

Jonathan Minton

*Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, Part 6*

A ghost is someone with a hole where the soul  
still beats its fire. It can hammer at the walls  
but it will never take another shape.  
Every villain and every hero must carry this guilt,  
as in the way Norman Bates reflects his mother's  
furtive, festering desire to be someone else.  
Marion steals the money because she's trapped  
in her womanhood before the film even begins.  
Jason inherits his mother's helplessness and rage,  
and Tommy needs proof that Jason is dead  
because he's seen the dispositions for cruelty  
under a variety of circumstances,  
through various oppositions. Parents will kill  
for their children, and the children will suffer.  
The effect is always the same – you create  
the thing you hate. You can call it fear or fate,  
but every Oedipus knows we belong  
to the run-down empire of the grave.  
Tommy learns that the self is a story we tell.  
We build our world from it, but it will end  
with flowers loosened from their gardens  
and pulled to an invisible center where the gravity  
warps everything to a blurred focus. Jason

is floating there, chained to the bottom,  
waiting for someone to call down to the dark.

\*Note: In the film's opening sequence, Jason is resurrected by Tommy in a strange transference of guilt. He cannot let go of his history or psychological trauma, any more than the film or its audience can let go of the now iconic and immortal villain. Some of the phrasing is from Jonathan Edwards' *The Great Doctrine of Christian Original Sin Defended*, and Robert Lowell's "Jonathan Edwards in Western Massachusetts" and "The Ghost."

### *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, Part 7*

Jason isn't real because he's alone, severed  
from even his mother's cruel love, and reduced  
to a single principle of retribution. He will cut,  
to see beneath it all, to make his loneliness, somehow,  
come alive, but everything is flat, without depth,  
and even the trees are just there, doing nothing, offering  
only a dark place to hide. His world is made of glass.  
Tina is paralyzed by her guilt, and a rage that awakens  
Jason from his silence, but she will never be alone.  
Her sadness is a theater where ghosts, as real as clouds,  
gesture towards the sun, hidden behind an egg-shell mask.  
When they crowd around her like strange fish,  
her mind strikes back in knife-quick confusion.  
Even if she shatters every picture of her father,  
there are little eyes in her words for pain.  
When she speaks, their lids open or shut, like a coin-toss.  
When she asks for forgiveness, the world bends,  
like a deep-rooted willow, at the edge of the lake.  
When it ripples, she is carried into it,  
where her father asks "what is there beyond death?"  
She brings him back and says *yes* and *this*.  
Love will always greet you, and the loveless  
don't know what else to say.

\*Note: The symbolic role played by Tommy now passes to Tina. Like Tommy, Tina's guilt links her to Jason. Unlike Tommy, she is never alone. When she resurrects Jason, it is inevitable that she will also resurrect her father. The audience can no longer be sure who is the avenger or the victim. Some of the phrasing is from Frank Bidart's "Herbert White," and Mark Jarman's "Descriptions of Heaven and Hell."

## *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, Part 8*

Jason isn't real because he appeared on the Arsenio Hall Show, to promote *Jason Takes Manhattan* in 1989.

"You're angry," Arsenio asks. "Where did it all begin?"

Jason says nothing, and the audience laughs at the suggestion of future movies - "Jason Rabbit" or "When Jason Met Sally."

In the theater that night, audiences will cheer as Jason kills thugs, and decapitates a boxing champ with one punch.

America has always been a cruel soil for talent, uprooting it, overheating it with cheap fertilizer. We want miracles but we never see them with our naked eye.

When he enters Manhattan, Jason will re-circulate as a plastic action figure, lunchbox artwork, and a video game character in *Mortal Kombat X*, in which he can fight D'Vorah, as voiced by Kelly Hu, who appears in the film as Eva Watanabe, and is strangled by Jason on a disco dance floor.

In this commercial churn, there is no true final-girl protagonist. Jason must survive not the vengeful blade, but the arbitrary shifts in taste. His story is misread, and retold until he emerges from the prison of the singular as a hydra that devours each new world whole. We always kill our heroes, and then promote our monsters. In Etruscan art, the Minotaur is cradled as a baby by his mother.

The Athenians place the baffled creature in the maze, where Theseus kills it to secure his throne.

In the logic of consumerism, power is a long arc forward.

Cronos swallowed his children to keep his authority, before vomiting them back into the world.

Zeus swallows Metis and claims her wisdom, before Athena is born from his head. To illustrate the strange nature of eternity, Zeno sent his arrows flying endlessly at their target. Getting there, he says, is tricky.

Jason is drowned at the end in toxic Manhattan sewage,  
but he isn't going anywhere. He's in the shifting constellations  
between audiences, flickering on a darker screen.

\*Note: Jason has moved out of his own mythos at Crystal Lake, and into the stranger realm of Manhattan and American commercialism and pop-culture. Some of the phrasing is from Norman Mailer's "Advertisements for Myself" and Mark Jarman's "The Arrow Paradox," plus statements from Sam Edsall, musician and former member of the West Virginia horror-punk band The Jasons.