





The Odds

Sam Robinson

Leo fell backwards, taking the chair down with him. I barely heard the crash, my ears were ringing. I peered over the counter and saw him laying on top of the chair in a spreading pool of dark blood. It caught the overhead lights; their reflections vibrated on the deep red surface. I hopped over the counter and stood at the laptop, still open, and pulled up a blank word document. I didn't have much time. Tara would be down any minute, and I needed to get to the Shangri-La. If I ignored the strike of inspiration, I'd be lost. I started typing furiously.

The sign that hangs over the entrance of the Shangri-La is always glowing—the flickering image of a tiger. Its fangs are bared, and a red tongue dangles from its mouth. I always thought its fur was more gold than orange, and its mouth was smiling when I arrived, and snarling when I left. It was a masterpiece. Four sets of glass double doors reveal its deep red interior from the outside.

I go in the door on the far right. It's marginally closest to the tables, even though they aren't far from the entrance. I haven't used the other doors in months. I'm always going to the same place.

I haven't worked in months, maybe a year. Writing isn't work. Even though it's the expenditure of effort in service of an aim, in fact the production of an artifact, and I'm even seeking handsome payment, it's still not work—there's no drudgery involved, and when there is, I just don't do it. But the muses don't visit me anymore, so I don't write much. A friend of mine says he writes with nice leather boots on because if you look good, the muse will swoon for you. When I write, I kick my feet up on unwashed cotton sheets, turning yellow, wearing nothing but underwear, if that.

My body is nothing special. I used to work out, lifting weights and eating one of those vital primal diets of protein and fat. Now I just starve myself, or steal from the supermarket when I can. Nobody cares, you can just grab a pre-made *poke* bowl or a bag of chips and walk around letting yourself be dazzled by the logos on the shelves, the non-local produce, meat slabs behind the glass guarded by a surly block-head. It's a big enough city, and I can disguise myself to avoid capture, circulate in different outfits, grow mustaches, beards, shave my head. No wigs yet. That would be too much work.

To pass my time waiting for the muse to come back, I've been stretching out the \$50,000 advance that I got for about a year down here, trying to come up with a foolproof system to win at roulette. I've got about \$3,000 left.

So far I've tried playing it safe, staying on the two-to-one odds and cutting out as soon as I start to lose. I've also prayed, which did nothing, and sacrificed a few animals to mixed results: The first time, I caught a rat in my apartment and killed it, for no appreciable change, but I don't think the intention was strong enough. After that, I found a seagull that looked lost; it was, out in this city in the middle of the desert, and it filled me with so much rage that I snuck up on it in broad daylight, grabbed it by the throat, and strangled it. It thrashed and squawked on the empty street, but I didn't even look around to check if anybody was there. Part way through, I realized my crime and looked around, finding myself alone, and then lifted my eyes up to heaven.

No reply came then, but I noticed a slight uptick later that night at the table. Afterwards, walking home, I thought about the cold and paltry beach I grew up near, ringed in on one side by the continuing coastal urban sprawl, and on the other by a natural gas tower—the interrupted ocean. My dad was in the Air Force, and when I was a boy he told me about colliding with a seagull in midair. They never let him fly a plane, he was driving a tow-truck. It destroyed the grille, he was horrified, and it came back into his eyes as he recounted it. To me, it didn't seem so bad, but what do I know? My ex-girlfriend hit a deer in New Hampshire and after that she refused to drive at night. I've never been in a car accident, aside from a time that the front wheel snapped off my

family's Hyundai on the highway. Completely out of my control, and nobody was hurt. My ex-girlfriend, a different one, was in the front seat with me, passed out drunk. It's a good thing, she would have lost her mind, but she woke up as we came to a dead stop on the shoulder of route 1A around midnight. I watched the wheel roll forward, bouncing and spinning on its own momentum. It seemed endless, and my heart was racing.

The third time, I sacrificed a green frog and lost a thousand dollars in one night. I must have violated something.

That night, watching my money disappear from me I shut my eyes in pain. A cherub floated in front of me and turned into a beautiful young man. He was accompanied by a snarling, drooling panther with



a little frog in its mouth. The panther spit the frog on the ground and tensed up to lunge at me. I opened my eyes in fear.

Since then, I've been looking for more birds, but I haven't found any that seem easy enough to catch. If it seems like too much work, or work at all, I leave it for another day.

Another day came and went, I spent it like so many others, in my *writing practice*: staring at a blank page, the cursor flickering at me. I felt ambivalently like it was taunting me and genuinely calling to me, "please put something down on this page. Give me a purpose, project me forward into free and empty space!" I let it languish in a cage. After a few hours of this, I switched to a paper and pen. I looked at the last date in my notebook: not even this decade. The muse doesn't swoon for me. She doesn't even return my calls.

My agent and my publisher email me, reminding me the deadline has passed and they're really hoping to see a draft soon, and to call if I need anything. I need a fucking book.

Beautiful Things is supposed to be my serious follow-up to *Going Nowhere*. I remember getting that message after it was published, reveling in the few positive reviews, the longlist for whatever prize,

ranting on the phone to my agent that “Art is possible again, not content, not some stillborn masturbation, but serious Art, tragic Art! Tragedy can still be achieved, even in a pissed-dry world like this one. We don’t have to be the shameful animal. It’s like, certain beautiful and crazy people are given a task by Nature to redeem us. Death at the hands of a lover, a crime of passion—she’s begging him to kill her after driving him to madness. The gratuitous expenditure of entire lives for one vivid tableau, where the will overwhelms all reason. A tortured artist and a gracious whore, a philosopher and a mystic. The Apollonian is subsumed to the Dionysian. The fate of all great things is ruin, and even knowing that beforehand the beauty is worth it. Is this not the ultimate superfluity of life? It’s Icarus! No... it’s the story of Zeus and Semele. A woman begging for a man to show his true self!”

I’m not so enthusiastic anymore. I barely speak a word these days.

He seemed nonplussed, some people already took me for half a psychopath, or worse a fascist, but the climate must have been changing because he got me a little chunk of change from XXXXXXXXXXXX Publishing. *The next Burroughs but he’s straight, questionably, at least he’s not a pedophile, he didn’t kill his wife, and he likes uppers instead of downers, so we expect he’ll be productive.*

I need throngs of people reading it, and acclaiming me, and giving me license to spend the rest of my days in violent luxury. Not license, I have the license. Just no means. I need to get it optioned for a screenplay, and a major motion picture, so I can spend time eating hors d’oeuvres and snorting coke in some mid-century modern home on the Pacific Coast Highway, until I blow my brains out on the red carpet, under a marquee bearing my desire in block letters: BEAUTIFUL THINGS. They’ve never seen anything like it. *Such a poignant and tragic story! A bold confrontation with the overwhelming desires of sex, romance and violence that actually move us, outside of the petty status-seeking and comfort that we take to be what motivated the mass of humanity! I didn’t even know tragedy was still possible in this day and age!*

I’m taken away by the spirit of music, a recording of *Carmina Burana* is playing loudly out of tinny laptop speakers, reaching its climax. The emails go unanswered. It’s too much work.

A month later, I was desperate. Down to my last thousand, or a little less than that. I had been trying to focus my intention on swatting flies and other insects, and was mapping out the relation between a few variables to see if they had any impact on my winnings—number of sacrifices in a day, strength of concentrated intention (on a scale of

1-10), trying to control for play style on a given night. A spiderweb of linked coordinates emerged on a piece of white posterboard I'd bought for the experiment. It was the first thing I'd written in months, maybe a year. Unbeknownst to myself, I'd gone out almost every day for a couple weeks straight and was just pissing money down the drain. I came to the conclusion I had upset the gods with my paltry offerings, and I needed something substantial if there was going to be any turnaround in my fortunes.

I went out for a walk after a few hours of my *practice*, amounting to fuck all. It's best to think when the muscles are moving. When I first got here, I came to notice this, and had even written a couple poems as I circulated the casino, taking breaks to smoke and snag drinks from the cocktail waitresses when my luck cooled so much I couldn't ignore it. Nobody wants a poem. I won't eat off it.

But it's still better than working.

When I moved to this city, I'd expected a little more action, glamorous whores, rich playboys, but soon realized that even with my wind-fall I couldn't afford that neighborhood. Usually there was nobody around, until you got a lot closer to downtown.

I was floundering like a talentless latter-day Baudelaire, looking up at the sky. I stumbled a few times on cracks and divots in the sidewalks. Birds flew overhead under the Sun. I couldn't identify them. I certainly couldn't reach them. It wouldn't be enough, anyway. I'd been feeding flies to the gods for a while now. They were drooling for a real meal.

My wanderings took me out of my familiar element, and before long I started seeing passersby. The buildings were getting taller, chiseling away the sky, and I realized I had been walking straight towards downtown, my vacant reverie leading me in the direction of the Shangri-La. I was a little over halfway there. I had to make a decision soon. If I showed up empty handed, my luck wouldn't take me anywhere. I'd be flat broke for sure, looking for a job or preferably a bridge to jump off.

She was across the street, walking with her back turned in the same direction I was, in a shiny black dress. It was tight, leather or latex I couldn't tell, and she had thigh high boots to match, covering the whole leg save for a band of skin between the hem of the dress and the top of the boot. Every now and then the dress would start to ride up, and she would adjust it back down, but she never looked around nervously, checking to see if anybody saw a little too much.

There was a black line tattooed on the back of her left leg, dead center, connecting the fabrics, and I could see that it continued up the left side of her back where the dress was cut low, disappearing under shaggy hair, brown bleached blonde. Her shoulders were slim and strong, jutting out past her slender hips below. There was another

tattoo, a panther reclining between her shoulder blades. I watched the muscles in her back as she walked, tensing and relaxing all the way down to her ass, and I felt myself flush a little. I kept pace on the opposite sidewalk, a few dozen feet back.

We ended up waiting beside each other at a crosswalk with the street in between, and we made eye contact when I looked aside at her. Her eyes were blue, and dazzling. She turned away after a second, waited, and then looked back at me. I'm sure I was flushed, in fact, I must have looked like shit. My balding hair was growing out in an unruly way, my mustache was shaggy, and only my beard was at all cropped. It was quite close. I'd always been somewhat vain regarding my jawline. It's not hard to stand out there, either you got it or you don't. With all the weight I'd lost, my face was taut against the skull.

The light changed, and I crossed over to the corner she was waiting on. We talked a little bit, I told her I was on my way to the casino, the traffic and chatter was starting to pick up, and she told me she knew a place where we could talk a little more privately if I was interested, a room at a motel a couple blocks back the way we came. Heading back that way, we chatted a little bit, she asked me "where are you from, if you want to say?" I grew up in a place most people have heard of, she'd learned about it in American History in high school. "Witches have always been so cool to me. Like those girls did not give a fuck! They just did their thing, and everybody went crazy... so what, are you on vacation here or something?"

"Well, I'm not working. I mean, I'm supposed to be, but I'm doing everything I can to avoid it." I didn't really feel like explaining, and she didn't seem to mind.

"Don't worry, honey, when we get back to my place I'll take care of everything. You won't have to lift a finger." After that we walked in silence, periodically broken by her singing something under her breath, absentmindedly, a song stuck in her head. I didn't recognize it, but the melody was lovely.

"What song is that?" I asked.

"Oh it's nothing—I wrote it, actually."

"That's cool. It's very pretty."

She half-sighed, half-grunted. "It's not supposed to be pretty. It's supposed to be... I don't know, unsettling. Freaky." I shrugged. We walked further in silence, and then she turned to me with a sweet smile, put on incongruously with the blank eyes hanging over it. "Thanks, though." I gave a half-smile back and nodded my head. We walked on and I realized I was humming the song.

We arrived at a narrow building, five stories tall with pairs of windows covering the facade. There was a sign above the entrance. All it said was "HOTEL." She opened the door, and I followed.

There was a man waiting in the lobby, balding in a dirty black tank-top and black jeans, somewhere between burly and obese, leaning back in a brown faux leather office chair behind a green and black faux marble counter. He was staring at a laptop when we walked in, and it cast a glow on his tan face. I noticed some cags: a scar over his lip, a nose at some point broken. I could make out a couple of tattoos under the tank top, some Latin words at the top of his pecs—*ALEA IACTA EST*, above two dice coming up snake eyes. A pair of thin gold chains hung from his neck.

“Hey, Leo. I’m taking this guy up to my room.”

He sized me up, evidently finding nothing too threatening, and barely nodded back at us. He looked into my eyes and pulled a lewd grin. “Watch out for this one. She can be a handful, trust me.”

She rolled her eyes and shook her head. “Be back in an hour... we’ll see you.” She squeezed my arm and gave me a pull towards the elevator. We got in, and she pushed the button for the fourth floor. “You know we didn’t really talk about the price. It’s a hundred for an hour.”

In that moment I thought I might be wildly off course, but I had the money in my pocket and it seemed like too much work to turn back now. What is best to feed the gods? I want to sate them fully. Do they like to eat beautiful things, or would they rather leave them here on earth, and watch them play? I still had another hundred and after this I’d be able to turn it into a lot more. “Yeah, I can do that. What should I call you?”

“Tara. What do you want me to call you?”

“It’s not important.”

We got off and went into a room on the back left of the building. The view stretched out over the low roofs leading back to my neighborhood. The sky was open wide through the window, and the Sun was setting over it, orange, yellow and pink. There was a band of deepening blue at the topmost edge of my field of vision. Before long it would descend and cover everything, and the Sun would rise after that.

“Have you ever done something like this before?”

I thought about it for a minute. “No, no, nothing like this.” Tara threw her handbag down on the floor, and the butt of a gun protruded from its slack leather mouth. She saw me looking at it and hastily walked over to bury it deeper in the bag. She chuckled. “Sit down, sit down! Don’t worry about this. I just got it to protect myself around here.”

“It doesn’t bother me.” I sat down on the bed, then reached into my back pocket and pulled out my wallet. I had all the money to my name in there, in cash, about a grand. I had to feed the gods, they were starving. “Look, Tara, I need to ask you something strange, a favor actually: I’ve got \$900 here, so that’s a hundred for the hour, and the other eight

for the gun? I don't know how you got this one but I'm sure you can get another one... I don't have the time to explain but I need it right away."

She looked at me perplexed. "And what, you're gonna walk out of here just like that? And Leo's gonna ask me what happened, and I can't just lie to him. No, no, I don't think so."

"Just consider it, would you? I don't really feel like fucking, actually, I don't have the time, just this other pressing need I can't explain. Don't you want the money?"

I guess it was enough. She kind of shrugged, and relented, and went to her purse to grab the gun. It was a little pistol, easy enough to hide. I gave her the money, put the gun in my pocket and thanked her. We



made a plan to wait about a dozen minutes before I would go down first, and then she'd follow a few minutes after. She sat down on the bed beside me as we waited. I laid back, my legs hanging over the edge, and found myself humming the tune she had been singing earlier.

"You know, that's why I came out here."

"Hmm?"

"I wanted to make some cash and then move on to L.A. I've always wanted to be a songwriter. I don't know if I'll ever get rich off it but nothing makes me happier."

"Isn't that the dream? When you love what you do..." I trailed off and left the cliché hanging, decaying in midair as I stared at the ceiling.

“You’ve got a talent for it though, not like I know you like that but I barely heard this one and I’m singing it. It really is lovely.”

Tara smiled, I saw out of the corner of my eye. I looked at the clock instead: about fifteen past. I sat up, then stood and turned to her, shaking her hand and told her I’d see her on the other side. Before I left I had to ask, “What’s the name of that song?”

“*We Worship the Sun*, but it’s not, like, catchy—I don’t know, it’s a little wordy—so I might change it.”

“I wouldn’t.” I took one last look out the window. The band of darkening blue was advancing fast. I left and shut the door behind me. As I entered the elevator, I looked into my wallet. A little less than a hundred left. It descended slowly.

What is best to feed the gods? I want to sate them fully. Maybe their appetites are more ravenous, more just and more terrible than we know, and they feed on every thing that dies, even a great ugliness, and know that what plays out under their gaze on earth is that much more beautiful for it.

I walked across the foyer, looking through the glass double doors to the world outside. It was dusk, dark against the fluorescent-lit lobby. Leo snorted as I walked past him, and I turned in his direction. The skin was hanging off his face. He squinted and smiled, his eyes disappearing behind blotchy sagging curtains. I shut my eyes when he started speaking.

A cherub was floating before me. His limbs and torso stretched, turning him into the lithe young man, with dark curls cascading down past his shoulders, almost to the elbows. A panther walked up from behind him, flexing its muscles under golden fur. Its eyes were blue, and dazzling. It was holding something in its mouth, dripping red. I thought it was the number 1. I heard a titanic rumbling, opened my eyes, and fired twice.

To whoever finds this message, please send to my agent, Gabriel Adams, and the good people at XXXXXXXXXXXX Publishing,

My apologies for the delay in getting back to you. Thank you for your patience. You will see that it hasn’t been a waste. I expect to have a working draft of Beautiful Things finished very soon. In the meantime, I hope that the following piece will satisfy you in some measure. It’s an essay, a philosophic and poetic meditation in the vein of Augustine and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. I think it would be well placed at the Paris Review or some comparable publication. The New Yorker, perhaps? It might be a good way to generate some word of mouth.

Confessions

I am a criminal. I am an artist. I am a writer. I am a poet. I am a philosopher. I am a necrophiliac, intimately playing with dead things. I am a monster. I am a monster of ego. I do not write for therapy. I do not write for catharsis. I write for immortality. I desire immortality in this world. I deny the next. I deny equality in the phenomenal world. I deny that any thing is commensurate with any other. I am a monster of ego. I believe my work deserves to be read by everybody on earth. I do not believe my work deserves to be read by everybody on earth. I have manifold and contradictory desires. I am entitled to my judgments, but you are not. I am entitled to every thing on earth, and you are not. I aim to take every thing on earth and make use of it (cf Benvenuto Cellini, stealing bronze for the furnace to fill his mold for Perseus with the Head of Medusa, then avenging his brother in a murderous vendetta). I spend everything I have. I spend my time prodigally. I spend my money with the certainty of death in view. I write, knowing that literature is dead at this time. I believe dead things can return. I know all things die. I still desire to have them. I watch dispassionately as the thing possessed becomes the thing lost. I watch passionately as the thing possessed becomes the thing lost. I have manifold and contradictory desires. I am a *décadent*. I need discipline. I have confused instincts. I have suffered from diseases of domestication. I am still convalescing. I desire rest. I desire peace & quiet. I desire war. I desire annihilation. I do not want the peaceful resolution of problems. I want the rupture of open conflict. I do not think humanity can be saved from our fate, it is in terminal decline, and another species will read these confessions in the next age and see the Flame behind all things.

Thank you again for your patience, and I promise you will not be let down by what is to come. It will soon be yours.

*Sincerely,
Sam Robinson*

I looked at what I had done, and was pleased. Hopefully Tara would know what to do with the message.

I hopped back over the counter and made for the exit. Outside of the hotel, the street was still quiet. The sky was now fully a deep blue, any last traces of daylight lost on the other side of urban sprawl. Some apartment lights were on, but the neighborhood gave the impression of a giant body crossing over and away from life.

Heading deeper into the city, I walked swiftly, and felt the pistol bouncing against my thigh with each step of my right leg.

It was bright downtown, as ever, as always, and I looked at the tourists ambling around, grazing on the scenery, gaudy storefront windows, men in sandwich boards advertising any pedestrian show you could think of.

Back at the Shangri-La, John's table was empty that night. He's my dealer of choice, with stern gray eyes hidden behind smile lines. I sat down at my usual seat across from him. He seemed distracted, but wasn't startled by my arrival.

"Good to see you, Sammy." I nodded back to him. "It's good to be back." He shrugged. "I've got \$95, my friend. Put it all on 1."

"Are you sure about that?"

"Never been more so."

He let the ball go, and I watched it roll. It was circling the wheel, over and over again. There is nothing more to life. I'll never have to work again. I might not even need to write. I shut my eyes and the cherub returned. He became again the beautiful youth. This time the panther was curled at his feet, while the young man smiled and laughed. The wheel stopped.



(BEHIND EVERY DOOR)

Rick K. Reut

...the Whole World and all
there is, including your soul.
Shadows stretch from the sun,
seeking the end of the day,
which is about to run
out of light on the way
to tomorrow. Few eyes
see and few ears hear
the truth. Plenty of lies
swarm around in fear.
In the night, fear waits
deep in the dark behind
every door. It inflates
like a balloon on your mind.
Fear tears through the air
just like a poisoned dart.
It's almost everywhere,
even in abstract art
galleries. It's on walls
like cobweb. Fear hides
in emergency calls.
It is felt on both sides
of any dead-end street,
stalking you to your place.
It feels like it will slit
your throat if you see its face
in a sharp piece of glass.
Spilling some boiled blood
from your heart, try to guess
WHO has no fear. GOD
is certainly not afraid
of anything: HE made...

...the Whole World and all there is, including your soul. Shadows stretch from the sun, seeking the end of the day, which is about to run out of light on the way to tomorrow. Few eyes see and few ears hear the truth. Plenty of lies swarm around in fear. In the night, fear waits deep in the dark behind every door. It inflates like a balloon on your mind. Fear tears through the air just like a poisoned dart. It's almost everywhere, even in abstract art galleries. It's on walls like cobweb. Fear hides in emergency calls. It is felt on both sides of any dead-end street, stalking you to your place. It feels like it will slit your throat if you see its face in a sharp piece of glass. Spilling some boiled blood from your heart, try to guess WHO has no fear. GOD is certainly not afraid of anything: HE made...



Transitory Proposition

Sarah Rosenblatt

I remember my aunt saying to my dad
how unbelievable it was
that she had gotten so old.
No tears, only a light laugh,

laughing off time.

The handkerchiefs we blow our noses into
won't remember us for our best qualities.

The fans blow, cars respire,
leaves sway in wind
but before I make sense of this split second

it slips off
into the stratosphere.

Supreme Aggravation

Nik Hoffmann

Ah ha! You've locked me in my void,
This subtle cage which pleasures so,
Filled with the din of light and toy,
But never never, I say no.
'Tis not allowed men to object,
Nor protest displacement injured,
As hero's way is made reject,
And each harsh word is fast censured.
You've cut my tongue to circumcise
The flesh you've found unfit to wear,
Unjustly presumed god-like size,
Though no god-like burden you bear.
Despise myself for being trapped,
Though hate you more, your idiot's tone.
Let be dashed your little brats,
But God! They could have been my own.



KAOS KARMA THE JOURNEY INWARD/MIDNIGHT MEDICINE CODE
INFINITY SCREAMING BONES DIGITAL POSSESSION IN THE
HOUSE OF LOVE FACE TO FACE WITH SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T
EXIST/GODSTAR ABSTRACT REALITY HEAR THE SECRET SUN
SPEAK MARBLE REINCARNATION GOTHIC ROSE NARRATION BASS
NECTAR SCARECROW NAMELESS DAY CANAL BREATH SUPER-
SCENE BLOOD LABYRINTH BLOOD ALL THE DARK REBIRTHS ARE
MINE/ANNHILATING THE REAL VENUS IMPOSSIBLE FATHOM
LINES OF A MYSTERY FRONT TECHNOROMANCE VIPER MONSOON
OCEAN MACHINE SCREAM OF SWIFTS/ELECTRIC DAY CIRCUIT
HORIZON SOMEWHERE IN THE UNKNOWN WORLD I SPEAK TO
YOU IN THE LANGUAGE OF LOST LIGHTS WILDERNESS OF MIR-
RORS DESPITE ONESELF THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO ESCAPE FROM
REALITY SHE SAID DESIRELESS MINDCIRCUS THE RIDDLE OF EX-
ISTENCE FOREVER ON YOUR MIND EVERYWHERE AN EMPTY
BLISS THE SCENT OF SAINTLINESS/DIAMOND DUST EROTIC
WASTELAND STRANGER THAN ME GHOST WHISPERS 3 AM ETER-
NAL WHEEL OF FORTUNE BIRDFLOWER OF MY BECOMING THE
BREATH OF PERSISTING STARS/GLASS TEMPLE EROTIC VERTIGO
DREAMFLESH DICHOTOMY SINISTER FLOWER SWEET CHILD IN
TIME REMOTE OCEAN PRAVER FUTURISTIC SOLITUDE RITUAL &
REWARD/KINGDOM WIND NOTHING IS TRUE OR FALSE IN THIS
HOUSE OF NAMES/VANDAL MOON ROBOT LOVE MY RESURREC-
TION TALK TO ME LIKE A FORGOTTEN CIGARETTE EVERYTHING
IS SOMETHING ASLUM HEART MUSIC & RITUAL INTOXICATION/
AFRICAN ROCK PAIN SUPERIMPOSED ON SILENCE ESCAPE INTO
LIFE EXOTICA THE ART OF RUINS FORBIDDEN COLORS MY LITTLE
OBLIVIONS THESE TEARS OF LOVE BECOME WHAT YOU ARE HOLY
FUTURES TARANTULA POETIC MEDICINE OF CALM & CHAOS/
MAGIC MINDFIRE HEAVY VELVET BURNING THIS POSSIBILITY/
VOICES IN MY HEAD THESE ALMOST INVISIBLE CLOUDS OF
BREATH KILLING TIME



The Threshing

John Swain

The wake of the hill encloses our solstice
in a transparent flame,
the emmer husk ignites the scythe to burn.

We emerge from rifts of silence
and speak through teeth and cinder leaves,
the shape of names intones the vapor rose.

After the glance of your hand,
the painted chamber resonates a solar mark,
the winter ceiling rises as we sphere air
to table the sky on a pillar,
the lattice strands enlace the light to stone.



AI Wrote This Story

Kushal Podder

AI wrote this story; perhaps it found me in someone else's writing. Maybe it was my autobiography. Funny, but I cannot recall writing about this street, birds, shrill noise evenings make or the way grass chokes all the progress. Were those from another piece? I would have thanked it, albeit life meant nothing to the one who began the chain.



url: minimag.press
subs: minimagsubmissions@gmail.com
substack: minimag.substack.com
twitter: @minimag_lit
insta: @minimag_write
book: <https://a.co/d/2O1yfmD>

“Supreme Aggravation” by Nik Hoffmann
X: @merkurymann
Substack: <https://acrossthespheres.substack.com/>

“Transitory Proposition” by Sarah Rosenblatt

“KAOS KARMA...” by Rus Khumotoff
(Rus, I lost your contact info, send a dm
I’ll update this space)

“The Odds” by Sam Robinson
Substack: <https://sunworship.substack.com/>

“The Threshing” by John Swain
Website: <https://www.john-swain.com>

“AI Wrote This Story” by Kushal Poddar
Book: [Kushal Poddar Amazon Author Page](#)
Twitter: @Kushalpoe
Insta: @kushalthe poet

“(BEHIND EVERY DOOR)” by Rick K. Reut

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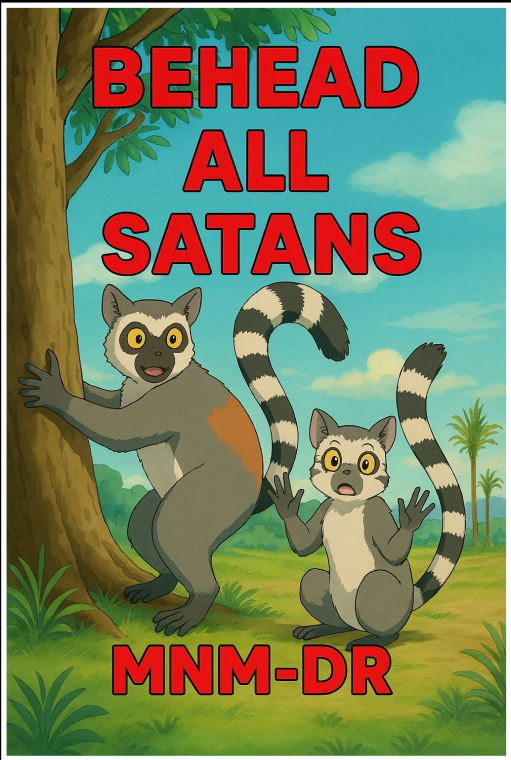
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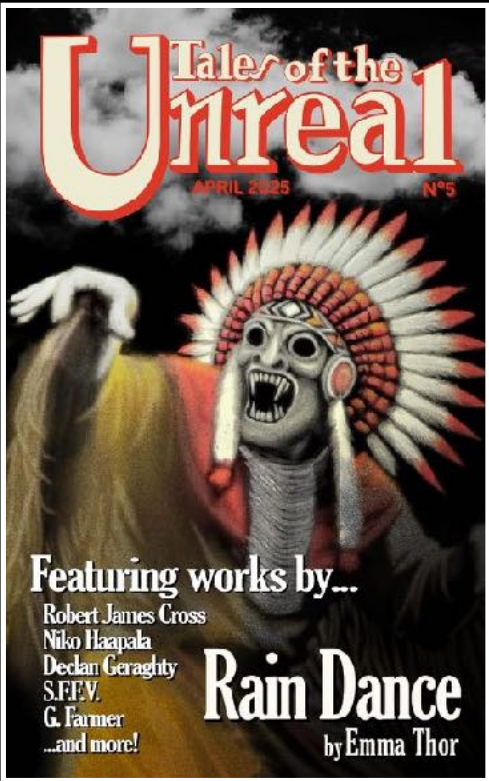
Silkworm



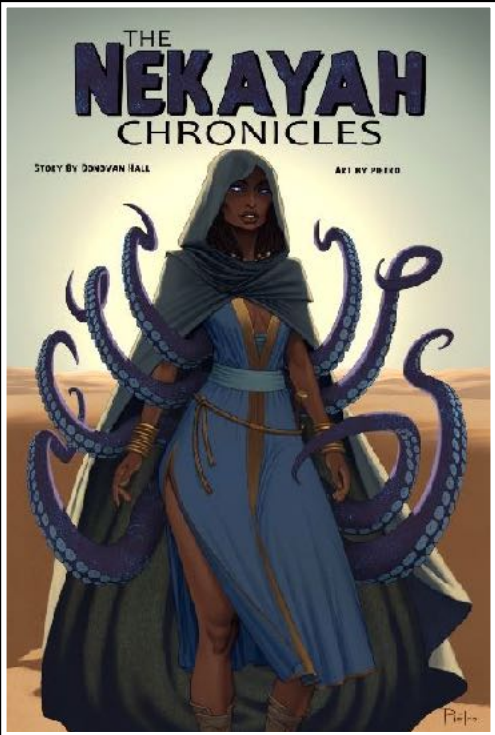
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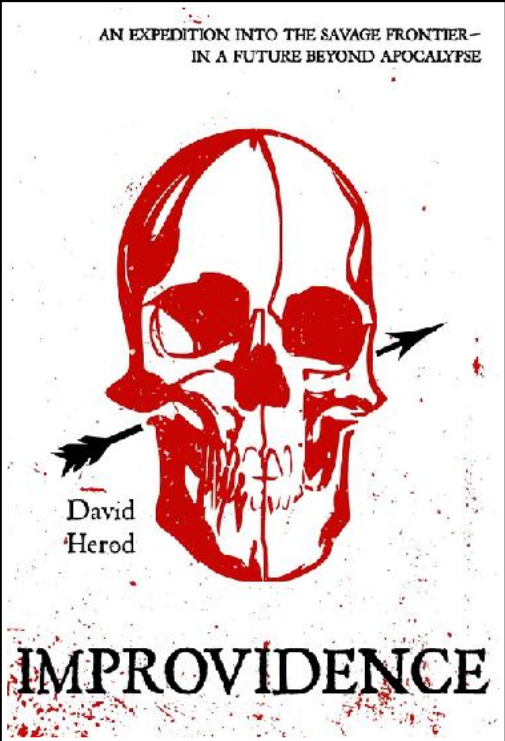
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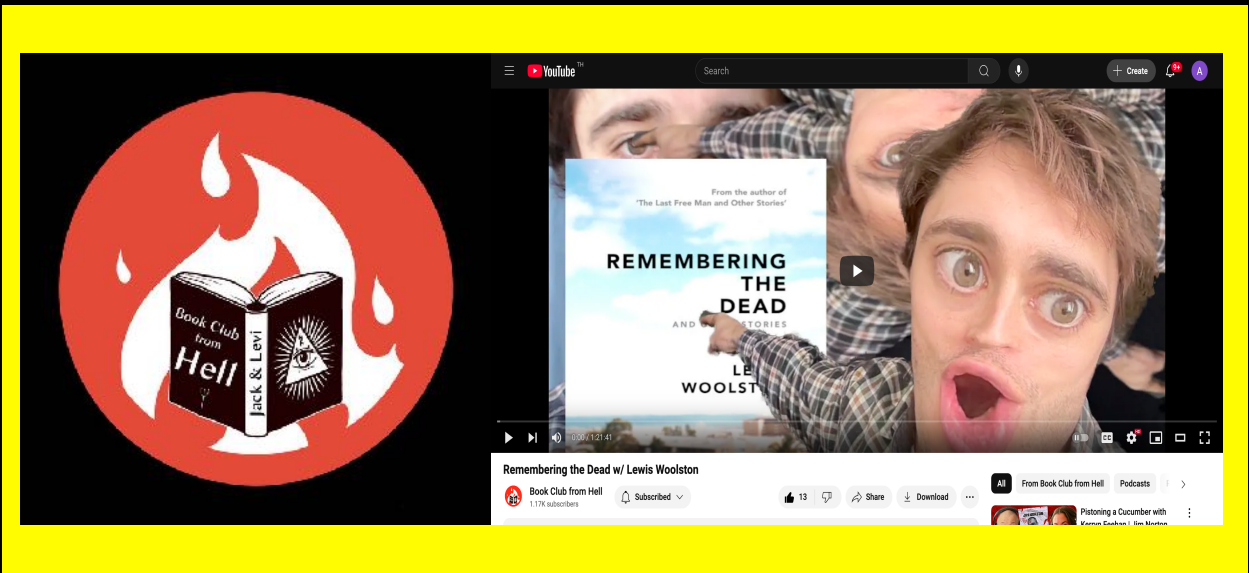
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