

IN COMMEMORATION OF SPRING

- I. IN THE DEPTHS: An evening of parables
- II. OF THE DARK NIGHT: An evening of dreams
- III. THERE IS LAUGHTER: An evening of truths

A King said to his friend: Whenever I look at the stars I see by my telescope that whoever eats this year's produce will go mad. So what can we eat?

The King's adviser suggested: Should we perhaps prepare last year's produce and eat nothing grown this year?

The King answered: Of what good is your remedy if everyone else is crazy and we are sane? They will all say that we are crazy, not they...We have no choice but to eat this year's produce like everyone else in this world. But we will differ from the others in this, that we shall know at least that we are crazy, while the others will be crazy without being aware of it.

Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav

PART I. IN THE DEPTHS: An evening of parables

We can no longer  
tell tales of the fall  
of noble men  
because we do not believe  
that noble men exist.

Joseph Wood Krutch

In the darkness, the cast begins to sing "Undzer Rebenyu," a chasidic song. The song dies out...

**First Reader:** There is an old parable. In a small, forlorn country, in a valley amidst many perilous and jagged mountains, there lives a man. He is neither young nor old. He lives alone, farming the raw land. Every night the wind sweeps down into the valley, and every night the cold pierces the walls of his cabin, so that, every night, this man sleeps on the edge of the same discomfort, as if on the verge of a dark and terrible dream. But he never dreams that dream, and each morning the sun is just warm enough to wake him and set his body in motion to draw water, cut firewood, and cultivate his lands.

In the valley next to his, to the south and cut off from the world by similar peaks, lies a similar small cabin, deserted. And to the east, another cabin, also deserted. To the west and to the north--to this day no one knows. We can, of course, assume that cabins had once been built in every valley, or that only three cabins had ever been put up in this country, or that somewhere there is another occupied cabin, but this is beyond the telling of our story. Indeed, there are several parables which deal with these contingencies--with the search for other men, with the finding of deserted cabins, but, as we have said, this is not our concern.

We do know, however, in this case, that our hero (whom we shall call Aram) has an elder brother. And the concern of this parable is with that brother, his existence, his necessity, his imagined and/or real circumstances. For Aram, though content with the meagre vision of life he finds before him every sunrise--the few animals, the shallow fields perpetually threatened by stones and malicious birds, the unfurnished cabin--Aram occupies his spare moments with thoughts of possible other lives, lives somehow different from his own. This is his one dream--how his brother, who has in some past moment set off to the south to climb the nearest mountain--how his brother is now faring.

Some days he dreams that his brother is married, has children, and at night reads to his children from a heavy dusty book. He imagines his brother's wife as he remembers his mother, who now lies buried alongside his father in a simple plot outside the cabin. Aram's mother we know little about--she was soft-spoken, knew how to knit, and she died young and still attractive, though not beautiful. Aram's father grieved for his wife deeply, but kept the despair to himself, turning more and more frequently to the heavy dusty book. Aram's father mourned also the loss of his eldest son Aval to the wanderlust that he too had felt when a youth and under which he had himself left home. Aram, however, the second and only other child, remained with his father, grieving with him, speaking only with his eyes, immersing himself in the routine of wood and harvest and food. Then, several months later, Aram's father died, still, even then, in his prime, strong and knowledgeable. On his deathbed he bequeathed everything to Aram except the heavy dusty book, which he reserved for Aval, the first son, the traveller, and the image of his father.

We know incidentally that Aram had taken to his mother's side of the family in looks and in disposition at a very early age. His father, content with a first son in his own likeness, was not displeased that his second son should follow the wishes and thoughts of his wife. All he had ever demanded of Aram was that Aram be well--

strong, capable of mending the cabin walls, fixing the hinges, cultivating the crops. In other words, as long as Aram were perfectly self-sufficient, it was no cause of concern to his father whether Aram's thoughts or dispositions were more tender, soft-spoken, and sentimental than those of Aval.

All this we have explained in order to conjure the dream which Aram dreams of his brother, married or unmarried, and living in a vast cabin with many horses and golden fields of flowers and vegetables just outside the door. Aram's dreams are not, however, wishes; of this we are sure, for he has told us this himself. We have of his a diary; it is a priceless codument of his wife, without which we would not have this parable to tell. In his diary Aram wrötes:

Second Reader: Today I dreamt of Aval. This time he was on a white horse riding through the meadow, and perched on his left shoulder was a magnificent purple bird.

FIRST: We can see from this and similar entries that the dream was not a wish: Aram had no desire for honor, prestige, glory, or the simpler facets of human fame. His dreams are poems: he dreams to create, for the circumstances of his life leave him little in substance with which to work--a few stones,

SECOND: I have tried painting them

FIRST: scarce twigs,

SECOND: They break at the slightest touch

FIRST: one tree,

SECOND: struck by lightning and black and dead

FIRST: a heavy dusty book. So instead of turning to the world outside, he takes to dreaming up dreams of his brother. Were those dreams wishes, Aram would some day have set off to the south in search of Aval. This is something he never does. How do we know? In his diary he wrötes

SECOND: When I have begun to sense the last days coming on, I will cut much firewood and set loose the horses and the goats; then I will sit before the fire in the cabin and wait for the wind to sweep down into this valley; I will fall asleep, and the sun will not wake me. And no one will disturb the cabin, because no one, so I am told, comes to a cabin once it has been lived in.

FIRST: And this is how Aram is found, bundled before the fire, which is of course dead by now, days after Aram has presumably passed away in his sleep (or his dream).

THIRD: We have not yet, we realize, begun the p~~z~~able, the parable of Aram's dream, but this preface has, hbpefully, been of some interest, and may have some further bearing. This then is the parable:

FOURTH: In a small, desolate country, in the midst of many steep and forbidding mountains, deep in an isolated valley, there lived a young man named Aram. He lived alone, his two parents buried in the graves marked with honeysuckle which lay behind his cabin. His brother, the other and eldest son, named Aval, had gone off to the south to try his luck with mountains and with the world he supposed was there out beyond the farthest crest. Aval had never returned. Aram, meanwhile, coaxed a meagre life out of the earth and spent the nights dreaming of his brother. Never for a moment did he doubt that Aval had made it through the pass which must be there somewhere, for he knew that Aval, fierce Aval, Aval of the red beard and the stormy eyes, Aval of the strong thighs and powerful arms, Aval the rider of wild horses, could not fail of a simple physical effort such as the conquering of a mountain. If Aval were ever to fail, it would be a fault of emotion, some crevice of desire and imagination which would render his muscles useless and turn his eyes black and imageless. This sense of the possibility of Aval's failure, though Aram never expressed or considered it, was that which, from time to time during the winter nights, caused Aram to shiver as if on the edge of a nightmare. But then Aram would turn to dream of Aval in the middle of a huge cabin with many candles flaming in the faces of hundreds of guests in their finery--the thinnest of laces, the most transparent of silks (his silks, yes!)

SECOND: my father's wedding gift to my mother was a turquoise silk scarf

FOURTH: And with this the nightmare would slip away into the corners of the cabin and console itself in the sweeping wind from the mountains.

One day, however, Aram looked up from his woodchopping to see, or to think he saw, a rider far in the distance, working his way down the lower slopes of the southern mountains. He did not believe this could be; his father had told him that only when there are no cabins can a valley be entered (by the grace of some unspecified power). Still, upon a second look, Aram could follow the movements of the horse and the rider as they maneuvered among the rocks and the sand.

Aram did not know what to do. As he wrote in his diary,

SECOND: Is it my brother who has returned? Or am I imagining my brother returning? Or has my father been wrong all along and is this actually a stranger come to an occupied valley? I do not know. I am beginning to be afraid. And if it is Aval, I must remember what my mother once said, that if I should look too long and too closely at the eyes of Aval, it might be that I would no longer see my father's eyes. I did not understand this before. Perhaps... but what shall I do now, here, in this country, with a rider approaching who is perhaps, no matter who, a stranger? I do not know...

FOURTH: Unfortunately, our parable does not have a satisfactory answer to the question, what did Aram do? This was the last entry in his diary.

FIFTH: The answers, however, are obvious. We now have this diary; we are in a different country; we know how Aram died; we know indeed that someone must have violated the dictum that none shall enter the valley of a cabin--else we would not have this diary, nor the account of Aram's death. However, our parable does not end here.

We do know something of Aval.

He was last seen, or we think it was him (marked features, red beard, a strange accent, excellent horseman, powerful build) riding north with a purple bird on his shoulder, talking about a heavy dusty book, about the wife and children he was leaving behind (though he had never married) and promising to return within a few weeks with a story no one would believe.

Now, the diary and the account of Aram's death have been brought to our attention by an anonymous donor. The diary was wrapped in a bedraggled scarf, the donor's handwriting was painfully legible, and the letter we received was written on the reverse side of a faded folio page, similar to the kind one finds in old manuscript bibles.

The implications are not clear. It could easily have been a thief who found the bible and the diary, then had second thoughts. It could have been, of course, Aval. It could have been us. We could be Aval. After all, perhaps, as Aram's mother once said, none of us is brothers, or all of us are brothers, or some one of us is not our father's son. Clearly we are not Aram, because we know how Aram died. Before the fire, bundled in a knit blanket, in his sleep, dreaming?...

So this is the parable of Aram's dream. He dreamt to create. Of all the rest, the conclusions are unclear. We have only one faded parchment and the primitive letter. What to do? Admit to having written the parable ourselves? Will that answer the question of who it was that found Aram, there, by the fire, clutching a purple feather?

SINGER : "Dremlen feygl ofy di tsvaygn "

(translation): Birds are drowsing on the branches.  
Sleep, my darling child.  
At your cradle, in the field,  
A stranger sits and sings.

Once you had another cradle  
Woven out of joy,  
And your mother, oh your mother  
Will never more come by.

I saw your father fleeing  
Under the rain of countless stones,  
Over fields and over valleys  
Flew his orphaned cry.

## THE SECOND PARABLE

THIRD: The land of Harim is surrounded by vast forests. The forests, as far as we know, are uninhabited and uninhabitable. All of the vegetation is poisonous, either with barbs or burrs or serrated leaves edged with needles. In the land of Harim there are five ageless men; how they came to be there, we do not know. Who they are--their ancestry, their origins, their descendants--all of this is similarly a mystery. All we know, and this by account of a traveler who twice braved the forests, is that these five men, nameless, ageless, are indeed there. And, despite the traveler, we must take much of this on faith--for how can we ever know, how could the traveler who has revealed to us this parable know, that the men are ageless?

There are then in Harim five men; each speaks a different dialect of the same language; each has only one ear; each is a scholar. There are, consequently, countless difficulties: one scholar will misunderstand a second scholar due to the missing ear; another will pretend to understand, only to mistake a word in one dialect for a word in another; a third cannot understand anything, and will say so to a fourth, who, confused, will not understand enough of the third to understand that the third cannot understand anything, and who therefore will attempt an even more complicated conversation, trying to elicit precisely what it is that the third cannot understand...But this is becoming much too muddled much too soon. The parable begins simply.

FIRST: There are in the land of Harim five ageless men each of whom speaks a different dialect of the same language. One day a traveler who knows and speaks all five dialects somehow penetrates the perilous forests to find himself in the land of Harim. Unsure as to his ability to return, wounded and scarred by the venomous growth of the forest, the traveler asks the first man if there is any safer path out of Harim, a path perchance avoiding the forests. The first man, delighted to have finally encountered someone whom he can understand completely, speaks so quickly and with so much fervor that the traveler cannot follow what he is saying. The traveler goes on to the second man, who is similarly delighted, but who is also stunned, and remains speechless amidst his great joy. The third cannot hear the traveler at all, because he had not his head turned and tilted in the correct direction. Moreover, so accustomed is the third man to using his good ear to communicate that he has taken to feigning blindness as a defense against the melange of dialects of the other four. The traveler, seeing this masquerade, mistakes it for true blindness, and perhaps for deafness, and thinks to himself that a blind man who is perhaps also deaf could not help him anyway, so he approaches the fourth man. The fourth man, so accustomed to hearing sentences which are only half-understandable, has long ago given up listening attentively to single sentences, but rather attempts to get the gist of long paragraphs. The traveler, asking his simple question, upsets the fourth scholar with a perfectly comprehensible single sentence, and must repeat it several times before the fourth man understands. And the fourth man answers the question as he is used to answering the other scholars, by belabored repetition:

FIFTH: No one no one not even any of the five five five five has ever ever ever gone into the forest there there the forest you see the forest and and no one one not one absolutely no one of us us here can tell you the traveler you whether if there is indeed a path path free from scars and wounds and blood and blood and blood and no one can tell you. I do not know. I do not know.

FIRST: By this time the traveler is tired and frustrated, and he turns in desperation to the fifth and last man, ageless and scholarly as all the rest. The fifth understands the question immediately, nodding gravely. He points to the forest from the traveler has just come, and he indicates that there is indeed a more painless way out. But the traveler cannot understand what the ageless man is saying, because the ageless man has a severe speech impediment. Examining more closely the man's gestures, the traveler finds that the man is pointing in a direction opposite to the one from which the traveler has just come, as if to indicate that there is the safer path. The traveler thanks the old man for his kindness, attempts to reconstruct the mutilated words in which the fifth man has told him of the path, and sets off quickly, leaving the scholars to their erratic and spontaneous conversation.

Although the traveler searches and searches for the path of which the fifth man has spoken, he cannot find it. Finally, fatigued beyond all previous experience, he returns to Harim and falls asleep behind a rock, burying his head in his shirt to blot out the nonsense conversation of the five untiring and ceaselessly chattering old men. In the morning the traveler awakes to find the old men laughing and drawing pictures on the ground, all of which approximate the features of the traveler himself. The old men do not see the traveler behind the rock, but they sense some alien presence and return to their jabbering, erasing the figures. The traveler, angrier than ever, but somehow also fearful, leaves Harim and claws his way through the forest for what seems like ages, avoiding all the burrs and barbs and poisonous needles, in what seems to us now as a super-human effort. And he returns here to tell us this story.

THIRD: Of course we cannot be sure that his story is accurate, but certainly if the marks on his body can be believed, he has suffered enough to merit a certain amount of faith; if we do not believe that the story is true, at least we can believe that it was he who did tell us the story. That is, we must have faith in the origins of this story, of the essential truth not of what it says, but of the telling of it, true or not, so that others, telling this story, may say that we were the ones who told it, true or not, and we got it from the traveler himself, or if he was not the traveler, there was a traveler sometime ago who did create the story, true or not, and tell it to someone else. We must have faith in the storyteller, not in the story told. But this too is beside the point.

FOURTH: There are interesting gaps and inconsistencies in the parable: why have the men never entered into the forest, or if the fourth man is lying, or has been misunderstood, why does not someone of the five tell the traveler about the path, if there is a path, or



at least draw him a map to describe its whereabouts. Moreover, why has the traveler come to Harim in the first place--what tempted him to enter the poisonous forest, and what kept him from being poisoned? Perhaps, indeed, his path, whatever route he took, was the safe path. Perhaps, indeed, all paths are safe paths--the poison being only in the imagination of the one who tells the parable. Perhaps indeed there is no forest, no five ageless men, and perhaps the fifth man did not have a poisonous burr imbedded in his tongue.

Who knows?

SINGER: "80 ER Un 70 zI"

(translation): Today's the fiftieth year on the dot  
That the old couple has been happily wed.  
Just take a look, they've aged a lot:  
He is eighty, she a sprightly seventy.

God hasn't spared them riches or honor,  
They've never had a fight.  
They call each other "sweets" and "dear,"  
He is eighty, she a sprightly seventy.

The guests began to guzzle the wine  
And dragged the couple to the circle;  
Aunty came crawling on her knees and spine,  
He is eighty, she a sprightly seventy.

Thus they reveled until midnight  
When zeyde said good-night.  
"Sleep well, my wife, and bundle up tight."  
He is eighty, she a sprightly seventy.

Grandma fell asleep at once.  
I'll recount her dream some other time;  
Let's leave them for now, since  
He is eighty, she a sprightly seventy.

## THIRD PARABLE

**SECOND:** This is the story of the stone tablet and the island of Pehli. We do not know the origin of this story, after what must be so many ages, but the manuscript itself appears in an old graying folio a German scholar found once on his peregrinations through the archives of medieval German cities. The book itself is written in mittel-hoch deutsch and has been translated into several languages, or shall we say, interpreted into several languages, among them, English. The translators as well as the original author are unknown, though some assume the work must have been accomplished during the period just after the return of Charles II. This is extremely unlikely, and we would place the translation in a much later period, possibly preceding the Queen Anne's War. A few notable critics even wish to credit the translation to the English romantics. Nevertheless, as to the original author, or authors, we have scarcely enough clues to justify a reasonable guess. The work is undoubtedly of semitic origin, though perhaps by way of Greek and Latin sources. The plain truth is that despite the claptrap and humbug of scholarship, we know as much about the origins of the story of Pehli as we do about the actual life of say, Moses, or Jesus, or even John Hus. Which is, after all, pitifully little.

Here then is the story:

**FIFTH:** On the island of Pehli there was a stone tablet which read

**CAST:** On that day there shall be holocaust.  
 He who is blind will see.  
 She who is deaf will hear.  
 They who are not will be.  
 We who are will disappear.  
 The evil

**FIFTH:** The last half of the last line was, we see, missing. And it was precisely this missing half line which the villagers on the island of Pehli had come to worship. Their religion consisted of an annual spring sacrifice, in the hopes that the last half line would somehow be revealed, or that the words "the evil" would somehow be removed. (For, after all, the inscription seems complete without the last line.)

One spring the sacrifice chosen by the village was the young and lovely maiden Roah. Roah's reputation in the village was that of a stubborn, rebellious, and wayward girl. She had refused the customary marriage with her uncle's second son, and she took to making long trips by herself along the forbidden parts of the beach, often venturing inland to the unknown jungle which surrounded the volcano on the island.

The volcano, in the memory of the most venerable and ancient men of the village, had never erupted. It was dead. No billows issued from the cone, nor had billows ever been witnessed, but the stone tablet upon which the Words were written was made of lava. The sacrifice to the tablet was, therefore, a propitiation to the power which restrained the spirits of the volcano. Roah, however, did not respect either the superstition which depended upon sacrifice to restrain those spirits, or the senseless desire

to remove or add to the final words on the tablet. Her love and her magic were centered about the forest of vines which wound about the upper parts of the forbidden beach, and Roah herself had no fear of bodiless things, spirits of volcanos or forests of ancestors. She considered herself free of the tradition which bound the other villagers like a vine to their carefully defined lives. She ran along the beach among the waves, she fed herself upon wild fruit--all the forbidden things were experienced without regret, compunction, or regard to the centuries of social superstition. The villagers associated her with the volcano spirits as they associated any person who might defy the perimeters of their circumscribed society. They also related her defiance of their law to the incomplete inscription, hoping that in her sacrificial death the words would also die, or somehow be altered. But Roah, in a final act of defiance, on the night before the sacrificial ceremony, in a moment when the guard was not looking, escaped to the forest, in which she knew she would be safe, realizing that the villagers would not follow her and risk the curse of the volcano

CAST: We who are will disappear

FIFTH: or the greater curse of the tablet

CAST: "the evil" is unlimited

FIFTH: which was the interpretation the elders put upon the incomplete inscription.

The villagers, unhappy to have lost such an archetypal victim, quickly chose another, Roah's cousin, whom she had refused to marry. And as he burned, Roah, in the forest, watched the flames curl over his body, watched the smoke ascend to the tops of the trees and disappear near the rim of the volcano.

Roah, so the story goes, grew more and more lonely, though remaining healthy and beautiful within the dark regions of the upper beach and lower forest. Then one day she gathered up fruit and began the climb to the upper rim of the volcano, which was overgrown with luxuriant vines and great red flowers and many many trees which blossomed turquoise and silver flowers (can we believe the storyteller here?) and among which ran golden-horned antelope and deer. Some days later several of the more clairvoyant villagers claimed to hear a single piercing cry; a blind man claimed that a seagull had flown to his shoulder and dropped a mirror into his hand; an old lady with <sup>one</sup> ear gone, said that she had found a turtle inside a conch shell; the five elders, sitting around the fire, saw visions of their ancestors dancing in the flames. And Roah's uncle secretly buried the ashes of his second son out beyond the reef which stood opposite the forbidden beach.

SECOND: Here the story ends. It seems, in many ways, complete enough: the parallels of the predictions on the tablet and the final events after Roah's presumed death in the crater of the volcano. In other ways, however, the story is certainly mystifying: was this the holocaust, these simple acts of magic and vision and fervent belief? was there no change in the inscription

on the tablet? was Roah actually a suicide, gathering up the social instinct within her to commit that supremely religious act? and to what can we attribute the holocaust--to the death of Roah's cousin, or to the presumed suicide? And was there in actuality a volcano, despite the assumption that the tablet was formed of lava? We can postulate a few conclusions: that Roah, being the image of social disorder, hence of evil, was a necessary sacrifice in order to remove the disorder and discontinuity of the inscription on the rock; or that her suicide, if that did happen, was a manifestation of the ultimate end of all which is evil, just as the inscription itself ends in a void:

CAST:           On that day there shall be holocaust.  
                  He who is blind will see.  
                  She who is deaf will hear.  
                  They who are not will be.  
                  We who are will disappear.  
                  And evil

SECOND: or that the act of casting her out by designating her as a prospective sacrifice was in the eyes of the spirits of the volcano a sufficient moral act, and that her cousin's proxy could be accepted for what it was--that all weeding out is necessary before that final day; or that the holocaust itself is not something final, but something enduring, and it will always claim annual sacrifice in the midst of life, in spring; or, finally, that the inscription itself is meaningless, that the events after Roah's death, if she died then, were all imaginary, and that what is meaningful is the mere respect, awe, worship, or fear of the inscription on the stone or the stone itself--and that Roah's denial of the stone was an act of immorality beyond all others--for she denied the validity of that mystery which the villagers thought fundamental--that there was indeed something incomplete about the rock's inscription, that indeed it was not a perfectly complete inscription just as it was, and that it was as it has been intended to be.

FIRST: There are a few details we can add to this story of Roah and Pehli. They do not help us any further to an interpretation of the parable, but they aid us in placing the story within a richer context.

The island which some believe to be the prototype for Pehli has no volcano, although a sheer cliff on the western side rises two hundred feet above the sea and borders a sharply-walled natural depression covered with vegetation <sup>which</sup> towers over a forest of barbed vines which slopes down to a village on the eastern side of the island. A scientific examination of the island has revealed that mirror-like pieces of mica do indeed exist on a few walls of caves near the shore. There is also, according to one biologist, a species of turtle which thrives inside vacated seashells.

Further, an examination of the book in which this tale has been written reveals that the dust on that book can come only from lava. Finally, we note this remark which the German scientist made upon the discovery of the book:

FOURTH: I have found on the inside, in the middle of this book, carefully hidden by folded pages, a pressed flower. Although the colors are

faded, I believe the flower, which is very large, and nearly covers the page of this folio, was once some combination of gray or silver and greenish-blue.

FIRST: That German scholar, whose disease of the eye brought him to eventual blindness, is long dead. The book itself, originally in good condition when used by the scholar, is now gradually disintegrating, and all that remains legible on the last page of the book are the words

CAST: We who are

FIRST: and there are some words missing, we believe

CAST: evil

FIRST: What we ourselves find so intriguing is that the book should be in such perfect condition relative to the pages themselves, which have not been torn or scratched, though the book was stored in the archives at Munich during the Second World War.

SINGER: "UNter Dayne Vayse Shtern"

(translation): Stretch out your white arms to me beneath your pure white stars. My words are tears that wish to fall into your hand. See, their brilliance fades in the caverns of my eyes, and I have no other altar to place them here before you.

To you, my faithful God, I offer all I have, for a demanding fire in my heart consumes my days in flame. Yet in back streets and in bunkers, the treacherous stillness weeps. I flee higher, over rooftops, searching. Where are you, where?

Suddenly I sense pursuit: the howling steps, the courtyards. I hang--a broken string--and sing this song to you: stretch out your white arms to me beneath your pure white stars. My words are tears that wish to fall into your hand.

## FOURTH PARABLE

**THIRD:** A bearded, ugly man sleeps on a straw cot in the middle of his prison cell. The door to the cell is never locked, there is no prison guard, and the prison cell is the only occupied cell in the entire dungeon, which is but a few feet below ground. Still, the cell has no windows, receives no light, and is poorly ventilated.

Every day the ugly old man wakes at a predetermined hour in the morning, washes himself in the basin which somehow always contains clear cold water, and scratches a mark on the wall opposite his cot with a steadily diminishing piece of stone. Then he walks the perimeter of the room four times, the stone held in his left hand. Finally, he sits upright on his cot for 6 hours, with his eyes open, staring at these marks accumulating on the opposite wall. Every so often he shifts the position of his legs, or blinks, or drops the stone into his right hand. At the end of the sixth hour, he returns to sleep, letting the stone fall from his hand to the floor.

We who tell this parable have twice interrupted the man's routine to request him to leave his cell. He has refused, both times, without a word, but a grunt and a taciturn gesture which admits of no rebuttal. From our room in the castle above the dungeon, we can hear his pacing, and we have become so sensitive that we can even hear that single scratch on the wall in the morning. We are able to describe his regimen because we have spent much time watching him stare at the wall, though all we can make of the scratches are single lines, parallel and equidistant, as if calendar markings.

None we have spoken to knows the history of this man, though some have intimated that he was at one time a rebel against the crown who, thought pardoned long ago, has maintained his vengeance by creating and recreating an insistent symbol of defiance in his wilful self-imprisonment. This has always seemed a rather fanciful interpretation, for the crown long ago was relinquished to the people, the castle long ago became the home of those a rebel would most dearly love, and the symbols of tyranny which once rode the parapets of the castle have long ago been left mouldering in the filled-in moats far below the dungeon floor. No, there must be another explanation.

We have also heard that this man is in reality blind, or deaf, or mute, or some combination of the three. We attest to the falseness of these things, having visited the man ourselves, having seen him see, having heard him grunt, having spoken to him and having had him understand. No, it is not physical disability.

Men have been down to decipher his markings; they cannot, or they say they are simply counting signatures. His stone is merely a piece of chalk. His cot is merely straw. The basin of water is the only mystery, but engineers say that the dungeon walls perspire and leak sufficiently for the ugly man to be able to empty his old water and let the night air draw new clear water out of the walls. This seems plausible. It is, at any rate, unimportant.

The cell is like the other cells which are no longer in use. In short, there is no simple physical explanation of the bearded man's adherence to this way of life.

The mystery then is in his choice. Even ascetics who have visited the place declare it uninspiring. Mystics cannot locate God within its walls any more intensely than without. Priests are antagonized by the man, but that is because they get the sniffles every time they descend to the dank dungeon. There is no simple religious explanation.

As to the history of the castle itself, once it was the center of much religious persecution: Anabaptists, Hutterites, Friends of Love, the usual set of thumbscrews and tortures and racks that every castle has gone through were once here. The castle has also some magnificent tapestries commemorating the seasons, uprisings, the hunt. A few statuary are sprinkled here and there, mostly Roman imitations of Greek originals. Some pieces of jewelry and some vases of fine porcelain; a large chandelier; a parqued entrance hall--all these things are gone to the people's museums. Little of that which might symbolize the old regime has been allowed to remain. The castle now harbors a fine restaurant, a park, a museum of postage stamps and old coins, and a fire engine corps. What incongruity, then, for this wizened and ugly man to remain below in the dungeon as if to say that once there was the necessity of rebellion and that once there was an inquisition and that once there was the despair which could drive a man to live out his life in a cell, voluntarily, without sun or companionship, marking the days as they pass.

But this all-too-frequently suggested interpretation seems singularly inadequate--it does not explain what the inner compulsion of the man himself is--it is not at all concerned with that sense of mind and emotion <sup>which</sup> had to congeal before he considered himself fit for such a role as pariah or nemesis. And our language also waxes too eloquent now, for his act, whatever it is, seems too simple to merit such philosophy. When he dies, we all know we will not know anything more about the mystery, so this is why we become disturbed when we chance to think of him, down below us, in his cell.

We suppose that if there should ever happen to be a Daniel among us, he would read his "mene mene tekel upharsin" in the wall where those same scratches appear every day; or if there were a young hunter, he would see his face in the wall; or if there were a neurotic intellectual, the wall itself, and the addition of those marks, the wall itself would be the symbol of this civilization. But the prison cell and the man are much too simple for this explanation. For this is a parable. There is in truth no man down there. The cells have been turned under, and there is now a park above them. Long ago, perhaps, there was a man down there; we are not sure. Someone just the other day found some ruins near where the old moats used to be, with walls full of undecipherable scratches similar to the ones we have been describing. Everyone thinks the marks are just calendar dates, but if one looks closely there is, on the thirteenth upright mark, near the top, a slight horizontal bar: a cross. Which does not mean anything, really, except that the marks are not simply calendar marks.

Of course, no one really found any ruins. That too is in our imagination. Our imagination is what counts--the inquisition was nothing but that imagination, and all we can think of now when we think of the inquisition is not the horror of the torture (for who can imagine that) but the horror of the possibility of a man choosing to live his life in a cell in order to remind us of that

torture, that destruction. Anabaptists, Hutterites, Friends of Love.

And now, now that we have explained this to you, for the first and the last time, we descend the steps into the cell there to wait out the end of the days, to make marks on walls which no one ever will completely understand; to be silent, to live as if by will and spite alone, to remind the world that once it was necessary for a man to remind the world what it means for a man to choose to live in a dark cell, alone and cold and spiteful, remembering how once the millions were stoned, tortured until their bones turned to chalk, and destroyed, one by one by one, until who was left?

SINGER: "Viglid"

#### THE FIFTH PARABLE

SECOND: This is the parable of the keeper of the museum

FOURTH: Herr Hinterladungvatterligewehrpatronenhülsefabrikarbeiterverein

SECOND: known to the public and to his associates as Herr Namen.  
Herr Namen's museum was a museum of rare things, as are all museums, but the rare things in this case, or in these cases, were

FIRST: one purple feather

THIRD: one shell with the skeleton of a turtle inside

FIFTH: one piece of chalk

FIRST: one poisonous leaf

THIRD: two pieces of mica

FIFTH: one turquoise saarf

FIRST: one bone with a hole through the center

THIRD: one lampshade with butterflies imbedded

SECOND: Very rarely did any of the townspeople enter the museum. Each year the young of the village, at the age of ten, were brought to the museum to see the displays, as if to initiate them into the society which could tolerate or even respect such a place.

In fact, people later began to refer to this visit as a ceremony to be undergone before citizenship could be extended.

One visit, however, sufficed. Each year, therefore, Herr Namen



patiently awaited the influx of ten-year-old children, as he might await the saviour himself; certainly with no greater anticipation, for his years were devoted entirely and unselfishly to those few moments during which the children would gaze uncomprehendingly at the feather or the scarf or the shell. Herr Namen gradually assumed other correlative functions: he became the census taker for the young--since they all came at age ten; he was the genealogical expert--generations had followed the same ritual; he was the historian and scholar--none but he knew the secrets of all the displays, and none but he might dare make further enquiry concerning the nature of things of antiquity.

In short, Herr Namen was the single source of devotion to the necessary mystery in all lives. Herr Namen prevented the village from panic, havoc, and natural disaster; his simple displays, merely because they were not given an explanation, yet worshipfully placed within an increasingly sacred context (a museum)

FIRST: hush this is a museum

SECOND: assumed the position nearly equal to that of religious relics.

We of course understand the history of most of the displays, being strangers to the village and to Herr Namen. Our familiarity with the displays precludes any familiarity with Herr Namen, since our position would in many respects threaten the charisma of the museum. However, we too are strangers to the lampshade and to the bone, and we are strangers to the history of all the other displays in one further aspect: we do not know how they all came to be in the possession of Herr Namen, how he came to know of them or to think them valuable, and why he should be so zealous in his care of them.

We cannot ask Herr Namen about the scarf and such--since that might reveal our violation of the mystery. We can, however, inquire as to the history of the bone and the lampshade.

THIRD: It will do no good. Herr Namen never answers questions.

FOURTH: It is enough,

FIFTH: he says

FOURTH: to know that even if you knew, it would still be a mystery.

SECOND: We will ask him anyway.

FOURTH: I cannot tell you. It is something in my heart. But come, look, are not the butterflies spectacular? They are South American butterflies. Imagine, hundreds of them flitting over the bushes and through the tall grasses--grasses so tall you cannot reach the tips with your hand. Imagine.

SECOND: Yes, Herr Namen, but what about the lampshade? Where did you get the lampshade?

FOURTH: An anonymous donor. I cannot tell you any more. An anonymous donor--but generous, don't you think? Generous, yes, parting with something

that must hold your heart so, and for my little museum, where so few people will ever see it.

SECOND: Why not donate the lampshade to the museum in Berlin, Herr Namen?

FOURTH: Yes, so few people will see it, but it is better that a few people will see it and appreciate it than if many thousands, yes hundreds of thousand, should take one glance at it and disregard it. This, this is a choice collection, an election, if you will have it so. Yes. And the people here too, they are in a way the elect, this museum serves them, I keep the museum, the mysteries live forever in their glass cases, yes, that is how it should be.

SECOND: But, Herr Namen, if there is mystery no matter how much the telling, then why not tell us as much as you know?

FOURTH: Ah, the age-old question. But what do I know? Do I know something true? Do I know the story myself, or it is perhaps just a fantasy of mine as well, no? The age-old question. Suppose, suppose I were to tell you about how the dog found the bone, supposing a dog had found the bone--what good then? Yes, what ultimate good?

SECOND: For the sake of the parable, Herr Namen.

FOURTH: The parable?

SECOND: Yes, you are part of the parable of the keeper of the museum.

FOURTH: I begin to understand. You wish another museum, and wish for me to be a display. You wish for me a fiction.

SECOND: We suppose so, Herr Namen.

FOURTH: But my fiction here is enough: I have my village and my children and my census-taking and my life here as polisher of glass cases and keeper of the mystery--this reality is quite sufficient. And the fiction of what is in those cases, this too is sufficient. Yes, at times I have thought that I might someday like to be looking out at people from inside, <sup>but</sup> the glass I think is not two-way; we look in, but nothing ever looks out, nothing ever sees us. This kind of death I do not wish: a death without death. I want my death to be something final: the last heavy clod of grass and earth--yes, like the old glassmaker who made these cases, who told me that he would never be sure who looked through what when people wore glasses, or looked through display windows, he could never be sure; and on his coffin instead of a wooden cover the relatives chose a fancy glass cover--the irony, the absolute irony: is he, is he looking back at us, or did we ever see him, or is he thinking that he can never know what there is really behind the glass under which he is now forever? Yes, my gentlemen, that lampshade.

Now the lampshade (you understand I am telling you this in order to explain why I cannot possibly be part of your

parable, why I cannot participate in your sacrifice)-- the lampshade comes from that glassmaker. He was amazed at the luminescence of their wings, the butterfly wings: how thin, how delicate--something ground glass could never imitate. Like mica. Like the inside of an abalone shell, like the fluorescence of a grackle's purple feathers. Have you noticed the shine on a bone in the early morning? Have you ever looked at a silk scarf--look at it glisten. That gleam, that unearthly reflection which the glassmaker knew he could never imitate...

There...I have told you everything. All you need to do now is to open up the display cases and see if what is labeled as there is there in fact. Hence, and this, this is my escape from your parable, gentlemen, the fact of myself. Labeled. Herr Namen. Myself? Behind my one good eye (did you know the other eye was less mortal, as mortal as the glassmaker, who died of blood poisoning in a strange forest, chasing the sunset through the leaves, knowing he would never grind glass so thin or fine it would come finally to be the sun)--behind my one good eye is that suspicion that you are not there: my other eye is glass, with a sphere of colored bone for a pupil; for all my children, all my pupils, all the lives which are the jewels of my eye, they are finally in the end, chalk and bone--but as long as they do not know that the lampshade came from Buchenwald, and as long as they do not know that their fantasies are as ephemeral as the chalk, as long as they live on the other side of the glass cases, this museum is their only salvation. Only here, yes, only here, despite my explanation to you, can there remain any life to the mystery--because beyond the explanation is my motive for telling you all this, and beyond that, your reasoning out of my motives, and beyond that the suspicion that perhaps you have wound yourselves into your own parable, and like me who has one glass eye, cannot escape the doubts that someday you will discover that your other eye too is made of glass, and that what is out there, despite the

FIRST: murder of the feather

THIRD: sacrifice of the turtle

FIFTH: blindness of the mica

FIRST: love of the scarf

THIRD: desperation of the bone

FIFTH: illogic of the lampshade

FIRST: privacy of the leaf

FOURTH: is all of it chalk. But I have said enough. You do not know and you will never know how I have accumulated all these things, if they are truly here, if you are man enough to open up the cases--the keys are with every man, every man who is a stranger to this village, and to my museum. Too great a familiarity with the museum, however, breeds a certain inaptitude to unlock the cases, and perhaps indeed I have involved you to that extent, no?

One thing more: The glassmaker and eye(I) once met a stranger who was looking for a way out of all this. He wanted not only to escape the parables, which we have done, but to escape the necessity of having to listen to parables. He wanted the truth and then to be done with it all. The glassmaker gave the stranger this advice.

FIFTH: You will not understand me, because at the bottom of all this, our dialects are different, but I can tell you, from the depths of my heart, that there is no truth to escape to. No truth. It is all a fiction of the lampshade: a beautiful piece of work, is it not?

FOURTH: And I told the stranger: here, take this leaf. I will put it in a bottle, and when you decide you have found the truth, take the leaf out of the bottle. Put it in your hand, crush it up. The poison works quickly. But only when you have found the truth.

So you know one more thing. The glass case labeled as containing the leaf, it is empty. The label is a deceit. I have given the poison away to a man in search of the truth. But you need not care, because the parable is your only concern.

SECOND: When Herr Namen bade us farewell, we departed. Late that night we could not resist the temptation to return and unlock the other glass cases. The front door of the museum was already open. But, strangers though we thought we were, we could not open the cases.

FIRST: The next morning we learned that Herr Namen had disappeared.

SECOND: So here we are, before you, keepers of the museum.

THIRD: No one who is a stranger is interested overmuch in our displays.

FIFTH: No one who understands our situation can penetrate them.

SECOND: What to do?

FIRST: What to do?

THIRD: What to do?

FIFTH: What to do?

SECOND: There is nothing left but to tell the story.

FIRST: Again.

THIRD: And again.

FIFTH: And again.

SECOND: We know one thing.

CAST: The leaf is gone.

In gradual darkness, Singer: "Makh tsu di eygelekh" roughly sung.

PART II. OF THE DARK NIGHT: An evening of dreams

There sat down, once, a thing on Henry's heart  
so heavy, if he had a hundred years  
& more, & weeping, sleepless, in all them time  
Henry could not make good.  
Starts again always in Henry's ears  
the little cough somehwre, an odour, a chime.

And there is another thing he has in mind  
like a grave Sienese face a thousand years  
would fail to blur the still profiled reporach of. Ghastly,  
with open eyes, he attends, blind.  
A ll the bells say: too late. This is not for tears;  
thinking.

But never did Henry, as he thought he did,  
end anyone and hacks her body up  
and hide the pieces, where they may be found.  
He knows; he went over everyone, & nobody's missing.  
Often he reckons, in the dawn, them up.  
Nobody is ever. missing.

John Berryman

## SCENE ONE

CARPENTER: Oh Lord of the Universe. It is terrible!

PHILOSOPHER: The nightmare generally seizes people sleeping on their backs, and often begins with frightful dreams, which are soon succeeded by a difficult respiration, a violent oppression on the breast, and a total privation of voluntary motion. In this agony they sigh, groan, utter indistinct sounds, and remain in the jaws of death, till, by the utmost efforts of this nature, or some external assistance, they escape out of that dreadful torpid state. As soon as they shake off that vast oppression, and are able to move the body, they are affected by strong palpitation, great anxiety, languor, and uneasiness; which symptoms gradually abate, and are succeeded by the pleasing reflection of having escaped such imminent danger.

POET: Hell has three doors: lust, rage and greed. These lead to man's ruin. Therefore he must avoid them all. He who passes by these three dark doors has achieved his own salvation. He will reach the highest goal at last.

DREAMER: Hell, the real Hell, is simply the vision of Hell; there is nothing besides this, and to do battle in Hell is to play games with the devil.

POET: Imagine a life-and-death struggle between two angels, the angel of love and the angel of wrath, the angel of promise and the angel of evil. Imagine that they both attain their ends, each one victorious. Imagine the laugh that would rise above their corpses as if to say, your death has given me birth; I am the soul of your conflict.

CARPENTER: The people! Where are the people? The whole world has gone crazy!

DREAMER: Madness was a door opening onto a forest, onto the liberty in which anything is permitted, anything is possible. There A does not precede B, children are born dotards, fire produces cold, and snow becomes the source of desire. There, animals are gifted with human intelligence and demons display a sense of humor. There, all is impulse, passion and chaos. There, the laws are abolished and those who promulgated them removed from office. The universe frees itself from the order in which it was imprisoned. Appearance snaps its ties with reality. A chair is no longer a chair, the king no longer king, the fool ceases to be a fool, or to cry.

CARP: Does it make sense to you? Does anything make sense?

DR It is a dream within a dream, varied in details, one in substance. I am sitting at a table with my family or with my friends, or at work, or in the green countryside; in short, in a peaceful relaxed environment, apparently without tension or affliction; yet I feel a deep and subtle anguish, the definite sensation of an impending threat. And in fact, as the dream proceeds, slowly or brutally, each time in a different way, everything collapses and disintegrates around me, the scenery, the walls, the people, while the anguish becomes more intense and more precise. Now everything has changed to chaos;

I am alone in the center of a grey and turbid nothing, and now, I know what this thing means, and I also know, that I have always known it. I am in the Lager once more, and nothing is true outside the Lager. All the rest was a brief pause, a deception of the senses, a dream; my family, nature in flower, my home. Now this inner dream, this dream of peace, is over and in the outer ~~wurm~~, which continues, gelid, a well-known voice resounds: a single word, not imperious, but brief and subdued. It is the dawn command at Auschwitz, a foreign word, feared and expected: get up, "Wstawach."

PHIL: It is the agonizing and fugitive discovery of a human value that stands halfway between innocence and guilt, between reason and irrationality, between history and eternity.

ORATOR: History: An account mostly false, of events mostly unimportant, which are brought about by rulers mostly knaves and soldiers mostly fools.

CARP: Make them understand that I am a soldier, I was a soldier. One does one's duty. When the prisoners were bad, they were like ~~anghty~~ children, and ~~anghty~~ children must be punished. So I punished the prisoners. I am not a bad man. Dear God, make the Yankees who have now triumphed over us, make them understand that I am a good man. I am not wicked, I have done nothing wicked...it was a very wrong thing to have the hospital on the inside. Very little food could we get for anybody. Yes, the prisoners were crowded, I could not conduct a neat and efficient prison; all the time they kept sending more prisoners--train-load after train-load...It was wrong of the authorities. The northerners must understand that in my heart I am a very kind person.

PHIL: Cain says to God: "Why did you make me commit this crime? Why did it have to be me? You could have prevented it, but you didn't. Why not?" The answer: evasive of course. All that is left to us of Cain is his curse.

ORAT: An old Jewish legend has it that there are 36 righteous men on earth, unknown to others and themselves unaware of their mission...according to the Babylonian Talmud, "The world has not less than 36 pious men who receive daily ~~the~~ the face of God." They are the vessels into which the suffering of the whole world flows...If even one of them were not here, the world would perish with suffering." They never make themselves known to other people. They appear at times of dire need, during great catastrophes, perform their duty and die.

PROPHET: Take me up and cast me forth into the sea; so that the sea be calm unto you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.

POET: I am waiting for heaven to fall across the corner of my face.

CAST: (off-tune) (Chassidic song: "Undzer Rebbenyu")

## SCENE TWO

POET: Dark rabbis, let the dance begin,  
The dance you do not know you do.  
The dance of David was his sin;  
The dance you dance is you, is you.

(In the background, roughly, "Az Der Rebbe Tanzt")

The dance he danced before the Ark  
Bathsheba taught him in the dark;  
The dance you dance is you.

When Absalom hung by his hair  
And danced his dying in the air,  
God's mercy fell like dew.

D: The nhasidim were dancing, vertically, as if not moving from their places, but forcing the rhythm down into the earth, What did it matter if the walls gave way except to show that the enclosure was not large enough to contain their fervor. They sang, and the song gave them life and caused the sap to well up in them and bind them together; ten times, fifty times, they repeated the same phrase, taken from the Psalms, or some other place, and before each other proclaimed themselves invincible. As long as the song and dance go on, they are.

POET: Then Reb Hershl began truly to dance, moving as the boy moved and as the wind moved past him, moving as the earth moved under them all and as the sun moved through the immaculate heavens toward the ending of another day. Only his withered arm did not move, hanging motionless in the midst of the motion, as if it were somehow the center and the meaning of the dance. But whether that meaning was joy or sorrow, knowledge or bafflement, or some strange marriage of them all, it would have been difficult to say.

(end song)

CARP: I believe in simplicity. When one loves, one must say: I love you. When one wants to weep, one must say, I want to weep. When one becomes aware that existence is too heavy a burden, one must say: I want to die.

ORAT: After a certain time (five seconds or even ten), the first man in the row turns around with a single movement, raises his arm and immediately fires, aiming only by guess work...The sound of the explosions is very violent. Between the detonations nothing can be heard.

POET: The forest meditates; it listens to voices instead of stifling them. The forest has ears, a heart, and a soul. In the forest simplicity is possible; simplicity belongs there. And unity too. There liberty isn't forced on you like a straitjacket. I am what I choose to be; I am in my choice, in my will to choose. There is no divorce between self and its image, between being and acting. I am the act, the image, one and indivisible. They had an easy task, those righteous just men who took refuge in the forest and learned the language of trees, birds, clouds.



Nothing is easier than to live in a cloistered universe where I am alone with God alone, against God. They paid with blood and tears for their right to solitude and peace, but at least the blood and tears were their own. We aren't so lucky. The man that chooses solitude and its riches is on the side of those who are against man, who pay with the blood and tears of others. Anyone who describes the future as virgin is mistaken; for it is mortgaged from the first day, from the first cry.

CARP: They have all of them become pious again, they pray, they are mad!

ORAT: In one of his books Morelli talks about a Neapolitan who spent years sitting in the doorway of his house looking at a screw on the ground. At night he would gather it up and put it under his mattress. The screw was at first a laugh, a jest, communal irritation, a neighborhood council, a mark of civic duties unfulfilled, finally a shrugging of shoulders, peace, the screw was peace, no one could go along the street without looking out of the corner of his eye at the screw and feeling that it was peace. The fellow dropped dead of a stroke and the screw disappeared as soon as the neighbors got there. One of them has it; perhaps he takes it out secretly and looks at it, puts it away again and goes off to the factory feeling something that he does not understand, an obscure repvval. He only calms down when he takes out the screw and looks at it, stays looking at it until he hears footsteps and has to put it away quickly. Morelli thought that the screw must have been something else, a god or something like that. Too easy a solution. Perhaps the error was in accepting the fact that the object was a screw simply because it was shaped like a screw. Picasso takes a toy car and turns it into the chin of a baboon. The Neapolitan was most likely an idiot, but he also might have been the inventor of a world. From the screw to an eye, from an eye to a star...

CAST: (song)

chorus:

Bom, bom, biri biri bim bom  
Bim bom bim bom biri biri bom (2)

Zogt der rebe reb Motenyu  
A gut morgn dir gotenyu  
Nem arop fun undz day<sup>n</sup>kas  
Vet men ton kedın u-khedas.

chorus

Zogt der rebe reb Motenyu  
A got helf dir gotenyu  
Der tog iz heys, di milkhome  
iz shver  
Nor men lozt nit aroys dos gever.

chorus

Good morning to you, God  
Says the Rebbe, Reb Motenyu  
Withdraw your anger from us  
And we'll obey your every law

chorus

Good afternoon to you, God  
Says the Rebbe, Reb Motenyu  
The war is hard in the heat of day  
But we don't abaddon our arms.

chorus

## SCENE THREE

D: The miracle of the forest: nothing that is said in its midst is lost. The saint and the solitary, they too are perhaps identical, come here not only to purify their bodies and their passions, but also to listen and tremble, to tremble as they listen to this roaring voice, which, before creation, before the liberation of the word, already contained form and matter, joy and defeat, and that which separates and reconciles them, from all of which the universe, time and their own secret life were fashioned.

Outside the voice of the forest is drowned out by chattering and lamentations of those who traffic in their future and in anxiety, their own and that of others. Here it keeps its miraculous quality, its beauty, which ends by becoming force. Sometimes, beyond uprooted time, a cry of astonishment and terror reaches us, the cry of the ancestor who, opening his eyes for the first time on a world already in motion, realized that he had been deceived.

CAFP: Who's there?...Who's there?...Stop! Stop there! Don't come closer. I forbid you to take another step...Who are you? What do you want? Who sent you here? and Whom are you looking for? Where are you going? Who's calling you and who's with you?...Enough! If it's me you're looking for, come! I'm here, I am waiting for you. (Laughter, The Orator is laughing.)...Stop! Stop laughing! I'm alone and the war is still raging. It will go on and on, and I shall be more and more alone. Be quiet, will you? Listen to the war and you won't laugh any longer!

ORAT: I'm listening to the war and I'm laughing.

PHIL: Verily, like a thousand peals of children's laughter cometh Zarathustra into all sepulchres, laughing at those night-watchmen and grave guardians, and whoever else rattleth with sinister keys. Oh, nature! Men on earth are alone...this is the calamity. "Is there in the field a living man?" shouts the valiant knight. I---not a knight--am shouting too, and no one responds. People say that the sun vivifies the universe, and look at it--isn't it a corpse? Everything is dead, and everywhere, nothing but corpses. Only men, and, around them, silence--such is earth.

CAST: Who are you?

ORAT: You know who I am.

CAST: What is your name?

ORAT: It doesn't matter.

CAST: It doesn't matter.

PROP: If I had said to you as we danced together in my room in the light of the paraffin lamp: listen, take a million people, or two million, or three, kill them in such a way that no one knows about, not even they themselves, enslave several hundred thousand more, destroy their mutual loyalty, pit man against man, and...surely you would have thought me mad. Except that I would probably not have said these things to you, even if I had known what I know today. I would not have wanted to spoil our mood.

But this is how it is done: first, just one ordinary barn, brightly whitewashed--and here they proceed to asphyxiate people. Later, four large buildings, accommodating 20,000 at a time without any trouble. No hocus-pocus, no poison, no hypnosis. Only several men directing

traffic to keep operations running smoothly, and the thousands flow along like water from an open tap. All this happens just beyond the anemic trees of the dusty little wood. Ordinary trucks bring people, return, then bring some more. No hocus-pocus, no poison, no hypnosis. Why is it that nobody cries out, nobody spits in their faces, nobody jumps at their throats? We doff our caps to the SS men returning from the little wood; if our name is called we obediently go with them to die, and--we do nothing. We starve, we are drenched by rain, we are torn from our families. What is this mystery? This insane passivity that cannot be overcome? Our only strength is our great number--the gas chambers cannot accommodate all of us.

PHIL: By committing the perfectly incredible crime, the Nazis hoped to get away with it before the bar of history. Future generations wouldn't believe that such a thing could have happened. Ergo, the Nazis deduced history would one day conclude that it had not happened.

ORAT: History: an account mostly false, of events mostly unimportant, which are brought about by rulers mostly knaves and soldiers mostly fools

POET: You are afraid because murder has become commonplace, because your friends in hating the murder have allowed murder into their hearts. You are not so much afraid of Hitler as you are of the hatred for Hitler. What a plaything you have been. It is so easy to be a soldier. Soldiers are never alone. My plan is simple and beautiful. I can teach you to kill. Together we shall kill your wife. My sainthood is founded on murder. Christ was a saint of anger. My anger is much greater than his. Worship man, that is what I have said, and the sacrifice; man. We can kill too. We can become efficient murderers--but not for country this time. Murder is the new faith and I am its first saint. I am the will, the word, and the deed.

CARP: DISTRIBUTION OF THE WEAPONS OF WAR:

It is already well known that each respective country in the world has its corresponding square miles of territory.

Well then, here is an example:

(A) The country that theoretically has 1,000 square miles will have 1,000 cannons; the country that theoretically had 5,000 square miles will have 5,000 cannons etc. (By this it will be understood, 1 cannon for each square mile);

(B) The country that theoretically had 1,000 square miles will have 2,000 rifles; the country that theoretically has 5,000 square miles will have 10,000 rifles, etc. (By this it will be understood 2 rifles for each square mile); etc.

This example will include all respective countries that exist: France has two rifles for each of its square miles; Spain, idem; Belgium, idem; Russia, idem; United States, idem; Uruguay, idem; China, idem; etc. and this will also include all types of weapons of war that exist: (a) tanks; (b) machine-guns; (c) terror-bombs; rifles, etc.

PHIL: I maintain my human contradiction. I establish my lucidity in the midst of what negates it. I exalt men before what crushes him, and my freedom, my revolt, and my passion come together then in that tension, that lucidity, and that vast repetition.

CARP: And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

POET: And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

PROP: And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

D: And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

ORAT: And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

PHIL: And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

ORAT: I am the holy fig tree: I am Narada, the godly sage, Chitraratha, the celestial musician, and Kapila among the perfected souls. Of weapons I am God's thunderbolt: I am Kamadhenu, the heavenly cow: I am the love-god, begetter of children: I am Vasuki, god of snakes.

I am Prahlada, the giant: among those who measure, I am Time: I am the lion among beasts: Vishnu's eagle among the birds.

Among purifiers, I am the wind: I am Rama among the warriors: the shark among fishes: Ganges among the rivers.

I am the beginning, the middle and the end in creation: I am the knowledge of things spiritual: I am the logic of those who debate.

In the alphabet I am A: among compounds, the copulative: I am Time without end: I am the sustainer: my face is everywhere.

(FILM INTERLUDE)

SCENE FOUR

D: Now I am captive. My body is surrounded by the iron bars of a dungeon, my spirit is imprisoned within an idea. One horrible, one bloody, one implacable idea. I have only one thought, only one conviction, only one certainty: condemned to death. The silence of a prison is unlike all other silences...In this sealed, stifling world, men and things alike seem victims of some spell, as if in the kind of dreams where one feels guided by some fatal inevitability where it would be as futile to try to change the slightest detail as to run away.

POET: To the prisoners Alesi's voice meant the gift of that marvelous landscape for which all of us yearned and which we tried to imagine beyond our bars; it was the gift of an imaginary landscape penetrated furtively into the narrow cell, between those four white walls--blinding, bare, impervious, inaccessible. Hearing Alesi's voice, the prisoners saw opening before their eyes that free, limitless view, lit by a clear, even, mellow light which, falling from above, tinged the valleys with transparent half-shadows, pierced the secret of the woods, revealed the mystery of the shining silvery rivers and lakes at the end of the plain and the delicate tremor of the sea. For a moment, for a moment only, each prisoner had the illusion of being free, as if the door of the cell had opened mysteriously and noiselessly, and after a brief moment, was slowly closed again.

PHIL: The most perfect being is the one whose activity causes the most change. The inactive being, that is, the virtuous one, since he seeks only tranquility, would soon plunge everything into chaos if allowed his own way. Equilibrium must be conserved; and this can only be realized through change, that is, crime.

POET: The essential is that everything become simple, as it is for the child--that each act be commanded, that the good and the evil be designated arbitrarily, that good and evil be evident and clear.

D: The world was beautiful when looked at in this way--without any seeking, so simple, so childlike. The moon and the stars were beautiful, the brook, the shore, the forest and rock, and the goat and the golden beetle, the flower and butterfly were beautiful. It was beautiful and pleasant to go through the world like that, so childlike, so awakened, so concerned with the immediate, without any distrust.

POET: Lover & child, a little sing.  
From long-lost cattle-cars who grope  
who near a place of showers come  
foul no more whose murmuring  
grows in a hiss of gas will clear them home:  
Away from & toward me: a little soap,  
disrobing Achtung! in a dirty hope,  
they shuffle with their haircuts in to die.  
Lift them an elegy, poor you and I,  
fair & strengthless as seafoam  
under a deserted sky.

CARP: Much of what I once said was naive, immature. And it seems to me now that perhaps we were not really wasting time. Despite the madness of war, we lived for a world that would be different. For a better world to come when all this is over. And perhaps even our being here is a step towards that world. Do you really think that, without the hope that such a world is possible, that the rights of man will be restored again, we could stand the concentration camps even for one day? It is that very hope that makes people go without a murmur to the gas chambers, keeps them from risking a revolt, paralyses them into numb inactivity. It is hope that breaks down family ties, makes mothers renounce their children, or wives sell their bodies for bread, or husbands kill. It is hope that compels man to hold on to one more day of life, because that day may be the day of liberation. Ah, and not even the hope for a better, different world, but simply for life, a life of peace and rest. Never before in the history of mankind has hope been stronger than man, but never also has it done so much harm as it has in this war, in this concentration camp. We were never taught how to give up hope, and this is why today we perish in gas chambers.

POET: There are countless families of the most beautiful birds in the Ukraine. They fly about in thousands, twittering among the acacia leaves. They rest on the silvery branches of birches, on the ears of wheat, on the golden petals of sunflowers in order to peck the seeds out of the large black centers. They can be heard singing ceaselessly through the rumble of guns, the rattling of machine-guns,

through the deep hum of aircraft over in the vast Ukrainian plain. They rest on the shoulders of men, on saddles, on the manes of horses, on gun carriages, on rifle barrels, on the Panzers' conning towers, on the boots of the dead.

D: But the love will have been enough, all those impulses of love return to the love that made them. Even memory is not necessary for love. There is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning.

POET: The dead were fleeing from the train. They dropped in masses-- with dull thuds, like concrete statues. Buried under the corpses, crushed by their huge, cold weight, Sartori struggled and wriggled, trying to free himself from under that dead burden, from under that frozen mountain; finally he disappeared beneath the pile of corpses, as if it were an avalanche of stones. The dead are wrathful, stubborn, ferocious. The dead are stupid, vain and capricious as children and women. The dead are crazy. Woe to the living if a dead man hates him. Woe to him if the dead fall in love with him. Woe to the living being if he insults a dead one, touched his self-love, or wounds his honor. The dead are jealous and vengeful. They fear no one, they fear nothing--neither blows, nor wounds, nor enemies in overwhelming numbers. They even have no fear of death. They fight tooth and nail, silently, without yielding a step; they never loosen their hold, they never flee. They fight to the end with a stubborn, cold courage, laughing and sneering, pale and dumb--those mad eyes of theirs wide open and squinting. When finally, they are vanquished, when they resign themselves to defeat and humiliation, when they lie beaten, they exhale a sweet, greasy odor and slowly decompose.

CARP: But if, on the one hand, it was impossible not to realize the frightening reality, which was both absurd and inevitable, there remained on the other hand, a fund of subconscious optimism common to all human souls which refused to believe in the hell which had been instated on earth.

ORAT: What does the simple child say, "What is this?"

Song: (Shtiler, sthiler, lomir shvaygn) (A prose translation:

Still, still. Let us be still. Graves grow here. Planted by the enemy, they blossom to the sky. All the roads lead to Ponar, and none returns. Somewhere father disappeared, disappeared with all our joy. Be still, my child; don't cry, my treasure; tears are of no avail. No matter the fury of your tears, no one will notice. Rivers open into oceans, prison cells are not a world, but to our sorrow, there is no end, there is no light. Spring has blossomed in the countryside, and all about our lives is fall. Today the day is full of flowers, but the night alone holds us. Somewhere a mother is orphaned. Her child goes to Ponar. The river Viliye, chained, convulsés in our pain. Ice floes race through Lithuania into the ocean now. Somewhere there is no darkness. Somewhere, out of darkness, suns are burning. Rider come at once. Your child calls you.)

SCENE FIVE

CARP: You see, the inexplicable actually happens: you do miles of somersaults; spend hours simply rolling on the ground; you do hundreds of squat-jumps; you stand motionless for endless days and nights; you sit for a full month inside a cement coffin--the bunker; you hang from a post or a wooden pole extended between two chairs; you jump like a frog and crawl like a snake; drink bucketfuls of water until you suffocate; you are beaten with a thousand different whips and clubs, by a thousand different men. I listen avidly to tales about prisons--unknown provincial prisons like Malkini, Suwalki, Radom, Pulawy, Lublin--about the monstrously perfected techniques for torturing man, and I find it impossible to believe that all this just sprang suddenly out of somebody's head, like Minerva out of Jove's. I find it impossible to comprehend this sudden frenzy of murder, this mounting tide of unleashed atavism...

D: I am physical.  
I feel the rain  
I feel the sun  
I feel the wind  
I feel the snow  
I am without blemish  
I fear God  
I fear your God  
I fear my God  
I will shake your hand or cut your throat  
I bake poisonous fish in my oven  
Drink my blood  
Eat of my flesh  
I have power  
I have a love  
I am a young man  
I am a thousand years old  
I will not humble myself  
I am alone

PHIL: It is man who kills, man who creates or suffers injustices; it is no longer a man who, having lost all restraint, shares his bed with a corpse. Whoever waits for his neighbor to die in order to take his piece of bread is, albeit guiltless, further from the model of thinking man than the most primitive pigmy or the most vicious sadist.

PROP: Are you innocent?

CARP: Yes, I am completely innocent.

PROP: I see. If you are innocent then the matter is quite simple.

CARP: My innocence doesn't make the matter any simpler. I have to fight against countless subtleties in which the Court indulges. And in the end, out of nothing at all, an enormous fabric of guilt will be conjured up.

ORAT: Abraham had shouted, "Have mercy, Lord, do not burn them. Are you not good? Take pity, therefore, on your creatures." And God has answered him, "I am just. I shall burn them all!"

POET: Grandfather, sleepless in a room upstairs,  
seldom came down; so when they tript him down  
we wept. The blind light sang about his ears,  
later we heard. Brother had pull. In pairs  
he, some, slept upon stone.  
Later they stamped him down in mud.  
The windlass drew him silly & odd-eyed, blood  
broke from his ears before they quit.  
Before they trucked him home they cleaned him up somewhat.

Only the loose eyes' glaze they could not clean  
and soon he died. He howled a night and shook  
our teeth before the end; we breathed again  
when he stopt. Abraham, what we have seen  
write, I beg, in your Book,  
No more the solemn and high bells  
call to our pall; we call or gibber; Hell's  
irritable & treacherous  
despairs here here (not him) reach now to shatter us.

CARP: six million you keep repeating and I too cannot forget it but is  
it really conceivable? Not to me--this is the real horror that none  
of us will admit that we cannot possibly feel it. Tragedy is too  
intimate to encompass six million strangers even if they were our  
fathers' fathers. I can think and talk but can I feel? Maybe it's  
easiest to follow the crowd and not even think...or else boil over  
with self-righteous indignation and refuse to ride in a Volkswagen...  
Two extremes of selfishness that lead nowhere. So once again I give  
up on the earth-shaking and return to trivia where there are, at  
least, no such metaphysical dilemmas.

POEM: Luftmenschen dream, the men who live on air,  
of other values, in the blackness watching  
peaceful for gangs or a quick raid,  
the ghetto nods, a mortal head  
soundless but for a scurry, a sigh, retching--  
no moan of generation fear.  
Hands hold each other limper  
while the moon lengthens on the sliding river.

PHIL: Practically everything that we call "superior culture" rests on the  
intellectualization and deepening of cruelty: this is my proposition...  
Any depth, any thoroughness is already a violation, a desire to  
hurt the basic will of man's mind whose trend is constantly  
toward illusion, toward the surface. In any desire of the mind  
to penetrate deeply and with understanding there is already a  
drop of cruelty.

D: See that that young girl is kept out of my way.

CARP: Why?

D: Because if I get the chance I'll kill her.

CARP: Would that make things easier for you?

D: Not the way you mean.

CARP: Then why must you kill her?

D: Do you know how many men are being blown to bits in Europe every  
hour of the day, every hour of the night?

CARP: Yes, I know, but I don't see...



- D: God damn it! You don't see--you don't see--what do I care whether you see or not! How will my killing someone change all that killing--that's what you don't see. Well, it does change it--it blots it out for me. I lie awake at night, and think--now, just this minute, hundreds of men, no, not men, kids, kids/just out of school, kids with girls, kids with the first fuzz of hair on their cheeks--you blind fool, you dirty blind fool! Don't you see now?
- CARP: I'm sorry. Better get some sleep...
- D: You're sorry! Get some sleep! Sure, we're all sorry. We walk around, We get up in the morning, we go to bed at night, we eat, we make love, we go ahead with all it--we don't want to see that other thing, we don't have the guts to want to know about that--then later we'll wave flags, we'll shout, we'll sweat up a big hate--but I can't--I can't! I tell you, I can't shut it out--it's worse not seeing it, not seeing them actually die, to hear their screams, to have the blood run over your hands--that's the real hell--I wish to God I could grab up a rifle and run along beside other men with rifles--to feel their terror, to share it with them. To have someone to share mine--but something won't let me--maybe I can't hate enough, maybe I'm too strong to take that way out--the only escape from war is to become a soldier, to lose all touch with your own identity, to become part of one huge, quivering mass of fear and horror--but to face it alone, to have principles, to believe--that's what I'm trying to say, to believe, to have even one belief left, --no! It can't be done, no one could stand up under that...

POET: This invasion of death which swept clean all traces of human life appeared so contrary to nature that all which occurred lost its reality, seemed to be a macabre fantasy, or the effects of black magic.

PROP: There is only one thing that may be said in your exoneration--that you do not know the truth. This is possible, But unlikely.

SLIDE INTERLUDE

(music: Ikh benk aheym)

SCENE SIX

CARP: An attempt is made to get him to admit his guilt. He feels innocent. To tell the truth, that is all he feels, his irreparable innocence. This is what allows him everything. Hence, what he demands of himself is to live solely with what he knows, to accommodate himself to what is, and to bring in nothing that is not certain. He is told that nothing is. But this is at least a certainty. And it is with this that he is concerned. He wants to find out if it is possible to live without appeal.

ORAT: How shall the murdered man convince his assassin he will not haunt him?

PHIL: From the beginning, since we are all judges, we are all guilty before one another, all christed to our cruel nature, one and the other both crucified, and always without knowing.

D: Let me tell you a strange. It is a dream which often troubles my nights. I walk into a square crowded with people who are all looking upward, and I raise my eyes and see a high mountain sheer above the square. A large cross is on the mountaintop. A crucified horse hangs from the crossbeam. The executioners, standing on ladders, are hammering the last nails in. The hammers can be heard striking the nails. The crucified horse dangles its head from side to side and neighs softly. The silent crowd weeps. The sacrifice of the Horse-Christ, the tragedy of that animal, Golgotha, I wish you would help me to understand the meaning of this dream. Might not the death of the horse signify the death of all that is noble and pure in man? Don't you think that this dream refers to the war?

All that is noble, gentle and pure in Europe is dying. The horse is our homeland. You understand what I mean by this. Our homeland, our ancient homeland is dying. And all those obsessing pictures, that persistent obsession of neighing, of the horrible and sad odor of the dead horses, lying on their backs along the roads of the war, don't they seem to correspond to the vision of the war, to our voice, our odor, to the odor of dead Europe? Don't you also think that this dream means something similar? It is perhaps better not to interpret dreams.

ORAT: The lake is not deep there, not more than six feet; but a hundred yards from the shore, the bottom suddenly drops. Pressed within that narrow space (the lakeshore curves inward there, forming a small bay) between the deeper water and the barrier of fire, the horses clustered, shuddering with cold and fear, their heads stretched out above the surface of the water. Those nearer to land were scorched by the flames, and reared and struggled to hoist themselves onto the backs of the others, tried to push a way open by biting and kicking. And while still madly struggling, the ice gripped them.

The north wind swooped down during the night. (The North wind blows from the Murmansk Sea, like an angel of doom, crying aloud, and the land suddenly dies.) The cold became frightful. Suddenly, with the peculiar vibrating noise of breaking glass, the water froze. The heat balance was broken and the sea, the lakes, the rivers froze. In such instances, even sea waves are gripped in midair and become rounded ice waves suspended in the void.

On the following day, when the first ranger patrols, their hair singed, their faces blackened by smoke, cautiously stepped over the warm ashes in the charred forest, and reached the lakeshore, a horrible and amazing sight met their eyes. The lake looked like a vast sheet of white marble on which rested hundreds upon hundreds of horses' heads. They appeared to have been chopped off cleanly with an axe. Only the heads stuck out of the crust of ice. And they were all facing the shore. The white flame of terror still burned in their wide open eyes. Close to the shore, a tangle of wildly-rearing horses rose from the prison of ice.

PHIL: I maintain my human contradiction I establish my lucidity in the midst of what negates it. I exalt man before what crushed him, and my freedom, my revolt, and my passion come together then in that tension, that lucidity, and that vast repetition.

ORAT: And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

POET: And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

D: And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

PROP: And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

PHIL: And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

CARP: And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Song: "A Kaptsn's Nign"

chorus: Cheer bim bom bom

Cheeri beeri bom bo-om...

#### SCENE SEVEN

PROP: Oliveira felt that La Maga wanted death from him, something in her which was not her awakened self, a dark form demanding annihilation, the slow wound which on its back breaks the stars at night and gives space back to questions and terrors. Only that time, off-center like a mythical matador for whom killing is returning the bull to the sea and the sea to the heavens, he bothered La Maga in a long night which they did not speak much about later. He turned into Pasiphae, he bent her over and used her as if she were a young boy, he knew her and he demanded the slavishness of the most abject whore, he magnified her into a constellation, he held her in his arms smelling of blood, he made her drink the semen which ran into her mouth like a challenge to the Logos, he sucked out the shadow from womb and her rump and raised himself to her face to anoint her with herself in that ultimate work of knowledge which only a man can give to a woman.

D: And so the bird of heaven, with archangelic shrieks, and his imperial beak thrust upwards, and his whole captive form folded in the flag of Ahab, went down with his ship, which, like Satan, would not sink to hell till she had dragged a living part of heaven along with her.

PHIL: To possess what one is going to kill, to copulate with suffering-- those are the moments of freedom.

CARP: Can a man with consciousness respect himself at all?

ORAT: WORDS WORDS WORDS

POET: The perfect solution. He won't have to speak or even to move, really. He'll appear on the stage at the appropriate moments of the last act, that's all, without a word, or a gesture, just as a presence; he'll look on and accept what happens. A silent Judas, there's something original for you, a Judas struck dumb by God!  
Moral: He who sins by his power of speech shall lose it.

DRAT: Listen, I have one glass eye. It is difficult to tell which is the real one. If you tell me at once, without thinking about it, which of the two is the glass eye, I will let you go free.

CAST: The left eye.

ORAT: How did you know?

D: Because it is the one that has something human in it.

POET: For this pen of mine, wherewith I have written most of these notes, has become a living part of me. This pen, too, is broken, like myself, like my soul, like everything within me.

D: One day I was able to get up, after gathering all my strength. I wanted to see myself in the mirror hanging on the opposite wall. I had not seen myself since the ghetto. From the depths of the mirror, a corpse gazed back at me. The look in his eyes, as they stared into mine, has never left me.

Song: "Hot zikh mir di shikh tserisn" --loudly. (A translation:

Woe is me.  
My shoes are torn.  
I'm freezing cold.  
My collar's ripped.  
Come dance with me;  
These Siberian forsts  
Will run me to the ground.

Yellow permits, pink permits,  
A whole array of colors.  
When will my wife Zlate  
Return home again?  
Dance, come dance with me.  
If you have a working card,  
I'll marry you instead.

Bread by the centimetre,  
Wood by the splinter,  
These we've gotten from the Council,  
The Judenrat of the ghetto.  
Dance, come dance with me.  
If you have a working card,  
I'll marry you instead.

## SCENE EIGHT

ORAT: Have you ever seen a man shot by a firing-squad? Do you know that the firing squad stands only a yard and a half from the condemned man? Do you know that if the victim took two steps forward his chest would touch the rifles? Do you know that, at this short range, the soldiers concentrate their fire on the region of the heart and their big bullets make a hole into which you could thrust your fist? No, you didn't know all that; those are things that are never spoken of. For the plague-stricken their peace of mind is more important than a human life. Decent folks must be allowed to sleep easy o' nights, mustn't they? Really, it would be shockingly bad taste to linger on such details, that's a common knowledge. But personally I've never been able to sleep well since then. The bad taste lingered in my mouth and I've kept lingering on the details, brooding over them. And thus I came to understand that I, anyhow, had had plague through all those long years in which, paradoxically enough, I'd believed with all my soul that I was fighting it. I learned that I had had an indirect hand in the deaths of thousands of people; that I'd even brought about their deaths by approving of acts and principles which could only end that way. Others did not seem embarrassed by such thoughts, or anyhow never voiced them of their own accord. But I was different; what I'd come to know stuck in my throat. I was with them and yet I was alone...I have realized that we all have plague, and I have lost my peace...I know positively, I can say I know the world inside out, as you may see-- that each of us has the plague within him; no one, no one on earth is free from it.

PHIL: Because, and this is the awful privilege of our generation and of my people, no one better than us has ever been able to grasp the incurable nature of the offense that spreads like a contagion. It is foolish to think that human justice can eradicate it. It is an inexhaustible fount of evil; it breaks the body and the spirit of the submerged, it stifles them and renders them abject; it returns as ignominy upon the oppressors; it perpetuates itself as hatred among the survivors and swarms around in a thousand ways, against the will of all, as a thirst for revenge, as a moral capitulation, as denial, as weariness, as renunciation.

POET: Indeed, this <sup>is</sup> your country. A country where systematic murder is the one function of the State. At the last your only property is murder...The fact is pitiless...There is no escape from War. Have we already been killed? What do we oppose? The spirit creates its own country...The law of the spirit in this time is death. We must exhaust the systems of destruction. There is so much hate in the world. I would crawl a thousand miles on my hands and knees if that would stop the war.

PHIL: Everybody knows that pestilences have a way of recurring in the world; yet somehow we find it hard to believe in ones that crash down on our heads from a blue sky. There have been as many plagues as war in history; yet always plagues and wars take people by surprise.

CARP: O cannot understand to this day how I was able, quite calmly, to give the order to fire. I was so agitated that I could hardly hold the pistol to his head when giving him the coup, de grace.

PHIL: The modern state deludes itself into thinking that it can protect God's life simply with police measures.

ORAT: We are born into this time. There is no other way. Our duty is to hold on to the lost position, without hope, without rescue, like that Roman soldier whose bones were found in front of a door in Pompeii, who during the eruption of Vesuvius died at his post because they forgot to relieve him. That is greatness. The honorable end is the one thing that cannot be taken from a man.

PROP: And who knows (one cannot swear to it), perhaps the only goal on earth to which mankind is striving lies in this incessant process of attaining, or, in other words, in life itself, and not particularly in the goal which of course must always be two times two makes four, that is, a formula, and after all, two times two makes four is no longer life, gentlemen, but is the beginning of death.

D: But there was nothing there: no peaks, no life, no climb. Nor was this summit a summit exactly: it had no substance, no firm base, it was crumbling too, whatever it was, collapsing, while he was falling, falling into the volcano, he must have climbed it after all, though now there was this noise of foisting lava in his ears, horribly, it was in eruption, yet no, it wasn't the volcano, the world itself was bursting, bursting into black spouts of villages catapulted into space, with himself falling through it all, through the inconceivable pandemonium of a million tanks, through the blazing of ten million burning bodies, falling, into a forest, falling---  
Suddenly he screamed, and it was as though this scream were being tossed from one tree to another, as its scream returned, then, as though the trees themselves were crowding nearer, huddled together, closing over him, pitying...  
Somebody threw a dead dog after him down the ravine.

CARP: Where was the Judge whom he had never seen? Where was the high Court, to which he had never penetrated? He raised his hands and spread out all his fingers.  
But the hands of <sup>one of</sup> the partners were already at K's throat, while the other thrust the knife deep into his heart and turned it there twice. With failing eyes K could still see the two of them immediately before him, cheek leaning against cheek, watching the final act. "Like a dog!" he said; it was as if the shame of it must outlive him.

POET: So it was believed that neither rain, nor fire, nor wind could ever wipe out the stain of a crime. For justice hangs over the world like a great sledge-hammer lifted by a powerful arm, which has to stop for a while before coming down with terrible force on the unsuspecting anvil. As they used to say in the villages, even a speck of dust shows up in the sun.

SCENE NINE

PROP: You can not be born into a more perfect epoch than that in which all has been lost.

ORAT: Does it matter how they died--by design or by chance, by will or by order? Does it matter how they killed--with gas, with bullets, with disease, with cold, with heat, with chemicals or fire, with electricity or barbed wire, with whips or clubs or poison, with suffocation or experiment or work or starvation--with cruelty or quickly, with sadism or disgust, with pleasure or dread, with excess or moderation?

CARP: Was that cogwheel going to make trouble after all? But it was something quite different. Slowly the lid of the Designer rose up and then clicked wide open. The teeth of a cogwheel showed themselves and rose higher, soon the whole wheel was visible, it was as if some enormous force were squeezing the Designer so that there was no longer room for the wheel, the wheel moved up till it came to the very edge of the Designer, fell down, rolled along the sand a little on its rim, and then lay flat. But a second wheel was already rising after it, followed by many others, large and small and indistinguishably minute, the same thing happened to all of them, at every moment one imagined the Designer must now really be empty, but another complex of numerous wheels was already rising into sight, falling down, trundling along the sand and lying flat... the machine was obviously going to pieces; its silent working was a delusion...the face of the corpse, was as it had been in life; no sign was visible of the promised redemption; the lips were firmly pressed together, the eyes were open, with the same expression as in life, the look was calm and convinced, and through the forehead went the point of a great iron spike.

POET: If Christ was God, then the crucifixion is without dignity. It is merely ridiculous, for to endure several hours pain is nothing heroic in God, in any case.

PHIL: The question is not: do we believe in God? But rather: does God believe in us? And the answer is: only an unbeliever could have created our image of God; and only a false God would be satisfied with it.

PROP: A bona fide angel of God, within prescribed limitations, not to be confused with the members of any particular sect, order, or organization here on earth operating under a similar name.

PRIDE: We are fighting for fine distinctions, but the kind of distinctions that are as important as man himself. We are fighting for the distinction between sacrifice and mysticism, between energy and violence, between strength and cruelty, for that even finer distinction between the true and the false, between men of the future and the cowardly gods you revere...

CARP: What has happened to me is only a single instance and, as such, of no great importance, especially as I do not take it very seriously, but it is representative of a misguided policy which is being directed against many other people as well. It is for those that I take up my stand here, not for myself.

PHIL: La sensibilité de l'innocent qui souffre est comme du crime sensible. Le vrai crime n'est pas sensible. L'innocent qui souffre sait la vérité sur son bourreau. Le bourreau ne le sait pas. Le mal que l'innocent sent en lui-même est dans son bourreau, mais il n'y est pas sensible. L'innocent ne peut connaître le mal que comme souffrance. Ce qui dans le criminel n'est pas sensible, c'est le crime. Ce qui dans l'innocent n'est pas sensible, c'est l'innocence. C'est l'innocent qui peut sentir l'enfer.

POET: Or is it because right through hell there is a path, and though I may not take it, sometimes lately in dreams I have been able to see it?

CARP: Calmly they denied, in the teeth of the evidence, that we had ever known a crazy world in which men were killed off like flies, or that precise savagery, that calculated frenzy of the plague, which instilled an odious freedom as to all that was not there here and now; or those charnel-house stench which stupefied whom they did not kill. In short, they denied that we had ever been that hag-ridden populace a part of which was daily fed into a furnace and went up in oily fumes, while the rest, in shackled impotence, waited their turn.

ORAT: If a man does not judge himself, all things judge him, and all things become messengers of God.

CARP: I know well that we are of the same race. Are we not all alike, speaking without respite, to none, always confronted with the same questions although we know in advance their answers? So now, tell me, I beg of you, what happened to you one night on the banks of the Seine and how did you manage to refuse to risk your life?

POET: And since today the world has not yet blown away, I take out fresh paper, arrange it neatly on the desk, and closing my eyes try to find within me a tender feeling for the workmen hammering the rails, for the peasant women with their Ersatz sour cream, the trains full of merchandise, the fading sky above the ruins, for the passers-by on the street below and the newly installed windows, and even for my wife who is washing dishes in the kitchen alcove; and with a tremendous effort I attempt to grasp the true significance of the events, things and people I have seen. For I intend to write a great, immortal epic, worthy of this unchanging, difficult world chiselled out of stone.

PHIL: I maintain my human contradiction. I establish my lucidity in the midst of what negates it. I exalt man before what crushes him, and my freedom, my revolt, and my passion come together then in that tension, that lucidity, and that vast repetition.



ORAT: And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.  
POET: And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.  
PROP: And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.  
PHIL: And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.  
CARP: And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

D: It is a dream within a dream, varied in details, one in substance. I am sitting at a table with my family or with friends, or at work, or in the green countryside; in short, in a peaceful relaxed environment, apparently without tension or affliction; yet I feel a deep and subtle anguish, the definite sensation of an impending threat. And in fact, as the dream proceeds, slowly or brutally, each time in a different way, everything collapses and disintegrates around me, the scenery, the walls, the people, while the anguish becomes more intense and more precise. Now everything has changed to chaos; I am alone in the center of a grey and turbid nothing, and now, I know what this thing means, and I also know, that I have always known it; I am in the Lager once more, and nothing is true outside the Lager. All the rest was a brief pause, a deception of the senses, a dream; my family, nature in flower, my home. Now this inner dream, this dream of peace, is over and in the outer dream, which continues, gelid, a well-known voice resounds: a single word, not imperious, but brief and subdued. It is the dawn command at Auschwitz, a foreign word, feared and expected: get up, "Wstawach."

PART III: THERE IS LAUGHTER: An evening of truths

...it is only somewhere  
between savagery  
and civilization  
that love is born

Joseph Wood Krutch

NIGHT OF TRUTHS

CAST: Welcome  
Welcome  
Welcome left and welcome right  
We hope you spend a pleasant night  
Welcome  
Welcome  
Showers here, barbers there  
Look at all that lovely hair  
We should have ourselves a fair

Trinklets and beads  
Eyeglasses  
Wigs and laces  
All that you need  
For happy faces

Trinklets and beads  
Golden teeth  
Earrings and frills  
All that you need:  
Just take your fill

Welcome  
Welcome  
Welcome left and welcome right  
We hope you spend a pleasant night  
Welcome  
Welcome

M\*C\*: The world is a cash register--if we press the wrong buttons, all we'll end up with is one big VOID (moral to end all morals).

COMIC: "Raise your head a minute, the pillow's too low, I'm going to change it for you."  
"It would be better if you left the pillow alone and changed my head. Surgery is still in its infancy, that you've got to admit."

MIDGET: And don't tell me God works in mysterious ways. There's nothing so mysterious about it. He's not working at all. He's playing. Or else He's forgotten all about us. That's the kind of God you people talk about--a country bumpkin, a clumsy, bungling, brainless, conceited, uncouth hayseed. Good God, how much reverence can you have for a Supreme Being who finds it necessary to include such phenomena as plague and tooth decay in His divine system of creation? What in the world was running through that warped, evil, scatological mind of His when He robbed old people of the power to control their bowel movements? Why in the world did He ever create pain? What a colossal immortal blunder! When you consider the opportunity and the power He had to really do a job, and then, look at the stupid ugly little mess He made of it instead. His sheer incompetence is almost staggering.

COM: Being instated as an archangel, Satan made himself multifariously objectionable and was finally expelled from Heaven. Halfway in his descent he paused, bent his head in thought a moment, and at last went back. "There is one favor I should like to ask," said he.  
"Name it."

"Man, I understand, is about to be created. He will need laws."  
"What, wretch, you his appointed adversary, charged from the dawn of eternity with hatred of his soul--you ask for the right to make his laws."

"Pardon, what I have to ask is that he be permitted to make them himself."

It was so ordered.

MAGICIAN: They're trying to kill me.

ACROBAT: No one's trying to kill you.

MAG: Then why are they shooting at me?

ACRO: They're shooting at everyone. They're trying to kill everyone.

MAG: And what difference does that make?

ACRO: Who's they? Who, specifically, do you think is trying to murder you?

MAG: Everyone of them.

ACRO: Everyone of whom?

MAG: Every one of whom do you think?

ACRO: I haven't the faintest idea.

MAG: Then how do you know they aren't?

MAG: Cleveland's 82nd air raid warning of the present war and the 21st since 6:14 a.m. last Monday was sounded at 9:47 yesterday and the all-clear signal came at 4:26 a.m. today.

The alarm lasted twelve hours, eight minutes, the third longest of the war, being exceeded only by the Tuesday-night-through-Wednesday alarm of fourteen hours ten minutes and by the Holy nineteenth record-breaker of twenty-nine hours, fifty-four minutes.

In the 603 hours 11 minutes between the beginning of the next-to-the-last alarm sounding and the conclusion of the warning this morning, this city has been in a state of alarm for a total of 76 hours, 59 minutes. In toto, seventeen Dutch-Keggy bombers (of the dive type), twenty-nine Dapharwaith-112 fighter-bombers, and two thousand, four hundred and six Dupond-113's were destroyed; 24,000,000 men, aged 21 to 45, died under the debris; \$134,853,016,235 worth of city property went up in smoke; 70,000 kegs of crude rubber were seized; all live stock was commandeered; a 164 per cent sales tax has been decreed; 13,000 oleomargarine dairies were compelled to close their doors; 596,000 suspected spies have been arrested.

M\*C\* Any Jew who wishes to hang himself will be so kind as to put a piece of paper with his name on it in his mouth, so that we may identify the body.

[SONG]

MIDGET:

I am an old man with wisdom to spare  
I have no teeth I have no hair  
My legs are crooked my nose is bent  
Let me share my wisdom with you:

Act according to what is spent--  
That which is dear is not always rare.

CHANTEUSE:

Life

MIDGET:  
That which is loved cannot always be shared.

CHANTEUSE:  
Wife.

MIDGET:  
This I tell to you.

CHANTEUSE:  
I am an old woman with affection to spare  
I have no teeth I have no hair  
My loins are empty my breasts are thin  
Let me share my passions with you:

Love according to that which is lost--  
One cannot find what has not been.

MIDGET:  
Dreams.

CHANTEUSE:  
One never knows the shape one is in.

MIDGET:  
Or so it seems.

BOTH:  
We are an old couple without a hope,  
And here we have a very old rope.  
We hang it from the ceiling beams  
And watch it strangle all our dreams.  
We hang it from the ceiling beams,  
Until there are no longer dreams.  
We hang it from the ceiling beams  
Until we die, or so it seems.

You are my wife. (MIDGET)  
YOU are my life. (CHANTEUSE)  
We have no teeth we have no hair  
Just a rope a very old rope  
Swinging ever so gracefully.

CHANT: You believe in the principle. How complicated. You're like a witness.  
You're the one who goes to the museum and looks at the paintings.  
I mean, the paintings are there, and you're in the museum, too, near  
and far away at the same time. I'm a painting...Etienne is a painting,  
this room is a painting. You think that you're in this room, but you're  
not. You're looking at the room, you're not in the room.

M\*C\* This girl could leave St. Thomas way behind.

CHANT: Why St. Thomas? That idiot, who had to see to believe?

ACRO: Until the day of these proceedings, I was ignorant of the fact that  
millions of Jews had been murdered in the concentration camps or by  
the special forces divisions in the East. Not a single person told me  
a single word about these things. The existence of concentration camps

of this type was completely unknown to me. I did not know a single one of their names. I never set foot in a concentration camp.

MID: Dear Mrs., Mr., Miss, or Mr. and Mrs.; Words cannot express the deep personal grief I experienced when your husband, son, father or brother was killed, wounded or reported missing in action.

COMT: NATIONAL ANTHEM? sung miserably off-tune,

COMIC: A friend of mine was arrested for singing out of tune. You know, falsch gesungen. Once, during a church service in Warsaw, when everyone was singing hymns, my friend started singing the national anthem. But since he sang out of tune, they locked him up. And they said they wouldn't let him out until he learned to sing properly. They even beat him regularly, but it was no use. I'm sure he won't get out before the war is over, because he's quite unmusical. Once he even confused a German march with Chopin's funeral march!

M\*C\* Of course you expect to go to heaven when you die. We all do. The hope is in all of us, that when we die, we will go to heaven and rejoin the other members of our family who have passed on. Take my advice: make a reservation. Heaven is becoming very crowded and it is extremely doubtful whether you can get in; and should you manage to squeeze yourself past the pearly gates, it is even more doubtful whether you could find your family among all that crowd. St. John records the limits of Heaven in Revelations XXI, 16: He measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal. Twelve thousand furlongs is seven million nine hundred and twenty thousand feet, and when cubed, this is equal to  $4.96793 \times 10^{20}$  cubic feet--in other words, heaven as visualized by St. John is about 1500 miles long in each dimension. If you allow 10 cubic feet as ample space for a human being, you will find that heaven can hold about  $4.9679088 \times 10^{19}$  persons if packed in tight. This calculation does not allow for the streets of gold or the trees of marvelous leaves and fruits, or the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." It is apparent that heaven was filled up several hundred years ago--or about the time that Columbus was discovering America.

MAG: In other words, you were there in order to assure the greatest possible supply of gas so that the greatest possible number of people could be exterminated.

ACRO: Yes, that was an order.

COMIC: Wild Street, March 1st, 1868.

To the Gaol Committee of Newgate,

Gentilmen,--As Ive heerd Calcraft yure could hangmon iz goin to leeve iz plaise, Ive just takin the libertee too ask yu too chuse me, as I am villin too dothe jobs on murdrers for the same pay, and vill ever bee punkshal hat it, ven ever yu vant to hang em up at the gallerse. Ive no objecshun to exschecute any vun yu please, without feer or favur too any relashun or aquanetense, but vill do my dooty imparshul, for vich I can git a good karacter,

I am Gentilmen,  
Yure humbel sirvent,  
THOMAS COFFIN

M\*C\* 1. The thumbscrews used in conjunction with 2. The leg vises. 3. Scourging either off or while hanging on. 4. The ladder, a form of strappado. In addition, special tortures were employed, such as 5. The stocks, furnished with iron spikes, a torment which might be continued for as long as six hours. 6. Strappado, a modification of squassation. 7. Severe friction with a rope around the neck, to cut to the bone. 8. Cold water baths. 9. Burning feathers held under the arms and groin, frequently dipped in burning sulphur. 10. Prayer stool, a kneeling board, with sharp wooden pegs. 11. Forcible feeding on herring cooked in salt, and denial of water. 12. Scalding water baths to which lime had been added.

MAG: THE LIFE, TRIAL, CHARACTER, AND CONFESSION OF THE MAN THAT WAS HANGED IN FRONT OF NEWBATE, AND WHO IS NOW ALIVE? With full particulars of the resuscitated.

ACRO: You're in Auschwitz concentration camp and you'd better not forget it. It's not a sanatorium, and you're not here for a cure or a holiday.

CAST: [SONG]

Hey newcomer  
with your gold and silver  
what you gonna do  
with all of them jewels  
Hey newcomar  
don't you know  
it ain't no go  
when you gonna stop  
playin'  
the fool

You gotta learn the rules:  
Rule#1: You can't have fun.  
Rule#2: They'll kill you if you do.  
Rule#3: Don't talk to me.  
Rule#4: But listen all the more.  
Rule #5: You gotta wanta live.  
Rule#6: Else we'll murder you with sticks.  
Rule#7: You'll never get to heaven.  
But Rule #8: You may get there late.  
Rule#9: Read that sign: ARBEIT MACHT FREI  
Rule#10: Forget that you're a man.  
Rule Eleven: Remember this rule, you fool:  
Rule Eleven There ain't no rules.

Hey newcomer  
with your tears and passions  
what you gonna do  
when they're all through?  
Hey newcomah  
don't you cry  
we're gonna fry  
in a cute little oven  
for two (or three, or four, or five, or six)

Hey newcomer  
 don't you know  
 it ain't no go  
 you gotta learn  
 geography  
 didn't you hear  
 the world is square  
 and nobody out there  
 cares  
 didn't you hear  
 we are on a corner  
 and eventually  
 all of us  
 will be sent a-spinning  
 forever and a day

Hey newcomer  
 we don't care  
 all of us here  
 are real tough cookies  
 got no emotions  
 no sentimental notions  
 we'll kill you  
 for a crust of bread

Hey newcomer  
 you gotta empty your head  
 of all emotions  
 sentimental notions  
 else you're gonna die in bed  
 and nobody'll know  
 nobody'll know  
 who it was put a stick  
 through your head.

Hey newcomer  
 Hey newcomer  
 don't you know  
 it ain't no go  
 no emotions  
 no sentimental notions  
 when you gonna learn  
 the rules  
 when you gonna learn  
 the rules  
 when you gonna  
 one two three four  
 how many millions more  
 five six seven eight  
 kick and stomp and masculate  
 when you gonna stop  
 playin'  
 the fool?

MAG: HOW TO COOK A WIFE:



- COM: The witty reply of the Knight de Montbazon:  
Once, in the presence of the king, a young and extremely comely maiden composedly asked the Knight de Montbazon, "My lord, which is attached to which, the dog to the tail, or the tail to the dog?" To which our knight, being highly skilled in the art of repartee, answered in a perfectly unperturbed, steady voice, "No one is forbidden, madam, to take a dog either by its tail or by its head." This reply afforded the aforementioned king great satisfaction, and the knight was not left unrewarded.
- M\*C\*: A pact between the Devil and a nobleman in Pigneroleş in 1676:
- ACRO: 1. Lucifer, you are bound to deliver to me immediately 100,000 pounds of money in gold. 2. You will deliver to me the first Tuesday of every month 1000 pounds. 3. You will bring me this gold in current money, of such kind that not only I, but also all those to whom I may wish to give some, may use it. 4. The foresaid gold must not be false, must not disappear in one's hand, or turn to stone or coals. It should be metal stamped by the hands of men, legal and valid in all lands.
- MAG: (Simultaneously with M\*C\*below) Be on guard at all times for <sup>the</sup> appearance of one who will indicate himself in many disguises; he is known variously as Lysander Butler, Hiram cutler, Benjamin Hazard, Birdsall Steele, Daniel Ferry, Orris Butterfield, Darius Howe, Fitz Roy Porter, Francis Steele, John Bellrope Hull, Eppa Rust, Braxton Cockrell, Robert Early, Jubal Ransom, Clayton Barfield, Jefferson Baze, Macon Chance, Benjamin Boyles, Noah Prosser, Mercer Groat, Isaac Chapman, Jasper Wifelove, Zara Bull, Lemuel Stone, Albert Coffin, Castlemoor May, Oliver Crewe, Cyrus Spermilk, Reuben Kellogg, Barr Kinsman, Bradford Plimpton, Norton Meadow, Carndon Newpurse--but you may discover him by this (which he cannot change): the little finger of his right hand is missing.
- M\*C\*: (Simultaenous with above MAG): Call forth Hermann Wilhelm Goering, Rudolf Hoess, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Robert Ley, Wilhelm Keitel, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Alfred Rosenberg, Hans Frank, Wilhelm Frick, Julius Streicher, Walter Funk, Hjalmar Schacht, Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halback, Karl Donnitz, Erich Raeder, Baldur von Schirach, Fritz Sauckel, Alfred Jodl, Martin Berman, Franz von Paper, Artur Seyss-Inquart, Albert Speers, Constantin von Neurath, and Hans Fritzsche.
- CHANT: There'll always be people with different viewpoints. At home we have Democrats and Republicans. Here you have Nazis and anti-Nazis. That's what makes the world go round. Try not to worry too much about it.
- ACRO: Concerning the Jewish question, they deceived me as they deceived other high officers. I had never approved or tolerated the biological extermination of Jews. The anti-semitism found in the Party, and in the State, had to be considered, in time of war, as a measure of extra-ordinary defense. The anti-semitism of Hitler such as we see it today, was barbarous. I did not participate in any of the persecutions and I affirm that the discontinuation of the extermination of Jews was due to my influence over Hitler...If one were to ask me, why did you remain once you knew that your superiors were committing crimes? I can only answer that I could not arrogate myself to judge my superiors, and that even this tribunal is not of the necessary distinction to consider the expiation of these crimes.

MAG: We are not here to shock you. We will only tell you lies.

MID: My dear Dr. Weizman,  
 You will remember that on the 6th of July you discussed with the foreign Secretary the camp at Birkenau in upper Silesia, and the atrocities that were being committed there by Germans against Hungarians and other Jews. You enquired whether any steps could be taken to put a stop to, or even to mitigate these massacres, and you suggested that something might be achieved by bombing the camps, and also, if it was possible, the railway lines leading to them. As he promised, Mr. Eden immediately put the proposal to the Secretary of State for Air. The matter received the most careful consideration of the Air Staff, and I am sorry to have to tell you that, in view of the very great technical difficulties involved, we have no option but to refrain from pursuing the proposal in present circumstances. I realize that this decision will prove a disappointment to you, but you may feel fully assured that the matter was most thoroughly investigated.

Yours sincerely, etc.

MAG: AN INTERRUPTION: GERMANY SURRENDERS! ENGLAND SURRENDERS! HITLER AND CHURCHILL FLEE TO MARS!

CHANT: The sign read: "Do us the honor Funeral Home"

COM: An old Jew lay dying. Around him were his wife and children. "Is Monya here?" asks the old Jew with difficulty. "Yes, she's here." "Has Aunty Brana come?" "Yes." "And where is grandma?" "I don't see her." "She's over here." "And Isaac?" "He's here too." "What about the children?" "They're all here." "Then who's left in the store?"

MAG: Each morning as I floated down the sacred stream, I saw this sun-gazer being carried down the steps to his accustomed place on the Dasashwamedh Ghat. His brothers placed him down gently--he could not walk, as his legs had withered away from years of inactivity--and turned his face toward the east. Slowly he opened his eyes to greet the morning sun as it raised its burning head over the temple tops of the Holy City; here he remained the whole day long with his wide staring eyes fastened on the blazing sun without once turning them away or closing them for an instant until the dying disc had sunk once more below the horizon. He had been doing this for fifteen years.

COM: For a long time Levy and Bernstein sat over their teacups saying nothing. At last Levy broke the silence. "You know, Bernstein," he said, "life is like a glass of tea." "Life is like a glass of tea...Why?" asked Bernstein. "How should I know," said Levy, "am I a philosopher."

CHANT: [SONG]  
 I remember sang the beggar  
 times of lemons and oranges  
 the good old times the sad old times  
 full of women and honor.

I remember sang the beggar  
 mountains filled with sacred stones  
 the good old times and sad old times  
 all the wonderful omens

I remember sang the beggar  
love as great as an open field  
the good old times the sad old times  
(and he slowly drew a dagger)

I remember sang the beggar  
sages and philosophers  
the good old times the sad old times  
no sceptics then, no scoffers

I remember sang the beggar  
(bringing the knife to his throat)  
the good old times the sad old times  
the ark that was our only boat

I loved them and had them all  
and left them without thinking  
the good old times the sad old times  
there is no hope, no hope to sing.

I remember sang the beggar  
driving the knife to his heart  
the good old times the sad old times  
and the love that had to part

Our love that had to part sang he  
Our love that had to part and scatter  
our love that had to part sang he  
it's the principle that matters

I remember the beggar sang  
times of lemons and oranges  
the good old times the sad old times  
full of wisdom and honor

the good old times the sad old times  
the good old times the sad old times  
the ark that was our only boat sang he  
sang he sang he sang he  
life is like a glass of tea

MID: Recipe: 12 pounds human fat, ten quarts water, and eight ounces to a pound of caustic soda, all boiled for two or three hours and then cooled.

MAG: BELIEVE IT OR NOT! There is no rice in rice paper.

M\*C\*: 1050 grams of bread/wk.  
300 grams sugar/month  
1 egg/month  
100 grams marmelade/month  
50 grams roughage/month  
1 dozen potatoes/year  
fish and vegetables when available

- COMIC: The greatest man in the twentieth century in my opinion--and I hope I don't offend anybody--is Mau Tso Sung. He did something the world could never do. He feeds the multitudes. It's amazing about Peking. Like myself, the average layman in business for himself, in a hot dog business, I'm always in trouble with flies. An ordinary fly who's a pest. Now Mau Tso Sung has come up with a chemical. They've come up with somethin' which even us, the capitalistic system, does not have. There are no flies in Peking. He's a guy who's come up so hard.
- ACRO: The idea of the extermination of Slavs and Jews, that is to say, of the effective eradication of entire peoples, had never entered into my mind, and I had not accepted it at all. I figured that it was necessary to resolve the Jewish question by the creation of a legal minority by emigration or by the establishment of Jews in a national territory in the course of the decade to come.
- M\*C\* EASY COME EASY GO. Sultan Murad IV inherited two hundred and forty wives when he assumed the throne of Turkey. He decided to dispense with their help by the simple expedient of putting each wife in a sack and tossing them one by one into the Bosphorus.
- ACRO: Reliable witnesses have revealed the guilt of the German people, and with them I am in the same boat--accused of being an accomplice to a thing most serious, having at the very least known of the extermination of millions of Jews and other victims, if not having taking direct part in it.
- MAG: Here lies the body of John Mound,  
Lost at sea and never found.
- ACRO: For putting the bodies into the furnace, we suggest simply a metal fork moving on cylinders. Each furnace will have an oven measuring only 25 by 18 inches, as coffins will not be used. For transporting the corpses from the storage points to the furnaces we suggest using light carts on wheels, and we enclose diagrams of these drawn to scale.
- MID: Here lies an atheist: all dressed up and no place to go.
- ACRO: Following our verbal discussion regarding the delivery of equipment of simple construction for the burning of bodies, we are submitting plans for our perfected cremations ovens which operate with coal and which have hitherto given full satisfaction. We suggest two crematoria furnaces for the building planned, but we advise you to make further inquiries to make sure that two ovens will be sufficient for your requirements. We guarantee the effectiveness of the cremation ovens, as well as their durability, the use of the best material, and our faultless workmanship.
- MAG: A TYPICAL DAY'S TORTURE  
1. The hangman bound her hands, cut her hair, and placed her on the ladder. He threw alcohol over her head and set fire to it so as to burn her hair to the roots. 2. He placed strips of sulphur under her arms and around her back and set fire to them. 3. He tied her hands behind her back and pulled her up to the ceiling. 4. He left her hanging there from three to four hours, while the torturer

went to breakfast. 5. On his return he threw alcohol over her back and set fire to it. 6. He attached very heavy weights on her body and drew her up again to the ceiling. After that he put her back on the ladder and placed a very rough plank full of sharp points against her body. Having thus arranged her, he jerked her up again to the ceiling. 7. Then he squeezed her thumbs and big toes in the vise, and he trussed her arms with a stick, and in this position kept her hanging about a quarter of an hour, until she fainted away several times. 8. Then he squeezed the calves and the legs in the vise, always alternating the torture with questioning. 9. Then he whipped her with a rawhide whip to cause the blood to flow out over her shift. 10. Once again he placed her thumbs and big toes in the vise, and left her in this agony on the torture stool from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., while the hangman and the court official went out to get a bite to eat.

In the afternoon a functionary came who disapproved this pitiless procedure, but then they whipped her again in a frightful manner. This concluded the first day of torture. The next day they started all over again, but without pushing things quite as far as the day before.

CHANT: She had everything: breasts like watermelons, a bulging nose, brightly colored cheeks, and a powerful neck.

ACRO: TO THE CENTRAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE SS AND POLICE, AUSCHWITZ: Subject: Crematoria 2 and 3 for the camp. We acknowledge receipt of your order for five triple furnaces, including two electric elevators for raising the corpses and one emergency elevator. A practical installation for stoking coal was also ordered and one for transporting ashes.

MAG: BELIEVE IT OR NOT: There is no kid in kid gloves.

ACRO: I know that, during all of the these years, that I was Chief of Youth in the Reich, although my organization encompassed several million members, youth, in principle and without exception, remained aloof from all action of which they might be ashamed today. The youth knew nothing of the innumerable atrocities committed by the Germans. They had no acquaintance with evil, and they did not desire evil.

MID: Gogol, the Mahabharata, Blake, Tolstoy, Pantopodan, the Upanishads, a Mermaid Marston, Bishop Berkeley, Buns Scotus, Spinoza, Vice Versa, Shakespeare, A complete Taskerson, All Quiet on the Western Front, The Clicking of Cuthbert, The Rig Veda--God knows, Peter Rabbit, "Every thing is to be found in Peter Rabbit."

M\*C\* From the community of Israel he shall take two he-goats as a sin-offering and one ram as a burnt offering. He shall then take the two goats and place them before the Lord at the entrance of the tent of meeting. Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other for Azazel.

ACRO: Let the public continue to regard me as the bloodthirsty beast, the cruel sadist and mass murderer, for the masses could never imagine the commandant of Auschwitz in any other light. They could never understand that he, too, had a heart and that he was not evil.

COMIC: He was an excellent, I would say a good man. He learned hypnotism in India. When He was flamed out of Israel, they wanted to shaft Him because He was causing all this nonsense and riots, He said He was the Son of God. Today they wouldn't kill him. They would have offered Him psychiatric supervision, because the dear boy was in need of this. When He fed the multitude the fish, He hypnotized a half a dozen. He carried on the word. Who did He feed? He fed nobody. Who did He cure of leprosy? He hypnotized the people. They got up and they walked. He got Himself killed at thirty-two years of age. He couldn't keep his big bazoo shut. Did you know that Pontius Pilate offered to give this man a number? He said, "NOW look, Jesus, you're a marvelous boy. Why don't you go off in the wilderness and cut this nonsense out, and go about your business. Quit causing all these riots." This man wanted to be killed. And he told Him, "If you want to be killed, I gotta hang up two criminals. So be it." Hit his hand on the table and they strung Him up. He was a rabble rouser.

M\*C\* Laughter: an interior convulsion, producing a distortion of the features and accompanied by inarticulate noises.

MID: BELIEVE IT OR NOT! A letter addressed to "GOD" was forwarded to Rome from Liptau, Germany, in 1926. It was returned to the sender marked "Addressee Unknown."

CHANT: There was a young girl who loved the sun  
Far better than any man, anyone.  
She courted him with        finery,  
She flattered him with flattery,  
But could not make the sun the one  
to love her all her days

There was a young girl who loved the sun  
Far better than any man, anyone.  
She flirted and danced obsequiously  
All the better for him to see,  
But could not make the sun the one  
to love her all her days.

There was a young girl who loved the sun  
Far better than any man, anyone.  
She prayed in her closet at break of dawn  
For him to come to her alone,  
But could not make the sun the one  
to love her all her days.

There was a young girl who loved the sun  
Far better than any man, anyone.  
She hung herself at break of dawn  
From broken threads of midnight moon,  
For she could not make the sun the one  
to love her all her days

The moral of the story, then,  
The moral of the story:  
If you are a virgin  
And wish to be done,  
Then do not wish to marry the sun;

Marry the father or give up the ghost  
If you are a young girl  
Full of despair  
Whose life is not lost  
And whose will is still there--  
Scheme for the father instead.

M\*C\* BELIEVE IT OR NOT! All the names of God have four letters.

CAST: We are doing very well here. We have work and we are well treated,  
We await your arrival.

COMIC: A man died suddenly in Chelm while doing business in the marketplace.  
So the rabbi sent a shames to the dead man's wife.  
"Be Careful," he cautioned him, "and break the news to her as gently  
as possible."  
The shames knocked. A woman came to the door.  
"Does the widow Rachel live here?" he asked.  
"I'm Rachel, and I live here," replied the woman, "but I'm no widow."  
"Ha Ha," laughed the shames triumphantly, "how much do you want to bet  
you are."

M\*C\* A large digging machine has been installed recently at Treblinka. It  
works ceaselessly, digging ditches...

COM: There were so many hairdressing establishments and funeral homes in  
the regional center of N. that the inhabitants seemed to be born  
merely in order to have a shave, get their hair cut, and shen up their  
heads with toilet water, and then die.

M\*C\* The entries for March 19, 1945, show that on this day 203 people were  
sent to death. They were assigned serial numbers from 8390 to 8593.  
The names of the dead are carefully listed, The victims are all re-  
ported as having died of the same ailment, heart failure. They  
died at brief intervals. They died in alphabetical order.

MID: BELIEVE IT OR NOT! All the books of both the Bible and the Talmud  
contain no more than 6,654 different words, --including derivatives.

MAG: CAN YOU SAY SHIBBOLETH? The mispronunciation of this single word  
has caused the death of 42,000 men, and the extermination of a whole  
tribe in Israel. This word was "Shibboleth," a Hebrew word meaning  
"ear of corn."  
"...and he said Shibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it  
right. Then they took him and slew him at the passages of Jordan:  
And there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand."

M\*C\* The instructions began with a bald statement that a few cases of a  
malignant fever had been reported...It was not possible as yet to  
say if these fever was contagious. The symptoms were not so  
marked as to be really perturbing, and the authorities felt sure  
they could rely on the townspeople to treat the situation with compo-  
sure. Nonetheless, guided by a spirit of prudence that all would  
appreciate, the prefect was putting into force some precautionary  
measures.

- COMIC: A man of Chelm, having concluded that people could be distinguished from one another only by their clothing, began to fear lest some day he be lost in the bathhouse where all are naked and therefore indistinguishable one from the other. To guard against such a risk he tied a string around his leg. Unfortunately the string came loose and he lost it. Another man of chelm found it, and, perhaps disturbed by the same fear, fastened it around his own leg. The first man noticed the second as both were emerging to dress.  
"Woe is me," he cried, "if this fellow is me, who am I?"
- CHANE: If I am not for me, who is it? And if I am not for you, what is it? And if not now, who?
- ACRO: In the course of the proceedings, my lawyer asked me two fundamental questions. First, several months ago, he asked, if you had been the victor, would you have refused to participate in the results of your success? I replied, no, I would be proud. Second, he asked, how would you act if you were to find yourself in the same situation again? My response: Then I would prefer death sooner than allow myself to take part in a series of such pernicious acts.
- CAST: I am very happy here, thank you, Sir.
- M\*C\* Article 46, Hague Convention: Family honor and rights, the lives of individuals and private property, as well as religious convictions and liberty of worship, must not be restricted.
- ACRO: I must emphasize here that I have never personally hated the Jews. It is true that I looked upon them as the enemies of our people. But just because of this I saw no difference between them and the other prisoners, and I treated them all in the same way. I never drew any distinction. In any event, the emotion of hatred is foreign to my nature.
- COMIC: A Jew was walking on the Bismarck Platz in Berlin, when unintentionally he brushed against a Prussian officer.  
"Swine," roared the officer.  
"Cohen," replied the Jew, with a stiff bow.
- M\*C\* A troubled conscience is not a defense for acts which are otherwise criminal. Nor can we hold that he who signed, cosigned, executed, or administered measures which violate international law, because he thought that acquiescence would enable him to maintain and safeguard the integrity of his department and the career of his officials, or even the life or liberty of individuals who came to his attention, but who by his actions condemned the great inarticulate mass-- to persecution, mistreatment, brutality, imprisonment, deportation and extermination, escapes responsibility for his conduct.
- MID: The last will of Rabeis: I have nothing. I owe much. I leave the rest to the poor.
- ACRO: The victor will always be the judge, and the vanquished will always be the accused.



CHANT: LAST DYING SPEECH AND FAREWELL TO THE WORLD OF THE LORD MAYOR'S SHOW.  
WHO SUFFERED THE EXTREME PENALTY OF THE LAW...

MAG: 360 every half hour, or 720 an hour, or 17,280 every 24 hours.

MID: WORLD-TELEGRAM

Man with a tail heads eastward for the Fair.  
Can open a pack of cigarettes with it.  
Was weaving baskets happily, it seems,  
When found, the almost Missing Link, and brought  
From Ceylon in the interests of science.  
The correspondent doesn't know how old.

Berlin and Rome are having difficulty  
With a new military pact. Some think  
Russia is not too friendly towards London.  
The British note is called inadequate.

Right of the centre, and three columns wide,  
A rather blurred but rather ominous  
Machine-gun being set up by militia  
This morning in Harlan County, Kentucky.  
Apparently some miners died last night.  
"Personal brawls" is the employers' phrase.

All this on the front page. Inside, penguins.  
The approaching television of baseball.  
The King approaching Quebec. Cotton down.  
Skirts up. Four persons shot. Advertisements.  
Twenty-six policemen are decorated.  
Mother's Day repercussions. A film star  
Hopes marriage will preserve him from his fans.

News of one day, one afternoon, one time.  
If it were possible to take these things  
Quite seriously, I believe they might  
Curry disorder in the strongest brain,  
Immobilize the most resilient will,  
Stop trains, break up the city's food supply,  
And perfectly demoralize the nation.

11 May 1939

created

Previous definition of roles insofar as it has been defined by the material  
each character deals with is now gradually dropped, until the confusion of  
characters renders each essentially identical.

ACRO: BELIEVE IT OR NOT! Mustard Gas is not a gas, nor is it mustard.

COMIC: Whether this mass extermination of the Jews was necessary or not,  
was something on which I could not allow myself to form an opinion,  
for I lacked the necessary breadth of view.

CHANT: The guilt lies with organization. It is the high officials who are  
guilty.

- M\*C\* I can assure your honor that in all their acts, whether bodily or mental, the nuns have never displayed any legitimate or convincing signs of true demoniacal possession, neither in understanding foreign tongues, knowledge of hidden secrets, revelations, levitation of their bodies in the air, movement from one spot to another, nor in their extraordinary contortions which exceed those normally found.
- ACRO: BELIEVE IT OR NOT! Mme. Marie Olliver, of Hondschoote, Flanders, who committed bigamy, was sentenced to wear two pairs of pants around her neck for life.
- MID: Seven is the holy number. There are 7 days in creation, 7 days in the week, 7 ages in the life of man, 7 divisions in the Lord's prayer, 7 bibles, 7 Graces, 7 Deadly Sins, 7 Senses, 7 Sorrows of the Virgin, 7 Virtues, 7 Precious Things of the Buddhas, 7 Lamps of Architecture, 7 angels bearing seven plagues, ...The vision of Daniel was 70 weeks, and the elders of Israel were 70. There were also 7 heavens, 7 planets, 7 stars, 7 wise men, 7 notes in music, 7 primary colors, 7 wonders of the world. The 7th son was considered endowed with preeminent wisdom and the 7th son of a 7th son is still thought to possess the power of healing diseases spontaneously. ...And the opposite sides of the dice total seven.
- ACRO: Once there was a poor man, a schlemihl. He was so unhappy, that he took pleasure in day-dreaming. One day he uttered the following prayer:  
Dear God--give me ten thousand dollars for the New Year. I'll tell you what--I'll make you a deal. I swear to give five thousand dollars of this amount for charity, the other half let me keep. You say you have doubts about my honorable intentions?--then give me the five thousand dollars I ask for myself and the other five thousand you give to charity yourself.
- M\*C\* It is admirable that at the same time they taught murder to aryan students the teachers taught the Jewish children suicide; this illustrates the German technique, its extreme rigor and simplicity, from which it never departs.
- COMIC: BELIEVE IT OR NOT! Hejtman (General) Jan Zizka (1376-1424), Bohemian Hussite leader, on his dying bed directed that his skin be made into a military drum so that even after his death he might still lead his soldiers against the Germans, whom he hated with great fervor. It is a tragic joke that in one victorious engagement the Germans captured the human drum and used it against the old warrior's beloved Czechs.
- CHANT: BELIEVE IT OR NOT! Panama hats are not made in Panama.
- M\*C\* QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED OF A WITCH
- How long have you been a witch?  
Why did you become a witch?  
What was the name of your master among the evil demons?  
What did your incubus give you for your intercourse?  
Who are the children on whom you have cast a spell? And why have you done it?  
How are you able to fly through the air?

CHANT: One night after he had been reading Ecclesiastes, he turned to me and said

MAG: You know, sometimes I feel that I am God. Do you think I am?

CHANT: I don't know. (I tried to imagine that he was God.)

MAG: I didn't ask you what you knew. I asked you what you thought.

CHANT: I thought you were my brother Roland.

MAG: I am. But who do you think I am besides that? You don't think I'm just Roland, do you?

CHANT: (Then I began to feel very dizzy and it seemed to me that I entered into a great black void, and as I tried to imagine who Roland was, he became millions of tiny gold specks in front of me. Roland God Roland God Roland God...Finally I pulled up out of this.)  
Do you really feel like God, Roland?

MAG: YES.

LECHANTE What's it like?

MAG: It's like everything you can imagine. I feel eternal. I feel that I've lived for thousands of years and that I will never die. I feel that I might suddenly expand and fill this entire room, and that I could put my arms around you and you would disappear forever inside me. I feel that I could move clouds. That I have infinite wisdom and that I know everything without having read everything. There is a miraculous <sup>calm</sup> in my mind and body. It's like nothing else I have ever felt.

CHANTEL (I thought this might be so or might not be so. I could not say for sure. I could not tell Roland that he did not feel like God. That would have been stupid. I did not want to be stupid around him if I could help it. I knew that he could work miracles if he wanted to, I was very sure of this. So now, in that dark and oppressive and dizzying atmosphere, I felt that maybe he could be my brother and God at the same time.)

M\*C\* Do you know what laughter is? I'll tell you. It's God's mistake. When God made man in order to bend him to his wishes, he carelessly gave him the gift of laughter. Little did he know that later that earthworm would use it as a weapon of vengeance. When he found out there was nothing he could do it was too late to take back the gift. And yet he tried his best. He drove man out of paradise, invented an infinite variety of sins and punishments, and made him conscious of his own nothingness all in order to prevent him from laughing, but as I say, it was too late. God made a mistake before man made his. What they have in common is that they are both irreparable.

(Comic ceases counting) (Cast joins in recitation, one by one.)

COMIC: Et loué. Auschwitz. Soit. Maidnek.

MIDGET: L'eternel. Treblinka. Et loué.

M\*C\* Buchenwald. Soit. Mauthausen. L'eternel.

CHANT: Belzec. Et loué. Sobibor. Soit.

ACRO: Chelma. L'eternel. Ponary. Et loué.

MAG: Theresienstadt. Soit. Varsovie. L'eternel.

and all continuing as before:

Vilna. Et loué

Skarzysko. Soit.

Bergen-Belgen. L'eternel.

Janow. Et loué

Dora. Soit.

Neuengamme. L'eternel.

Pustkow. Et loué

(19)

Lichtenberg. Soit.  
Gross-Rosen. L'eternel.  
Flossenberg. Et loué  
Oranienberg. Soit.  
Dachau. Leternel  
Natzweiler, Et loué  
Ravensbruck. Soit.  
Sachsenhausen. L'eternel.  
Stargard. Et loué  
Potulice. Soit.  
Trawniki. L'eternel.  
Lida. Et loué  
Bojanowo. Soit.  
Wolzec. L'eternel  
Lvov. Et loué

entire cast begins recitation of kaddish, cast members in sequence slowly breaking out into laughter until there is no more kaddish and all is laughter. Then M\*C\* says,

M\*C\* O\*K\* Let's take lii from the top.

a tape of the first night begins to play. The cast exits.