

The City of Omni+Baal,

or,

Nature is an Infinite Dodecahedron
Whose Centre is Everywhere
and Whose Circumference is Nowhere.

by Davis Schneiderman



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B o o k d e s i g n G e o f f r e y G a t z a
e d i t o r @ b l a z e v o x . o r g

Forestar Accommodations.

Viewscreen rises.

Omni+Baal is a trading post, border-town, and colonial fabrication on the edge of Megalopolis dominion. Infinite cameras and recording devices operate in perpetual motion, disregarding the laws of base physics, lodged in dirty public restrooms, chiseled between the standard-issue Gideon copies of the *Upanishads*, implicit in the dank of multi-level bureaucracies, surgically implanted into cyborg tsetse flies and malaria mosquitoes.

To the east lie the contours I have come from, the final tendrils of the Alamüte-Megalopolis in sparser and sparser permutations, oases of similarity...workers bees form magnificent, celestial honeycombs in the sky...integrate their *buzz* into militant city-noise *tapeloops*. Due west contains the Cities of Unknown Quantity. Mongol territory. Rumors of government immunizations run rampant in order to best contain disease; and while officially denied, the Mongol Medicinal Ministry is said to be almost thirty years ahead of the Persians, the space program nearly fifty...

Omni+Baal is the last spot where memories can be memories. As such, a comical place.

Upsided by the specious reasoning that characterizes all transactions within the DOME, between questionable annexes bordering empty spaces, I realize that my passage through this town is no more random than the endless catacombs I have been trenching through these past

indeterminable months, no more accidental than the apples of delicate fiber perched in orchard limbs like static, frozen robins, the cornucopias of urn-shaped gourds adorning the bathhouses and ambisexual barbershops. No more abstract than the neo-realists with their photographic placards, their architectonic reform bills, their straight and heavy dogma lines, their badly-timed but infinitely deferential set-ups...

“How much does a Grecian earn?” they ask, brandishing upside-down fedora’s. Grey dots below question marks.

“Just what he’s ode,” I answer and send the flatfoots away. Nuisance be gone.

Bigger problems face the soggy spokes of Omni+Baal’s third-wheel layout. Fifth-columnists work from within the various administrative offices to topple the Alamüte stranglehold with Maquisard-trained precision. The sanitation inspector, Olaf, refuses to pick up any kitty-litter used in the absorption of upchuck, and as a general rule, demands a kiss on the spacious plane of his upper harelip before allowing any amount of back-pay to flow from city-hall’s coffers. His army of tiny, garbage-eating boars have been seen to mutiny like pit-bulls against card-carrying member of the Associated Press. Papparazzi disguise themselves as celebrities, *yukking* it up at Mr. Chow’s — the Wandering Jew, Lord Mountbatten, the Morton Salt Umbrella-girl, Jimmy Stewart — *persona incognitas*, shunning the negative jowls of the vicious panopticity, packs of sentinel, celluloid Cerberuses.

Hara-kiri is pandemic for the elderly, all minimally centurian, suffering common-law lung mutations that would cripple the breath of YHWH, choking on *piped*-in oxygen substitute for the entire history of use, *ogling* Hayflick limits obscenely protracted across the span of the earliest, and most abstruse biblical generations. Mal Scusalah, the hoary-throated scat-singer and longevity vibraphonist, just last week, I’m told by his penis-smoking ivory-tickler, Lester “Ribbs”

Omadjinn, climbed weakly inside the cockpit of an old WWI Jefferson biplane and...“Ribs” tosses the bloody stump of an erect Albino cock between his oral ivories, “Shit damn boy...do the words ‘shit damn’ resonate wit you?” His free hand *divebombs* into the middle-C of his Moog as a few strands of pubic *bleachies* follow the bones. “No *Mal de fleur*,” he tinkles between puffs, “no theorizin’ on the reproduction of the recording...session.” Cold grey sobbing afternoons.

Any number of surreptitious A&R *agentes* take the opportunity to *burst* out the blue shutter doors of condemned office buildings, *blur* past butcher shops specializing in domestic pet *charcuterie* — canine sausage, Siamese bratwurst — shouting with raised, *dripping* cleavers the offal news to *shellshocked* aqualung boys at corporate. They swing crystal dildos like Olympian hammers, old toaster ovens with frayed twists of cord, Russian pelts raised deep in the regions of darkness — martens, ermines, silver foxes, ebony sable — anything to get noticed by the superlatives and keep a job, sign a rising star, get their propaganda payola-ed onto the *playlist*. All is fair trade in Omni+Baal. For accuracy’s sake, I view endless hours of historical inaccuracies filmed on omnipresent camera setups, before live studio audiences, street-walking fire-eaters and fire-walking street-sweepers, *swooshing* brooms like *witchstick* hazel above the sewers, telling me tall-tales as moods and opportunities arise like bowls of sand submerged in ice water. And they know...that’s the thing. The object. They are ever aware of the watching, a taping, the copying, a registering and labeling, the filing and post-production and test-marketing and re-shooting. They often employ traveling make-up artists whose identities appear as ghostly syllables in the monotone trim of ever-scrolling credits.

The palpability of flesh is mistaken for high-quality tape product, and no one knows what’s live anymore...and this occurs at all times, for me some time, and I tire, hope for contact

with Alamüte agents, recorders. Look for boom mics hidden in ceiling tiles, title-bars on the periphery *snapping*.

The Magog Grill and Detoxification Port appears as a wild-west facade, no more than a story, riveted by non-union carpetbaggers to termite-rotten two by fours. Up for the shoot, but down in the duration — today packed with Masonic tradesman, Nestorian missionaries, mercenaries from the Khmer Rouge on loan to a neighboring Caliph (dealing with some slovenly “dissidents”), various sentient polygons — tomorrow a brand new cast...I order a double shot of *kumiss*, on the rocks, warned by the bartending-ape’s brute dialect about the singeing texture, the geopolitical burn. “It’s common sense really. I’ve got a deal with a Kashmiri glass-bottler on this shit for export as, get this, virility tonic...liquid manifest destiny, shit damn...” *Dustbunnies* roll by like tumbleweeds.

The Super Bowl plays perpetually on a giant projection television inside an art-deco manger scene. Beatnik Joseph has got a fish-story Fu-Manchu and gets a frankincense rim-job from a sweaty, animatronic Melchior. Somebody’s always getting tackled, and Vince Lombardi looks like an extra piece of shrubbery in *Waiting for Godot*. A hologram of baby Jesus cries cries before ascension...

Before long, an imperial dodecahedron arrives, proudly brandishing the following items: a sleek automatic revolver, the complete works of William Shakespeare, bullets rolled in sheets of the Pentateuch, the British oath of colonial allegiance, rhubarb, sandalwood, a spiked cat-o-nine-tails, a Telos-2600, canisters of mustard gas, the decapitated head of a Circassian slave — two final dimensions still beyond my view and he levitates to the stool on my right, *backside* to the bar (judging where the sound excretes, unless its one of those new-fangled talking assholes) — introduces itself as Commander Opacity, arbiter of colonial protocol, executor of the

executive's office execution of duties.

He opens with extended blank verse, "'Tis now the very witching time of night/When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out a contagion to this world..."

And I follow uncertain. He doesn't recognize my uniform? "Now might I drink hot blood/And do such bitter business as the day would quake to look upon..." I twist down the *kumiss* with a *dobble* of the Adam's apple.

"Very nice, *eh?* As I said I'm Opacity...Oppenheimer to the Vichy government...opiate to the people..." He spins like a twelve-sided die emitting a low summer whisper. "Opalescent to the jewelers...Ops to the seventh planet out from big gas battery." He beer-farts rudely. "So far as the locals need to know, *heh heh*...can't be to careful, especially after the...*um*...insurrection last week..."

I take a quick surveying of the Magog's grounds, past the non-regulation Ping-Pong courts, foosball tables, ubiquitous pitchers of imported brew...I click my modernized Telos-5200 to standby *hum*...take notice of *shimmy-shakes*. "Looks all-American enough to me..."

Frips of the barb-*whip* shake lightly. "What's that old boy... American? *Oh!* What time's the big soccer...*er*... football game come on? Can I slip a bet to the bartender? Fuck your wife I'm the milkman? That sort of thing?"

"Precisely." I laugh.

He doesn't...but slides geometrically close to the plane of my burning eyes, loosened grit filling the slits between *blackball* and flesh. "Take another look around...you're just not used to the potency." I let loose the shot glass...figures burn blank...

Metaphorical, *ja?* *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* on the back wall, *The Third of May* to the aft...convex compositional like snow from the picture box...pigskin projecting the

live *colorcast*...waiters jaded, human, *autobot* and barmaid silly bitches...all blared and bleary-eyed...intimations of spectral hoods and Stepford degeneration...sinister Jesus-phreakers blacking selves out leaving resurrection calling cards... *Mephistophical*, no?...*View of Toledo* billiard cover in heaps for the local snooker tourney...gypsies and atomic prodigies...heads bowed in meditative *Feng Shui*... playing pick-up-sticks with glowing green coolant rods...

“Not exactly your benignly colonized...that talkie will explain better than my Queen’s English...” On the picture-box, *tailend* pixels of a op-art Rickshaw commercial fade with the sly *thump* of callused footsteps over gravel...switch into Omni+Baal newsbrief...

Voice Over (middle-aged Caucasian): “Omni+Baal, our fair city, continues to receive its due priority Megalopolis-provided emergency aid funds.” (Medical chopper personnel hurriedly wrap bundles of sackcloth, iodine, beef jerky, chocolate bars into drab-olive parcels, making hand gestures for communication above the *whir* of helicopter blades.) “And the emotional outpourings...” (Remote-controlled parachutes navigate packages into fields of naked, emaciated, but oddly upbeat children) “have been overwhelming.” (Skin tone matches the olive airdrops and they immediately cloth themselves in the sackcloth effectively effacing their shame. One child looks up and waves at the helicopters, in bright neon colors, phosphorescent hummingbirds on the horizon. She speaks): “Thank ooh whirly-people. Next time breeng daggers and we cut traitors up eerselves!” (An elderly woman smiles toothless and places her shawl over the child, smiles blithely into sunset. Children cheer wildly, hoist lighters into the dusk as camera pans back over immaculate cityscape.)

“What’s this all about chap?” I order another drink. All patrons stare at the screen. The picture changes again, this time, back to the halftime show — big-breasted cheerleaders with cotton-candy pom-poms, tight little bobby-sox. A cue ball goes scratchy.

“I like that spot myself...an Elia Kazan impersonator did all the close-ups...stunning work.”

Opacity swims in the foreground of green-felt snooker, under lemon-yellow lamps glowing orange and green, bright hovering *cyclopeans*. “Magog is a café in which one can go mad, ruin one’s self, commit a crime...” The bartender ape pours a foamy lubricant over Opacity’s top-most faces. “You aren’t thinking of committing a crime, are you Mr. Bosh?”

“How...?” Don’t even bother to finish.

“Come, come chap. Standard narrative practice at this point. We were warned about your naïveté...” The obvious.

The Telos-5200 warms against my leg, implying by its constant readiness and insertion, use at a future moment, or mere distraction from the moments passing by. It instinctually protects me now, providing the same illusory security as suckling at a maternal breast, or sleeping only in broadest starlight.

The night wears on like old clothing. Opacity begins prefiguring his “rounds” about the distracted quarters with the immediate visual aids: salt shakers, moldy lemons bitter to watch, corkscrews on parade; he describes the grim sluggishness of the local *kief*-mongers accosting all wee-hour wanderers, *jonesing* for any resinous by-products to cut into tomorrow’s compost-*marjoun* batches, the *thump thump* of the native Togo drums cold and wily in the night air, the renegade graffiti artists and their pre-cinema shenanigans...

“This is a hoot, indeed. And I’ll admit between us, the theoretical frame is *perhaps* a valid one — postmodernism is dead, if it ever were alive...and today everything is simply pre-cinema...so says their manifesto...split the city into different cells and spray-paint oftentimes stunning depictions of movies soon to be made...genetically-resurrected dinosaurs terrorizing a

Pacific island...medieval farces and revenge dramas...Mickey Rooney done-up like a Chink. Rival camera gangs *rumble* for position as the documentary team primp and savor, as it happens. Of course, this behavior can't be tolerated for obvious reasons."

"Sounds like quite a mess out there," I offer half interested, smiling pleasantly over the *kumiss*, wondering why I'm here. How I left the gelatinous Pox to find the geometrical Opaque.

He buys me a few on DebitCharge as the *sloshing* sting of goat-juice rockets my insides like malleable fire-pistons. "Say...we can't really get more out this score..." Animal life makes the walls breathe. Glasses *clink* and *crash*. "Why don't you come around with me?"

"Uh..." My head is heavy with life; I check for pressing responsibilities.

"Don't be such a 'Pansy.' I'll set you up with your own Shakespeare desk copy and pepper spray. Assassin's have automatic entry-level clearance. What do you say?" None found.

A rusty clock *pings* above a doorway. "I appreciate the offer, old bean, really I do...but I'm afraid my duties require me to get across the border as quickly as possible. Business in the east."

"Yeah. No getting through 'till morning though. We don't exactly have an open border with the Golden Horde. Lockdown season. Besides, your papers, I'll assume they're in order, will have to be approved by the Viceroy. Let me show you our...*um*...troubles here with the natives, and perhaps you can put in a word back at the Megalopolis. I'll take you around to Durango's office tomorrow, for taxi to the Unknown Quantities."

Shooting the Lemon Moon.

Dogs barking eating scraps of meat at the shores of a particular lake. *Viewscreen* cameras capture the insurrection one way, the editors another. Tobacco farmland. Difficult strip

mining. Persons present present a third, the other side a fourth. Harbor trains. Study info. Responding to postings in the post office. A fifth, sixth, and seventh, for smoky censors, volatile producers, the common viewers. Cardinal certificates of rules and regulations. Papal decrees. Taking everyone involved into account, and we're over one thousand years before the middle of the dawn. Sesame Kismet. Shooting the lemon moon. Sun promises to rise.

Opacity and I bounce over lavender fairways of the St. Andrews-like golf-course, bounce because Commander O., formerly a rear-admiral of the "The Tertiary Panel" squadrons, he tells me, moves just like one might expect from a dodecahedron — shiny brass angles turning and spinning like a Christmas-goose gyroscope over the crab-grass artificial turf, points kissing green points upon contact, launching his shape back into the ether, deferring to the crux of another angle for the next physical meeting.

"Sorry to be so demanding about you coming with Bosh, but it's not safe to talk in there, particularly if you're a member of the administration. We're barely tolerated...that over there..." Opacity rolls on some mysterious axis. "That's the Grand Numerator's private car...present from Bucephalus that great horse of state..." The Rolls Royce stands idling at the overhang of the country clubhouse. Roses fall steadily to the street in *drips*. Lilac odor floods the fairway.

"They let him keep it despite the iron crosses and swastikas. Valuable artifact impounded with the Kali cult's mind-control stash...something we are, something we stay..."

I struggle to keep up almost fifty yards behind, tacking and switching behind the Opaque, pinpointing his position by observing a touchdown, *zooming* like wildfire towards the coordinate, but upon arrival at the last spot, losing him in the spin of the night air, past abandoned golf carts and decapitated gophers, showering the putting green with purple blood.

"Damn kids..." Opacity pauses, replaces an overturned flag in the fifth hole. "They

switched the flags around again. Take a look at this Bosh...” I manage to approach after a few seconds of Opaque remaining static. “Flags from the city course over at the cardboard district...hooligans replaced those with the private course, no doubt...” Opaque radios a complicated system of police codes into a transmitter wedged between *I Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV* in the complete works of the Bard.

Sharp canine-looking teeth litter the grounds of Omni+Baal’s inner-quadrants like a seabed of coral, draw blood from the pearl divers and non-sandaled castaways. A gang of transplanted riot *grrls*, spikes connecting ears to other ears, belly buttons pierced with gigantic hypodermic needles floating over piles of heated incisors, steam *bubbling* on ancient tooth decay...laugh at the blood-letting, the streaming, the toothless derelicts licking the dregs of old applesauce snack-packs and working their sore gums into numbing oblivion with week-old cocaine-chutney...

“Alright...cut the mirth people, cut the mirth.” Opaque blurts from a megaphone floating above whatever currently marks his *toppermost* side. A glint of revolver peeks out from the darkness of the street, and everyone lines the sidewalks for passage of the night’s ethereal parade — ten-gallon hats on giant robot dragons, bio-genetic cartoon-characters covered in tiny Christmas bulbs. I shine a penlight at his sidearm, upon request, but find nothing more illuminated. “Between you and me...” he whips a mutant rat to death with the cat-o-nine-tails, “None of them are worth even one of *our* chromosomes...”

Disney’s animatronic Pluto swoops down Mammary Lane like a dynamo, powered all puppy-dog by a fusion core lodged in its duodenum. Opacity redirects the bloody rat into the light of a flaming garbage can. “Let this be a lesson to you...” Two voodoo priestesses telepathically ignite the Colonel’s effigy made svelte on used condom wrappers, empty KY

tins...they masturbate to the sound of breaking vacuums seals, bottled nut jars. “Keep go now Meester...no want your keend...”

“You can see the conditions we have to work with...just dreadful.” Opaque pogos in disgust over slabs of rusty metal boards, over quivers of nightshade-dipped crossbow bolts, over cartoon dog lunchboxes, over thermoses venting gas into the troposphere...I *jag* the *Resemblati*, my official Assassin get-up, on the crooks of unfinished needlepoint projects, *flick* it loose behind acid-drenched food stamp sheets, button-fly blue jeans, Beatles tapes...

“It’s been abandoned since the ‘incident’...” He *boings* ahead twice. “There have been some anxieties ever since...surely you can feel it...even as just a visitor.” I’m not sure what source projects his voice, what player or tape speed, but the faces of the commander rotate and revolve with his hidden internal axle, confusing me all the more...

What’s Brown and Sounds Like a Bell?

“We’ve had some reports though, intimations of continuing activities...” The transvestite toilet behind the *pockmarked* particle board wall, up the slanted stairs from the abandoned split-level single-unit family-living duplex resonates in full vibratory swing. Disco balls. Samba music. A randy-faced Cock-Roach dressed in 1950 *housefrau* regalia balances various steaming TV-dinners across extra arms — brown dung oysters with artery sauce and shat-brownie — intestinal sausage and charcoal briquettes — irradiated strawberries sautéed in the cum of illegal migrant workers. The Cock-Roach grips the microphone stand with two-additional appendages.

“This is just a picture upon entrance.” Opacity pulls me behind a conveniently placed column of vulcanized rubber, past rows of spray-painted camera lenses. “En-trance.” *Fuzzback* hits my ears radiating off the mic.

ZZZZWWWWNNNNGGGG

“Associates, evangelists, members-in-good-standing, potential recruits — I am Vishnu of the Lowlands...” *Clapping*. Bongo drums. Frappachinos. “Your host for tonight’s meeting of the...um...” Vishnu waits for a red saucer light to stalk up from darkness. “The Glorious Communist Manifestation Workers Party...insurrectionist movement of Omni+Baal, struggling with each syllable to dismiss the current hegemony through product-oriented terrorist activities...” Old Texaco jingle plays on xylophones...smells of seventeenth-century haddock broth. “We ask that everyone break their current state of fellatio, cunnilingus, sodomy, missionary posturing, etc...”

“*Aha!*” Opacity *bumps* me into the rubber sheath. “Do you see this? Shameful. After all the culture we’ve given them...”

Various insertable items are extracted from various holes...erect phalluses slacked in Malaysian hookers *sucky-sucky* mouths, wax-covered toothpicks and plaque-painted q-tips from ears *and* slits, candlesticks pulled from pierced perineums...sounds of suction seals slipping...

“Torch all Sanskrit copies of *Richard III* Cliff’s Notes...that’ll show ‘em...” Opaque shivers.

Vishnu of the Lowlands *flickers* his substantial antennae from drooping, weeping-willow position to strait up, protruding towards sky receivers. Low-priced beer cans *hiss* open.

“Thank you for the temporary abstinence. We need to channel together, through the cords of my cerebral cortex, the world-stem.”

“No problem,” shouts a centipede dressed as Wonder Woman, licking chicken grease from the coils of its invisible lasso.

“Our first concern for today’s meeting is a report from the chairman of the DSE task

force...who has informed me earlier, and to avoid last meeting's unfortunate denouement, that his remarks will observe proper parliamentary procedure, time-wise." The cast rises and dons powdered-wigs, converges on the front of the stage for better acoustics — insectoid figures vibrate through the rotten *wallspaces*, loose electrons *bursting* ripe from outermost shells, plain-clothed office clerks stand incognito from various colonial ministries. Odd-smelling candy bars are distributed. Opacity pushes flush against the rubber column.

"Seeing as I am chair of this particular committee, I'd like to thank myself for allowing me the floor...and in fact, contrary to my own well-meaning remarks, I do have quite a few items to report on..." Vishnu drops a *trayful* of anal-mucous soufflé with pancreatic consommé and fried testicles onto the slant of wooden floorboards.

"The gentleman takes the floor..." shouts the Wonder Woman centipede. "Time starting now."

Vishnu nods his head and dips three free appendages around the microphone stand, manages a few throat-clearing sounds. "The DSE is a powerful control device in operation, our agents have discovered, since well before the Megalopolis occupation. Once the Invading Force established diplomatic bases at the key military installations — the men's room of city hall, Lucien's All-Nite Wundermat, Man-Toe's Port, the crevice of my asshole — the DSE became state-policy. We have attained this early video example at great personal sacrifice." The Cockroach lifts up the folds of his frilly blue apron, exposing a *bubbling* gash across the chest plate, tiny *pulses* of magma drip down clumps of marinara sauce. The assembled crowd sits Indian style and plays chic in their low-collar Nehru jackets.

Viewscreens rise.

(Rolling ocean-cam pans the dark bottom of the Marianas Trench. Spotlights flood a

broken trident. Movie-trailer voice-over) “From the depths of deepest Poseidon...” (Cut to sky-cam flying next to stealth-bomber.) “To the archetypes of the nuclear age...” (Cut to Omni+Baal freedom *kinderplatz*, last day of Ramadan, sun about to set and break fast.) “The brassy flutes of the *new* Omni+Baal...” (Woodwind decibels migrate over ravenous natives; they loot broken-glass store fronts) “...sing proudly for your new Overlords.” (Camera captures ensuing madness disarray, lobotomized shopkeepers *skullfucked* for their grey matter, door-to-door melanin salesman beaten with cancerous honeydew, milk *bogarted* straight from the carton, human beef jerky *gagging* health inspector.) “The good Samaritans of the Alamüte-Megalopolis occupying government and Victual Help Network (VICHy)...” (Shadowy outline of a giant vending machine eclipses the light of the moon, friezing the hunger bacchanalia against the wet film of city street.) “Enjoy Sodium-Rich CaCa Bars rich with real caca goodness and paint-chip flavorings...” (CaCa Bars fly out the mouth of the vending machine like depth charges shot vertical from the ass of a U-boat parked halfway to *mergatroid* in New York harbor.) “Enjoy these samples from the Viceroy’s personal humidor.” (Residents of the quarter find pacification in the warm chunks of caca coating their bloated *cheekskins*.) “Remember to consult the vending machines for all your fast-breaking/snacking needs. Hope you had a great Ramadan!!!” (Battered and bloodied enemies help each other to their feet, assist the smiling riot police in their own well-deserved beatings, help load all traitorous neighbors into paddy wagons...)

Viewscreens fall.

“Well, there you have it...A DSE in operation.” Vishnu of the Lowlands waves arms in complex inter-dimensional *swirls*, forcing fractal explosion in segmented *limbwake*. “Don’t you see people?”

The assembled members of the Glorious Communist Manifestation Workers Party sit

among piles of empty CaCa bar wrappers, munching mandibles. The Cock-Roach, Vishnu, stands with some hands on hip.

“Time. The gentleman stands down...”

“No. I will not stand down...” Cock-Roach says defiantly. “Its rare that I’m out of the motel, and even rarer to be given the floor...I may as well come right out with it...”

“Yeah, come right out with, and then sit the fuck down...” yells the centipede. Opacity *shakes* and spins.

“Alright I will. CaCa, when translated into the Queens’ English, means ‘shit.’ Those are shit bars you’re eating...yes shit — waste, excrement, dung, manure, coprolites, western cow pies, feculence, monkey chunks, buffalo chips, ordure, do-do, etc...like gluttons I tell you, like gluttons. There’s your DSE. Once more and it’s in the bag.”

The transvestite-toilet flushes itself as the urinal bugs roll along the ground, caught on fire, spontaneously rejecting all bodily fluids and chunks — acid-stench urine, joint-mucous, eye-jism, *cornshit*, kidney stones — decomposing into puddles of leprosy and intrigue. Rigor-mortis sets in then out again like red tide in the rising atoll of entangled roach limbs, hubristic antennae, vinegar flies and supercilious, sanctimonious weevil plate.

The concatenated stench rises, floats about, reconnects with the sum of its parts. Opacity forces a blitzkrieg-era gas-mask over my nostrils burning the toxic steam of dying vermin.

“This is disgusting...” Opacity hits stop on the recording apparatus. “I’ve got enough tape.”

Various coffee-size tables overturn; glasses *shatter* under the spin of anti-ceiling fans — sucking the loose limbs up into crippled, asbestos-lined air ducts as we move, exhausted, through various tubes atop tenements, and out — sweating like meadowlarks in to the general miasma.

Neophyte Protocol.

As Opacity promises in a half-remembered dream, the next day finds me scorched beneath the typical pale of hot sun, brushed uncomfortably close to the iconic underbelly of capitalist swill, anti-state-sponsored verbosity...and I slither into the office bunker of Omar Durango: Head Customs Inspector, Chief of Police, Minister of Propaganda, Master Mason, champion Baccarat player and default Viceroy of the Omni+Baal outpost...

Supplicants tread the ante-room raceway with roll upon roll of official-looking case briefs — monogrammed wheelbarrows overflowing with rent-control agreements for the landed gentry, permission slips from the parents of honor roll students permitting permission slips to be signed, metaphorical treatments of the Omni+Baal Colony charter by a team of anti-insurrection lobbyists — “We recommend daytime curfews, routine cavity inspections, the syncopated boots of martial law...”

I busy myself over a sulfur-colored copy of the Omni+Baal Spectator-Beacon-Press-and-Courier, Volume *blur*, Issue *smudge*, skipping my eyes across darkened islets of text and empty squares of scissored white...a follow-up on last week’s “incident,” suspiciously complete, delineates the event in amazingly nondescript plausibility: “While the Megalopolis was swift to administer humane k-rations and provide the wounded with non-toxic Band-Aids, Viceroy Durango has decided to allocate the surplus monies from the Indian liquor trade directly to affected quarters...” I begin to feel sick at the taste of salty implications.

Durango offers me entrance, or so says his automatic secretary PerSe, a frumpy looking mummy woman preserved hermetically behind the wire-rim of her *hornowls* and the lace-up underside of a flamingo-pink corset. Somewhere else, she might be a looker! I enter his office,

down the *shrift* of triple stairs, down the blank of blood-red shag, the esquilax-skin rug — rabbit ears out like flat running boards on a white-styled invisible autogyro.

Durango draws the eye, the weight, the majesty — sitting akimbo at his grand empire desk, oak proudly stained with rare *cumsap* shellac, milked post-mortem from local wood. Papers are strewn over the *topface*, mixed with angular little floppy disks, Mr. Punch and Judy cards, rainbow-prism CD-ROMs. Various unexpected weapons hang like trophies on the wall — WWII bazookas, Lone Ranger cap-guns, rubber-dog party vomit, pocket-buddy hydrogen bombs — “Ah, Bosh, we’ve been expecting you...just reading over your reports!”

Empty-heads of fantastical kills hang taxidermically on the walls. High and low. Grimacing at me. Basilisk, chimera, cuckoo, red-squirrel, griffin, etc... Omar Durango ruffles a stack of papers at the corner. “A bit amateurish at times...but promising, perhaps.” He offers me one of two Louis IV chairs in front of the desk. I choose the one without a cushion. A series of *screeches*, vaguely simian, each more distant than the previous, punctuate the morning air.

“Dear me! I’ve skipped the official introduction...” With tight lucid motions Omar Durango screws in his sub-atomic monocle. “Vision isn’t what it could be. Too long in the cubicles. Others act as my eyes and so on...”

“Quite all right.”

“No not at all.” He rises. “As you know I am Omar Durango, the latest and perhaps final Megalopolis-assigned Viceroy to this savage wasteland, the Omni+Baal outpost.” Omar waddles up to my now-standing body. He wears a military-jacket, trouser, and sash, excurved across his belly, molding the tuft of the thin, waxed mustache drooping slightly in conjunction.

“I am Thelonius Bosh...” I look into his eyes. “I am presently an Assassin...”

“Presently.” Durango lifts both his arms in the Orant prayer position, inside clefts of

thumb pointing skyward at the slowly-spinning ceiling fan. “You boys *crack* me up.”

The sheets of our mutual flab rub like old friends — his loose and buttery, mine capped nicely by the *Resemblati*. His hands are still raised and now *jiggling*, outlined sharp against the bookcases, maps, safes adorning the wall. I read and re-read the spine of Joke Astaroth’s eighteenth-century imperial discourse: *The Ways of Man*, as I wait, rubbing, uncomfortable.

“Oh Bosh! I meant the *official* intro...” Veins threaten to *burst* through the arms of his ribbon-covered shirt. “You know,” bright whispers, “the secret one.”

I have no clue what he’s speaking of, per se, but surmise that the Megalopolis must commission some sort of identifying handshake between its officers, or perhaps this Durango is an Assassin in disguise or a former operative...but that makes no sense — no such thing as a *non-career* man.

So our arms enfold each other at strange ninety-degree angles without my willful participation. My left out and bent down, palm facing inward. My right out and up, palm outward. Durango’s right out and down, palm inward. Left out and up, palm outward. Locked together like the illusion of a box, impossible figure, Chinese parallelogram, Tetragrammaton.

“Lovely,” he says as we detach, filled with some sort of mutual respect, I surmise, “Everything seems to be in order, we’ll forego the urine test, etc...” PerSe, rubber-gloved, trots out the study door, frowning. “Now we can talk...”

He *plops* back around the desk into his swivel chair, leans back on the ballast and sits there gloomily, in silence for some minutes. I begin to grow uncomfortable and take careful notice of the room, his person, his figure. It appears as if he stares at me and through me at the same time, pen poised in clenched fist — I am one piece of a multitude who have sat in this chair, and the other one as well, placed under scrutiny. The previous night, like a dream,

Commander Opacity informed me of the difficulties in executing the census in Omni+Baal. Birth and death rates jump and dive like stock industrial averages, defy the abacus factory to keep up. Tenants exaggerate household figures shamelessly, claiming sentience of office supplies and refrigerator contents — overworked staplers, Belgian endive with a bad attitude and wilting tendencies (requiring constant hospice care), overhead projectors hell-bent on tattooing humanoids with permanent marker... And I wonder as I stare over the gravel chins of the Viceroy, *fluting* the sag of his shoulder blades punched like time-sheet holes into his office chair, *circumspecting* the folds of *eyeskin* around monocle scratched and weather-beaten, about the uneasy confluence of age and physique symptomatic of the world-weary, the proud, the never beaten slant of his imperial proboscis, the black official boogers clinging to sweaty nose-hair like a neutered wolf on its last marked territory.

Is this the dominant hegemony that Vishnu of the Lowlands works assiduously against? The distributing source of CaCa bars and psycho-social plentitudes...cultural inundation. I am one among many to him in this chair, *dripping* like sap from the smooth oaken woodwork of the external city. My station seems irrelevant under the gaze of the Viceroy, our hands never touch, out bellies remain distinct. He observes the crowd in the distance through the record in my eyes...the transvestite toilet?...seeing what I saw, sampled census one dot at a time.

“Our position here is tenuous, Bosh.” He stirs. “And, in a sense, my contract killers resemble you...”

“Pardon.”

“In a sense they act like you, that is...on windy days they are happy to bounce along. They would never rape the current as you so obviously would seem to have no compunction averse to that manner of delivery.”

“I’m sorry, I don’t follow...”

“That, in the converse, is partially the problem. I don’t care for ceremony, let me say that right now. I only wear this ridiculous outfit as it is my skin...go ahead attempt to peel off a layer...”

Reaching my hands forward across the desk, bumping slides of micro-amoebas and spirochetes, accounting ledgers and unfinished librettos with the cuffs of the *Resemblati*, I again feel the chain-mesh on my skin. I grab for the Viceroy’s duds, pinching a seam between pocket and collar, watching the drab of the drabbest olive decompose like multicolored dots on certain impressionist paintings, *Sunday in the Park, Olympia*...until I am lost in his pores, mesmerized by the breathing and lengthening of their mouths, agape starving children folding teeth in the wind.

“Ow.” He says sarcastically. “Got it tattooed after my victory against the Armada, bloodiest damn thing. Commemorate the occasion, loyalty to the service and all. You see me now, years later, naked but able to pass...I’ll never forget those needles...”

I lean back now, and press myself into the plush.

“There they are in the trophy rack, mounted next to that world-class succubae carcasses. Each one a previously discarded hypodermic...”

“Infection?” I ask, looking over.

“Precisely. Control is affected mainly by differing proportions of the DSE. As the invading force, it is our job to filter all media, record all reactions, tape, splice and delay, as needed, to insure cooperation. You saw them last eve?”

DSE again. “The Glorious Communist Manifestation DOME Workers Party. Yes, they had a video screening.”

Durango laughs. “Is that what they are calling themselves now...no more PMRC, Promise-Keepers, or Yippies. Probably altered already. They’ve got language that defies our triangulation methods — I’ll give them that...we keep imposing new letters into the alphabet. Last year it was ‘K.’, devised to immediately follow ‘old K’ — replace a hard ‘C’ aside from its *endstop* duties. Chok.olate — K.ak.a — Ok.lahoma — etc...threw off everything a turn or two...other letters shifted pronunciation, connotation...all grammar texts retroactively revised. Shit didn’t work out...fire in the K.astle...”

“The Communist Manifestation seemed rightly displeased upon considering the feces content...”

“*Hmmm...*” Durango spits a wad of leaf into an empty can of Prince Albert. “Anyway, we’ve been adding genetic hybrids to the *lingua franca* in order to best utilize, according to the native... eccentricities...the plenipotent DSE...”

“Is this declassified information...this DSE?”

Durango stares blankly out the window, mutely, before *snapping* his eyes in a liberating shudder of lids.

“Oh yes.” He looks back at me. “So sorry. Not classified for you...*eh?*” He reaches into his pants and removes a suspiciously stained packet. “Study this document, and I’ll attend to a few other matters, plenary sessions of course...”

Escorted back to the hallway, I examine a lemon-yellow dossier with its embroidered *barcodebar* stylus, it’s gracious Alamüte watermark...muffled *screeches* fill my eardrums; secretary PerSe hands me a pacifying cup of Bengal spice tea and I forget and open and stare...

The Treatise of the Dime-Store Epiphany.

The primary control device is the Dime-Store Epiphany

(DSE). Historically, use can be traced back to the "pre-civilized" "civilizations" – Etruscan, Babylonian, Altantian, Sumerian, Biminian, Pangean. The consummate infiltration device, the DSE bonds easily to any base narrative, increases outward complexity, and decreases resistance to message. Late twentieth-century television advertisements exist as most prominent application – a first strike for the multi-national hegemony. In this particularly effective instance, the DSE operates as follows: 1) Tiny boxes are developed that carry pictures transmitted over air – hyped as communication devices. 2) Boxes are distributed to target organisms over an initial sampling-period, followed by various credibility-generating mutually-observed state-sponsored "events" – presidential debates, assassinations, moon landings, etc... 3) Target organisms are fully convinced of box's relevance for the entire life of their familial units, and themselves. 4) Data control sub-stations, code name "networks" "executives" and later "cable outlets," determine content through initial proxy spectres "Nielsen families," until self-monitoring pretences becomes irrelevant for inured and dependant target organisms. 5) Hermeneutic circle is established – organisms have been fully PROGRAMMED by box and box's comptrollers to require box. 6) Data Control transmits centripetal narratives that conform to organism tolerances of narrative convention while simultaneously determining need, punctuate with ADVERTISEMENTS at target-specific intervals. 7) Organisms deliver the sum of their possibilities and potentialities to controllers with smile, yet maintain PROGRAMMED notion of free-will-individuality-narrative-control. 8) Data Controllers PROGRAM narratives to distribute pro-colonial messages within current narrative expectations. Hokey sitcoms are rampant. 9) Organisms feel unhappy with current transmissions, tire of current discourse, yet believe that innate filters of organisms are still in operation, demand PROGRAMMING alteration. Yes, organisms demand PROGRAMMING. 10) Data Control crafts new narrative lines that seemingly pacify desire for variety while impacting greater proportions of colonizing discourses. Organisms are appeased – eyes fixed on box for programs, for advertisements, for hours each day. 11) MEANING is dispersed for individual organisms through collective box transmissions. 12) DSE is grafted at level of organism inundation (belief in primacy/relevancy of box-PROGRAMMING.) DSE is imposed at narrative level, coaxing tears before certain advertisements, canning laughter before others. Organisms MEANING become inextricably tied to consumer-culture. DSE triggers pseudo-personal relevancy which increases demand for additional DSE...

My eyes go sterile as interruptions rumble through space and line, punctuated by *bursts* of Omni+Baal bureaucracy. Forlorn epic-heroes looking for lost-luggage and telecom equipment around my figure, splicing the latest pre-figurations of the DOME's omnipresent coups and revolutionary cells; a hunchbacked Nomadic "Olivetti dealer" sporting a plastic button nose and a weather-beaten cane lugs the husks of 1950 typewriters into Durango's office via a electronic wheelbarrow...sheets of carbon paper fly triplicate onto the steam-cleaned carpet. I *turnback* into the treatise...

"Mr. Bosh...the Viceroy is ready for you..." Secretary PerSe's arm grabs my own again, as I am shepherded, herded by a cold brush of fingernail. Flash against stomach. "Ooh, sorry...I couldn't resist. I'm dry myself..." Gaze of inscrutable eyes. Erection recall.

Durango cuts a rug like a fallen angel, pacified blithely by the splays of typewriter carbons laid across his desk. His shoulder blades, amputated stubs, hunch out and up in line with ceiling angles.

The Olivetti dealer, a cryptographic nomad, stands by his wheelbarrow, dumps the monotype carcasses onto the floor around Durango's desk and Omar nearly goes cathartic through the ceiling. It's the perfect cover, evidently, for a questionable customs enterprise. Durango's eyes nip and tucker around the fact of my presence and position to the Bedouin, and he *gruffs* in rough approximation. "As you can see Assassin, we too have business in the east." His palm flies into the air and anoints the nomad with a small sachet of the Omni+Baal cash-crops — pure sodium-flakes like transcendent crystal snow, the bala rubies of Lop, a spiced liquor made from fermented sheep intestines...the nomad shakes his head in affirmation and punches a complex strain of alphanumeric characters into the typewriter's keypad (completely Arabic), and the letters scroll across a ream of papyrus in *scrapes* of obligatory *snap cracks*

making text.

“Bosh.” Both men stare in my general direction. “This is one of *our* field agents, goes by ‘Roach...’”

We shake hands, no angles. “Nice too meetz you...”

“Now that we’ve prepared the brief on the DSE...you’re to accompany him and Opacity out into that maelstrom of resistance...” He jerks a thumb past the windowpane. “We need an Assassin presence...orders from the Megalopolis.” The Roach’s face shrouded by clover eyes pleads silently. Olivetti goes *clickety-clackety*.

“Sorry chaps.” I muster a little courage, “I’ve seen enough. Got to get over the border. I’ll be sure to file a report back at HQ...” I spin to exit. Monkey *screeches* fill my ears. The door is locked.

“I’m afraid I must be the one to apologize. Omni+Baal has been placed on quarantine for an indefinite period, beginning retroactively of course...”

“When?” I *jiggle* the handle. Nothing.

“*Hmmm...*” Roach rips a self-composing sheet off the Olivetti. “Says here that theez place has been shutdown since that there Cinco de Mayo...quite some weeks ago.” A low sucking sound, “Looks like we deefault partners...”

Lingua Franco.

The Roach and I fly instead of bounce *sans* Opaque, *sans* sheriff, and the Roach waxes philological, “Opacity’s thee only lawmen worth hees salt in these parts. I of course, am a smuggler, and follow my own code...” He takes numbers from a pack of tourists, electronic

camera tits slung around goose-necks. “I’ll say the first” — “Give me the middle of pet-appreciation week” — “Fresh daughter’s cunt for Flag Day over here boss guy...”

“Care to make a wager Bosh?” The city is shutdown. “Got word that those insects are right stirred up...let me tell you how we knew...seems we got a sweet guy on the honeycomb inside, see, somebody who’s so deep he don’t even remember which cunt’s juicing his *offhands*...” Sub-divisions perform neighborhood death watches for the good of real-estate. “Which door is exit-only? Catch my meaning...we entered him through the ‘K.’ — typical martial law in effect, goes in cycles around here...just the same to a bloke like myself...” Vapor trails behind corpus-carts piled with steaming offal, smoking bandages in afflicted *tailpipes*. Anyone with a hypo and some testicles gets to play doctor “Well this cat is so deep, like I said, he really jazzed their alphabet up...and the text monkey producers back at the Viceroy’s compound are all smiles about it too, this guy’s so smooth, filing reports left and right for anyone who’ll take a peek, working the curve...” Modality checkpoints *pop* under abandoned archways, with out-of-work *bailbondsmen* and *ombudspeople* assigning life-numbers to the fruitful for a few more blank days...

“We’ve got a great staff here too, gee whiz...” Roach fakes a glob of *eyedrip*. “These organisms, see, these guys here for *godsakes* and *godswounds* and *gadzooks*, prefer to choose the hour and manner of their own deaths than to putz around for the scourge to get ‘em...” Scads of parishioners, supplicants, applicants and well wishers wait in queues for approval. “Wildly successful during the Bubonic and Chernobyl. The *Blauschein*. Old Man Catheter saved countless unborn generations of his progeny from genetic sequestering just by volunteering his keester from perfunctory liquidation. The Blue Sticker. That’s one thing I’ll say about this place...” We skip to the front of the line, the Roach steaming shit trails off his body like

cologne...organisms drop away and spasm. A blond paralegal, assigning digits up front, gets a knot of the Roach finger up the crack between panty hose. She gives a little *gush*. “This guy here...” pointing at me, “he’s alright honey.” We walk right through, her body rotating with the force of fingers. “And next week, baby...we’re gonna up the kill to every other day...” She *shudders* in buckets.

Forced through the *crink* of crowd into sunlight, bright dazzling light shards...the knives of control...tattooed on silver sailor arms... *dockworker* daydreams...I get déjà vu by the waterfront...it’s been done before...a place I’ve been...report read already. I know the line. Feel the toss. “Back to that agent, Bosh, the double guy...” Schooners, yachts, paddleboats and a Spruce Goose, moored ghostly in the atoll, draped in white antiseptic linen, passengers in *lockbox* quarantine, cargo aflame in the subterranean trash-compactors. *Redtide setsin...*

I feel purpose before explication. “And we’re here to meet the insurgents right. Take us into the ‘maelstrom’?”

“Fast learner, *eh* kid? Let’s hope you got enough sense behind those donkey ears to keep yourself solid in there.” *Redtide setsout*. We enter the lower spiral of the ivory lighthouse. Dank floods the pits of the entranceway, solid oak door sealed poorly shut, funereal smoke pressing out seams from the dark engine inside. “This crematorium-lighthouse has a double use, Bosh. Ostensibly, it’s the main maritime-quadrant cremation/dissolution/liquidation station in this part of town. But the kids enjoy the metaphorical distinctiveness...”

The antechamber overwhelms gigantic; stairs split up and down off the entrance platform. Atop, Chinese lanterns cast foxy glows and vibrate off sensor-arrays across checkerboard ceiling tiles. Scads of pro-vitamin demonstrators dance to acid-house schlock-tunes on a clear glass dance floor. “As above — the magic mirth...it’s use No. two....yellow

No. seven below. Bosh handles the double, no big deal for your standard-issue, upright Assassin, right ‘o? Look down yonder so...”

Below, the dead and dying lie *screeching* in punctuated decomposition on rusty hospital slabs, patients choking on fecal gelatin, *swishing* absent fingers into bedpans, catheterizing themselves to yellow orgasms. Attendants, bathed in protective anti-bacterial jelly, *trudgewalk* their *slimeboots* around the heaps of *moaners*, deflecting radio-isotopes with uranium wands and sub-atomic pokers. *Screams* rise into the ceiling tiles and get recycled as upward revelry *backbeats*.

We have to shout above the surge of bodies, erect nipples brushing Teflon, strobes and *thunker* music. “The perfect spot of death/live bacchanalia...just the type of convergence that those damn antiquarians can’t get enough of...the fucking Luddites...don’t get me wrong...I turn off the box once in a while myself...for *godshopes* that’s still aloud...but I believe in it through and through...these guys wanna fold our hard-earned empire back into its arse...with our own control devices even...the nerve!”

My déjà vu *shutdown* in the of bodies...so this is news to me. “And the DSE...we can find it here?” *Thump thumpidoobiest*.

“Whad you say?” Two sailors make our acquaintance by a rude dance an ape-jumping-bit masked cleverly as the lambada.

“This is it kid...exactly.” One of the sailors hits the skids back into his sweaty muddle, while No. two saunters over like a master *cocksman*, bombarding us with warnings against venturing too far into the quarantine — with or without provisions. “Don’t blame us old chap,” he grifts my arm during a rare break of the psycho-sonata, the auger of dead flesh rendered *upshaft* in the floor, levitating dresses on sailors pretending this place is equatorial, “if you find

the harshness of this segment of things not precisely *up to code*. Catch my drift?” And he *cackles* back with a classic closed-mouthed laugh, holding in gas or liquor or kerosene from the swigs of a halved, sliver coconut receptacle. “It’s all milk and honey here *loverboy*...” Nectar drips from the cuffs of this Sailor’s lower lips and coagulates into additional facial extremities like the Baluchi sugar-glue ritual. And he’s boasting a triple chin, at least until the bees get a taste for ambrosia face...

“It’s simple really,” the Sailor tells us off to the side of things, behind the tweak of supplicants praying against Allah at the space-bar, “My friend over there, Waxman...” the sharp of his sleeve points with his hand, “was once a well-respected field *anthro-apologist*. One of the highest castes around these parts. Quite famous. Until the partisan zealots of these border towns...” The Sailor gives a nervous glance at the ceiling, his eyes *whirligigging* around in seeming impossible tangents until I gruffly acknowledge the *redbreath* of recorder *redlight* blinking inconspicuously from a carbon-dioxide monitor on the hooked ceiling...” They are, how do you say...dunceish, deficient...largely addepleted?”

He’s waiting for some sign of support, a slight shoulder rotation, a snap of telepathic scissors, but I’m keeping mute, following the Roach’s lead...wisely...can’t be too open before the unknowns...especially in Omni+Baal, all things watching all other things, the ten thousand things, etc...I order two intergalactic scimitars (signature drink of the Northern Parsi) with a flop of wrist wrapped in black Assassin cloth. The closest Port-O-Porter, a rusty aluminum job, floats over gracelessly aside the monkey-looking waiter. “It’s the Paradise *pod* that keeps ‘em hooked,” the Sailor says, *swigging* the black-cherry concoction back into his eyeballs and his lips catch on the corner of a *yasdi* napkin, “Out father east, they’ve got stronger stuff than that crappy hashish and resonated *kief*...we’re talking serious opiate derivatives — Dilaudid candy buttons,

paracodine caviar, pantapon enemas. Whatever you want T. Bosh, you are man of some means, no?”

I *swig* my drink and scour the Sailor’s *fleur de lis* lapel pin; tiny microchips form the leaves like shamrock blades. “Waxman,” he starts up again, “lived among the peoples in the desert for some years. Initially, he was not accepted, but my friend is known for his perseverance, or at least he has been since this assignation...and within some months he was given his own extraction equipment and allowed to perform genetic circumcision rituals on the *nouveau riche*. The children of proto-cloning age, eighteen for the males, sixteen for females — After that, Waxman learned to swipe the DNA from even the hibernating elders, etc...”

“Your friend is a DNA extractor?” I suspect more than the DOME’s simple narrative set-up, some arcane story of warnings and taboos not to be broken in my journey, which these Omni+Baalians, parked at the border of the desert of a thousand days. They roll the *lowgrade* opium suppository with brittle brown fingers, arrange the various smuggling operations throughout this part of Omni+Baal. The Roach leans into his own sternum and whispers... “I knew it, they’ve got a line to the east. Keep ‘em hooked, Bosh...”

“I’m intrigued,” and the three of us rejoin the Sailor’s friend Waxman over in a corner booth, astride the dance floor. A few Mahotomens two-step to the nuke-DJ Uncle Thyroid, entrenched behind a field of computer-terminal sound machines. A group of intoxicated Müllahs argue over a passage in the Koran at the table next to us. Brown noise covers their flesh, and in the dim fluorescent *candlegrade shinepower* I get a unintended close-up at Waxman’s pock-marked face, eyebrows tweezed and shaped by hasty glue guns, eyelids of paraffin tissue-paper pulled softly down the void of empty sockets. “The retinas, as you see, can be easily crunched into the optimized shape and dimension. Show him the chest cavity...” says the Sailor, and the

so-far inert Waxman levitates his shirt with a boost of sloping, languid arm movements, *scrunching* up his flab and exposing under cover a gaping rectilinear crevasse in his lower torso. “He’s got everything but the abdomen...” the Sailor *whispers* and I instinctively finger the Telos-5200 in its hip-holster under the table. It’s instinctual but not my instinct, something to do with the DOME’s implanted character mechanisms.

The Roach puts down his drink and carefully runs a set of long fingers over the face of the inert Waxman, landing on nose like a lunar capsule touching the surface. He collapses the bridge into malleable *skinsand*. “So, this is your cover...” The Roach asks the Sailor in proxy for the Waxman. “DNA extraction?”

The Sailor shuts out the *sunlamps* homing over the dancers and squatters like manic flashlights. “Like everything here...extraction is intimately related to its opposite...infection. We’ve managed to isolate the means of infection through an analysis of our own subject positions. For you,” he looks quickly at the Roach and then at me, “two highly...fertile...members of the dominant hegemony, the ability to recognize infection is somewhat innate. Everything you know and/or have ever been taught, from the moment of conception, places you in a system that profligates your participation in the infection of others. Yet, by your rationale...this is the ‘extraction’ of unwanted characteristics from the target organism...”

The Roach kicks me under the table, covers a few packs of Olivetti ribbon on his utility belt like a child donning a fig leaf. “You know about the DSE?” he asks.

The Sailor sizes us up as his friend Waxman decomposes, face flooding down into a pool of plasma sand gravity, shape disassociating before our infectious eyes. “Yes...for some time. But that is no more news to you than it is to us...and you wouldn’t be here dropping such

information unless you didn't plan to arrest us." Suddenly, caught on tape, the Sailor *bursts* to the edge of the booth, overturns our drinks and appetizers, knocking Waxman to the ground, a pool of sand dispersed by the dancing clogs and knickers of a thousand riotous twirlers, shadows moving in silhouette dankness, strobes blinding movements like *stopgap* cartoons. Sailor makes a meander for it.

"After him," yells the Roach and we tumble through the cords of limbs and bodies gyrating in the sea of glassy spin, around the edges of DJ Thyroid's nuclear drum and bass, molting over the lighthouse dance floor and mixed with the ashen remains of burnt, *fizzled* carbon bodies weaving through our sinus cavities, tickling like dead feathers.

"Stop that organism...Omni+Baal security! Stop him!" shouts the Roach as he pushes the dancers away from him one at a time Bruce Lee-style, his badges hanging soft in one palm, a roll of quarters solid in the second. I *swizzle* the Waxman's leftovers with the tip of the Telos-5200 looking for the obviously extracted DNA. The Roach touched the guy and he fell to pieces and maybe it had been coming but that set it off...

"Bosh...this way...get going..." And I follow the trail of sand scattered in viscous clumps through the crematorium, staining between *stomping* feet and covering the medicinal soap opera one level below me — mole-like nurses with flat paraffin faces administer various IV drips and anal probes to the cramped, fetal patients, already burning, already dying. Gleaming strands of DNA, through the muddle, but no...only a trick of *clublight* meeting the *lightless* at work.

A fluid bass *thump* rumbles around my stomach. "Bosh!" Again through my ears and I rise from the crawl, scan the upper ramparts for the Roach or the Sailor, see the droplets of liquid acid dispersed into eyeballs, long hypodermic needles inserted into cuticles as skin flays onto the

floor, swept up by the janitorial staff on their hands and knees, looking ever down...up above the lights blaze so quick and the heat...do they give a warm glow to the lighthouse-crematorium?...the whores like a fire around me...the music *shaking* my flesh...causing the crawl...

“Up here...” And I look up again, past a rickety spiral staircase draped with homeless marmosets and coital creatures engendered in bizarre S&M rituals — flagellation with steel pipes and bare-stripped collar bones, mounting each other with suction-cup limbs, *whitehot* leather straps. DJ Thyroid shouts between samples for revolutionary grooves and mind-numbing subservience, and I can just make out the struggling outline of the Roach or the Sailor on the latticework overpass up top. A funk covers this place.

Expect-Torrent, Receive Suppressant.

Walls are bare. Room is full of organisms, organelles. Some humanoid. Some geometrical. Some geometrical impossibilities. Many insects of the resistance. One Vishnu of the Lowlands with many arms. Obviously he is a roach. It would seem that he is *the* Roach. There are no more TV dinners. Many organisms have blank paraffin faces.

Organisms chant and *viewscreens* rise. My ears *ring*. They have been *ringing* or could be *ringing* for some time but I have never before taken notice. Most organisms put on monk robes and begin *banging* drums. It is obvious by their movements, actions, and attention to the *viewscreens* displaying media that these organisms understand the Dime-Store Epiphany, the DSE. The Roach, Vishnu of the Lowlands, is some sort of high-priest, or priestess. Everything is rather gender-biased so far. Torches are lit and a giant holographic altar emulates from a supercomputer. The Roach floats various items for the service on its flat. Bowls of liquid,

perhaps gelatin. Candles. Masks. Masques. Swords. Magic stones. *Smartgel* chalices.

Viewscreens cease playing whatever they are playing, fix full upon the Roach, Vishnu, at the holographic altar. The entire congregation of organisms stare at the screens and *bang* drums wildly. Soon the beats fall under collective control, begin to *thumpthump thumpthump thumpthump...*

“Preterite insects of the common cause...” Vishnu begins, arms flailing like spokes from a cyclotron. “Everything had its own symmetry...but it takes eyes to develop and see, and not just eyes, but the willingness to use them...” *Viewscreens* show close up of Roach’s dark *brownsot* irises. “No offense meant for our differently-abled members...” A few blind, biotech moles *bang* wildly on the tight *drumskin* before them. “My question then is one of agency. Who imposes this symmetry of our existence when we cannot determine it for ourselves? When we feel lost, addlepat, inchoate — I ask, you who sets the boundaries beyond cogitation?” Low *hum* of single finger drums.

“Why it’s that magnanimous quasi-invalid local ‘protectorate’ — the proxy government dispersed from the Alamüte-Megalopolis, the bureaucrats who administer Omni+Baal in the spirit of ‘improvement.’ That’s there *grift* — ‘administration’ — teaching the classics, pushing Marlowe at our elementary schools, installing the language police into the local security forces, administering quarantine whenever we shake our cages a little too loud.” Organisms writhe beneath vestments; *bulges* gravitate like tapeworms under burlap sacks.

“And what do we have to show for it? WHAT DO WE HAVE TO SHOW FOR IT?” yells the Roach, hoisting four arms towards the assembled...sounds of suction seals slipping...

“Standard English.” *thump*

“Two beef patties.” *thump*

“Button fly blue-jeans.” *thump*

“The crematorium.” *thump*

“Fifty percent more stain-fighting power to help whites stay brighter.” *Thump*

“Special sauce lettuce.” *Thump*

“Super Bowl halftime show with sleek new advertisements.” *Thump*

“Situation Comedies that include a wacky neighbor characters we all can relate to.”

Thump

“Cheese pickle onions.” *Thump*

“Chocolate-flavored diet shakes for breakfast and lunch, complementing a healthy dinner to effortlessly slim-down the excess weight no exercise necessary one time low low low offer.”

THUMP

“Cigarettes without additives such as tar, nicotine, free-will.” *THUMP*

“The internet as global communication device that will transmute segmented thinking into a unilateral culture ostensibly determined by the interplay of individual forces but implicitly shaped by the dominant paradigm which contains and validates those forces as sub-tracks of a larger control mechanism.” *THUMP THUMP*

“On a sesame seed bun...” *THUMP*

“‘Online’ — ‘Email’ — ‘intranet’ — ‘telemarketing’ — ‘teleconferencing’ — ‘global marketplace’ — ‘multi-national conglomerate’ — ‘virtual avatar’ — ” *THUMP*

“Almost there people!” The Roach screams.

“The Dime-Store Epiphany...” *THUMP*

THUMP THUMP

“*Quaballah!* Reclamation...the language is key. And we won’t stand for assimilation. It stops here. Take your shiny new American, four-wheel-drivin’-sport-utility-anti-lock-brakin’-cruise-controllin’-cash-back-piece-o-shit and prepare the landing cite for the WORM...”

THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP

They dance maniacally, frenetically, tousled in an empire of sweaty resistance. Torches *blaze* reverse *airstrike* blues and greens into the ceiling. Pyrotechnic flame-throwers weld the atmosphere to pieces. Slugs emote forth from the sides of the lighthouse walls, dragging crematorium patients entangled in the glassy-eyed *sludge* of drunken sailors on shore leave, chunks of sand clogging assholes. The twin torches overturn into a heaping bonfire — a tremendous *auto-da-fé* fed by the semi-charred limbs of the slug victims, stained high-school versions of *The Tempest*, chrome detail strips from luxury sedans, plastic microprocessor *chipcasings*, cellular phones and beeper-pagers, fiberoptic cables binding unlucky custom officials, the Viceroy’s collection of rookie baseball cards, wilted heads of DDT-sprayed Romaine lettuce, canisters of jellied-gasoline and gummy salamanders, two tons of greasy french-fries left under heat-lamps for two decades, pay-per-view boxes and cheater modules...

THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP

Vishnu of the Lowlands does a witchcraft dance at the summit of the slightly elevated stage podium, pistols waving in his multiple arms carrying three sides of a scalped pentagon

official. “THUMP Mother of all, father of reclamation, god of segments, we incant you...”

I turn back towards the simple door, the as above/so below world of the crematorium-lighthouse silent on the other side.

“THUMP THUMP Umma-Segnus. We take these objects for you, we reclaim the marginalized discourse THUMP Come unto us *oh WORM of alltime...*rise from your subterranean jar and devour Omni+Baal in your cool, refreshing *burst* of minty dankness...THUMP” THUMP

I’m out the door and down the catwalk. A nameless sailor shuts out the sunrise, blacked out on the stairs. I trip on his cane and his legs tumble up to the ground, face flat against *glassfloor*. All bodies are zombies. Cremain ash cigarette butts and pools of stale beer soak into the *Resemblati*. The Telos-5200 only *hums*. I hear the THUMP THUMP behind, the breath of walls about to collapse. I’m up and out...

THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP

Out. Out. Out into the maritime quadrant, past the dock *swirling* black shadows. Bayonet-beaked seagulls commune in a *screech* of wings, fluted in vortex, spearing the *crashing*, metal-colored waves for wounded scrod. Ash is everywhere, all around, in my lungs. Globes of bird-shit *splatter* my neck and I could swear I hear laughter. I toss handfuls of antacid towards the flap of wings and pass on quickly, head down.

I choke long on the *deadwind*, back to the Viceroy’s compound, listening closely for inevitable birdy *bang* THUMP.

THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP

Ding. Dang. DUNG!

The shadows of Omar Durango's receiving room are covered in the universal dank. Two cyber-bionic pit-vipers *slithering* up a winged-wand, the official Alamüte-Megalopolis seal, imprinting themselves into the mass of overturned *waxjars* no longer needing palpable press of palm and vein. Temples of the secretary PerSe's *hornrims* lay broken beside her dead body, typewriter ribbons *neckwrapped* like bloated boa-constrictors. And everywhere the *slink...*the slither, the carpet soaked with wet sticky film like a cat's eye as I scour the ground around the blue-green stiff. I can't bear to see it end this way for loyal PerSe, and for decency's sake, fidget hopelessly with the long strands of ink-soaked ribbon. *Viewscreens* imagery *garbled* send.

She's entangled certainly — we all are and the THUMP of drums *seems* oddly removed, cool and distant. But I don't buy it. It's coming. Unfurling the cords from her neck is futility. The free end of the first strand plays only an inch before sticking beneath a handful of other, deeper cords. I try to untwist, uncover, bend beneath and around the blue-stained ink, the wet clot of letters, obscured *typeline* boundaries lending the chronology of wrap. No doubt this was a hasty job, an inside operation, and I *fumble* to my feet after slipping once, grab an ivory handled letter-opener, OD monogrammed, sweaty in a pile of mucous-covered office supplies.

I bend back down to *slice* away the pressure, sever the *inkline* that *bulges* out her eyes and tits and I somehow hypothesize, against all medical knowledge, that removing the ribbon will magically restore the stiffened mass of PerSe's flesh to its former ductility. *Slice*. *Letterblade* receives spent typewriter ink, memories of imprinted characters dye it ivory blue and black and gray like the ashy sky tonight. A long strand of mucous-film connects the open, dirty

pores of her neck with the end of the blade. And I pull back farther than necessary for leverage, far enough to watch it thin and silky and thinner, and finally, the break...

I don't notice the monkey until she bursts on top of my head, *screeching* and cloying, her superhuman fingers *sheened* with marmoset-jelly over my forehead, deep into the furrows of skin. The room is intermittently dark and hurtful. I stand up *screeching* myself, mimicking the *lingua franca* of the beast as much as possible. I go dizzy in a head-rush and run my hands on *neckback*, meeting fur and skin and nails. Blood *trickles* slide down my forearms. My eyes are being gouged. In desperation, I run backwards into the honor bar like a landslide. Tiny bottles of Fra Angelica *crash* against the floor. Monkey *screams* into my ear, bites my lobe and *thuds* into the ground.

"Ablaut!" a deep figure cuts his voice through the blinding blood of my left world.

"Return to your Remington monkey station immediately..."

It's Commander Opacity, *whirring* fat aerospace needle, torturing enemies of the state, pursuing the errant-monkey, putting his best face forward.

"Don't worry Bosh...just in time I see," he speaks in smooth bubbles at the monkey called Ablaut. "They don't understand our language...but respond to tone, pitch, rate, etc..." Ablaut huddles in the corner, absently *scratching* the lump from her fall, chewing on the eraser end of a No. two Dixon Ticonderoga pencil. "Etc..." makes her edgy; the muscles in her arm reticulate. I *shuffle* mutely towards Opacity, pulling the crust of jellied, dried blood from the chasm of my left eyeball.

"You've been very naughty, Ablaut. First you've left your work station during a very important moment...just when the Viceroy has ordered production output increased for today, to compensate..." Opaque hovers above the secretary's ruddy carcass, leaves of *The Riverside*

Shakespeare tickling her ribcage from one of his several undersides. Slow spin; remain smooth...

“Then you took something from Omar didn’t you...” Ablaut looks imploringly at the dodecahedron, wide-eyed upon “Omar.” She nods her head tiny. I notice that her ears are pierced with metal slats and pinned back onto her parietal lobe.

“Yes...that’s a good monkey...give it back to me...so I can give it back to Omar...” Upon the second “Omar,” Ablaut rips out a trinket from her *sidepouch*, excitedly waving its up before the *flickering* fluorescent tubes. *Screeching* again. Sinister show and tell.

“We’ve got to stop her...” But it’s too late. Maybe it’s an intonation shift of Opacity’s ostensibly still-smooth vox that Ablaut senses more perceptibly than the Homo Sap. Or perhaps she does understand, but tenses nonetheless. The fingers covered in jelly and mucous and now feces as she *rips* a hand from her anus and screws the trinket into her *eyesocket* — Durango’s sub-atomic monocle!

Opacity *gasps* somewhere *downinside*, providing at least the illusion of a pulmonary system. “Now you’ve gone too far...” She’s *screaming* and bouncing on the secretary’s body like it were a summer-day trampoline, or a *widebody* pogo stick. Ablaut *thrusts* her middle fingers sideways into the sweaty ether before simultaneously turning them skyward.

“Ah...ah...you’ll get it now you little fucker...” and the Commander of Colonial Protocol spins his revolver side *upward* as he pogos, *squishing* the entrails from the secretary’s corpse like clay out a spaghetti press, forced through ribbon wounds, surfing a clotted, purple *bloodtide*, strips of Courier font, oozy inside mash.

Opacity raises his *gunsides*.

And Ablaut jumps onto the desk, pours herself a vodka tonic and shoots a thin beam of

light from Omar's monocle over my eyes and face, my bruised arms, surveying the strangled body on the ground, the hovering *whir* of Opacity's panels. The monocle lands on the revolver, on the hilt of the gun, holding fast for a moment like a pregnant pause — and then the flash, and then the sound.

Ablaut sings one last monkey *screech*. Sang once more before death. Sung no more.

THUD THUD THUD or What the Fuck was That?

THUD THUD THUD

“Never you mind.” Opacity *whirs*.

“We've successfully removed the capital 'M', and that's something, right?” Omar Durango gazes out into the space between his overturned desk and the entrance of myself with the Commander of Colonial Protocol, Opacity. “Soon things we be safely *re-italicized*,” he whispers. “Try to put on a brave face...”

“Chalk it up to that 'K.' extra-letter schtick boss!” says the polygon. He pauses. “Oh yes, I've had to liquidate one of the simians...”

The Viceroy nods and *cracks* knuckles, motions to flash-cards scattered on the shag of the destroyed office like leaves dispersed after a hasty autumnal pile-up. “Right you are, old chap...” Cannonball file cabinets have exploded into the vestibule of the office and this place is a sinking ship; a trophy gryphon finds its ears pinned back to its stuffed little mane, staring down empty, eyes gauged away. “Chalk one up to us all right...”

Opacity *whirs* haplessly but pseudo-energetically above the fallen index cards, scribbled almost indifferently, hastily in the languages of the region — Sanskrit, C ++, Aramaic, Java,

Yiddish, Cobal, Esperanto. “We’ve got to be strong here, try to adapt for adaptation’s sake...*damngodit*; we display mammalian traits.”

“Precisely.” Omar scratches his tattoo mustache, tries to *rip* it away. “Ask me the first one.”

What follows is a bizarre ritual that I surmise to be a ritual simply by the solemnity of the action. Neither this last Viceroy, Omar Durango, a man stilted in his prime by the various idiosyncrasies of a distant empire, arguably assigned an impossible administrative task, nor his chief protocol officer, Commander Opacity, a veteran of greater more stable campaigns further west, show any outward sign that this ritual, so far as rituals go, will ever lose its reserved brilliance.

“‘*Eyesocket*’ sir, ‘*eyesocket*’...” Cards stand magnetized like loose iron filings glued to Opacity’s hull.

Omar’s hands massage his brow, his wrinkles. “*Eyesocket, eh?*” He pours gooey liquid from a near-empty decanter. “That’s an easy one, very recent. *Eyesocket* is the area in and around the vestibule of an organism’s eyeball. It is utilized often when referring to an animal, savage, or non-Alamüte. A compacted term, when time is of the essence...” Omar looks at me gleefully.

“Correct, sir! Exactly what’s on the card...splendid.” Opacity *whirs*.

The Viceroy correctly identifies ‘*hornrims*’ ‘*puckerupmotherfuckingbuttercup*’ and ‘*clublight*.’ I slump onto the one remaining Louis IV chair. The upholstery is *scratched* and *ripped*. Stuffing pokes out. The other chair is nowhere to be seen.

“Uh...‘*skinsand*’ ...that’s going a bit back now isn’t it Opaque?” Omar *unloops* a belt buckle and with a remorseful gesture of index finger attempts to straighten out a faded tattoo of

war ribbon. “That’s the *uh*...give me a moment...the word that identifies the outer epidermal layer of the savages who have been fully assimilated. Used mainly by other savages, of course, at first...a coinage that attempt to indicate the ‘degeneration’ of their membership into the media-zombie state they seem to deem unacceptable.” Opacity makes some sort of affirmation notice, imperceptible to me. Omar continues, “We’ve taken it back though. Made it sound desirable...”

I let out a little chuckle that goes unnoticed. While pondering the term ‘*whirligigging*,’ lost in deep contemplation, the Viceroy suddenly addresses both his commander and myself. “The Worm should arrive rather soon now...don’t you think? Listen closely, and you can hear it approaching...”

Perking up my ears, I do listen closely like a child at the railroad tracks. THUD “You know already?” I ask.

“Of course...” He brushes his hand at me in the sooty air. “The letter removal won’t last long. Only delays what is now an inevitability. As for ‘*whirligigging*,’ Opacity, I think I’ve got a workable definition.”

“I’m sure it’s fine Sir. Ready to receive...” Squalls of warp *williwaws* whip through the long brown drapes, into the chamber, over our dimly lighted forms. Stained crimson in *splotches*, the room diminishes quickly — my body scabs cut loose by the *knocking* drawl, the flash cards flying from Opaque’s outward panel, tumbling in asymptotic piles towards the Viceroy. He straightens his spine like a y-axis, breathes deep the gaseous outside atmosphere. “It’s a taste, to be sure boys...‘*whir*’ has become an almost ubiquitous turn of onomatopoeia, signaling a variety of connotations — spinning, twisting, revolving, rotating — as plain physical indicators of motion — as more scientific metaphors of perspective — gyrating, trundling,

circumnavigation, circumspection, and the spin of a cyclotron. In terms of movement across a vector, *'whir'* has come to determine a jump between levels of interpretation, the sound that brings us from simple thinking, to thinking about thought..."

"Bravo! But that's just the root sir..."

"Don't interrupt." Omar says curtly. "I'm still your commanding officer...don't slouch either." Heavy "I." "Recently, *'whir'* has come to denote the movement that you yourself make Opacity, as you pogo and rotate across Omni+Baal. *Hmmm... 'Whirligigging'* then, is used to indicate a maneuver of some visibility perception device — eyeballs, cameras, etc... — that provides the appearance of spinning along an irregular axis in order to increase awareness of additional recording devices, while simultaneously avoiding their gaze and capture..." Omar stands up limply from his chair, looks tired, haggard, cheeks *droop* like fishing weights. THUD

Opacity *whirs* out towards the window ledge, partially obscuring his bulk with the flowing, beaded curtains, plopping in tiny, dark swishes against him. "Excellent master. The sound is definitely muted." He manages to *mutter*.

Over his shoulder I can just make out a rising seafowl riptide migrating towards our bunker — seagull, pelican and albatross — *blurs* of grey white feather carrying the foreboding eiderdown just above, low enough in the *droop* to catch the upward *swoop* of wings and be pulled, like a piece of helium-filled scenery, over the crooks of the sky.

"One more boss...you're really grade 'K.' at this." Opacity floats indignant.

"*Thumpidoobiest*, what's that mean?"

The Viceroy, Omar Durango, steps lightly behind his Colonel. "*Thud-idoobiest?*" Salty sea air garbage floods our nasal cavities.

“No, that’s not what I said...I think you know well enough. ‘THUMP’”

“Indeed.” Omar Durango pushes into the solid backing panels of Commander Opacity, ripping the sleeve of his Alamüte military uniform — a long rod of colored flesh — on a particularly jagged corner of the construct. Blood *veindrips* like *treesap*. The force is enough to knock Opacity into the window sill, halfway out, and he stumbles over the ledge quickly, falling the one story down to the decimated ground. The commander of colonial protocol scurries in a *whir* of deceit towards the *seabreeze* stink, vaulting like a monster. THUMP

Omar remains calm, raises his pistol to the horizon. Fires two shots, then *click click click*. I *sidestand*. “Empty. Damn...” Opacity *whirs* further away.

“Bosh, use that Telos-5200. Hurry. The WORM is coming...the ‘M’ is back...” THUMP. “Bosh! By order of the Alamüte-Megalopolis, by virtue of your position as a fully-engendered Assassin, by right of my position as colonial Viceroy of this Omni+Baal province, I command you to fire upon the traitor...Bosh!”

Durango *rips* the gun off the bendable sheath of my leg and forces my arms into position. I offer no resistance. “Fire at him...fire! You’re an assassin! Damn you Thelonus!”

Humming in my *shaky* arms the gun vibrates like a crankcase burning the oil of resistance unmercifully, continually. I’ve never even held the thing for this long, but I can see Opacity in the scope...feel the rising surge as the SHADD-AI satellite *whirligigs* to syzygy in the upper atmosphere, circumnavigating the other DOME orbitals, beeping a small box around the waist of Metatron lost somewhere...maundering in Paradise...somewhere far removed. THUMP

THUMP

“Oh shit...Bosh! BOSH! Now...” Seabirds circle and dive at the bunker.

THUMP

“I’ve got a bead on him.” Close crusty left eye and *smash* trigger.

ZAAAP. The clouds break apart the metallic-looking fowl...a bright aperture of sunny *smaze* slits open, and down comes the beam...THUMP...the brilliant beam...directly at the bunker...inflecting the break of rifle...and then charging...THUMP...Opacity spinning wildly...screaching from an adjacent nearby...swear he’s looking back...screaming something...horizon blood red...ZAAAP again...out the flow of pneumatic release...picking off Opacity like a duck in a carnival line...

THUMP THUMP THUMP

Chink. He’s atomized off the axis, removed from his vector, spinning into the air higher than the gulls, up through a puncture in the clouds...he explodes...cascade of panels...planes connecting points...glowing nuts and bio-technical organs...skin like titanium...flames diving down...

THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP

The gun hops in my hand, a tear pretends to *drip* down Omar’s cheek and becomes an unfinished tattoo on his regal chest. “Good work Bosh. Knew you had it in you.” THUMP He pats down my quivering arms, rubs my buttocks, takes the Telos-5200 out of my hands, warm, sweaty. “Liquidation begins...”

THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP

Sky grows so dark as to make darkness seem light. Birds get *bangled* in the vortex of air, stems, burnt Opaque, bent hypodermic needles, CaCa bar wrappers, cheap cigarettes, old mufflers, dynamite pill boxes...speared like fish by the *swirl*...a small hill, entrenched in the distance, covered with tenements, Tudor style houses, gas stations, shrubbery, picket fences, all rise higher in the distance. The bunker wheels over the terrain...rising hill...uprooting the covers of the land...pulling up Omni+Baal's pavement and pay phones, cafes and cabbies...

THUMP We wheel in closer. No. The mountain grows higher, rises like Leviathan from a crook in the sub-aquatic firmament...higher and segmented...darkening the dark that darkens the world...the WORM!...Annelida overlord...blacking out all...atomic *stonebirds* plummet and explode scurrying machines below...useless hand grenade ballerinas...meadows inaugurated with fiery orchid cannonades and trampling the Alamüte tanks...bisecting hummingbird helicopters...terrifying megaphones blaring dull video sermons...

THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP

“Umma-Segnus, the WORLD-WORM!” screams Omar and he forces me towards the near empty book case. He pulls down *The Ways of Man* and the hidden door, more than expected, opens slowly on dying battery. THUMP Drums come alive and shadows are eliminated.

Past the husks of old davenports, ancient mirrors cracked and concave, breadbox desks

rolled down and locked...we find passage to the giant production warehouse. Descending into the distance, angled straight through the long planes of horizon into the center of the ground, I can't make out the merger of ceiling and back wall. Everything recedes, heavy, soiled, gelled...thousands of industrial size windows, vaguely translucent flashing grey shadows over the assembled monkeys and their typewriters...yes monkeys...small capuchins stained with rainbow fur and chunked feces...pissing each other spasmodic...rolling in shit...*smashing* the keys of their machines haphazardly...Olivetti, Remington, Clark Nova, Brother...all *tap tap tapping* and typing in potentialities, patterns, hanging on proclivity's edge...lights down and twisty in a solar wind...ceiling fans wildly spin...

"WORM will be here any second...take a good look," says Durango...piling remnants of old furniture against the now-closed passage door. THUMP The monkeys jerk themselves feral over their *typepads*, standing on hands, prehensile *whacking*...

"Who's got something? Which one of you filthy animals has it?" Durango hoists a bunch of rotten plantains into the sky on a ashplant; *crystalnacht screeches* fill our ears, shattering tympanums, inflaming cochlear implants. Omar reloads his pistol...digs nails into my flesh. Shadows pass through the sheets of window, fleets of solid dank converting the passage of the light through the swinging twist of lamps into intermittent black sheaths. Celluloid nightmare, sloe-mo *filmstops*, *strobelight* chaos...

"What do we have here?" Durango rips a sheet of thirty pound bond from the mouth of a hungry Olivetti. Trailing guitar-strings of soiled ribbon hang out the sides of the machine, spider veins over the floorboards of slanted correspondence and old produce. "Ah! This is *gobbedlygook* you dirty ape," and he crinkles the monkey's entire manuscript with his *bootheel*. THUMP THUMP "Lao Tzu's *The Art of War*...that poppycock! We need extra Shakespeare,

Milton, even translated Thomas Mann for *gadzooks...*”

THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP

He passes a plantain to the sweaty beast but shoots him before he can open it. “Better to distract them first. Some have sharp claws...” Sheets of cheap plaster drop from the ceiling as far back as I can see. Columns of wooden support beams *crack* through from stress fractures. Gallons of termites pour onto keyboards. “We’re being liquidated Bosh!”

Remaining windows *shatter* and splinter...the outside wall *crumbles* to bricks and clumps of dried adobe nothings...cold dank air breaks through the levy of words in the absence...bubbles of sticky gel glob over the monkeys freezing them in preposterous grimaces and contortions...humping each other for safety...*cracking* coconuts on the skulls of neighboring drones...showering cum over their works-in-progress...oceans of plastic freeze washing the warehouse...

Omar rushes me with heavy low *breathbursts* and pumping systoles to a dilapidated typewriter. “It’s a QWERTY...Ablaut’s old piece...escape pod...this place is going Ho Chi Minh whether we like it or not...type you crazy bastard, type...I’ll cover you out of here...”

a s

And Omar runs into the maelstrom...the segmented body of Umma-Segnus hovering outside to the heavens, *slithering* and *shaking* the leaves off the world-ash, nibbling on the aperture of sun tacked cheaply to the firmament, coagulating all organisms to unilateral slime...

THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP

a s d f j k l ;

It's coming back, my fingers, the unlimited rolls of paper. Monkey freeze and die around me, fall to the floor in heaps and the insects of the soil partake of their flesh. Unholy manna. Roaches over my legs and up my shins...centipedes walking infinite feet into holes between letters...sticking to the clots on my face...termites infiltrating my nose...looking for the heart of the stench...aphids in my arteries...tent caterpillars birthing the hordes in my head...Japanese beetles with razor flesh form teeth...

; l k j f d s a

THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP

Whiteflat tapeworms and flukes burrow into my colon...guinea worms...THUMP...falling shards of heat around me...Durango into the outside *pounding* on the sheath of enormous Umma-Segnus, fighting segment by segment. "Escape pod...pod...BOSH!"

F D S A

The *roar* of the World-Worm overtakes Omni+Baal. This DOME-segment is forfeit. Blood pours our my ears in buckets...sharp pains searing...

F D S A

THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP
THUMP THUMP

Gel covers Durango in distance. He falls before he can fire the gun at his own face...he explodes just the same...*splatters* of skull on half-eaten plantains...broken keys of typewriters cease incessant *clacking*...monkeys all *laydead*...everything sheathed in dank...hunt and peck, burning apart...*alldead* but my *clickety*, desperate fingers.

THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP
THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP

J K L ;

Viewscreen

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