s invasion of Poland in September 1939, the Queen of the Netherlands made a joint appeal with the King of Belgium for mediation to stop the war. The appeal was unsuccessful, and the Low Countries were invaded in 1940 (8). During the same year, Belgium’s second city Antwerp and Rotterdam adopted each other as sisters. The war in Europe ended in 1945, with the Soviet capture of Berlin and subsequent German surrender. Rotterdam became sister cities with Oslo (Norway) and Basel (Switzerland). Both Norway and Switzerland were Dutch allies or neutral during the Second World War.

The relationship between Basel and Rotterdam highlights the role of the Rhine/Maas river in Rotterdam’s city-to-city connections. The river Rhine runs from its source in Switzerland through western Europe, linking Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, Germany, France and the Netherlands. When the river reaches the Netherlands, the name changes as the water splits into three main distributaries. One of these, the Beneden Merwede, joins the Lek River near Kinderdijk, and becomes the Nieuwe Maas which flows through Rotterdam and out to the North Sea. In their research on civic connections between ‘mountain communities’ around the world, cultural geographers Debarbieux and Rudas (9, p.500) discuss how communities use geographical categories, such as mountains and rivers, to build shared identities based on a perception of commonality across similarly-located communities. They explain that mountain communities associate themselves with independence and intrepidity, while harbour communities see themselves as hard-working places where people from all backgrounds meet and trade. The name ‘Rotterdam’ literally means ‘dam on the muddy water’, and dates from 1260 when a dike was built across the river ‘Rotte’, in the location where Hoogstraat runs today. Hundreds of



kilometres upstream, Basel shares the identity of a 'river city', describing itself as '[a]t the heart of Europe, trinational and cosmopolitan' (10). Between Basel and Rotterdam, the Rhine runs through the next city to join Rotterdam's family – the city of Duisberg (Germany), which connected with Rotterdam in 1950. Beginning with Duisberg, the decade of the 1950s witnessed a wave of sister-city relationships initiated as reconciliatory gestures between the members of the Allied and Axis groups formed during the Second World War. Zelinsky notes '... a proliferation of post-1950 liaisons between German, Austrian, and Italian towns on the one hand and places in their erstwhile enemy and conquered territories on the other, most notably France, Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, the U.S, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union' (2, p.20). This spate

of 'family bonding' reflected efforts to integrate Europe's interests and to prevent another war<sup>II</sup>, also manifested in the establishment of the Council of Europe in 1949 with a mandate to 'promote European unity by debate, publicity, and research' (8, p.1083). Relationships established between Rotterdam, Cologne (Germany), Esch-sur-Alzette (Luxembourg), Lille (France) and Turin (Italy) were all reciprocated, forming a quintuplet of sisters. This group were joined by Nuremberg (West Germany) as a 'partner city' in 1961, and by Liege (Belgium) in 1976. Zelinsky also notes that Japan initiated a number of 'reconciliatory' relationships with cities in countries who had fought on the Allied side of the war (2). Rotterdam is on this list, pairing with Kobe, Japan's sixth-largest city in 1967.

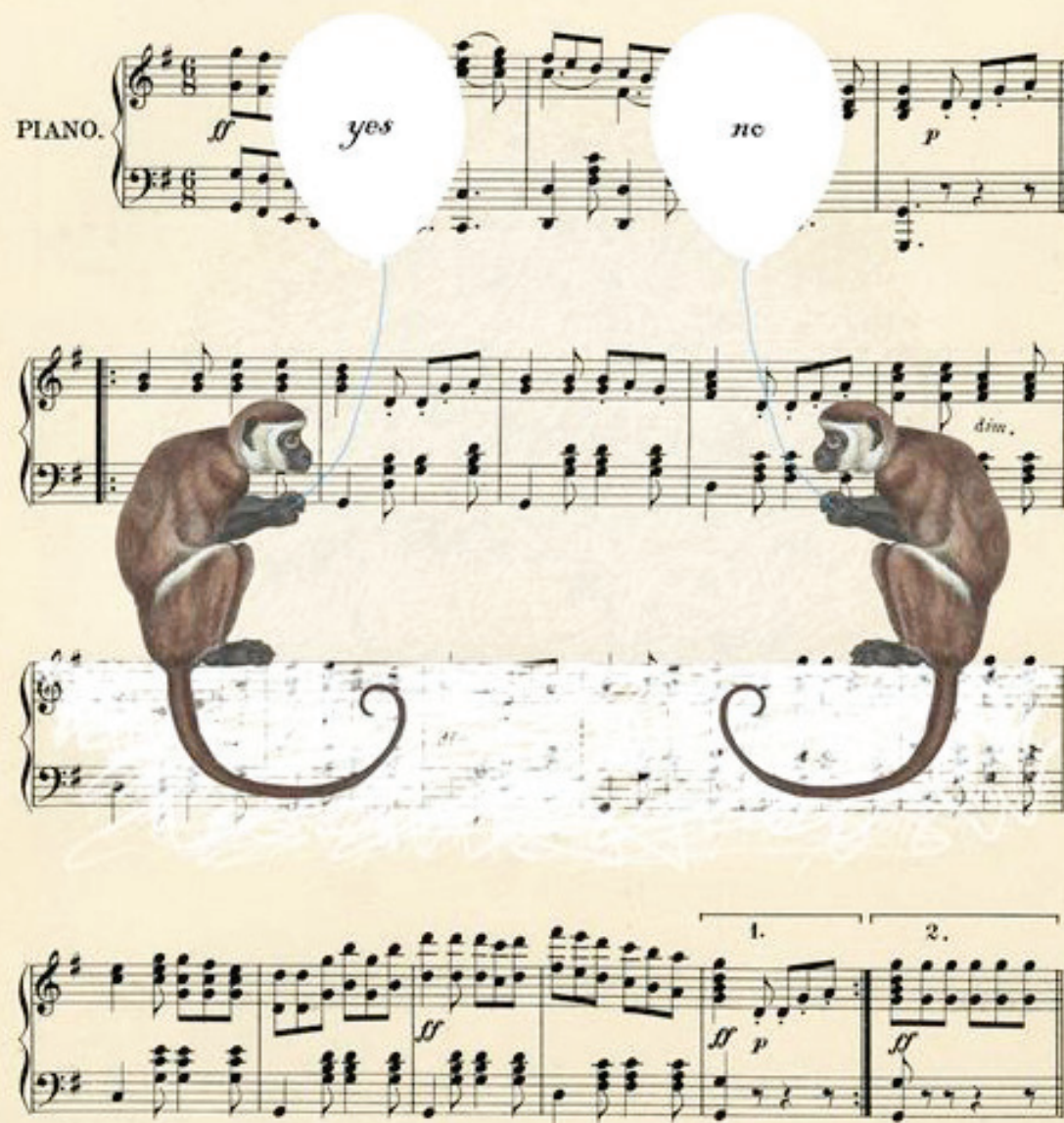


## CITIES, COUNTRIES, AND THE COLD WAR

The term 'sister' is an interesting choice to describe the relationships between cities. A sister-relationship implies an empathetic bond based on mutual understanding, but also the potential for jealousy and division. During the Cold War period from 1945 until around 1990, countries defined their identities in opposition to 'the other'<sup>III</sup>. Although sister city relationships were promoted as a-political, citizen-initiated gestures – the International Union of Local Authorities boasted of the 'great advantage of not having any political purpose' – Rotterdam's connection with Seattle (United States) in 1969 coincided with the 'People to People' programme devised by Dwight Eisenhower (11, p.331). Initiated in 1956 – one year after the Warsaw Pact was signed between the Communist nations of Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union – 'People to People' is seen to be part of the government of the United States' 'Cold War on Communism', aiming to strengthen networks between the capitalist nations of the world and delineate between the two ideologies (2). However, sister city relationships were also formed through the Iron Curtain, including a number of relationships between Dutch cities and cities in Communist countries in the 1970s and

1980s<sup>IV</sup>. According to Dutch academic Ben Hoetjes, these relationships were based on humanitarian motives (similar to later movements to adopt real Eastern European children into American families in the 1990s) (12, 4). In the period 1976 to 1984, Rotterdam became sister to cities in six countries run under various Communist ideologies, including Burgas (Bulgaria), Constanta (Romania), Gdansk (Poland), Saint Petersburg (USSR), and Shanghai (China). Hoetjes suggests that during this period, preferred partners '... had to be 'critical' or 'revolutionary' vis-a-vis the present, U.S-dominated world order, but at the same time they had to fit in the broad context of Dutch foreign policy' (4, p.159), which included granting full independence to the South American colony of Surinam in 1975. The strong counter-current of anti-United States sentiment is exemplified by the disproportionate number of relationships formed between Dutch cities and cities in the small South American country of Nicaragua. Nicaragua struggled in the 1970s and 80s against the United States, who were concerned at Soviet and Cuban influences in the country, intervening in its political affairs. Anti-United States attitude may also explain Rotterdam's connection with Havana (Cuba) in 1983 and even Buenos Aires in 1990, but not the

# The two monkeys in charge of all happiness



R. L. S. M. 3.

Copyright 1896 by A. E. Wier.

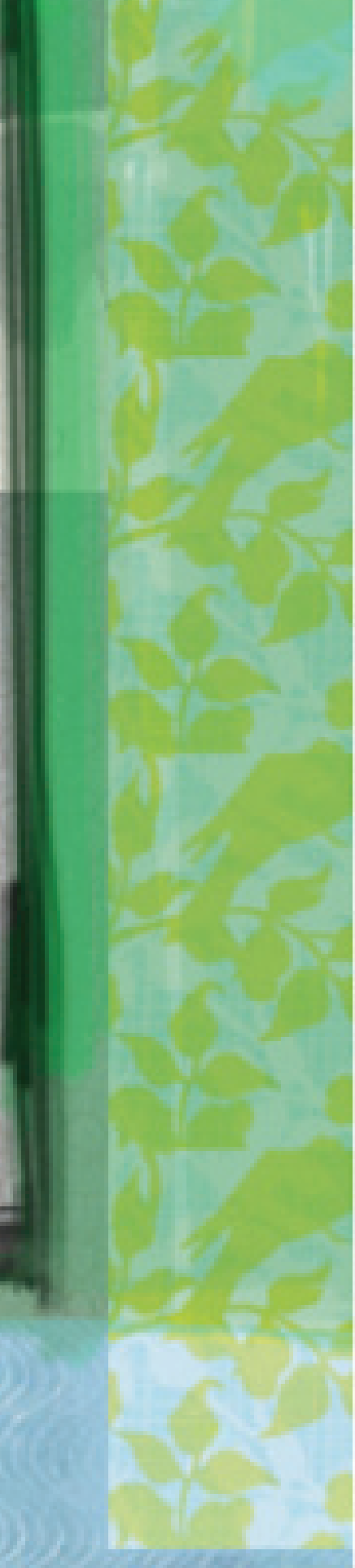
Penélope answered:

“I am stunned, child.  
I cannot speak to him. I cannot question him.  
I cannot keep my eyes upon his face.  
If he really is Odysseus, truly home,  
beyond all doubt we two shall know each other  
better than you or anyone. There are  
secret signs we know, we two.”

*The Odyssey, Homer. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald.*

book 23, lines 106 - 113









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*“ Pour moi, c’est simple : tout est sérieux, et rien ne l’est vraiment.*

*C’est ainsi que j’avance dans la vie. Même moi, je n’arrive pas à démêler chez moi le vrai du faux. C’est que je ne fais aucune différence entre ces deux choses. Pour dire vrai, ces histoires d’authenticité m’ennuient à mourir. Je parle du fait concret de mourir. Quand on évoque ces origines en ma présence, je perd littéralement le souffle.”*

*Dany Laferriere, Je suis un écrivain Japonais*

*“I’m certain, as we filed down the great staircase, that I appeared the same as ever, a moping twelve-year-old, all arms and legs.*

*But secretly I knew I had been transformed, moved by the revelation that human beings create art, that to be an artist was to see what others could not.”*

*Patti Smith, Just Kids*



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