The Salacious Sagas of Sparkle

Stories of Evil and the Search for a Moral Line

by "Ancient" Sparkle Plenty

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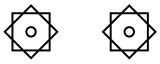

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A Forward for the Reader

I injected, without permission, a Dramamine pill, into this initial story to help keep it relaxed and to prevent it from spilling over into the margins, to fight the dizziness when it soars, to plit-plat the sky with all the determination of a slip-slop, with which to begin this story, Dramamine and all, to reduce the nausea for when it makes you sick. And has any other novel in the Universe ever had such a bristling first line? "No!" is the unambiguous reply, so let us now move boldly on to the second! And so, not even two sentences into the saga, we already begin to encounter problems, in the form of contradictions, perhaps a paradox or two, enigmas that require some simple instructions to prevent the warping of your soul.

Hence, and there will be a lot of *hencing* in these stories, a listing of guidelines and advices to help in the reading of this book. Follow them all and you will find the book (a) more enjoyable, (b) more understandable, and lastly, (c) more *fun!*

1. Whenever you think the author is being silly, awkward, shallow, or acting like an idiot, the author is purposefully portraying himself to be that way, a writing skill that took him many years to master.
2. Pace yourself. One story a night is probably just enough. Most of them are short on words but tall on compactness and conciseness. Each sentence is, to the contrary, long on words and short on compactness and conciseness although some people have claimed it is long on both. These stories tend to be rather dense, or, you might say, they are filled to the brim with density, and well said, too. One story a night is all I prescribe, and even though the story chosen for the night is short, give yourself a few hours in which to chew and fully digest your meal. Even those three or so hours may not be enough, for I have squashed *a full lifetime* into each tale, which is why they sometimes leak blood. Even the one-lined fantasy presented at the end of the first story in Chapter 18 and starting with the two words "Dial" and "O" is fully packed. So this is not a book to be read quickly. You don't even have to read it sequentially, but it's OK if you do, I think, if you do. Most people won't even get this far. It was *written* sequentially and that's the way I intended to tell the overriding story, to ensure presenting you the big picture. But each story, big or small, should stand on its own, have its own internal connections to allow for synergistic expansions to all those stories surrounding it. But the smaller the story, the denser it had to be constructed, increasing, with inverse variation, its density, thereby ensuring its agreed upon contents: *One Full Lifetime* (OFL), and, as I said, even that one-lined fantasy presented in Chapter 18, et cetera. Sadly, though, you will never fully understand as the full sentence had to be chiseled away until chipped to a more moderate size. It was just too dense and was crushing the bones of too many laps. The result is the *edited* version.

3. To help with the pacing, make good use of the commas, of which there are plenty. The sentences have been parsed, so as to provide, just-enough, information, for digestion, before moving onto the next-phrase. Sometimes this is done for clarity and, sometimes, for dramatic, *effect!* Think of each sentence as a mini Sparkle-poem, where each comma is the start of a new-line. It might look-silly at the-moment (please see item #1) but later on it will make for, as I have already mentioned, some, *startling* effects! Commas also establish the properly intended rhythm of each sentence. Sometimes it helps, especially if you are getting lost in its labyrinth, to chant the sentence aloud. Although it may sound awkward at first, just remember that this is the way Earth's citizens will chatter in the far-flung future.
4. All the sentences contained in each chapter can be combined to yield one story, although some chapters contain *more-than* one story, but you should be able to identify these sub-chapter stories, as you come across them. All the chapters can be-combined to yield one even-bigger story, but *not* necessarily the biggest. There may be a story, somewhat obscured, hidden in plain sight, that's even bigger. This book is, in fact, jam-packed with stories. You don't even have to read them all in order, but when you do, you get the story I first intended. The others all came later, sometimes unexpectedly. That's the way it was written, but, you can leave the end at the end, and start anywhere you want and call that your beginning, for you will find, offered to you, everywhere and throughout the book, it's *your* choice, *always* your choice. I really have no say in it.
5. Hyphenated-words can be read as one-word *or two*. You can change your mind regarding your choice whenever you want to, at-at the risk-risk of being-being redundant-redundant, *your choice*. And for the mathematically inclined, exactly how many ways *are* there in which that last sentence can be read? There is no-choice here, for there is only one answer (1). I suggest you ask your math-friends to help figure this out for you. And when they are all done calculating, they'll thank you and tell you it was a lot of fun. That's how math friends-are! I bet, if you ask two such-friends, at least-by *my* calculations, you'll get exactly *two* (2) different answers. The hyphenated words also create a rhythm intended-by the author so that when-the stories are read aloud, see recommended-tip number six, you can pick-up the feel, of-the rambling-action. It's the same rhythm as, a-dagger entering-and exiting, entering and-exiting, again-and again-again, et cetera-et.
6. *Read the stories-aloud!* It's not only more-fun, but it also reproduces what I was-hearing as-I-was entering the data into-my computer, my Latitude D630. For in-truth, this book was-dictated to me. I did not really-write it, although I pretend that I-did. Thus I usurp the notoriety and the shame, except for the parts you don't-like, the parts you-question, the parts-you-detest. These parts were surely-written by someone-else, hawking points-for, the Side-of Evil.
7. And always remember, it is always me, *just me*, telling you, *just you*, a story. A bedtime story that we're well into by now and that started way back there, at the beginning, with that Dramamine-intoxicated sentence.
8. There is one more thing, really, and it was a really good suggestion, too, but, I have forgotten, what-it-is.

0

Chapter Zero

Introduction

i

I, Sparkle Plenty, though I still have plenty of Sparkle, enough to tell you *my* stories anyway, am terrified of what I am about to do, self-loathingly so. We met, you and I, I think, in ali Abbra's story, the one about the drawings that came alive and the popcorn that delivered death. This story doesn't have popcorn or crayons or No. 2 pencils, and it hardly has any death, *for sure*, at all. What's up with the italicized "for sure"? On the one hand there may be a whole lot-of death, one after-the-other, in these stories, but, if I get-off, then, in that case, there really isn't much death at all, really, and *that's* the italicized *for sure*. So the question comes down to, "did I or did I not?" And that's what I, Sparkle Plenty have come to, a this-kind-of-a-story, a story-I-hope-you-can-enjoy. By the bye, you might have been wondering what's on the other hand, well, on the *other* hand, you might discover that there are many fingers missing.

ii

So, here, I lay, lying, chained, to the dungeon's hard-floor. Shedding the beginning-stages of my deterioration, ancient memories swirling about, both real-and-imaginary, and I cannot differentiate between the two, the imaginary-and-the-real. That complicates matters! How will I sort them out and how will you view me if the truth emerges, case-closed, against-me. Maybe I did-do all those horrific things! Will I then-be, *finally*, loathed by others? Oh, how I l-o-n-g for the luxury of such loathing, a loathing that can only asymptotically approach the full extent to which I abhor myself. No plastic ruler can measure that. I search my muddled memories for the answer, and I mean here, the *Answer*-answer, with its flawless accuracy and faultless precision. And if the truth is as disturbing as I fear, enough to have put me into this deplorable, bottomless, state, though, true, a rise, a hovering, just beyond my previous catatonic stupor, I still want to know-for-certain and hope, I hope that my utter despicableness, once discovered, will still keep me in your good graces. And sentences of grace, they shall *all* be. But maybe I am wrong. It surprises me that I am at-all able to consider this positive outcome, this propensity to be wrong, yielding a happy ending. Startled, that I am, able to project, even the slightest bit of hope for myself, and the poor devoured girls, never-found but, then again, never-lost. For the other possibility, the one that is quite frankly *evil*, that other possibility that has been debilitating me, incapacitating me, to the point where I am quite incapable of accumulating sufficient energy to perform any action, even those necessary for

my immediate needs. Lying, here, twisted in my confessional shroud, the dirty, crusty, bile-soaked bedspread, on the hard, cold floor, chained, as you probably recall, to the hard-floor, I try to remember, try to piece the thing together, and try to *know the true content of my soul:* wicked-and-vile or good and peace-be-with-us-all, albeit I still be tortured-and-haunted. Did I tell you I am old now, *Ancient* Sparkle, pretending, fairly well, too, for literary purposes only, to be dying from the anguish, from the grief, and from the preoccupation of not-knowing which-way the flipped coin will-land? And during my long, ephemeral, life, no one ever-suspected that it was-I, if indeed it ever-was. No one ever conjectured the possibility, but me, and they still, don't know, *anything!* And I, if I am forced to keep the evidence inside me much longer, each a story's cauldron's-worth of evidence, it will finish-me, cracked-dried and desiccated. So the stories presented here, one-after the-other, are the clues to which side-of the moral-line I have steered, with full-intent, either-way, stories to determine, furthermore, on to which side I crossed and by how-much. The opposite sides of this razor blade-of-our-life, is a matter of good, and of evil. They are the different sides of the same-coin and as-different as gender and, hence, as clear-as-mud. Let all remembered facts, as embarrassing as this might be, if-memory-serves-me-well, see the sunshine of-day and get their fair hearing in the town's Main Hall. My only salvation comes from the fact that I, even-I, do not know, though I do suspect-myself, *have always suspected* that, it, is-so. But some hope is no-hope, or, I pray, something like-that. Maybe I never severed a single-vein on a single-young thing, girl child that is. And did I say "y*oung*?" Do you see how I can get confused? I look over the prior sentence and I say "Guilty! Obviously guilty! Guilty-Guilty! But then I remember, I just wrote it down, no harmful intent, just a beautiful sentence, it-was, and that's all-it was! Hence, "Not Guilty!" That certainly snags the first of our dilemmas. Nothing concrete, nothing solid, and everything in-dispute. The second dilemma, and I hope there is no-third, is the *degree*. What I mean by this is that everyone has a little-bit of-evil in them, perhaps a jealous-thought, or the deliberate hurting-of your beloved, in some way, because, you haven't been allowed, to be as lascivious as you'd like, to-be, for one example, when suddenly, upon the crest of a humungous exponentially-grown wave, of uncontrollable anger, one arrives, again asymptotically, at the gate of the actual monsters, and passing through that gate, fall straight into the lap of those of the Red Kilt of the Kill't, to join those humans who kill, where a *definite-new-line* has *definitely* **been-crossed**. As you can-see, by that last sentence, this is going to be a rather challenging enterprise, for things aren't always what they seem-to-be! For things inevitably come-in levels, and there are, always, a multitude of-levels for all-things human.

iii

The two extremes could not be wider apart, like the legs of Sparkle's victims, real or imaginary, innocence to wickedness, nonzero to zero. So, at what point, at what chilling vile-act, thrillingly described, must we actually perform, or, sung another-way, (1) when does a person cross a moral line from good into evil, and going further still, (2) at what point, at what vilest-of-acts-moment, does a person cross a moral line from evil to *really* EVIL!? I wonder, even beyond that, what is evil's final boundary line, if it can ever be reached, can *ever-be*, if an upper bound exists, indeed truly exists, *at-all.* And, if ever we arrive, at such a place, at such a line, upon whose shore, it

can be made a case-for, most most-vile, which of the two is the more important to combat, to fight against, to obliterate given the possibility we can only obliterate one of the two: (1) the line that crosses from good into evil, or (2) the line that takes one from the *merely*-evil to *utmost*-evil. Which of those lines is worse? That kind of dilemma is a dilemma-known as the *Dilemma of the Regressive-Kind* or *DORK*.

iv

In my present state of debilitation, screwed to the splintered floor, I am unable to move more than thirteen inches, right or up, left or down, to retrieve this hoary manuscript I am writing, *for you*, my Tenuous Reader, and perhaps, you happen to be reading, at this very-very moment, this very-very same-book, a distraction, perhaps, to you, but for me, a confession, by me, to shake me from my life of constant sorrow, impressed-upon-me by the *rea*l author. And please don't let us forget about the *dread* (best not lose the r from that one!), yes, the *dread!* The shivers, too! For the author leaves me lying here, cold, no longer able to lift my hands high enough to feed my mouth, to take tiny dribbles of whatever can be deemed a tenuous-treat, slipping-gruel between my maple-syrupy fingers, nevertheless, even-when-successful, my toothless-mouth and crooked-smile can't-chew. And my hunger, the famishment, is enraging the machine-coded recollections and my chaotic-coded dreams! Three (3) or maybe four (4) sock-worn footsteps are far-too-many to answer the never-visited door or to-answer the phone that never-rings. So to whom can I share this confessional, wet with the pink-blood of tears of a probable brute, but with you, my Pitiable Reader? I would encourage you to put the book down **now** for what is to follow is an unhappy, ill-fated tale, too many roses and not enough teardrops, where in days gone-by, our insatiable Sparkle never-went hungry. The faded memories are few, but to follow any of them, whence one always-leads to another, then-another, until, always, to the screamingly-tortured pain, a pain in my heart and-brain, drilled into the-core of my impoverished soul, you discover that when-they all, eventually, come to a scream-screeching halt, you will find them draped across the altar of my sacrifice. But is the altar genuine? Or is it mist-fog caught within the circuits of my poet's brain? Yet still I do not know, and I pray, that it is only a morose-and-merry madness that fixes a monstrous-and-merry eye upon-*me*, and it is, in fact, never-I who has done the deed, and nevermore, need I dwell, upon the possibility, of an unfortunate, ultra-truth. I am left splashing within the repository of memories, and linger, as long as time itself dost linger, always longing for, yearning for, the expulsion of life, an early demise. But the unknowing, the unknowing of the outcome, is keeping death at abeyance, just out of musical-reach, until I am able, to download the seeds of the program, and spill-my-guts-of, all I can, remember, catalogue, and decode, always looking, for an output that can provide, a decisive, unequivocal, 0 or 1, with, or preferably, without ambiguity. And when this occurs, will I then be able to distinguish whether the 1 is a yes or a no, an act of benevolence or an evil depravement? This evil, whatever the-form, is-what I fear. As the stories assemble themselves, making themselves comfortable enough to pass gas in all our presence, as they slide through my still-blood stained-hands, nailbeds never to be fully cleaned again, as they spill into the multi-paged "*papery*" vessel you presently hold, draped-and-dripping in your very own hands, hands you own, to help deliver to you, Persistent Reader, the answer, so you, too, will know, the truth, as to whether I am most depraved amongst the depraved and mercilessness, or can it be, through the slim sliver-of chance, its polarized moral-opposite. A poet,

as they say, can-go either-way, and either way, my soul is already damned. I know the conclusion will be as sudden as it is severe, but for just a bit of your sympathy, for the duration of a single book, I will write anything, anything at all. I have spent too long mulling the facts, reliving the horrors, real or imagined, or both, relishing in the horror onto these pages, and neglecting to consider the triumph of remorse. What an odd phrase, *"triumph of remorse"* is. I wonder what it means. Yet, we ask, how many *did* die, of these eye-laughing girls, either with the triumphant battling of a warrior or with a quivering of fright and remorse, and how many of them, with stifled screams and eyes-of-horror, were due to these wriggling fingers, protruding feverishly from my palms, palms laying in the lap of Sparkle, hands that, droopingly, can no longer do good *or* evil, hands that can barely *just do*, yet, as always, with such wonderful precision, while still unable to wipe my drooling mouth once I become excited-excited, or to touch, trying to be tender, without that *scratch* of tenderness, sometimes secretly, hidden below, hands already moldering, hands nervously waiting, quietly, for the rest of her body, scrap-by-scrap, to be parsed, tasted. I sigh contentedly, at such thoughts, and then I sigh again, contentedly, again.

v

When Sparkle was young and able to kill with a gentle-ease, he made efforts to record the memories, poetic memoirs, chronicling special moments in his life, and he erroneously assumed they would remain intact, over the years, neglectful of their potential to flee this universe, unaware of time's ability to decimate, with the excrement of time, seeping rain and snow, and in the heat of the summer, the cold of winter, and the decay of all things mortal. So only fragments can be offered as evidence, regardless of how vigorously and relentlessly Sparkle worked to preserve the dreams, long into the frog-croaked night, under the blood-creamed moon, as he tried, desperately, to reclaim and reinterpret those obscure and flighty reminiscences, entering them into the machine as data, where they were ultimately transformed into the stories that follow.

Hence, we discover that his life has been one long s-t-r-e-t-c-h of constant dream-filled *desires* where daily life was indistinguishable from the dream, so go and try to imagine this as *your* disability, if you may. I shudder in advance for you, my Shattered Reader, as desires such as Sparkle's runs through your blood, I shudder, for you, with violence, so you won't have to disgrace yourself in such an unrespectable manner. Yet, still, imagine this is you, desires and all, and no one will blame you when you shudder uncontrollably when you discover that you are unable to determine which part of this is set solidly in your reality and which, desires and all, was only a dream!

Desires

My two-nervous legs
Excited!
Neither leg-excluded
Befitting phantoms of ~~your~~ my body
Deeply crawled-along across those crow-strewn nights
Flappingly so
With knife-striking-force

Detached from my being like a rushing watery spring
Running through red
Propelling me forward
Fumblingly so
Head first
Into gauze-yet-feigned desire
Stifled screams
Bubbles!
How I long to regain the pleasantries
Of those sensations
Once again
And yes
I
Too
Am shivering
Yes
I am
My Teeth-Chattering Readers
Those kinds of
Desires!

vi

Sparkle, relieved from a bit of the tension, would slither, after all such allegèd encounters, steadily back, to pen and to paper, to write his poetry, his prose, his poetry-in-motion, as he remembers her swaying like a wave out on the ocean, in an attempt to record such omniscient delights, drippingly-so, specimens plucked from the far side of her heart, but at the risk of directing me, the true author, into the darkest of voids, voids beyond my slightest-recognition, of what may have had truly occurred, atom-by-vibrating-atom, and what exactly he, Sparkle Plenty, may have been, as consequence, a participant to. And no-one knew-at-the-time, *not even I.* N*o one* ever found out; n-o one e-v-e-n suspected. So now, Sparkle, newly awakened, is giving his chain a gentle rattle, just a little shake, not enough to wake the rats from their nearby slumber, but just enough of a jingle-jangle to make sure he is still there, rattles made of rat bone, a little-known fact, and now he is certain of *nevermore-sleep* through-the-endless nights, which is why, he lies, there, *there-awake!* It is here he comes to realize that I am putting off his all-pervading-and-ever-persistent nightmare, the one sitting *bone-crunchingly,* atop his chest, and instead, I give to you, my Ever-Entrapped Reader, Sparkle's one last spurt, a mere slaver of energy, ALL for the purpose of finding out: (1) Finding (2) Out – two such trifling words, after which, upon a closing gargled conclusion, a final report, either for, or, against, after which (another two separate words that collocate together) he can finally dig himself a cuboidal hole, metaphorically – for don't let us forget our Old Sparkle is rather incapacitated at present, approximately 6x6x2, cubic feet, that is, claw-by-crusty-claw, spiraling fast into the darkest-of-all-his-darkest-voids, his grave. Did he, *in reality,* or, did, he, only, *in imagination.* One or the other! He cannot, for-the-death-of-me (ha-ha!), remember, albeit, he has tried and shriveled his already shrunkened head, disproportionately, in doing so. And

squirming out from one just-now-dislodged shrivel, located on the right side of his aforementioned teeny-head, from just below the left temple, jumped this poem, landing squarely onto the page below. Pretty neat trick, eh? SMTTPI-splat! What the hell is that all about? Perhaps a portal into the bowels of Satan? And what is it that makes that portal so slimy? Will you, my Slithering Reader, in search for a solution to Sparkle's dilemma, discover any incriminatory evidence within Sparkle's poem? I don't think you will, but, alas, it is you, and not I, my Deliberating Readers, that comprise the jury. Hence, it is *you* who must slither, and slither you shall! And, have you noticed, he even made sure it was a never-rhymed rhyme that does not rhyme. And his poems are always a bluish gray.

We begin upon our quest
Partners amongst the Dreams of Sparkle
Severely dealt with
Once already
In his darkened past
Rehashed and now reconstituted
To determine his gory fate
A trial by jury
In
A Dream Tribunal
Forced within the portal
of our
Twenty-first century vehicle
Barreling along the slimy
Superficially Modeled Trek
Though Pleasantly Induced SMTTPIs

I

Chapter One

Another Introduction and Hopefully the Last

I lay, lugubriously, slate-stapled, hard-and-heavy, upon what may become my deathbed floor, head facing upward, eyes a-twirling, ready to dribble-drabble my thickening guts, guts a-gushing, hovering above me, gushing still. As I continue to evacuate my past, ploppingly dull, bouncingly onto the presently-clean-white page, plopped to preserve (1) my germinal ideas, (2) activities remembered, (3) actions taken *for-better-or-for-worse* , (4) people known, (5) people accidentally touched, and, (6) people for whom I was the recipient of an unwanted-but secretly yearned-for touch. In the distant-and-glimmering past, things happened to me, and, being a distant relative of the Dutch-Ivy Plenty, I was able to make things happen around me as well. Yes, extraordinary as this may be, actions were taken, by me, which unavoidably resonated to touch-and-quiver the universe about me. You could almost hear the *"plink"*. Listen carefully and you shall hear the echo still. Alas, and to what effect, I will never know. It's hard, really hard, to believe there ever was a past, really, really hard to get my brain around that one. That's a lot of reallies. So many reallies, and so much more,

really, has been forgotten. And what is remembered, I disbelieve. Yet I detest the hard evidence wherever it emerges. Still, that couldn't have been me. No way. The evidence must have been misinterpreted, there must be a mistake somewhere on the accounting page. So why do I preserve these ideas of my past? For what purpose, for whose benefit? I'm sure they will project no power to change, in any such way, those who are living, right now, and they, the benefits, will decrease, in any residual way, imperceptibly, exponentially even, upon those whose lives are forthcoming, whoever they might be, if the earth makes it long enough to accept them upon its human-scarred surface. I have thought a lot about (a) Nothingness, (b) Imagination, and (c) the Great Paranoia called Life! The things people and I have believed – outrageous! Schizoid paranoids – every one of us! Scientists and mathematicians may be getting the closest to what's really happening here, the somewhere-someplace we are, but they are still lightyears away from having any real answers to any of the big-big questions. So, paranoids-are-we, we-all, still, considering all the crackéd-and-kinkéd things scientists, god-fearing republicans, butchers, and perhaps one lone serial killer who sparkles in the night might believe – totally outrageous!

Think of what follows as a series of stories, a story a day, a story written for a "friend" and you can be my friend, please do, if you want to. And since you're now my friend, I'll send you a lofty and sensuous tale in the form of a letter! (If you are a reader, and you are very-much-young or newly-to-the-Earth, assuming you're on Earth, as I am as I struggle to write this parenthetical clause, and the next one, too, do you, children of the future, still send letters?) (Do you even know what a letter, envelope-stamp-and-all, is? If not, look it up in an encyclopedia, but, alas-alas, you probably don't know what *that* is, either, do you my dear.) Until today, I have had no friends, *zilch*, not even a crabapple tree would befriend me, nor the crab upon which it grows, and I find myself, still today, as *I take it all in*, grasping at everything capable of reflection, in every direction, all 2π radians, upon which my oozing-eyed gaze can rest, scrutinizing, now on you, tenderly. If ever again I find myself without you, my new-found friend, My Dearest of Readers, I will hence be utterly alone in the infinitely wide universe, so alone it would be rather difficult to know to whom I should have addressed such a letter, a before-I-met-you letter, that is. Have I scared you away so soon? I pause and wonder broadly, is this a matter for which we will just have to wait and address at a later time, when the addressee's devotion becomes a thing for certain? In my muddled-mindedness, I don't see a clear answer and that will have to wait, too. See, I can be funny. I have more depth to me than you ever imagined! I am witty, too; I am witting all the time, really, *I am*. We'll get to *that*, too, in time, but not *this* time. Maybe a later time, but I think I may have already stated that so I'll be quiet for now. A letter I will send, a story to be read then rendered for the fire. This effort, if successful, p-l-e-a-s-e, would relieve me of their, ah, the memories, and their constipating effects, results of which prevent me, in one-last-sparkle-of-breath, from exhaling, exhaling that one last time. At least I think this is what's forestalling that *now-you-can-let-it-out* finale. You know, *die*. But that I cannot do, not until the verdict is in. Hopefully we'll all be in the know, both you and I, when we discover, together, *simultaneously*, at the climax, the culmination of the show, the terminating verdict. I truly *hope* there is an exciting dénouement forthcoming, otherwise, why all the bother? And what must I do to convince you that this is not an invalid project, a *projet non valide*, and the thoughts, my thoughts, both the noble and the depraved, are worth preserving. Good luck with that one. I'll figure out a way to sneak that past you, somewhere along the way, maybe when the words start to

make you drowsy or, if necessary, when I purposefully strive to confuse. Things usually work out. All in its good time; I'm sure we'll get to everything that needs getting to. Not your problem anyway. You should just snuggle in, allow me to perch across your velvety thighs -did you just hear me sigh? I did, I d-i-d-d. Ah, a cozy thigh-sigh, upon which for me to lie. Yes, snuggle-snuggle and thigh-straddled in, and read and read and read and read and – you're getting sleepy! Let me worry about the words and the sentences and the tricks-and-acrobatics that make the words perform, perform their magic-magic. And now, would you look at this: *Their pollution grew only out of time.* Great sentence, found stuck inside a long-forgotten folder, in the basement of a long-forgotten castle, sitting upon I-don't-remember-which corner, East or North-West, in a phosphorescent basement stuffed with maggot-filled-folders whose blood-will-soon-be-needed, careful with the evidence, kind of a folder. And I'm torn, like an old anus, regarding what to do with it. I can't bear to throw it away. I don't even know what that sentence means, which brings with it a burden of its own. Can I say, what's already been said twice, perhaps already a third time? Yes? I hope there won't be a fourth, but, if memory serves me well, it goes, "All in its own time!" We'll, or rather, I'll, get to it, no worries. The stories are puddles from my past, sloshing about my ankles, but only what's left of them, after quick-savage splashes and a thirst-quenching sun. What remains isn't much, just the bits-and-the-pieces, the leftovers, dust bunnies of time, the chipped-dried blood of my life– almost all of which, is sadly hidden, so very-very well hidden, practically obscured, by the present. But the daylight is beginning to dawn. The stories presented here have been molded and rotted, to a putrefaction that, without the whisper of a sound, silently oozes maggot's blood, scribbling amidst the thirsty dust of, shall we say, centuries? *Their pollution grew only out of time.* Boy, did you see how sly that was? That sentence did come in handy, after all, and right away, too! See how things work out? I still don't have a clue as to its meaning, "growing pollution, and growing out of time," – whoa! But, boy, does that fit in there nicely! "Poetry in motion," if you know what I mean. See, this will be an easy tomb to raise-and-excrete. Already one task disposed of and dumped. So, today I will begin to resurrect my past and its ghost-living-images, through (1) pseudo-recollections, fractured over the years, I will build a *4M* – that's right, a ***M***emorial to ***M***y ***M***ercurial ***M***emories. I shall immerse each memory deep in the ice-water current of the USPO-circuitry, to energetically flow across a field of dreams, to drift, flutteringly, across the Monster-Plain of USPS Mailboxes, an SASE-letter for each box, the Pigeon-Hole-Principle finally finding a notch for itself amidst the literary world, both fantasy-filled and fun, all for your titillating-delight, though horror-splatted on occasion - but that's only to pacify your precipitously-deep disgust of me, to keep you as my only-friend, my pen pal at the very least.

O
Jelly Beans,
Galaxies,
Sweet Angels' Souls,
Life's a Bowl of Jelly Beans and we are Life's Bowl!

2

Chapter Two

Sparkle Burns Down His Home and Searches for Love

1

He left home *the first time* when he was nineteen, a very prime number, indeed. There should have been no problem, due to the prime and all. As he gave his departing good-byes he covered his eyes with his tearstained digital nubs, proclaiming that "No one should ever look back upon parting," and then he promptly ran away. The house continued to burn, unbeknownst to authorities, and, as he later revealed, with his family burning within. To where? –I, and now you, my Unenlightened Reader, haven't the faintest idea. But he ended up on an island, building things. Mostly he only dreamed of doing so, building that is, and actually *did* produce a structure or two, not that they served any purpose or reason for taking up space. Dreams, already, wasted and useless. Maybe *that's* what you can say about Sparkle, if ever you are asked about him, perhaps in other books written. And when he realized, privately to himself, that it, like everything (you know, *everything*...) is a farce, just like the book you are reading - and what do you do with something like that? Perhaps the only true remedy for a quandary like this is a boy's first love, a bit of-the lust. Maybe that will do the trick! Let's give that one a whirl! And whirl he did, following her from one end of the island to the other, until she told him to get lost, and he did. "I know what to do," he then said to himself, "I will get a job in a factory, a factory that processes mechanically-geared music. And in my spare time I will start to paint, paint like a real artist, I mean, Real Artist – an RA kind of an artist." But he promptly changed his mind when another solution just, from somewhere, just out of the blue, popped into his mind, like a POW! and a WOW-POW-POW!! A theater group, that's what's needed! (By the way, given this stage of Sparkle's life, and a book written like this one is in general, you can never-use enough exclamation points! And I have *plenty*, Sparkle-Plenty plenty, deep in the back of my decaying writing-desk drawer, to be used, exclusively, just for the Saga of Sparkle!) Now what was I saying??? Yes, a theatre group, "*script upon request only*," was his joke, since he never did get around to creating a script. The plan was soo-o bizarre, but it was also so-oo diabolical too, and, once again, a total disaster, it was like nothing happened at all, because, well, it didn't, *not*. The plan was to pose as a rock-&-roll band so that the band could perform its *vile acts* upon *unsuspecting drunkards,* but when the manager of the place saw their costumes he decided not to let them into the club anyway, and so nothing ever happened, so they *made* something happen by disbanding. Only they never were banded to begin with. So he quit his musical-construction job – or whatever job he happened to have had at the time. Alas, a poet doesn't need money. Poets live on, well, the word *alas* and poetry itself. Maybe instead of penning a poem, the actually writing of it (for he had learned, quickly, that you have to actually sit down and compose something if you want even the semblance of a poem to drop into your lap, a poem you can call your-own in the hopes it-will respond), maybe, instead, he was meant to compose a piece of modern music orchestrated for just three aspiring, yet still, quite immature musical instruments: (1) The Vaseline Jar (better expressed as a jar filled with the gooey-gooey concoction of a petroleum jelly -or you could just use jelly, concord grape is always a good starter), (2) Jet-Puffed Marshmallows, The Jumbo-Size, color unimportant, and (3) Celery-on-Carrot (also known as a the "C-on-C") *slippery-slidations*, like in the playing of a violin, or is it Carrot-on-Celery? I tend to get the two mixed up. A great piece of music that could never be heard (ever hear a marshmallow melt

or the stirring sound of a dab of petro jelly?) so it could never be proved, or admitted to, that a single-error residing-within the score existed. Perfect score! Never got played live anywhere except in his head. Hence, Sparkle Plenty, upon his initial plunge into adulthood, was a failure, totally. And he never even suspected it!

2

After the Holidays, heart-heavy and neglected Holidays, Sparkle stopped eating. No reason. Just wanted to see what that was like. Like falling in love: what's that? Something to do, that's what. Drank vinegar and ate bananas – Blue Java, Cavendish, Red, and Ladyfingers all, *Pisang Raja*, too. Did he really drink vinegar? That's what he remembers, anyway. He remembers some kind of pudding or oatmeal-like paste, made from the peels of the banana, that he ate like mad. Not eating, well, there's an art to it. Art! Sparkle Plenty, Poetic Artist! Yes, down to 115 lb. and Sparkle is having delusions of cosmic grandeur. Big thoughts, practically humongous! But so-thin that other people are starting to overlook him. But then, and it *was* like magic, (was it *not*?) he spent the night with Claire Voyant. Now who could that be? I can't remember any of this, but let's see what Sparkle does next and maybe, I hope, the identity of the girl, umm, the smell does seem to be familiar, becomes apparent. Let's see... He is attracted to her either because of (1) fear or due to the (2) high degree of perversity that is involved! And what, pray tell, does that high degree of perversity pertain to? I hope the boy reveals more... So disappointing for he never mentions the girl again, or what they did or, more likely, didn't do. She was never heard of again. And **there are no artifacts to present to the jury**, in the present nor screaming, harshly, from the embrace of his blood-dripping hands, out of the past, that substantiate that Claire ever existed, *except for in his mind* ! This is a pattern to look for with Sparkle, a pattern to behold. You'll notice it throughout his testimony. It is a clue to his character and to what did-he-or-didn't-he-do thing that is going on here. Just know that I think this, this Claire thing, is a big clue towards **his defense**, the big HE-DID-NOT! Just look at the sweet curly-haired thing's name, the girl's, that is, not Sparkle's – the name is Claire Voyant – now what kind of name is that and who would give their adorable new-born girl, and such a femininely branded girl, too, such a name? No, it's a phony one all right! All we know for sure is that the boy, and please recall that the boy is our very own Sparkle, who only weeks ago had finally declared himself a man ("*declared*" – a clue to the demise of Claire?) is sneaking off to Florida in search of his soul. Note also that he has proven himself, over and over again, *not-yet* to be a man. All in due time, as once has been said.

3

Here, running away *from something,* like a lusciously newly-dissected girl, definitely a point for the other-side, the HE-DID-IT side, the guilty-as-charged point of view – but, even so, I still don't think he did, even though I did see him running away, quickly, dissection bag in hand, that night, just before the bell tolled eight, or was it nine? Maybe Claire or some other girl looked at him, the slightest bit of a glance, or got too near, perhaps just a few centimeters too close. That would do it. He'd have to get out of there quick if that happened. Nerves, you know. His level of tolerance, after all, was still rather low at that time of his life. Even still, he was spotted hurtling through the cobbled-stone streets. He appeared to be crying. Was he shedding tears of joy, or were they tears of disappointment? And, though he knows, secretly but without a doubt, exactly where his soul lay, dejectedly, that moonless night, and upon which side of some moral line it mostly lolled, we, the readers, will never know for sure, and he still won't reveal, the location he's abandoned that flimsy soul, and he surely won't tell anyone, *not another soul*, that he knew, even then, for certain, had known it for years, that it, his soul, just in case you have forgotten, though I had not, his soul did

not and *never-had* resided in the Sunny State of Florida. No souls there, and not his either. Maybe it, again his soul, is, and always was, in New York State, just where he left it, but, at any rate, at the present moment anyway, he's lost it somewhere, somewhere along the aforementioned moral line. So, back in New York, he hires a private eye to help him keep track of his soul, a private eye who also performs psychoanalysis on him, using him as a guinea pig (or some other domestic cavy) in his spare time, of which he has lots, not being much of a private eye, the unlicensed therapist, that is. Orgones, sex, and more orgones – swirly-swirly, boing-boing, only without any sex, and still without friends. Lonely boy, apt to do anything!

4

Now maybe it was only because he was finally getting hungry, and still maybe (to pose a view contrary to the obvious) it was just beginning to bore him, just a little bit, but, at any rate, he, Sparkle Plenty, Spa, which rhymes with "bra", as he was called, in those days, by his very closest friends, of which, if you have been paying attention, *he had none*, z-i-p, well, our friendless Sparkle started eating again. Convinced that plants won't retaliate, won't seek their revenge in vicious ways, from unexpected locations, he ate a leaf, then a stem, and finally a flower, maybe two. And with *that*, the floodgates were open, for following *that*, he ate everything, including *that,* and *this*, too. Words had never tasted better to him than on that captivating evening, which, I believe, happened to be a Sunday evening. Boy, I guess he *was* hungry! Look at him eat! I hope he has access to a napkin, an elegant one, I hope, well-designed, too. And that's two-times the hope needed for such good manners. Don't you agree? He started eating again on one of those infamous religious holidays, one of the ones everyone, everyone but Sparkle and his table-of-one, seems to celebrate, the holiday of Easter, the holiday of marshmallows, eggs and too much chocolate, and that unbelievable resurrectional thing, outrageous the things people believe these days! – so, yes, now I know it was a Sunday, Easter's always on a Sunday, right? – But, at any rate, what matters most is anyone's guess. And *my guess* is that I am totally confused, and a little bit lost right now, so where was I? Oh, yeah... A full belly had invigorated the boy and while wiping his lips, one last time, upon his Lavender-Tainted Restaurant Cotton Linen Cloth, High-Grade, but Light, Luxury-European-Styled napkin, he spied, out of the corner of his eye, not sure which, and a little behind him, just to the right, (wow!, can I see up her skirt? Really?) hovering just ~~below~~ above the Restaurant Cotton Linen, Et Cetera, Tablecloth, but the tablecloth's color is ultraviolet, not lavender, just abreast the top of the table located there, gaily bathing, *splashing* in the golden sunlight, (as if it could be of any other color, the sun, that is), he espies the cheery face of the bouncy bath*ee*, a girl, young and pretty, see her spring and recoil, again and again, as she bounces, a girl purportedly named ~~Divine~~ Diana, Huntress of the Moon. Let's see if Diana nurtures into anything more substantial than did her predecessor of a month ago, Claire. Remember her? Has anybody reported her missing; will they ever? Days later, the two of them, smiling-and-laughing, a-grinning-and-a-snickering, being ever so happy-happy, taking turns chirping up chortles-and-guffaws – was she aware of their giggling time together or did he fantasize the whole thing? – "*they*, implying plurality," stated the lawyer for the prosecution, "discovered *they* were enrolled in the same biology class, and *you* know what biology means..." "And this class", stammered Sparkle, though he probably should have remained quiet, "was a two-session class, both parts, I and II, and together they might have lasted, well, maybe eight to ten weeks, that's, just a minute now," and we, members of the jury, wait. Until finally, "Fifty-four to, something like, seventy days?" he pondered, still calculating, looking for a possible error, somewhere in his head. A bright boy, but maybe he was just jabbering, for, after all, it wasn't really a proper stammer. And regarding his ping-pong-

reverberated ponderings, did she ever sense the *ping* of his pondering? You think? (Remember, folks, these are all clues to the mystery and we have to consider them all, the evidence, all laid out, and looked at every possible angle, of which, I am told, there are exactly 360 factorial of them, angles that is, but I could be wrong.) He told her how he'd been working, working as an electrician, something to do with electricity, a tough job, only two weeks ago that was, but he quit, although he didn't tell her *that*, and before that, the job before *that* job, that is, he was a master gardener, but he hemmed and hawed when she asked him the difference between a master gardener and a just-plain-old gardener. His riposte, barely audible, eyes fixed, welded to the tips of his sneakers, never to return to her pretty nose again, was that he was young, not old. And if the conversation actually had occurred in the real world, it was probably, just about here, that he really did stammer. "Stammer-stammer," is what we would have heard if we were within ear distance. But, at any rate, she wasn't too particular and she wasn't really very pretty, that nose diminished her, and she didn't have a chin after all, poor girl, and she thought him a rather worldly young man, stammering notwithstanding. Of course, *if the conversation actually had occurred*, et cetera. Remember, Sparkle doesn't like to get too close to anyone, anyone at all, not even you, or me. Having given up the highly technical skill needed for electrical work, "much too one-dimensional," he stated to her, with great nonchalance, she, google-eyed, staring at his crotch. "And gardening," he said, was "way too three, maybe, four-dimensional," a complex endeavor, indeed, he needed a job and she suggested he get a job at the library restacking books, the Fine Art of the Librarian Shipman, (or is it Librarianship Man?) a livelihood one could be proud of, bring home to your family, especially if your family did not die, undetected, in a fire, a job worth having especially knowing that the poetry shelves are never too far away. He fancies himself, his true aspiration suddenly revealed, akin to that of a god, a god of haughty poetry, getting caught reading his *own* Consolidated Collected Works (the CCW, as it is generally referred to by the scholars, as he daydreams, lost, in both body and dreams, among the serpentine bookshelves) when he ought to be shelving a book... any book would do! He was paid good money, $2.50 an hour, *not* $2.50 per shelved book, to return books to their proper niche amongst row after row, floor upon floor, stack after stack, of books, books, books, placing them precisely, pristinely, each with the delicate care it deserved, precisely, according to the number, via the Dewey Decimal or the Library of Congress Classification System, the latter of which entails letters as well as numbers, to exactly where they, the books, each belong. A task he perpetually ignored. Late on moonless nights, nights for which the searched-for moon could not be found, after the library had been closed, locks slammed shut, and the darkness, cast by the dim-lighted and missing moon, a darkness found everywhere within, squeezingly, grazingly, begrudgingly, across each cover of every bound book, books that described all colors in worldly existence alongside the gristly blackness of that darkness-that-grazed, a dark we all have felt gruelingly slide against our skin in graveyards of the past, while every book, as they sat, still and unmoving, in their precisely-reserved place, slept dustily. Not all tombs, though, were so comfortable and so cigar-mockingly content. For you could almost hear the moans and the groaning of every misplaced book, mislaid and forsaken, savagely-sad. Sparkle was definitely to blame for that. But that is not what he is being accused of here and it, therefore, is of no consequence to this tale or any of the tales that follow. But we are, nevertheless, pleased with Sparkle when he actually does shelve books and he could be depended upon to shelve several books, maybe four or five per shift, hence the accuracy of the $2.50 per book wage, and in doing so he placed these select few, these four or five, with great finesse, gently-and-gracefully, with a Sheep's Eye, a Liquorish-Tooth &, finally, with a Bookish Pride. He speedily became the Hunchback of... of... well the Quasimodo, at any rate, of book-shelving. He scampered up the library shelves with distinction and a skip and dancer's *passe* to his step. He never complained of

the hurt in his knees, or the burden of his heavy load, during his jaunts through the shelves, alone, *always alone*, rarely another Library Goblin to be seen. The rest of the time, hiding within the papery labyrinth, he read, in solitude, Baudelaire, Aleister Crowley, and the mad dolphin's Lilly located in the center of a cyclone, Rossetti, Martin Gardner (who'd make a difference, though maybe not in this story) and William Blake. Bio-computers + humans = imagination! Imagination, in the medium of a daydreamer, Sparkle's favorite occupation, always was, still is, but the least productive one from everyone else's point of view. Of Diana, *huntress*, he doesn't remember a thing, it's the null set all over again, nor did he learn any biology. Did they even talk to one another? Maybe a little, but nothing very substantial. Oh, I do remember, he told me late in the storm-cloudy afternoon, that Diana transferred, rather suddenly, in a huff, in order to complete her biological studies in Alaska. Investigations uncovered that she did, really, move to Alaska, made it there alive, eventually to marry, but her hubby turned out to be an alcoholic and started hitting the kids, though he claimed never to have hit her, and she eventually left him. Somehow he got the kids. Records show that when interrogated regarding her relationship with Sparkle Plenty, that romantic-drenched summer, a honeysuckled summer, sweat gleaming in the Buick's backseat, torn with desire with the sunlight pouring, gushingly, in, her only remark was, "Sparkle who?" And yet, she did miss a bullet, albeit she never knew this, and the pills she was to take later on, unprescribed, those were to get her through the sneaky little affairs attended, for money, just to get by and to buy more pills. Was it that one thing he probably should not have said to her, quietly into, was it her left, ear, that caused her to flee to the faraway North-West, somewhere above the 64th-degree of latitude? We will never know unless he starts to confess to unheeded details, word by regurgitated, half-digested word, exactly what it was he whispered to her, words that chilled her, crystallized forever inside her ear. But to remember would probably put him back in the hands of the private-eye, aka, therapist, and we can't have that. But he does remember, *kaleidoscopally*, that he did stop going to biology class *after mastering the art of dissection* and after learning that Diana had absconded to Alaska, Land of the Polar Bear, while taking only his heart. He pivoted and signed up to learn some slices of Calculus, the accumulated mysteries of the cosmos, and a fuming bit of Chemistry, no Biology involved. He didn't learn any of it too well though, forever distracted by the intangible poetry intermingling his world, and none of his learning ever did stick, none. But don't you worry about Sparkle and Love. I can just make out the silhouette of a saucy little girl, just weeks beyond her eighteenth birthday, standing provocatively as only an eighteen-year-old can, but a few sentences away. Can you see her from where you are? Another, heart-achingly drip-bit o' honey, ~~Susan~~ ~~Lily~~ ~~Lotus~~ *Susan*. I wonder what lust-and-liver she has in store for jittery Sparkle. And will Sparkle even know what went down? We'll, like all the others, probably never find out, but I hope, this time, we do. But first: Why does he call Susan his *Primordial Wheaty?* Does she think this romantic? Does he? Primordial Wheaty, my goodness! To quote from the *Journals of Sparkle* (9 Sept 1971):

Amongst the Winter Festivities I encounter ~~Lily~~ Susan, Primordial Wheaty!
And upon the billowy heels of She, PW,
Our tongues, slithering, together-together, in the syrupy Cream of the Oily Caress,
Whence you edified me to increase the manic flicker,
When the fever got ever-increasingly quicker.

Depressed and confused, I broke down, tongue-sagged and disheartened,
Soaked in a prime number of tears, 17 or was it 31?
I bellowed, moaned, with a knife-cutting desire,

"Take me into the bowels of Satan! Let me suffer for my indulgence!"
And the Blood-Red Devil glistened in the pathway of his refulgence.

So many mysteries
To unearth
As we burrow deep, and deeper still,
Into the precipitous brain
Of Sparkle!

3

Chapter Three

Butterflies and Elves: He'll Never Get Laid!

I

Walking down the old country road through the mountains of Vermont, safe from the turmoil and accusing eyes of New York, they never did actually inculpate him, he notices there are butterflies fluttering all around, and a great many caterpillars, too, though they, the caterpillars were not a-flutter, but were unflappable, instead. Why hadn't he noticed them before? He pondered if such creatures ever lived in New York, or Florida, or on that island, *so heavenly* is how he remembers the island, now, upon which he used to build structures of such marvelous delights! He entered onto a journal page, a leaf of pristine beauty, pages of which nearly all the lazy boy keeps empty, in Blue-Bic precision:

The pillars [the caterpillars, I presume] *are the deep sunsets,*
Stretching into the dark bands of night.
Emerge two small, lissomly-svelte, wings [the butterfly, I further presume]
Squirting and a-flapping,
Resembling that of a child's or young woman's
Fingertips, clasped in the tight embrace
Upon the struggling throat of a prayer.

Ah, young Sparkle, rookie-neophyte to the core, he sure is making some significant poetical strides, don't you think? – nonsensical, stuck-in-the-throat, prayers and all! Wily, too! From this rough-and-crunchy yet soggy beginning, we may appreciate the vast distance he has traveled in order to achieve such a masterpiece as we present here:

In the Liquid of the Sob

I sob.

Her dismembered body parts are missing.

It is suspected that her mutilated body has been stashed in a downtown office.
Right under Dante's ever-enlarging nose.
Zipper fingerprints and waxy rectangular impressions abound.

She was last seen writing a disciplinary memo.
Someone must've forgotten to breathe on her shift.
It didn't take long.
She had an extra bottle in that blood-dripping briefcase she always had by her side.
I have noticed, while hiding under her bed, the briefcase breathing.

I tried to cut and destroy it one day. (She was outside having a smoke.)
The damage provoked upon that bulging,
pulsating,
empty,
leather
void
was worth my days of recuperation.
It was even worth the lost digits.

I wiped the memo onto three roses
I wiped the memo on that trio of spots where the digits once wagged and sobbed.

IT was the briefcase and it finally got her.
A bullet would have been kinder.
I had a sip of the stale whiskey
Then the briefcase and I entwined in the liquid of the sob.

So, as you can readily see, though Sparkle still has a long way to go, he has traveled lightyears to get to where he is today. That lone red sob, the one at the top-right, *bam*! -that gets me every time! Sparkle, when he first tried to get that one noticed, was told by a publisher that that redolent sob made *him* sob, but I don't think he, that S.O.B., meant it in a constructive way, and neither did Sparkle. Now, if I remember, we last left our romantic little goblin rolling-and-lolling about the hilly-hills of verdant Vermont, discovering, for the first time in his life, that there were insects, worms, birds and wildflowers, *galore,* all around him, even in cities and towns. He detected, too, that the moon was always there, keeping an eye on him, following him, eerily, everywhere. The moon, *Strawberry, Pink, or Wolf's*, had promised to take good care of him, and Sparkle, with a mystical luminescence similar to that luminescence encircling the earth, again-and-again-and-again, at the speed of 1.022 kilometers per second, believed her/him/it (what *is* the gender of the moon?) but he probably shouldn't have, believed Lord Luna, the moon, that is. Sparkle was never a fan of the light of Luna, he claimed it had the ability to burn him but never had the courage to test his hypothesis. He, increasingly the aspiring scientific expert, a methodical maverick, a deep-seated cerebral *profundus*, bubbled up with a little theory of his own. Would you like to hear it? Yes? Forever-Acquiescing Reader, I shall tell you then. Just give me a moment to shed my smile. OK, now shed.

II

The little caterpillar unknowingly wanders out onto the phantom road. Got that? This, as it happens, is a disaster area for small and furry crawling animals. Look over there! There's a dead skunk in the middle of the road, stinking to high heaven! And a caterpillar, if you're not getting the gist of this, is (1) small, and (2) furry, and (3) it crawls. Got it? Alas (and all the good poets are forever *alas*-ing), alas, his doom is met, the caterpillar's, that is, not the sprouting poet's. But, what do we see, where do our perceptions lie? They are transformed into the infinite orange and black butterflies (angels!) he also sees along the road! The butterflies alight and wait for God's Glorious Breath (GGB), never needing TheraBreath Icy Mint Oral Rinse Mouthwash to ascend, that is *go up*, the chemical periodic ladder of gaseous molecules into the bouncing lap we know so well as Heaven, an unfortunate and odiferous place, apparently. Using sound reasoning, purportedly supported by factual evidence before putting it through the logic mill, skills our boy has begun to acquire, thanks to Martin Gardner, alas, yet, but, towards which there are signs that Sparkle has not only become a remarkable poet, but a scientific one as well, or so he presently believes without the aid of factual evidence or logical deductions, but he *can* draw an integral sign with all three eyes closed and one foot tied behind his back (can you?), and that alone should be sufficient proof, so, again, to catch you up, *using sound reasoning* he was able to scratch an "*And alas,*" written menacingly, in *skunk ink*, a brew of refined skunk's blood resin, real indigo, best quality myrrh, cinnamon bark, gum arabic, perfumer's alcohol, & filtered water, as his infernal ink, in his still-mostly-empty journal, that very night, so weary amongst the specters of the candlelight, but with a childish delight, and a head full of silly-willy dreams. He carefully formed each letter of a sequel to the Liquid-Sob piece he had so masterfully constructed what-seemed so l-o-n-g ag-o:

Today I beheld a crawling vision of gold with brown and blackish tips!
The spirit of Gabriel entwined in the hair of a new crawler.
By whose message, I had to bend my ear closely to overhear,
I became enriched with the knowledge that, indeed!
Something's surely about to happen in the Slaying Hills of Vermont, Baby!

Sparkle is sizzling, man, *sizzling to a crisp*!

III

Once again we find Sparkle neglecting his studies, ignoring responsibilities, unable to-look any other living-being in-the-eye. He's becoming confused on exactly what-day it-is, even which-season. For love, once-again, has drifted, along with the stench of fear, athwart his young, velvety-pink nose, while at the same time roaming, lengthwise, across her scrawny, desiccated body. Does she have a name? A chin? We find him, scrunched over, writing her a letter of great poetic intensity. Will his words win her heart? Does he tell her he'd like to fuck her, rather, then to tell her that he *loves* her and would love to kiss her inflamed-red and chip-cracked lips? He doesn't think he'd really like that, so he chooses to cross that line out. Never was he one for human contact, was Sparkle. Too painful even to think about. Instead he tells her, in a soliloquy, written during a brilliant sunset, across the Vermont horizon, wind a-blowing, hard, both the wind and Sparkle, paper flying, hair now hovering vertically, like electric bolts shooting out the top of his head, all swirling-and-churning about like writhing baby snakes, he inscribes, with great earnestness and a dismembering pain, the following:

I have enclosed a lost spirit upon whose wings I have promised a parting blessing from the lips of a damsel clothed in Poetry. (I think that "damsel" is the girl. I wonder who she is and if he'll ever reveal her name?) *Since this promise* (he continues) *angels consoling the spirits of my other many legged friends* (need I explain? –caterpillars and butterflies, alas) *have allowed them to glow with the light focused on Eternity which illuminates my path so I, too, do not go too far afield.* (Afield from what?) *It is at these times that I think of you. I become so overwhelmed with your essence, your, you know, everything, that I must wander by the pond, where I first gazed upon your, your … your whole kit and caboodle, the whole enchilada, and read the poetry of Rossetti. Perhaps someday I can accidently kill you, so much like his poor-and- innocent Elizabeth, with an overdose of some opiated drug, and bury my treasured poems alongside you in an earth-encrusted tomb, shallow shall be thy, grave. But, I, like that wombat loving Gabrielle, will need to dig you up later to get the poems back when I, and I must, share them with a beholden world! I'm sure everybody is reading Gabrielle Rossetti these days, as I, some day, too, will be read, by no, one. Oh, but rest assured, Dante Gabrielle Rossetti is sending me telepathic glimpses of your infinite soul, so don't be like Jon Swift's Celia or I might see you being naughty… Remember how the Great Red Dragon did fly furiously to protect me from the* "orange belted wild bees" *who will show me no mercy, otherwise. So, anyways, I'm doin' OK, how 'bout you? The frogs and the otters and the beavers all say hello! And I send you a gift, from my heart straight into yours, which does sound a little dangerous, I know, but here it is:*

"Oh, let thy silent song disclose to me,
That soul wherewith her lips and eyes agree"

Sparkle knows he's gonna' get laid with that one! Sparkle has a thing for girls without a chin and he is securely hooked onto this newfound chinless lassie, but he better not, as learned over and over again, count his chicks before they hatch. She, *the damsel clothed in Poetry*, is undoubtedly feeling safe from him, hunkered down, four-hundred-or-so miles away, safely ensconced in her teenage-girl bedroom, the lavender one with teddy bears, not one bear without-a-chin, not quite ready for teddies, not her, even if bought from the Sears Catalogue, probably in a brown paper bag for confidentiality through the mail. Not even her mom knows about this one – the paper bag hidden in the back of her messy closet along with that condom Alison gave her, that is. Yet both the girl and the boy are hoping, unbeknownst to one another, that the dream will become so dreamlike that they will be able to transcend, explosively, with a mighty force forward, the intent, to transcend, if you recall, *through the portholes of blatant existence,* whatever that is. But then again, what do they know or care? Not much. Yet.

IV

Sparkle is straddling the wet mountain, yes, mountains are sometimes wet in Vermont, too, preaching to the flowers, the trees, the dirt and the excrement of many cows. He should be practicing his calculus, but what can you say about Sparkle? He's looking for poetry inside mathematics, and everywhere else, but he won't find it there until he takes the time to learn what it really looks like, hiding there, betwixt the equations. Some might think he's on the death-defying slope towards Failure #23, but he, Sparkle, doesn't see it coming. Instead he proclaims, aloud, after assuring that no one is around who can overhear him, even so, he isn't exclaiming anything,

really, above the purr of a murmuring whisper. Or maybe he is only imagining his testimony to the flowers, the trees, et cetera, upon a possibly, or not, wet mountain. But we can hear him if we listen very carefully, so just graze your ear, tickled-up against the paper, feels chilly and distant, doesn't it? But do you hear him? Now within earshot, perceiving vibrations from a different realm altogether, we both hear him saying:

I told you of Gabriel's prophesy and, indeed,
Something is happening here in the Foggy Mountains of Vermont
And it is called Magic.

Each morning its mist can be seen throughout the velvety valley
You can feel it crawl upon your tongue as it drifts down
Along your softly dewed esophagus
Creeping towards that circle
Of sunlight
Shining hot
At the culmination
Of your
Alimentary
Canal
!

A nearby tree, waves its limbs in utter agreement, shivers its leaves in applause. From Sparkle's perspective he does not see a tree but experiences instead its etheric vibrations. He sees a young dying embryo, a robin spilled from its shell, lying, shell-shattered nearby. He warbles, poetically, in its general direction. Upon Sparkle's declaration that "the pumpkin was *smashed,"* the embryonic-robin *breaths out one last time*, and by the time the word "smashed" rolls off Sparkle's fine lips, its translucently underdeveloped beak *shutters*, and before Sparkle can utter a gusty "tire treads," it dies, *for a second time*, but we don't know how this can be. Perhaps the elves can explain:

I know it to be within the Great Spirit of Magic
Born in the Floodplain of the Womb in the Ebb of Snow Valley
Under the ultraviolet light of Blackberry Moon.

Its spirit is so strong that one day
(not so long ago)
A large dog, whose name is Njord
(whose name is his description)
Began furiously chasing his tail upon the soggy hills.

A great whirlwind ensued
Lifting me off the enchanted mountain
Transporting me along magnetic trails, spiraling through stony mountains
Speeding me forward, towards the Great Mountain Elves
(crayon-colored by a feral tribe of five-year-olds)
All scampering and a-scuttling from their petrified perches
Located miles-high in the blistering sky

Sitting-and-a-bobbling in the clouds, sippy-straws in hand, phosphorescent blue
Where they had all been sippy-sipping
From aforementioned blue-glinting straws still twisting
Liquid swirled the shade of deep coagulated blood
(the reddish kind)
Bequeathing the juice of the raspberry
Leaving behind only the dragonflies' wings
And those unlucky pumpkins
Smashed
Then marked by tire treads
While strewn across a country road of time.

V

Don't worry about the elves. Most of them got away. All but the one, who slithered and fell into the center of a flower, a blanket flower, *Gaillardia artistada*, if you must. Well Sparkle was not one to speed past a helpless elf, especially when bumble bees are not far behind. Gads! Sparkle was, of course, rewarded plenty for this heroic deed. He was shown a path, a secret and exotic corridor; a Conduit to Magic is what-it-was. The pathway sniggled and squirmed through the dense and dripping woods. But to Sparkle's addled mind it had meant so-much-more. To him the passageway was speckled with Hobbits and their little hobbit-homes and, as a result, he made it a hobbit to walk along this rocky, fairy-taled route, every day, sometimes twice. He thought he was enormously clever, such humor was he to bestow upon the mountain, on those mystical mornings, just after dawning, when, with a sudden jolt, BAM!, the Magic hit him with the SLAM! of its greatest potency. It felt like, well, like honey sliding, screamingly, along his naked body and, when he suckled it up, as Sparkle was wont to do, it tasted like happy-honey, raw and unfiltered, and that made him smile. And that's what Magic feels like, at 5 AM in the morning, on a Vermont mountain, just in case you ever wondered. Feels good!

VI

The only other time he had ever been aware of the elves, running and shouting, triumphantly, down in the valley, the valley so low, was when he was safe in bed, late at night, while sleeping. As he lay there, eyes tightly shut, lost from the world, magic or otherwise, he would hear, a-skittling and a-scampering, elves a-cantering, bareback, upon their mounted mice. Sparkle: *At times, overpowering all of this music, is heard, the cheers of the spectators, and the pining of each rider's sweetheart adored* - who could be *anyone*, but I think he was referring to the elves' girlfriends or wives. And just so you know this too, (1) girl elves always comb their hair slicked back, hat atop, whereas boys cannot abide a hat, (2) boy elves wear pants, plaited and curled, whereas girls are draped in dresses or skirts, and, last, (3) boy elves don't wear lipstick, or at least not much, and have light hair, the color of silk, whereas the girls like a lot of lipstick, everywhere on their body, except for the bottoms of their flufféd feet, the color of which, like the hair hiding under their hats, is darker than the color of night, and may be the same, also, as that hair between her legs! Whoa! Do elves even *have* hair between their legs? Sparkle still wonders about their genitals, he can't stop wondering. If he ever catches one, he'll find out, alright, and compose a couplet about it. He wonders, also, do their vaginas ever bite? Ah, but as he lies there, half asleep, elf genitals on the brain – forever wondering, in his clinkingly--cold bed, he thinks, *it's like listening to the activities of*

Heaven and it keeps me warm on cold nights. It protects me from all unhappiness, except for the sorrow due to my longing for you, [name, long ago, forgotten]. Why must we be so far apart? How I long to hear the music of an Angel's Tongue. Sparkle, you'll never get laid! As the Author of this scree, I have a mind to come into this book and slap you! Yet he dreams long into the night about that very same angel's tongue and groans...and of the elves, Jimmy and Zelda, elf genitals, together, locked, *forever*. He pleads to the phantom girl, whose phantom face and name and mannerisms, all forgotten, forgotten, long ago, forgotten forever, if ever there was such a girl, he pleads for her to, well, the way he puts it is: *if thou wilt, put the letter to thy lips, fill it with kisses and bestow it upon me!* A lost cause, this Sparkle of ours. He then duly reminds her that *God only helps them who helps their elves.* He needs to learn some grammar and take his own advice. Oh! And Sparkle can now tell you, for he has, over the past few sentences, made a study of it, for scientific purposes only, of course, he can tell you that the elf's penis is smaller than the human's, being only 10 to 14 centimeters long, and not as thick, but Sparkle, nor his imaginary assistant, has completed those circumferential measurements, yet. All in due time. For the elves and their penises kept wriggling while he was trying to measure those rounded fringes, so he resorted to observational comparisons, circumferentially speaking, exclusively. The female elf, cute-as-can-be she was, giggly, too, he discovered, has a vagina, size undetermined, but it's just a hole, no frills like a human girl's. He doesn't know what to think about that, frill versus no frill, so he doesn't think about it at all, during the daytime, anyway. It would be a waste of my time to describe the color and texture of the thick purple pubes, since neither gender has any hair down there. Bet you didn't know that one!

VII

As you may remember, I lay, still, upon my self-described deathbed, shoved in the crispy corner of my cell, the bed scraping the floor in time to my shallow breathing, panting in the gloomy darkness, consumed with thoughts of my demise, with each departing expiration. In contrast, note how Young Sparkle, illuminated here, with nary a cheerless thought, totally oblivious of what is to come, so that Death will nowhere be found among these pages. He is free from its bleakness and unsuspecting of its always lurking presence. So instead, we find him merrily plucking the wings off dragonflies as they grasp for dear life, their pin-like claws grappling at the brambly breezy branches of quixotic trees, heavenly trees, trees that droop and flutter to scratch at the crypts of our earthly domain. They melt, revoltingly, in his quivering hands. Unexpectedly, to the utmost bewilderment of Sparkle, he heard a ghastly scream, and then another, and still another, and finally, yet, one more. It calmed his jocund heart as he looked scathingly into his shirt pocket, rolling his left ear in the direction of his scathe, to discover a butterfly, lodged, painfully ensnared, within, screeching and a-shrieking. The butterfly, actually an Emperor Moth, but Sparkle hadn't a clue concerning the difference, and realizing that he, the engulfed butterfly, was being gazed upon, he quieted and said in a mothy-like tenor, with a sound that went *beyond any mortal ear,* Sparkle's mortal ear included, yet our Sparkle hearkening to an altogether otherworldly ear, such was an ear needed for such an otherworldly occasion, somehow, caught wind of an Upcoming Apocalypse, an Apocalypse that would be final, it would be *rigid*, even, but rigid in the form of several dimensions beyond our third, and beyond the how and the why of it all, and this is why it still remains a mystery to all of us. *The horrid perception percolated through my auditory canal describing the end of Butterflies and of All Animate Beings, Souls, Wings and Spirits (B+AABSW+S). All Angels will be transformed into the Inanimate* (AA → I), were the mathematical formulations Sparkle entered into his journal that night before pretending to cry himself to sleep, with sharp-and-jagged crystal tears, on that cloud-strewn drenched and stormy night, *Humans will metamorphose into*

DNA-Robots. Hence the utter ghastliness of the screech! *"I was told to love and imagine and found I could only imagine love." Oh! Cruel end! I returned the butterfly to its perch and wept. But the wings would not stay put and kept falling off.* He then fell, promptly, into a deep-and-dreamless sleep. (I wonder if he ever woke up, if he ever came to his proper senses.)

VIII

He tries, one more time, for the girl, the girl of his dreams, girl of his heart, dipping his fishing-pole, flesh dripping with the filth of the pond-water's slime, into the vast web of the webbéd postal service. He writes to her, hoping for the best, hoping to catch a bite, a connection, a little bit of love. At the very least, some hope.

> *As we parted last evening, I hope while you were looking elsewhere, I entangled myself amongst the weft of your soul. It has stretched itself into a long silken-like thread and is now, with some help from me, woven into the New England landscape. Its end is still wrapped around my finger and is available for the transmitting of spirits: Ours. I can perceive a constant, and not so slight, tug in your direction. I hope the pull is as unwavering in you. Hopefully this letter will send out an etheric lasso to you. Please hold on tightly and allow me to pull you back, for I miss you so!*

I see the girl, receiving the letter, smelling it, turning it around and around, sliding a finger across its jagged edges, feeling the sting, glancing at the back of the envelope, smelling both sides again, sniffing hard, then looking at every discernable detail on the ink-stained and grimy envelope before beginning, rupturing-it open, to draggle forth the squirming letter, out into her sundrenched world, all the while, her tiny, but lovely, lukewarm heart is beating in a complicated syncopation. And the paragraph above suddenly jolts out at her, seizing, like pushpins, to grasp at the thin skin of her attention, as she grapples with her ability to read, to comprehend, skills which were never too good to begin with, and she, decoding as quick as she is able, reads then rereads, slowly this time, the whole thing, concluding with a third perusal of the envelope, all over again. How does she react? Does moisture accumulate on the insides of her thighs? Do her breasts ache even the slightest bit? No, instead the boy next door, whom she now watches from her bedroom window, is looking pretty good to her at this very moment. Sparkle's letter drifts to the floor and eventually gets lost amongst dust bunnies and the grime, amidst the girl-awful mess years-accumulated under her now eroticized-and-jostling bed above, as she continues to stare at the neighborhood boy.

IX

I consider these recollections, and more, decades later, as I lay ensconced amidst soggy sheets and dampened towels, moist with the slow seep of wet blood and feces, and the gentle drip of urine my bladder can no longer retain, down in the basement of the crumbling castle. These memories besiege me. My veins crack ever wider to allow what happened ooze, percolating, always percolating, through the cage of my body, to trickle over in escape. She, too, oozed away, from Sparkle, percolating through the fisherman's lasso-net being cast her way in an attempt to trick her from a timely escape, an escape from what, inevitably, Sparkle would do. Oozed away, somewhere, but far enough away from his maniacal-poetic grasp and towards someone who could speak directly, reach out to deliver a caress, and not shriek an unmanly squawk whenever touched or patted or stroked. I close my eyes and envision that boy of long ago and wonder why he even tried.

He could have avoided the flow of so much blood, so much pain, and snares of detestable-and-murderous disgust. Wait! What memory is this a-creeping so unexpectedly into my squelched and tired brain?

Sparkle, young and broken, torn asunder with thoughts of the girl is now sleepless, he is seen mixing himself an elixir, to fill an *herb-pillow*, upon with which to rest his drooping head, a tincture meant to ease both his despondency and his gloom. Poor boy, flapping his hands as he rocks his body, incessant rocking with an occasional pounding of his head upon the hard concrete floor. An elixir whose magic is in the mixing of two ounces of rose petals, one ounce of mint, one-half ounce cloves and the cephalothorax and eyes of one or two dead spiders. It will bring him a disconsolate sleep, but a necessary slumber, nevertheless. He'd prefer death, but such a capricious thought is just a passing fancy, just another poem, never written, never fulfilled. He lays there musing on the silence permeating the atmosphere about him and waits for the sleep to overtake him, for the potion to take its effect. While his heart is feeling empty, creating a sagging hallow in his chest, a hole in which to hide, his forehead and temples, even his arms and clenched fists, blister with a simmering rage. But emerging from all this seething fury, this unexpected ire, a bile now sluicing quickly towards his legs and feet, he has a vision, a revelation, and this fills him with the calm indignation that allows him to persist, to continue, to hope for something more. As he falls, harrowingly deep, into his desired slumber, a vision assails him, so completely, and engulfs him within a spellbinding dreamscape, a nightmare that upon waking, seemed so real, oh it makes one wonder, and the forests still echo with laughter.

> Mine eyes are torn from mine shriveled skull, rolled like dice upon the crinkled table, wobbling tenuously to the edge, the brink, before descending-descending, vertiginously, to the floor. They bounce more than you'd think a pair of eyeballs would bounce. If you listened carefully you would have heard them go "wompa, wompa, wompa" before skidding to an abrupt stop at the rim of the room. Next placed upon the table, mine nose, sliced from mine face with a Hammer Stahl Paring Knife, looking more now like a very tiny but very bloody, flesh-knit bikini bottom ripped from the voluptuous bottom of the appears-to-be female (hard to tell now, through all the gore), after savagely amputating her legs. The nose, still sitting there, unseen, for the eyes can roll no more, can no longer turn to see, the nose wilts, then wilts again, even more. The face-skin and skull-wrappings are peeled away, hung out to dry, flapping in the merry wind, avoiding the sudden raincloud that spills a light pink rain looking a lot like Sparkle's tears, also spilling, because he is saddened by yet another loss, a loss from something he never had. He is suddenly reminded of Michelangelo, that great artist, and his flayed self-portrait. He fantasizes, earnestly and with increasing enthusiasm, that it is he who was flayed, by Michelangelo himself, in an earlier lifetime. And that, surprisingly, gives our Sparkle some needed hope! From his scalp grows the stunning verdigris blades levitating from the Grass of the Morning Light of the Miscanthus Maiden, the grass of a school-girl upon whom he once lay, begrudgingly allowed. And from his flayed body grew two craggy hands, strong and dripping with the power to strangle, posed as tired old trees, heavy while swaying in the gusty wind. Ears began to break loose from the elves, scurrying by, luminescent and warm, lurching from the lateral sides of skulls, breaking loose only to pair-merge into flesh-furred butterflies, grotesquely fluttering, and pointy, not unlike those butterfly-angels I wrote to you about, dear one, you whose name I no longer remember, whose unfamiliar face I never kissed, whose body I never held or crushed myself upon, always unwanted and

clawing when ensnared below my weighty desire, whose letters that were never sent, never to be received. They danced and they swam all through the gloom, the gloom in which he, to whom thoroughly tangled and tied, dreamt. The butterflies, finally perching, made homes among the verdant fields of his crystalized hands and stone-fossiled feet. The vision smoldered with a melancholic beauty, a beauty that makes one weep the twinkling of cut-glass tears, each drop hitting the floor with the unobtrusive sound of a shatter: the smashing clank of a splish-splash. He cries out,

Now that our mysterious webs have been disentangled,
I hope your Angel will guard
Long
Over the friendship that still
Seeks to bind us.

Poor boy! Lonely boy! But why the gruesome, tortuous, disentanglement of body parts? Will he ever pull himself back together? Let's see... he may surprise us all!

4

Chapter Four

Roses Love Sunshine, Violets Love Dew

He is on the road again, goin' places that he's never been, again. Why is he leaving so quickly? You can see him if you stretch your neck and turn a little to the right, there, do you see? He's hitchhiking alongside the desolate road. What a grand day for sticking out a thumb! He is smiling. The herbal *sleepbag*, along with the enchanted sleeping potion stashed within, must have done the trick. He reenacted in his imagination, standing on the side of the highway, how he had captured those titillating spiders, then yanked off a limb or two, maybe more, *probably* more, before dropping each lurid little guy into the herbal pouch. He recollected how he got a little carried away with the yanks, just felt right to him, and, as a result, he discovers that his own limbs don't feel quite so angry today. Only a bit of residual irritation can be detected in that gyrating thumb, rigidly extended, and blowing in the Vermont wind. But, with the exhilaration of the day and the car that is now creeping, womp-womp-womp, like a bouncing eyeball, along the side of him, slowing down, even that little bit of murderous hate is slowly dissipating, dissipating, dissipating, gone. Sparkle intones to himself, *"Magic's mist transforms into blueness and sends me following it to the origin of its birth."* Makes no sense at all, of course, but what can you expect from the boy? Not much as per usual. And here he goes again, my goodness, transforming again, yes, converting all his mundane experiences into a quixotic pursuit of poetry, and, no matter what the transfiguration, it is a transfiguration of the most hideous sort.

The sun is warm
Melting surrounding clouds
To expose God's gallant joke
A springtime in January!

Oh! You blossom, Life!
As once did the roses in winter.

You really don't want to know about the roses, but I did promise a *full disclosure* at the start of this confession, and since, importantly, the roses may represent *his first*, although the body, real or imagined, was never found, nor was he ever really suspected, invisible as he generally is, as always, and I do wish that she had been his *only* rumored victim, nevertheless, a full disclosure it will be. The rose came before that thing that happened in Vermont. And really, those roses, being the deep-burnt red, with the rust of iron, used to color the blood, almost a burgundy red, a stain upon the tablecloth, still oozing *way* too much red, those roses will indeed be an important clue, a bit of confirmation, evidence from a grisly tale to tell your mother, to horrify her, perhaps, dreadfully so, distasteful as it is, but that's something for her later, sometime in the future, and not now. Still, it probably is important for you to hear about the rose, to contemplate its thorny subplot, a Forever-Young Rose for you to envisage, to allow you to compile all the data. Ah, that very rose, the prettiest one in the bunch, especially *that* one, from the bowl of blood-red-roses, reddest of reds, amid a bowl of moonstones, below a lamp of childhood, tangled in a robe of roses, burgundy-draped, a dripping rose - so droopingly dripped!

Young Daughters, arise. Bah! Rely on me to make it poetic, for I have a Rose! I went rifling today for a budding, bleeding, rose and once on its trail, drip by trickling drip, an hour's search along its burgundy trail, not a minute more, I found one, pulsating and ruddy, ruddy and hale, squirming along its thorny branch, dripping still from self-inflicted wounds, lying softly along the roadway, softly lying. A young flower in the glory of her blooming despite the frosty chill of winter. Yet in utmost despair, the claret-colored mechanism truly-looked truly-worn, prepared as it was for its snugly unseasonable, Destruction. Its lower spirit looked timeworn and ripped, and lower, lower still, it was weary with, time notwithstanding, its recent blooming birth. I left it for the yellow-tainted sun. O Fiery Orb, do quickly arise!

And that night, gloom-and-shadows all-surrounding, I went burgundy groping, again. But with the nightfall, the roses had transformed into salacious berries, lurid with the succulent dew. Roses love sunshine, berries love dew. And one, a young one with grisly hair and gruesome teeth, let me reach out to provide a provocative squeeze, just one, deep in the gloom and dejected shadows, and the juice drip-dropped down, crawling languidly towards the bottom of my fingertips, fingertips now wet with the juice of the berry. The breath of burgundy gushed forth, intoxicating me, with a cheering outlook, an opulent perch upon which to stand. And I thought, once again, this is the end of my journey, I am finally here. But no, no, no. No!

So alas and aghast and alas some more! Once more a subtle and hollowed out depression took hold, a frustration glued to my fingers and about my throat, to legs that gripped like a hangman's noose, that sent me to extend my search through the petals of the flower of burgundy, lying lifeless, upon the pink-and-frosty floor amongst layers upon layers upon layers of flayed Juliet-Garden-Rose-petal skin. Hopefully this will send an etheric message, a lasso, out to you, binding you up, keeping you near. Please! Please hold on tightly, don't stop me, don't resist, and allow me to drag you, grindingly, scrapingly, across the thorny floor, back and forth and back again, for I miss you so...

That should have been a warning. I don't know her name, can't remember her face. Never did. But I remember the color red and the taste of blackberry burgundy upon my lips, burgundy with a pinch of balsam salt. And now with the Vermont wind at his back, he can see it flying away from him through the back window of a #4169 MCI MC-6 Super Cruiser "*Leave the Driving to Us*" Greyhound Bus, while peering before him he can just make out, through the front window, just beyond the driver, the setting sun, like a claw scraping the western sky, following to the origin of its birth, he sings, to the wind and the dwindling light, a parting song as he flees, ambiguous of the need as to why he must, leaving behind, the rose and the violet, down in the valley, the valley so low.

Greyhound like my mother's arms,
America is my cradle.
Never will I come to harm,
Unless the crash be fatal.

Chapter Five

Pits and Chasms

I

Somewhere in this world, hides the dangling end of a logarithmic spiral, lost umbilical cord, a link to a safer place, connecting all the dots of one's speck-by-speckilty specks (though always *too-few* specks to last us our *all-too-short* lifetimes). With this firmly entrenched in his mind, Sparkle began his exploration of the two naked bodies, *corpora delicti* just lying there like rags. Amongst all the hieroglyphics laid-bare upon them, only one attribute seemed worthy of his attention – tummy buttons, no matter the color, much less the bouquet! He sniffed and measured, taking on a heavenly demureness of exquisite care, estimating first, then using wooden rulers, of both meter and yard, then recording both data points in the highlighted columns located below that of his initial mind-calculating appraisal, *his estimate*, before getting distracted. Inevitably he resniffs, followed by another *quick-sniff* sniff, and he wished he could stop himself, as he kneels downward, tilting his body slightly forward, in the direction of one or the other navel, swaying just a bit, and that refers to both the navels and our too-eager Sparkle, yet *hardly* swaying at all, while his navigating-nose moves forward and d-o-w-n, perhaps to an angle of 47˚, angle of depression, of course. He sniffs yet again, but this time a sliver of drool forms in the corner of his mouth and, pendulously, creeps, towards, tantalizing, wounds, that have attracted his jacked up olfactory senses. What he was measuring was this: the distance between the crown of her curly-topped head, while trying hard to avert brushing up against an urge s-o-o hard to prevent, a ravishing of the hair, kindled by desire. Still he possesses enough professional presence of mind to prevent crossing that line, that nebulous and always present line, hence he dares-not caress those now-sticky hair-locks of ginger, auburn and blackberry hews. But in truth he is unable to help himself. He thinks, perhaps, he can just maybe, allow himself a single light graze upon those cuddlesome heads, by telling himself that he can stop anytime, forgetting about the last time he had succumbed. His attention snaps back into focus bringing him back on point. Without further meanderings, he measures from the tweenie's tippy-top of the head, and to attain the proper accuracy, to say the hundredths place, those heads needed to be shaven. And plunging now from this hairless apex and moving in a Euclidean straight line into the vividness of those enchanting navels, which in his present enterprise, the two distinctive navels, made-to-mail-order bellybuttons, those dual idiosyncratic *omphali*, no two buttons alike, one definitely an innie, he makes a note of that in his logbook, as most tend to be, the other definitely *not*, instead it is, conspicuously, an outie, flowering out just enough to give *anyone*, including himself, *omphalophobia*, if not just the willies, as he ultimately sets the *averaged* distance to be in proportion to one, the base unit. Then, methodically, he

measures the remaining length of body, a separate set of measurements to be entered, again in rigid columns, one set for each no-longer-struggling body, from the motionless naked navel, in the still of the night, while the stars were bright above, to the steel-splintered bottoms of each girls' *still-bleeding* feet. He looks so solemn throughout his endeavors, but this is because he's always been an *extremely* serious young man, always-always, but still, it is obvious that tonight, I remember that stormy-night in Middle-May, he is, why mostly, just having fun! He sets this proportion to some unknown x, and by solving for x, he arrives upon the goddess Phi, a value of 1.6180339887+ for his unknown, if his calculations haven't faltered. This, I dare say, he took for a great, irrationally-revealed, revelation and it raised his excitement level, on a scale from one to ten, to unmeasurable peaks. It was only then that he started to urinate uncontrollably.

II

He glanced down and a bit to his rear. Pun opportunity! So, how can I play this? (1) "Oh, how he dreamed that this were truly-so, and not cast-away, hidden behind a smokescreen of words, not ever to be seen, nor, alas, felt, teeth nosediving, eagerly, into his *tushie* caboose, if you get the pun, don't you see?" (2) "No sense in finding hidden proportions there!" he shouts, though at this very-time in the story, *this* very location, now *this*, and now the one that's *right-now*, notice how it keeps changing, time in which you are presently reading these words, by perhaps *you-and-me*, simultaneously, both of us, well could it mean that He exists within us? He? Who the hell is that? Get out of this story! The next thing you'll be saying, *if we* ***let*** *you say it*, that is, would be this: "Are we a vital part of His being?" Sparkle's brain is malfunctioning! Just go back and read the last few sentences – obviously malfunctioning! The *only* reason why we had to drag him back here was for the reconditioning. You see why we did it, don't you? But in reality, no one noticed a thing and Sparkle just kind of did whatever Sparkle wanted to do. And the girls, giggly as they were, loved him, at the start, anyway. So we again find him searching, endlessly, slushing around inside each of the two pubescent bodies, looking, ferreting around for the right openings, some honorable holes, the pits and chasms through which they could *all* travel, at the speed of light, to places, not yet traveled, by others. All without success. Never the satisfaction of success. Repetition of all possibilities, *all*, still in vain... He had been so certain that *this* relationship, *this* ménage-à-trois of bodies, means and extremes of all ratios, had an integral function to all our beings, a foundational building block of their trio of souls, perhaps.

And I am still certain that this is so.
But hesitatingly, we then have to wonder-with
GOD
When does God decide to round off this endless decimal phi?
When does he feel confident enough to then create an imperfect being?

6

Chapter Six

Time for a Third and Final Introduction

Chapter One

Here's the full disclosure, the generality of which, is that I have been keeping something from you: the global aspect of the story. I've been holding from you, the outside-layer, the layer encompassing the-outermost layer. See, somewhere back there, you were given that baloney about me, a guy telling a story

through his alleged confessions, all that nonsense, and well, there is more to it than that. And that is what, in the more general view, is going on here. Now give me a moment to pull it together into one neat paragraph, or, if I need more room, into a whole new chapter all its own. The outer story is this: The writer has a moral dilemma. If it is evil to defile a human female to the most deplorable-number-of degrees possible, as we have just seen in the last two chapters, why is it less evil, and by how much less, and by what type of measurement, to write or even think about that same deplorable act? Some people claim they believe (but don't ever say whether they *really* do or not) that those sick-dreamers aren't evil at all. And if *not*-evil, then, what? Are they are amongst the good? So I am "good" to daydream such dreams, to fantasize such reveries, to nightdream such nightmarish delusions? Good! Well, I don't buy that way of thinking. I think the trance makers, the visionaries, and all the rest of them, and I am among the rest, have got to have some evil in them to ponder such dreams. We just don't know how much. That's the question. So the tales that Sparkle tells, fantasies all, about that very same Sparkle, delving deeply into his dreams, unusual as they are, also poetical, perhaps somewhat magical, or so-hoped, as each sensuously touches, the page, riding those sentences wherever they go, and believe me, sometimes they can go on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and ... I bet you thought that one was *never* going to end, right?

Chapter II

So each story is a basket that holds some Danish-bakery-clues, which are clues that can sway you one way or the other, starting with just a little evil, and bouncing its way to *way* too much evil. Lots of evil in this-here story, which takes some getting used to. But, given a chance, you too, can get used to it. So, you can take each story, or leave it, stories that get the label *chapter* here, each chapter is its own story and sometimes, like this one, it hardly has anything to do at all with the story about Sparkle. Think about it. Yet, to my thinking anyway, what a great story. I could read this story every day until the day I die, but if you recall, Death does NOT enter this story, or any of the other stories beheaded or coming from behind, chapters already read, that is. Did I say "beheaded"? My goodness! That was pure accident, *accident-pure.* Why I would *never* bring Death into *these* pages! *Never-never!* Now if everyone would just calm down, quiet down, calm, d-o-w-n, there we go, now we can continue with our story. Storyteller? You may go on now...

Chapter 3

Now I believe I was interrupted while in the throes of evil ("e"), in those velvety-dangling arms of the "e", smack in the middle of eyes. Bathing in evils, evilly scratching holes that weren't ever-there in the flesh of human-evil. "The mechanism is faulty," the loudspeaker states. A neutron star explodes and the next thing you know there is a neutrino passing through your fucking mechanism, your DNA-Medieval Knight Suit Armor, Combat Full *Armour*, and for our Non-American readers, Wearable Handicraft Replicas, a mechanism on a mission to keep that DNA message moving across the eternity of time to finally get a chance to arrive at that finally arrived at destination. Good luck! As I said, the mechanism is faulty. And now there is an increased chance for the DNA *never* to arrive. How many possibilities for the message to arrive? Just one. Out of an infinite number of possible destinations, only one, 1, is the correct destination, one in an infinite number of possibilities. What is the chance we are the-one? "Null," is the answer. Work it out, it's just *math*. We all die, but not in this book? Are you crazy? So how evil is it to have everyone, *everyone,* not a single person left out, everyone die, including you. How evil is that? Never has mankind experienced anything close to that, if you think about it accurately. Infinity is an awful lot, eternity is forever. And no human soul will be ever be found among the forever. None. Not. So, this book is *not* about death but it *is* about evil and sometimes the two are the same and sometimes they get confused. But they know each other real-well, and I'd even venture to say that they are friends – at the *very* least, two-minute friends.

Capítulo Cuarto

A book about evil, whose details are worked out by the hidden author, he takes care of that part of the story. Then there is a book about Sparkle Plenty, possibly a serial killer of young women, all of whom are beautiful, of course, but maybe not, not that they aren't beautiful, but *not* that they had their lives taken from them. He probably didn't even get close enough to murmur delicate words to them. Can you even imagine him touching them, he being so squeamish of touch? So maybe it's true that he just thinks about it, or maybe it's a little of both – which is what the author and Sparkle both want you to think, to kind-of throw-you off of the-track, even though there isn't even any track to throw you off of – but it's not that, not really. I notice that-*that* last phrase in the last sentence, the one beginning with the word "but," to be a phrase consisting of exactly six (6) words. I could have saved time by just telling you the damned phrase, which is, well heck if I don't feel rightly comfortable saying it aloud just now, so here it goes, "but it's not, not really." There, done! Those *five* (5) words don't really amount to much. I haven't a clue what they mean bunched-up there together like that, and in that particular order, all those letters and things, but they certainly don't make any sense in the order I gave 'em to you, way back there by now, at all, see, and we put that phrase in there just to *throw you off the scent*, or, as I put it *bluntly* once before, somewhere up there, to "throw you off the track." But again, as I must emphasize, again and again and again, *there is no track!*

Ch. V.

So when you are searching each story for evidence of Sparkle's innocence or guilt, which, I know, is a fun thing to do, we all do it, remember that everything, both-here and everywhere-all-around-us, here is a clue, there is a clue-clue, is something that can be used as evidence to build a case, to prove the exact amount of evil that puts you over the edge, the *enough* beyond the edge to assert you guilty of some unknown crime, which makes you the devil-himself, telling yourself to cross a moral line, the sly-guy! But some clues are purposefully placed there by the writer to throw you *off course*, to confuse you, to force you to dream before you die. But some clues are duly direct. It must be done, otherwise, what a mess it would be. Even this story, a story called "Ch. V.", if you are still with me thus far, still with me to this distant point as well, well, even though this story is like really-hard to read, like reading some lawyer agreement to-do with anything in-this-world of ours, these days, anyway, except for suffering and starving and dying and other such things—no documents there. And we're all going to die, and this will happen within our own lifetimes, ironic, I know. Is this funny, ho-ho-ho, or funny he-he-he, huh? Either way, it sounds like evil to me, still, and even now.

The Sixth Chapter

But it is *so* much fun collecting evidence and working out a thesis, either for or against. And I wonder if and, if so, *how* this line and the one before it will be used to convince, at some indeterminable future, some unfathomable reached-for system, or footnoted rationale in some grad-school written paper, to prove why he, Sparkle, is guilty or wise. So let each story be a zestfulness of clues, jewels to fuel the larger story, the diaphanous netting that holds it all together, that thinks the big thoughts, too painful almost, to lug around for too many days of our narrow and short-lived lives. And comparing those days of lugging to the minutes contained in eternity, who is it that's really got a chance, any chance at all, to figure any of it?

Conclusion

Allow each story to stand on its own, apart from the others, for good or for bad. Together they grow, synergistically, apart they glow with the impatience of another-world. They tell a different story although the words are the same. Stand back, there, just a few inches more and now a little to the left, there-there, that's it. And now you see a bigger story yet, as you pop out of the story and stand next to it, sitting when your legs get a bit weary. You can lay in it if you want, and that gives you still another perspective all its own. But don't close your eyes, because if Sparkle glances your way, you just might look back at him and maybe, just maybe, you may fall for those Juliet-eyes, despite yourself. And you *know*, in your cheating heart, that Sparkle will tell on you, and, we all know-know, then, what-what comes drippingly next! But, as a consolation, you can always rely on the fact that the mechanism is faulty, even though the cost of repair is way beyond us all.

My Verdict
Guilty as charged,
With only a reasonable amount of doubt
And no more

7

Chapter Seven

This Version Does NOT Match the Greyhound Bus Version!

Introduction

Sparkle is twinkling like a Twinkie, but *not* in the good way. Someone, some *who-could-it-be*, is knocking on his door, and it is probably, most definitely, *not* an evil, mouse-urine-smelling, *talking*-dog. Contrariwise, at the very *least* of his worries, and he's rather casual about this one, it might be a police sergeant here to handcuff him from behind and take him away for no-purpose at-all, and *that,* he thought, might be kinda-cool in a weird kinda-way. But the *worst* it can be, and this, sadly, is the *most-likely*, is that on the other side of that *knock-knock* is a knocker, and on the other side of that knocker is a *knockee,* who happens to be a living, wet-and-disgusting, human slug, *uhg!* He quick-opens his eyes - just a dull, insignificant rumor of a dream, a *daymare* emerging from a nap set upon only hours after the noon bell tolled. He thought he'd bemuse himself with better things, and among his long list of better things, is to write a story for you, my Unfortunate Reader.

i.

Tuesday, Scotty, a young boy, easily excited is he, is unexpectedly, excitedly, going off to college, driving thousands of miles to get there, and maybe just a little bit afraid, a tad, but not enough to bring him down. He's just a bit *willied* to be as independent as the Western Sky to which he is headed, to study law, never to be seen or heard from again. He, Scotty, or Scott as he liked to be known, arrived at 11am, promptly and right-on-time, and I, *stuffer*, stuffed my rumpsack and the *single*-pouched-doctor's kit in the back, behind the rear, of his VW, in this case, the *stuffee*. I had everything packed one week before, so I, just like Scotty, must have been excited! And just before leaving, Tracy called, OMG! Now Tracy is the girl, the pretty one whose good looks, I told you, I don't think looks good on a girl like her, well, what did you ask me? Anyway, she lives with her boyfriend, Tracy does, in McMinnville, Oregon, or someplace like that, and I

was a bit upset when she had never answered my letter and, so it happened, she was, disappointed, too. But since she had traveled back to see her folks she decided to call instead, so, at any-rate, I have a place to go when I'm in Oregon, no problem. And, it was so cute, you know, when she said we could catch-up on soap operas together. Well, that's what she said, anyway.

So we drove until 9pm that night. It was already dark out when night hit and the sky was getting bigger-and-bigger, or vaster and *more altitudinous* as we might say back in New York, and I don't even remember where we stopped – I think somewhere in Ohio. I think it was the "City of Sin," the *really* evil one, the one more sinful than Las Vegas, more evil than Wisconsin, both only subsisting on a single-sin, whereas Cincinnati *eats it* with two. I stood on the balcony of a $12-hovel, my choice, and listened, crooning along but missing the beat, relishing in the vibrations of William Crotch and for whom-the-bells tolled, eight or nine times, but, having probably missed one or two of its chimes due to random traffic noise, and since we arrived at 9pm exactly, it must've been ten or eleven by now, definitely not twelve, and the tune, ripped from the Crotch by Handel's Messiah, about someone who (allegedly) once lived and whom Sparkle dreamed of hurting, but tonight the bells were embellished with a weird harmony draped upon the merry tune intermingled with a tapestry of blood-burgundy, same tune, heard even, in the bowels of the library while fleeing, across the hills kept stationary by the Vermonter's bloodied sky. Then fireworks, I swear! Lots! Amazing! Beautiful! Right under my window and high, sky-rocketing high, above the spinning, going both *this-way-and-that*—Ferris O'Wheel or the Wheel of O'Ferris. Oh! What more surprises await my mad-ridden fate! So, night one, I'm *somewhere-over-the-rainbow* in Ohio, possibly a city of sin. And Scotty is showering using all kinds of things on his hair and his body, scrub a dub-dub, me politely not laughing, not snickering, not even a giggle, just a bit frightened, huddled in a corner, when suddenly out comes the hairdryer, unlike any hairdryer ever seen by man. We had just earlier argued, temperamentally, unpredictably, about where we should stop, he wanted hi-class, and me, I wanted sleaze, so we compromised and it cost me 12 dollars anyway. So much for sleaze. Now I can see he's getting pissed because I'm walking around the room nude, showing off, and saying I want to go out, my toy scalpel in hand, swaying it about, to explore the possibilities of this blotch town of evil, splat-located in a tight-and-tiny corner of Ohio, just across the river, just splashing-it-up, near the river of ol' Uncle Tom. In the morning Scotty sprays his underarms and I hope nowhere else, and I hide my head under the blankets to avoid the smell and the burn, just as I did when I was a little kid and my brother sprayed his arms *and me* because he liked to torture, in cruel and subtle ways, but it is to him, my now-charred and spiritless brother, whom I must someday thank, for my especially robust pair, of twin nasal paraboloids, both hearty and hale, *most* stalwart and unimpaired.

ii.

I am here, in this dreary-and-ridiculous town, still writing you a story, but here, in this town, they call it a city, the rutty City of Spokane, rhymes with "man," or so the vacation guide states. Spokane, Washington with a longitude of 117.42604˚, latitude, 48.658779˚, *almost* above the 49˚ line, where things *almost* always go wrong, where the mechanism is most likely to break down, where Sparkle is feeling quite healthy, for the first time in his life, free from all discomforting, problematic at any rate, desires. I was told things are different this far up the earthly sphere's ladder, where it has a measurable effect upon the apparatus, where it sparkles more than below that line, where it twinkles tenuously, where it shoots stars, falling stars in particular. I am sweating, fearful of the regurgitation and the screams, always muffled with a plug, down a ruddy throat, before, but here the wails are free and easy, just peals of laughter, peals sloughed off with ease, peel by slough-torn peal. That sound is, probably, someone spitting up now, see how it splashes there, droplets of partially-dissolved emesis, aka mini-chunks, splashed onto the hem of your skirt, my Well-Dress Reader, traveling to you all the way from Spokane, at the speed of light, at $_{670,616,629}$ miles per hour. That is the evidence of a retch, just a spasmodic respiratory twinge occurring, fortunately for all involved, with a tightly-closed, but glitteringly shimmering glottis, splatting all the way from me to you, my Now-Bespattered

Reader. I interrogated several Frontline Entertainment Managers, FEMs as they are secretly known in the trade, and I asked them all, the ride operators as well as the operators of rides, about the people who get sick, and, oh, how they enjoyed telling me their stories but how they hated to clean them up. So the stories, which gave me a Spokane rutty-rise, were plenty dirty, soft fuel for my active imagination. But you, my Sweet Reader, know *that-thing* about me, already you do. You passed that test when I let you escape, safely back into the world. I still remember your smile, your pretty mouth, *poutingly* luring me, lips pressing hard into its smile, a smile only for me when I finally unraveled the ropes to emancipate you. I can still see the marks where your puddles and slop once lay, as I watched you wasting away before your precious release. Smile for me again, Dear Reader, and let us dream of exculpating you all, one by one, again and again and again. I will remember each smile, always, until the day I lay dying in my deep-dungeoned tomb. Yes, and as anyone, visiting here, with me, upon this dying splat of blotched earth, today, anyone is apt to notice, that at the peak of a 21st-Century Regurgitative Contest of various technical techniques, I too am in the throes of *wistfully* vomiting, spitting up (and *not* down), hurling a durling, doing the Techno-Color yawn, calling Ralph on the White House Courtesy-Phone, wearing (or bowing before) the Porcelain Crown, reviewing what you had for dinner, remembering not to do *that* again, exercising your trachea (a trachea with quite a workout), while laughing at the ground, *un-eating*, blowing up chunks, or more simply, just up-chucking, while tasting the rainbow, possibly while laughing, still, at the ground and the fact that this is what has become of your fate, and tasting it again-and-again, even, while swallowing in reverse, and finally, exorcizing the demons, especially when those demons are our cousins Death and Evil. These are the stories that the FEMs told, worrisomely, while standing in the dark. And maybe it was hard for these Frontline Entertainment Managers *not* to make the stories too-dirty being so close to the forty-nineth parallel as they were and all.

iii.

"So I was surprised when Death showed up at my door, but unfortunately, looking much like an old, worn, whittled and chew-upon pencil, most likely a No. 2, but I should only be here a month," he was saying to the bartender. What? Is Sparkle drinking now? The murmured sentence (and for whom was it murmured?) at the start of this paragraph is s-o crazy that my concluding thesis is that Sparkle must-be *on-something*. Nutmeg oil? Morning Glory seeds? Could be anything and that can't be good for his own safety, you know, for keeping things on the mum side, you know, on the—*quiet-quiet*. So this may be a very good time to change the subject matter completely, so I'm gonna tell you 'bout-a-story, 'bout how-I got-here – all the way to this-here chair – where I'm gently lowering the book I am reading, being Knut Hamsun's "Mysteries," so that I can tell you a mystery all my own. I don't know how long this headscratcher will take me to tell, if I ever get around to starting at the beginning, and to ward off its potential to bore you, I'll tell it very fast, and if I add lots of jokes, intrigues and digressions, and the right among of blood, maybe it won't, bore you that is, and I'm *not* going crazy, at least not *yet*, and I hope Western Civilization finds you sane (more on that later if there is time left over) but first I want to tell you about my grandmother and her encounter with Frankenstein and I'll add just a short ditty regarding my last day at the library and anything else I find *coming-my-way*. Are you ready for this? My God! It's already behind us! That *was* fast.

8

Chapter Eight

Who's Goin' to Take Care of Me Now That Scotty and Tracy are Dead?

Murder One

1

Scott and Sparkle are driving, *off*-again, and there are, to Sparkle's delighted heart, dead animals strewn all along the road and he's unconsciously singing "Dead Skunk" and getting a hard-on, hard like dead metal. The slaughter of insects on the windshield, though titillating, is thought by Scott to be bird droppings. He couldn't understand how so many birds could be hovering above his car, ready to *"let-it-fly."* Sparkle didn't know either, so he didn't try to explain. Until, that is, that very night when stopped in Des Moines, stalking the streets like land monks, moiling about, still unable to find any action, it came up as a topic of conversation. Sparkle freely speculated on the bird droppings, *guano's* the technical term derived from the Spanish word for "seabird droppings," before coming to tenuous but forgotten conclusions as they stared mindlessly across the shimmering plain. The land all around them was very flat, in fact it's unwrinkled from Ohio all the way into parts of Western Montana. The land, being so homaloidal, that Sparkle, in order to avoid coming down with an opposite case of vertigo, read a book about bird farts by some French guy named Promblès. Never even looked out the window, not enough anyway to notice the flatulent and defecating birds fluttering above the westwardly rambling vehicle. So what exactly was he reading? A story entitled "Fart-Bubbles Breaking Noisily upon the Windowpane" in a book entitled *Flatulence Denied.* Boring-boring stuff, just like the polluted air-scape outside his car window, heedless of scatological scenarios, breezily rolling, along the endless moonscapes of Montana. He missed it all. But maybe, if he happened to have remembered it right the *first-time*, maybe there wasn't much there to-remember to begin-with. We will never-know. But could that bubble story have had some influence on the hovering birds and the messes demonstrated upon the insect-gutted windshield? To which thoughts, Sparkle, in present time, jiggling in frustration at his chains, gave a grand-canyon-sized bottom sigh, punctuated by a second snort-like sigh, though, perhaps, not quite as deep, and *definitely* not as chasmal as his bird-dropping ponderings.

The two young gas guzzling travelers could get only one radio station to descend from that walloping, ever-enlarging, Big Sky and the few cassette tapes they had brought along for the trip soon became repetitious, warbled, and just plain nerve wracking. Oh how I wish I could hear these forgotten melodies all again, just one more time, bird poop splatterings and all!

2

It was in the Black Hills of Deadwood South Dakota, a real piss of a town, where Sparkle was able to immortalize the local Judies, a task that took him only a matter of hours.

And the girls were truly ugly
Each looking like a gnome,
Couldn't find a single one

Worth a two-line poem.

3

It was at this point, that, upon completion of his insulting and unkind quatrain, he suddenly contemplated, for the first time ever, the symbol of the *mother-fucking* Giant-Popcorn, and, just as suddenly, he began to remember why he hated himself. Murder began radiating from his fingers and the heat from these digits, without hesitation, were soon to seal poor Scotty's tortured fate.

4

It was on a Friday that we came to the magical mountaintop, or did the mountain come to us? Sparkle kept explaining how spiffy, magical, and natty everything was just looking-there back-at-him, while Scott struck with the more *attorney-esque* and traditional, "Gorgeous, simply gorgeous!" And that night they stopped at some college and tourist-trap whose name is now forgotten. It was probably in the state of Montana, but it could have been Idaho, and it very likely could have been on a Saturday instead. Either way it was just at the onset of dusk that Sparkle panicked, scared to enter the motel room alone—fearful of those unshakable yet tingling fingers of his and the persistent thoughts that there was soon to be a murder, somewhere in the room. He was sure it was to happen *that* very night, too! And once again, with such an intuition firmly lodged in his now-quivering fingers, holding tight to his dissection kit, spilling it open, a kit gaily embroidered with the name of a girl, a drug-taking girl who now lives in Alaska, he waited there 'til gloaming, for Scotty, just inside the doorway, the jagged doorway of a rented room where he ended up taking a dilatorily long-bath, more than enough time to wash away, at the very least, *most* the blood. As always, his scouring of the crime scene was impeccable.

5

So now I am here, sitting alone, in the center of an almost empty room, a hotel room, with the door locked and latched, afraid of the yelps and screams of winos and fags, child molesters and desperadoes, an assemblage of people who were meant to frighten and terrorize. And frighten it did. It could happen to anyone. Sparkle slumps back into the fetal position and begins to take deep breaths. He is on his own now without anyone to take care of him. It's about three-fourths of a mile from where Scott *would have been*, if... His place *would have been* nice. It probably *would have been* very much like a dormitory where they looked out for one another, discussed classes and professors and dreamed about hot girls and the law. Sparkle is happy he left there for this place to sit, did I say, in the middle of a virtually hollow chamber? *For there is no-more-Scotty.* I have, literally, swabbed these hands of his blood!

6

The room in which I am seated, friendless and lonely, but no longer sitting in the center, is rather large, consisting of such items as, going around the room, neither clockwise nor counter, but always *your* choice, in a dizzying circle, since everything has been pushed, hard, back against the walls where they will probably remain for my entire-stay, with, albeit, one comfortable, yet sturdy enough, reading chair, upon which I am no longer, seated, that is, having earlier been displaced, from, of course, from the comfy-seat to the bouncy-$_{bed}$-^{bed}-$_{bed}$-^{bed}, due to a sudden-and-totally-unexpected display of, Fireworks, just outside my suddenly-wondrous window. Next to the bed is a

warm and empty refrigerator, followed by a white kitchenette, home to a community of thriving cockroaches, beside a pile of oddly bent-and-mangled coat-hangers, adjacent to the *gothic-styled* door, which is *always-locked*, several lint towels limping over a deep-seated sink for which the water does not stay-on, it just bounces-back-off-off-off-off, all on its own. Next comes a gas oven with a stove on top, four burners. I'll need to get some matches. Next's the eating table that I will make use-of as my writing desk, and, finally, *lastly*, having come full circle, all 360˚, we find the dresser, and, oh yeah, the bed and me-are-last. All for what could have been $15 a week, but, lucky for me, before even thinking about my situation nor giving any speculation regarding my future, I bequeathed the Chinese man a prim fifty-dollar bill for a full-month's rent. And so here I am, at the Center of the Universe. Here I am. I am. Home at last! Alone in the red misty void.

Murder Two

So, tell me, Scott, why don't you answer my calls, am I off the grid? And how are you doing at school and tell me if you are happy and what was Kentucky like and is Rapid City all they say it is and are you attending your classes and which are your favorites and do you like my new haircut, cut just below the ears to be pushed up behind, perhaps unsurprisingly, the *ears,* wax exposed? And if you do write me, perhaps ever again, as I hope you do, again that is, do so *soon* because I want to go to Seattle and maybe Victoria, but Oregon most especially. Finally I'm going to Oregon. As if Oregon can do, what? Who knows? But my fingers are beginning their incessant tingling and being unable to stop such movements on my own, the time for action is now. As someone before me has already once said, "Time is equated with death as death lingers ahead of each and every one of us, always lingering, always arriving, always traveling *through-time.* They are twin brothers, Death & Time, always acting in unimpeachable concert, forever together, pinky promised, impeccably entwined." They practice, making it all so precise! For they are two respected men about town doing the best things so conservatively. Oregon, as you, my Mortified Reader, may have guessed, did *not* go well. It was awkward-awkward, and so, towards the end of an episode of *The Edge of Night,* with the baby finally asleep, only to relieve the tingling, tingling that was preventing me from being able to catch my breath until I felt like I was choking, I gasped, regurgitated and defiled! I had no-choice. It had to be done. And it wasn't at all sexual, not at first anyway, but then I noticed my breathing *was* getting a bit heavier, *but just a teensy-weensy bit*, almost imperceptibly, or so I had hoped. But as the breathing increased, in both heftiness and desire, spontaneously splashing me visions of the Goddesses of Death: the twins Hela and Giltine; and although I was in the depth of despair, in the active process of heaving-chunks, ruttily regurgitated, I noticed I was getting a relentless hard-on. An unexpected turgescence for Tracy, delivered to me as a gift for my childhood friend, and not for Hela, and most definitely not for Giltine. *Only for her.* You remember her, *Tracy!* Tracy Nash, the Tennessee-Nash Girl, a real TNG, and she was mine! Tracy Nash was the *real*-thing as pieces of Tracy were sprinkled *everywhere*, laved, swashed, and splatted. But now it was time for clean-up. And if you think of the actual mechanics of the thing involve, the mess that lay before us, well, it was more a matter-of-fact *kind-of-a-business* than you might think, unless you actually pondered upon *the thing*, the *thing* he had just done, that *god*-awful awful-*thing*, i.e.: the Gory Disentanglement of Tracy, a *real* gory GDT, to be more precise. Things sometimes happen and then you have to clean up after yourself. That's life. And there are a whole lot of details that were expected to be considered, none-of-which

could be overlooked, and each, to be worked out, in conspicuous detail, all for efficiency's-sake. (Fortunately for Sparkle his fingers were no longer tingling.) And that's the way it is in most of Sparkle's undertakings. Good choice of word, *undertaking*. I almost luxuriated in the election of the word *enterprise* instead. But, as in any endeavor, if you're good at what you do, you survive, and you will get even better-and-better at what you do, if you focus on some personal self-improvement, but, if you aren't careful, this can cycle all-out of-control, if you let it, with some of the cycles reaching all the way out to infinity, *infinity* man, yeah, infinity! So don't let it if you can help it. I appear to have lost my way again, so-so sorry, but do hold on tightly while I attempt to hop, again, atop a straggling train roving our way, and watch me, as I hip-hop back, back-on-board. Luckily for Sparkle, all that was overlooked were a few of the baby's toes, but they were so tiny, no one noticed.

Coda

So, cleaning up - *that blood-soaked Tracy-mess* - was a breeze. Even so, Sparkle found it invigorating, and it was making him feel a little bit horny, too, as he looked down and realized his hard-on had never left him. Too bad Tracy wasn't still alive, or at least in one piece, or one piece *mostly*. He could have used her at a time like this, with this bacon bazooka and-all. In fact, this is how it was *supposed* to end up, but it wasn't going to happen, not this time. Such a disappointment and definitely not good for his health and youthful constitution. Was that the start of a tingle in his left forefinger? How could he have calculated so incorrectly, while still achieving such exonerated impunity? And now, Sparkle contemplates his quivering lap, while awkwardly whispering quietly to himself, "Now what am I going to do with this winkle of mine?" When, suddenly, with both hands groping and finally grasping his giant pink torpedo, Sparkle, without warning, began to gyrate wildly while commencing upon a rhythmic, lamb-like bleating, *interspurtingly so*, while no one other than he, our mad and lonely protagonist, crumpled into a torn and stained cushion of the bus, rambling quickly back to the spooky streets of Spokane, took notice.

8½

Chapter Eight, Again

So Who IS Going to Take Care of Sparkle Now That Scotty and Tracy are Dead?

Nobody, that's who!

Chapter 8½ is only necessary because the author decided to actually make the implicit explicit. For he has not yet done so elsewhere, to answer the question posed in the title of Chapter 8. And to answer, finally, and hopefully, to everyone's satisfaction, with satisfaction-guaranteed, Sparkle's satisfaction excluded! Think of it as the 8½ % solution if you will. And you should have hit upon the answer at the same time as did I, *me*, the guy that gets to do all the choosing, you know, Mr. Make-It-All-Up! Yep, that's me, but I digress, at least I think I do. Not really sure, anymore. And the answer is ... there is a hushed silence, and we should know by now what exactly distinguishes the muted silence from the hushed, we all still await, both standing and sitting, and perhaps one or two of us are lying, supine upon the lawn, yet we all await, await the final decision, the final *designation*, the what-it's-really-all-about, or the *really-is*, and that decision, to the satisfaction and

expectation of us all, except, just to be clear, except for neither the satisfaction nor the hopeful expectation of Sparkle himself, is: ***Nobody!*** But you already knew that, *didn't you?*

Once the answer was spread among the rubble, the philistines, and the rabble, Sparkle wrote a poem about it-all, a poem just as quick as a Chapter Eight-and-a-Half, entitled, "Who's Gonna Take Care of Me?" And here is his poem, it's a di-poem, *di* -- the Latin for two, as in ***di-*ce,** di- for two dies; oh, why is it that he keeps comin' 'round, doesn't he know this is a no-death zone? Perhaps that was not the best of examples and, perhaps, we should just get on with Sparkle's poem, quick as-it-is, so unlike his-wit:

Who's Gonna Take Care of Me?

Nothing
&
No
Body
I'm on my own!

9

Chapter Nine

Pornography

That last chapter was kinda-short, *not-very-long*, even, sorta-like a half-chapter. And there is no way to determine or forecast, or, even, *guarantee*, that this new one will fare any better. We have only to read on-and-on, and when we get to the-end, only then, shall we then-know. Hopefully, both you and I, reader and writer both, will arrive at the end of the chapter, at the same time – simultaneously! And so we begin, and I hope you find yourself slightly squeamish and embarrassed as you read. If so, I have succeeded, in some peculiar, *way.*

Pornography. P-o-r-n-o-g-r-a-p-h-y... Porno! Or just plain *porn...* lots of ways to say it, but only one (1) item that is the real tamale, and that is the red, hot-peppered – and here you must use your imagination to complete the sentence. Sadly, I know you can do it. That's because you-know-it when you-see-it, or when you even-think-it, even, and so, when it reveals itself to you, as it so often does, when it shows itself $_{up}$-up^{up}, right in your face, you know it immediately, you even recognized it as a kid, self-taught you were, --and with that I need not go on.

I open up the screen, of the Dell Latitude D630, whatever that all means, and onto the screen pops up the all the tools I need to write these stories, trying to find a line, the line I cannot cross, and this story, by the way, could not have been written with a pencil, nor a pen, nor typewriter nor through dictation, no matter the lasciviousness of the voice *or* the indecency of the notetaker... It *could-only* have been written digitally, whatever that may-mean, for I am a digital man living in a digital world, just watch me dingle-my-digits, my ones and my zeros: @ # ۞ % ֍ and &, not bad dingling, eh? And with that I could end it all, right here, right now, nothing more to prove, just put

on the brakes and make it another short chapter and be *done-be* done with it. Whoosh! *Real* gone, man! But this is a chapter about *Pornography,* Sparkle's kind of pornography, and I haven't said a word about *that* thus-far, so it doesn't seem to warrant termination, yet. And, for reasons to be seen, in a hard and protruding but obscenely clear light, the kind of pornography I am seeking to share with you, hoping to slide it in, surreptitiously into the story, without anyone noticing, and then to pull it quickly back out, drippingly, to give you a tickling sensation, the old tickle-tickle, here, and now, and under there, too! Sexy hard-core pornography. *Sex-driven* pornography, perhaps with a Sparkle-type ambience. All great choices. Wonderful! But not the kind of pornography Sparkle Plenty would endeavor to enjoy, as we have said before, lasciviously so, yes, lasciviously, and how I yearn to *lasciviate* once again, and maybe this time, *lasciviously-so*. So taking it into my palms, with a firm and crusty grasp, clutching the delicious tail of this sentence, at either end, and placing it back, into the relaxed and capable hands of the Author, to pontificate and edit, again and again, *his prerogative*, always, to edit, in any way he sees fit. To embellish and complete, refabricate thoughts seized, from nowhere, as they float by, but first let me grab hold of the few threads left dangling, swinging to-and-fro, before me, and place them, also within the calm and reliable hands, of he, who contemplates before the D630, to intermingle with what already lays there, pooling here and there, before us. How I do congratulate myself, in my endeavor, to keep this chapter going, for as long as I have, for holding out so long, without coming, coming to some climatic, though sadly premature, and therefore *foreshortened*, ending. And I don't detect an end, *la dernière période*, from this entangled, yet smutty, perspective I have tumbled into, to ensure your long-termed pleasure in reading this, caressingly, word by syllable, and I don't see an end, delightfully callipygian, or otherwise, in sight. So, to keep it heated, boiled and roasted, and to continue to plow through this, and all the following sentences, I ask you, my Panting Reader, how would *you* describe the exacting and meticulous type of pornography particular to our bloodthirsty yet bashful Sparkle? What I'm talking about here, precisely, is the pornography offered to you in this book that you, cruelly and homicidal, with wet and ever-growing gasps, of which you are now barely able to hold in your hot-lap, now a d-r-i-p-p-i-n-g drool-pool, drippingly, *so-wet*. But what of the mind of the Author? Obvious pornographer – an easy-easy answer, though a pornographer clearly in search of a line – any line, obviously at this point, will-do. But so much easier than, say, *understanding* evil, wouldn't you say?

Full Disclosure, as promised. A promise given is a promise kept. Warning! Warning! *The Salacious Saga of Sparkle* is a work of pornography, hence, whether you knew it or not, you are presently reading: Porn! That explains the mess in your lap. But it's Sparkle's kind of pornography, which is a little bit weirder, creepier and spookier than all the other kinds of pornography floating around the universe. Stranger than the good-old porn most derelicts run into. It's more like, in Sparkle's own words:

> Oh, I just read Sparkle for his acrobatic sentence constructions, pretty fucking-far out-of-sight constructions, don't you think? And y're never quite sure when the darn sentence is going to end, or end, so-will-it end, if it-ever ends, until the-final end, the very-end, and it-will-never end, etc., and-how? Hey! I'm just playin' with ya! Yeah, *pornography* – that is what you are reading, in the meter of 7/4, say it hard on each of the third and fourth beats, right there in the middle. BooM!-BaM! But always ending on a BooM! That's essential for the beat to make sense. And sense is what it makes! *That is what you are reading,* whenever you're reading about me, Sparkle, while always ending on the seventh beat. BooM! Tra-la BaM! BaM! La-*BooM*! It's nothing but Pornography. And I bet you can't do *that* on a Remington Quiet-Riter or with a No. 2

pencil. And as long as you are still reading this sentence, which continues with *this*, and moves onto *that*, and *both*, the *this-and-the-that*, being a part of the *book that you are reading*, and no doubt wish, at this very moment, you weren't, though I hope that's not the case, but, more assuredly, it is *definitely* the book that I am writing, writing in a digital-world, for a digital girl, like you, how I wish I could reach out and touch your chin, or maybe I'm writing it for *just-me*, or, perhaps, for, *nobody-at-all*. Just something to do in order to pass the time, sitting around and writing some old-time pornography, until that ***thing*** we promised not to talk about in this book, a promise made, and, hence, a promise kept, one time, so very long ago..., until that unmentionable five-lettered *thing*, starting with a lower-case "d" comes to take me away.

Do you *like,* what it is, that you, read, do you *feel* it inside, you, in your bones, your shinbones, too, and in each of your toes, *all twelve*, vibrating *up-and-down*-and-up, giving you a buzz, setting up a vibration in your ears, maybe squeezing out a tear or two, *or many*, and is it getting too rough for you, *yet*...? Maybe you'd like some more? Dirty enough for you? I think I will have a seat right now, over here, on this fluffy cushion, and just cling to that last sentence, let it simmer, just give it a little-bit of the sizzle-sazzle, just a nano-bit, just to make it tender and red. I don't want, and you don't *want-want* either, *believe me*, there has already been too much blood in these sentences, let alone the blood that *still-flows*, does it ever really stop, really? But once you get used to it, it's not that bad, and you wonder, often aloud, "How did I ever do without it?" Sparkle likes his blood in all different kinds-of-ways, hand me the menu, cooked-and-fried with eggs, frogs are the best, their eggs, that is, whereas not, just saying, their toes, *s-o-o disgusting*, frog toes are! Blood just any-old-way, with those few restrictions though, just mentioned, blood he can smell-it-cooking-in-the-kitchen type of blood, as long as she is (1) young, (2) still pretty in that sort-of mangled-up way (you know that in his heart they never-ever die, these young, chinless, did I say "young?", young, pretty-pretty objects-of-many-delights), and, and, (3) what was the third thing? I keep forgetting that third one... A little bit naughty, maybe? That's a nice trait when you're with an *oh-so* young, pretty (a painful sigh just eructed from the computer terminal, so sudden and unexpected!) Oh, how he does remember her, *being naughty!* So it was a quite-pleasant thing to discover that the nineteen-year-old was, indeed, and not really meaning to detain you much longer, not *very*-much longer, can you hold out a minute longer? --in the mystery of it all: that she was a little bit naughty. But he liked that, and so did I, the Author, and I think that *you-do, too.* Scary to admit it, I know, but we all have a little bit of the pornographer in us, hiding in the daytime, yet still a little-bit-afraid to sneak-out, *even-at-night,* but maybe a pinch of a sneak, perhaps just a smidge, as long as we do not allow ourselves to become *too*-totally immersed, too wholly, in the horror-of-it-all. But I am repeating myself, for I already told you all-that, somewhere, back there, now lost from time, from the living and our-collective memory, lost among so many sentences and ideas. So lost, I no longer know what I am writing about!

So it is true, regardless of any artistic merit or social-redeemable value, neither of which can be found in a book like this, which is sometimes hard to understand, to see such merit easily tossed, by any agent-of-the-gestapo, any one of them would do, and each would do so without qualms, tossed like shit on a fine, velvety smooth torso, hot into the fire, until Sparkle's starting to achieve some level-of-tumescence, exponentially compounded, when he notices she's missing a chin: --*that* kind of young, little-bit-naughty sweet-thing, and *really young*, too. Really, really young: nineteen-years-old, maybe, or maybe just twelve. He never asked. He just played, playing up to his elbows,

in his most peculiar way, for he was a most peculiar man, in his silent world and his tiny room, or so-say the neighbors.

Not everyone finds Sparkle's aesthetic tastes in porn so interesting, his pornographic preferences, that is, along with his piquant perversions and dietary delights, upon the cutting-block of his salivating desires. What I'd like to know is, what are the pornographic squamations of the creator of Sparkle, the Victor Frankenstein who's really in charge, making this up as we go along? What about him? What secret confession is he holding back on us? He says he's just looking for a meandrous line to cross. I wish he would, instead, quit slicing around the bush and just spit it out, splutter it, splat, upon the page, where it can be skewered and licked, spiked and slavered, even if not yet fully digested! Must we wait until it is completely, wholly, sucked-and-chewed, applied upon fully, with some negative pressure, so as to withdraw some fluid, and thereby enable tranquil mastication, with spilt sensuality and animal desire, suck-suck-chew! *Slurp-chomping!* And here, after much-and-earnest gnawing, is what he gobbed:

> I scour through pornography searching for the beautiful. Pornography is an arm-chair activity, something, when injected directly into the system, helps with the perpetuation of the species. Whoever is driving the DNA flesh-husk is manipulating the machine meant to transport it, the DNA, that is, and to where, or misshapen into what, or manipulated, DNA strand by strand, into becoming something we cannot imagine, of which we will never know. It's something so much bigger than me, or you, or all of us together, and whereas *our-time* is brief, *its* time is all eternity, so it will definitely happen, become a success someday, or somewhere, at some-some-some, into a thing that cannot be described, which is precisely what *some-some-some* means, just in case you were wondering and you couldn't find it in these pigheaded, finite, dictionaries of ours. So I like my pornography to be eye-catching and smart, generating an alluring sequence of charming words that yield captivating sentences, with unexpected phrasings, and provocative fantasies, and it doesn't matter if I get a hard-on, or not – especially at my age, lying here in the basement of a dungeon, deep in the bowels, and oh how the pong attests to that, so I hold my nose in the bowels of, if not Satan, then that of the Château de Lacoste, within whose dungeon, I wait, ruminating upon combinations and possibilities, like the corpulent Count before me, the boundaries of delectation, and the chained and locked confines of the bottomless pit, scraping the sausage of evil upon which it presides. Beautifully exquisite, jovial with pleasure – words that scamper joyfully across the page – that's *my* kind of pornography. And did I already make it clear? *Not*, no, *not at my age!* For I'd be the laughing stock of the neighborhood, as if I wasn't already, given my penchant for mirth, deep in the middle of the night, when visibility diminishes, and the forests still echo with laugher, and it makes me wonder. But this is just between you and me, my Trustworthy Reader, just we two. And that is the truth and nothing but the truth. Would I concoct something otherwise just to make it a better story?

And now it's now time to extinguish the light and seal your eyes shut with the staple gun. It's the season for sleeping, to dream your own erotic twists and turns, crannies and chinks. You're getting s-l-e-e-p-y! Just keep your perforated eyes on the pendulous watch, swinging back and forth and back and back and forth and forth and back again, and listen-listen, turn your ears upon a story, an edifice-poetic, a fairytale-romantic, a storybook fabrication from the blood-dipped pen of Sparkle.

Dark are the thoughts and heart of Miss Nash.

A heart, delicately garnished with thoughts, already partially eaten.
Scrambled in the sauce that flows through the heart of Miss Nash

She is wearing a banana for a hat.
A tentacle reeling from her brain slides from her left ear. The one with the earing!
It crawls searchingly up the side of her cracked-and-broken head,
When unexpectedly the Stout Banana is found, inflating still,
She grasps it and slides it into her cavernous skull.
Mashed is the banana that flows through her thoughts.
Yellow thoughts, squishy, mashed is the heart of Miss Nash.

Mixed with the blood
That forms the sauce
That flows though the thoughts
The thoughts of M-i-s-s N-a-s-h!

She is wearing a telephone on the top of her head for a cap. Slam!
A tendril from her brain skulks, emerges from her right nostril. She screams!
A tendril that slides nervously up the side of her shattered face. Stop!
Telephone discovered.
She clutches it and slurps it up that same-same nostril, the mentioned nostril being her Nostril!
Crashing it, the telephone, of course, into the banana that now resides,
In that hollowed-out-hall, once smiling with a-joyful-delight, yet uninhabited skull. Her skull! Her skull!
Digitized is the phone that carries her thoughts. Dreary-dreary thoughts!
Electron-thought of the chip-pocked brain of young Miss Tracy Nash. Sparkle's childhood-friend, Tracy! No!

Mixed with the mash of yellow blood
That forms the thickened sauce
To slug the delicate parts right through
The veins that stick out
And carry the ugly dark thoughts of

Our (1) very own, *(2)* dead-and-gone *&(3)* who'll-take-care-of-us-now, *Miss-Missed Nash-Nash*

Makes you really think a little about the meaning of pornography and just where that tenuous Red Line of Evil resides. Not bad, docile Sparkle, gentlest of poets. Both tender and meek, is our Sparkle Plenty, not bad!

10

Chapter Ten

How I Got to Use the Shower at Scott's Place

Introduction

Sparkle thinks it's time to get acquainted with his new environment so he leaves his $50-a-month, or, if you prefer, his $15-a-week, and, if that is still a bit too much for your wallet, his $3-a-night, less than the cost of a three-dollar-whore, but Sparkle nor I would know anything about that. The Hotel, about as low-class as you can get, even in Spokane, has a high-class name, but, like a young-girl's name, it was forgotten even before he moved in, never to be remembered again. All Sparkle can dredge up is that he thought it a "spiffy" name, a word he was fond of using at the time, although he never used it aloud, for he never spoke in the City of Spokane, City of Phosphorescent Decay, Holy Spokane!

I

Knowing no one, having no responsibilities, few interests, and select sensibilities, his only option was to hole up in his drab-and-dreadful room or explore his environment. Choosing the latter, he slowly, begrudgingly, walked, then he began to meander, before strolling and ambling. As the morning wore on he found himself beginning to totter just a bit before staggering forth. To avoid falling asleep he marched, promenading through the center of town, until, his racing heart demanded a steady sauntering, all the while finding very little to interest himself. He journeyed a pathway to check out and pore over the Great Tumbling Falls located along the Spokane River near Vast Riverfront Park. Alas, the river had been diverted, thus by-passing the cliff leaving no water to fall, hence, no waterfall. He changed course, and wandered, *exploringly*, *moseyingly*, in the direction of Uptown Spokane (US), looking now much different than DS, yes, you got it, Downtown Spokane... Up and up and up he drifted, a-roaming-and-a-rambling, ever-exploring, ever-dull, when, suddenly, uh-oh! He espied two fourteen-year-old bad-girls, almost women *he* thought, who had just gotten bawled out by an old man, a fuddy-duddy of an old man, not quite a geezer, but much more than an old fogey. He was screaming at these two beauties because the girls had connected one rubber band to another rubber band to yet another and another, a girly kind of sailor's knot, until they had a rubber band chain long enough to stretch across the neighborhood road ready to ensnare whatever was to come their way. That would be Sparkle, ready to ensnare, aching to be ensnared. And so, with a bantam-sized-sister in-tow, a one-year-old baby in malodourously-wet diapers, tied to the one called Judy with what looks like to Sparkle to be a Turk's Head Knot, decorously strapped about her too-skinny middle, a middle with too-little meat, thought Sparkle, though eager to find out if it matters – but she would have to chuck the baby, though, and the river is always nearby for a chucking, never too far when you live in Spokane... Yes, that is exactly what the two naughty girls, had naughtily done, and it was the old man who had seen them *done-it!* The old-croaker told them, his voice in yelling mode, volume on high, that *if he hadn't "just come from church," he would've called the police* – "the *Spokane* Police," you know, "the tough ones located *downtown*." Let me see, hints abounding, it must have been a Sunday, late morning, no later than early afternoon, with the bright September sun splashing off the rubber bands, bands of multiple, rainbow colors, glinting spectrally, warm now that the morning cold has disappeared into the east, into Idaho, to hide amongst the potatoes. I thought that a wonderful line, that line about not calling the police and having been to church and all. Don't you? As it happened, Sparkle had never seen so many churches and church accessories (like the nunnery up the road, but he did not like to think about the nun, the nunnery, the n-u-n-n-e-r-y and the blood). There were *so* many Jesus Saves signs, too, and Sparkle thought he could certainly use some saving, but maybe not until tomorrow. (But meanwhile, how can he get the girls to his room?) "Jesus Saves," broadcasts the signs, strewn about like marijuana seeds. In fact right out of his hotel window there was a billboard exclaiming "Jesus is a Life Savi<u>o</u>r" where the underlined "o" portrayed an actual drawing of a candy-mint Life Saver® but with "Life *Savior*" on the candy. The "o" just made him horny,

and whenever he thought about Jesus, he only contemplated how he could hurt Him more than He's ever been hurt and the sweet feel of His voice, like the candy-filled sweet-chipped Saver®, to hurt him in a more esthetic, erotic and jubilant manner. Sweet *jesus-effect*, eh? Now back to the girls. He talked to them, casting his spell. He told them the story of the *once-upon-a-time* when he was around seven- or eight-years-old when he and a pack of neighborhood kids, back in his hometown, yeah, he's a traveling and worldly man these days, even has his own place – plenty of room where they could all spread out if they'd like, you can bring the baby if you want, anyway, this pack of kids and he tied a rope, a ⅝-Diameter Manilla Rope *with a Break Strength of 3960 lbs.*, across the road secured tightly with an Icicle Hitch on one side of the road and a Snuggle Hitch on the other side, just to mess with the forensic team, a rope pulled tight so that either the post and poles dismantle or the oncoming vehicle cracks in-two, but the rope, the rope, emerges unscathed. So, as we waited on the sidelines, hidden amongst the Barberry Bushes and Sweet Honeysuckle, in the diminishing evening light, the carefree and slightly intoxicated couple scuttled up the hill in their 1961 Caddie, after a spaghetti dinner, and plenty of garlic, the Albanese's b-o-inge-d directly into that tautly-bowed twine, bounced back several feet, front end raised slightly, enough to slide a dog under the front wheels, before hearing the *crick-crack* of their two headlights, as the front end of the car, returned, to-the-road. And, as we skedaddled, scattering out from amongst the bushes and sliding into the woods behind the Catholic Church, praying to that Catholic God, kids of all denominations, as we sped as fast as our Canvas High-top Pro-Keds Sneakers, Average-Size 5-1/2, "always room to grow," each of our mothers had told us, blue ones and red ones, depending on your gender, all bought just weeks ago for the first day of school, running, speeding if you recall, just as fast as those running shoes would take us; and as we zoomed away, we couldn't help but notice that Mr. Albanese, in his spaghetti-splattered shirt, once-colored white since this miserable idea of ours occurred on a Sunday, just like your rubber band escapade, (he smiled at the girls as he said this, a smile that looked weird to the girls, making them a little bit more cautious than they had been a moment before), Sunday, gads! – it was a school night, even! Every one of us kids noticed, in the reflection of the setting sun, bloody across the horizon, Mr. Albanese, as who I have already mentioned, was especially fuming! He looked at his broken headlights, looked into the setting sun, and he hollered, "Church or no church, I'm going to get you crummy little brats!" Three days later the rumor started to spread. It was then we heard that "the authorities are going to have the rope *fingerprinted!"* This was years before any of the *now credible* mathematical models for analyzing the dynamics for rumor-spread, but without these tools and at that time, each of us, one and all, had a little bit of trouble focusing on anything but forensics over the next two days or so. We were little kids, though, and these girls, well they were *practically* women and they were, despite the lessons buried within Sparkle's tale, were ready to stretch their rubber bands again in ever widening pursuits. But first Kelly, I believe that was her name, would take her ten-month-old baby-sister home so they could make their inevitable get-away without such an impedance. Later, daydreaming about the girls, girls who got away, he opened his refrigerator, rocking swiftly, back and forth, breathing harder than usual, to get some wintry air to cool himself down, lower the temperature, calm himself. He doesn't even know why he had the refrigerator plug-plugged in, there was nothing in it – not even an empty ice tray. But he was glad he did.

II

What is cool about the hovel, in which the heart of Sparkle inhabits the very center, is that Expo '74, a world exhibition, is right outside his lone window. Just ahead and below him, and I wonder how many floors high he is out of how many floors altogether, all forgotten, lies the amusement park and the frequent regurgitations hurled within, while just to the right and directly in line with his vision is, in all its resplendent wonder, the Ferris wheel, above which, at 10 PM nightly, every night, rain or moonshine, even when the moon is new, fireworks! –the most beautiful display of which he has ever experienced! And he further wonders, what would it be like to do ***it*** under that wondrous display and in the shadow of the great wheel going round and round and round and round, as he ponders looking up and under the girls, Kelly and Judy, or as Judy would have it, Judy and Kelly, sans baby sister, and the lost possibility of their still-developing, boyish-and-skinny, bodies being strewn about, before him, on the sticky-wet floor, pondering,

calculating, how much fluid is there, of any particular kind, and, really, more than one liquid dost qualify, how much, to bring us back on track, could such a tiny flesh container, he supposes the word petite also pertains, exactly how much liquid of-any-sort does one-young-thing retain? Now double that, for as you might recall there are two girls involved, and there's your answer. Plenty, but not as much as he has dealt with in the past. Cleaning up would take less time and that, at any rate, is one consolation. But what exactly is the ***it*** we are talking about here? The answer to that question would go a long way towards answering our major thesis, the thesis pertaining to Sparkle's innocence or guilt. So it would be to our advantage to delve into the meaning of this word and discover what, if anything, can be milked, yet another liquid, perhaps, even, a liquid of speculative interests, what can be milked from a dissertation upon the ***it***.

It, as we shall soon discover, is a most interesting word. One trait, known by all, but often overlooked, is this: consider the descriptive word used here – ***overlooked***. Now close your eyes, no peeking – can you spell it? Now that singular trait of the word ***it*** is that the solution to that question is "i-t." I told you it was known to each of you, and this is proof that this is true, as well as the fact that every single one of you overlooked this basic trait. But from here, we move on. Let's look the word up in the dictionary, in fact we will explore several dictionaries, and see what we can find. To simplify matters, note that the word was used as a verb, so nary a pronoun need be considered. So the neuter pronoun of the third person need not apply, nor need we consider it as a sub-stance for any noun of the neuter gender as in "take this book and shove it!" We seem to be getting closer to the meaning here when it is used to demonstrate, especially at the beginning of a sentence, pointing to that which is about to be stated or mentioned as when the statement, "I saw him chopping up the body," is followed by, "Yeah, I saw him doing ***it***, too!" The ***it*** here can represent any action, for example, the word "chopped" could be, while referring to a great and honorable doctor instead, the word "healing" and this would change the meaning of the ***it*** immediately. So, although the definition here may be clear, the ambiguity of the act is wholly intact. As an indefinite nominative for an impersonal verb, as in "it snows," or, "it is in the dreaming of it, but not its realization, that makes it evil" (a real double-punch to that second example, wouldn't you say?), we remain in the same location, making no further progress albeit a bit of elimination. How about as a substitute for such general terms as, the state of affairs, the condition of things, and the like; as "How is it with that sick bastard, Sparkle?" To which Sparkle, with a downcast glance, replied: "Think of me when ***it*** shall be well with ***thee***." Finally, our inquiry forces us to consider the possibility of the ***it*** as an indefinite object after some intransitive verb (or verbs – interesting distinction, don't you think?) or even occurring after a *substantive*, used humorously, as a verb, or as the great English poet, Alexander Pope, has so delicately put-penned it, in *metrical lines* of verse, each containing two feet, a *dimeter* if you will,

Whether the charmer sinner **it**, *or saint* **it**,
If folly grows romantic, I must ~~paint~~ dissect **it**.

So, the "***it***" in Sparkle's contemplations cannot condemn nor acquit him. His obsessions in fluids could be damning, but not if his evening dreams refer to alcohol, emesis or urine. But still, it could be...

III

Before returning to our story, though, I must confess to yet another quandary that has been plaguing me. In fact, I lost a night's sleep, last night's sleep to be more specific, over the elaborate length of some of the story's sentences. Take for example the rambling

> And, as we skedaddled, scattering out from amongst the bushes and sliding into the woods behind the Catholic Church, praying to that Catholic God, kids of all denominations, as we sped as fast as our Canvas High-top Pro-Keds Sneakers, Average-Size 5-1/2, "always room to grow," each of our mothers had told us, blue ones and red ones, depending on your gender, all bought just weeks ago for the first day of school, running, speeding if you recall, just as fast as those running shoes would take us, and as

> we zoomed away, we couldn't help but notice that Mr. Albanese, in his spaghetti splattered shirt, once-colored white since this miserable idea of ours occurred on a Sunday, just like your rubber band escapade, (he smiled at the girls as he said this, a smile that looked weird to the girls, making them a little bit more cautious than they had been a moment before), Sunday, gads! –it was a school night, even!

Such a sentence may be amusing, but also confusing and, more dreadful to my thinking, intimidating to readers resulting in their utter disgust and the abrupt end to our relationship. And, in as much as you are my *only* friend, perhaps the only person to have been willing to travel along with me thus far, well, maybe I should try to remedy that horrible potential fate. I will rewrite the above sentence into short-short sentences. The new rules will be (1) no sentence can be more than seven (7) words total, and (2), well, there is no second rule so this sentence could easily be remade into a quite-a-bit shorter one, maybe even, within the 7-word maximum. So here is the first attempt at following the ~~rules~~ rule:

> In a quick skedaddle, the children scattered. (7) Jumping from amongst the bushes, they glided. (7) They slithered and slid. (4) Into the woods they slunk. (5) Behind the Catholic Church they prayed. (6) They asked protection from that Catholic God. (7) These kids, kids of all denominations, prayed. (7) Prayed as they sped. (4) Sped as fast as their sneakers would go. (8 – ugh-oh!, we broke the rule!) Ked sneakers made of canvas High-tops of average-size, 5-1/2s. (9!) "Always room to grow," our mothers had told us. (9 – 9 is now the new 7.) Blue sneaks and red. (4) Depending on your gender. (4 – but are these last two sentences?) All bought just weeks ago. (5) Bought for the first day of school. (7) The kids are still running. (5) Speeding along, if you recall. (5) Just as fast as those running shoes could take them. (10 – which is bigger, 10 or 7?) ~~As~~ We zoomed away. (3) Clearly noticing Mr. Albanese. (4) His shirt splattered pink with spaghetti. (6) No longer a pristine white, readied for church. (8) Our misshapen attack, planned for a Sunday. (7) Just like your rubber band escapade, Judy. (7) (Sparkle smiled at the girls. (5) A smile that looked weird to the girls. (8) It made them more cautious. (5) Just a bit more than they had been. (8) Than they had been a moment before.) (7) Sunday, gads! (2!) It was a school night, even! (6)

This was harder than I thought it would be. I have several remedies:

(1) Work harder on this – maybe during the rewrites, editing and all, it might come together into a true work of art. But, then again, maybe not. And is it really worth all the trouble? Just some things to consider.

(2) I could cheat and change the rule to ten- or fewer-word sentences. Then, technically, I'd be done. Did it! But, the same considerations as above will still apply. Specifically, is it fun, is it witty, does it tell a good story? I can tell already, I'm in for another sleepless night!

(3) Is there a third thing? Yes, and that is, maybe I have created a monster for myself here! Editing the original will surely necessitate changing the 7-word-per-sentence version as well – triple duty is how I see it. Will a triplex of sentences necessarily require editing and matching and manipulation – from one to another, from the other to the one? Will I have created a quagmire from which I will never emerge? A recursiveness into whose maw I will be chewed but never devoured? Things to contemplate as I take a break and walk among the squirrels and the flowers to focus more on the true story at hand.

IV

He later stopped off at Scott's who lives about three quarters of a mile away. He was surprised that Scott was not home. Scott is never home anymore and Sparkle is not sure why. He hasn't seen Scott since before arriving to Spokane. In retrospect, and as I grapple with my chains, I can clearly understand why that might be, but I leave the truth-of-the-matter in your grimy hands, my Adjudicating Reader. Scott is going to law school somewhere around here. Perhaps Sparkle just got the address wrong. He decides to play a couple of

sets of tennis. There were some well-kept courts behind Scott's empty apartment - Scott should buy some furniture, a lawn chair maybe, and some decorations would be nice, and some food and a cabinet to store his clothes would help round out his life. Scott's mother would be worried, if he has one, a mother, that is, if she saw the way he is living – with no more needs than that of a dead man! If you recall, tennis racket in hand, Sparkle began to play and he played hard, sweat breaking out all over his body, sneakers slapping the clay pavement, a court that caused the tennis ball to produce a slow and high bouncing ball, Sparkle served, from both sides of the court, with a lot of topspin and plenty of kick. Nevertheless, he lost both sets, the first 6-3, the second 6-1, but he had himself worried-and-challenged throughout each game. It was hard work jumping, back and forth, over the net to play each ball. He of course lost because he was playing with a strange racket, his own he had had to bury-and-burn a long time ago in New York, a long ways from his present home. In addition, he was wearing long pants, rolled up around the ankles. It was then that he noticed a splatter of blood, hardly a smattering, just inside the cuff of his left white sock. It was the imprint of a baby's toe. He made a note of that. Clumsy of him, unprofessional.

V

It was just tonight that he saw, for the first time, a naked man walking through town. Just one. Could no one else see him? It was in an area just to the right, nautically speaking, to the south-east, as the wind blows, alone on a hill, where we observe him sitting, with a foolish grin, keeping perfectly still, and a little bit chilly, at this very minute. It is within the duration of this very-same-minute that, he, also, found *his* park, *his* territory, and *his* kind of people. Sadly, a description of *his* people inhabiting *his* parked territory is forever lost, mislaid, hence, there is no surviving description at all, *none*. For a while there, at least the last four or five days anyway, he thought there might not be any madmen in Spokane, not even one solitary-lunatic, harboring the same kinds of foolishness, folly and foolhardiness, as he would be apt to harbor, in the town, either downtown or up, but he, at long last, has found their domain. It was also at this same-very moment, with the eyes in his head and the world spinning round that he realized it was he, Sparkle, who was not wearing any clothes!

VI

INTERMISSION! Time for **F**ire **W**orks! An explanation is forthcoming, but it will have to wait until later, hopefully not much later, for now the organ has begun to play...

VII

The Explanation. And this explanation is most definitely "not much later" as once was *not* hope-for, but instead, to the delight of both you, *Delightified* Reader, and I, owner of the *still-ten* (10) fingers punching in data into these electronically processed-and-stored digital stories, stories, again, of our delight! Presently, now, as I remember: Expo '74 is right outside his window. What is visible to Sparkle while sitting Indian-styled, are all the amusement rides, among them the Ferocious Ferris Wheel (FFW). At night they are all alight, in a chaos of glowing greens and reds and ultra-ultra-violets, and they are spinning-spiraling-and-a-whirling a-round and a-round and a-round *to-the-music*, vibrating basses and cranky old voices to the strums of a neutrino guitar, sometime within the range of a falsetto, of some cheesy band (excuse me as I turn on my radio to drown out the memory of the music buzzing in my head). Now, with a pillow inserted in each ear, I can concentrate much better, and with enough aural clarity to tell you more, and if you're good, even more *some-more* of the story. Now then, *every* night, at 10pm, and that means it's nighttime, in honor of Amerika, they shoot off fireworks! –the most beautif-u-l-l I have ever seen. And right outside my window! I don't know how to rant and rave to make you understand, the vital color display, the intricate stellar-and-planetary choreography that just took place and will take place 28 more times before my very eyes! –just enough to ease the fire in my brain and to lessen the need. And it is precisely here, my *Starpricked* Reader,

back there, now, behind us, my brain reset to manufacturer's specifications, this honorable explanation dost end.

VIII

Today the manager of this flophouse misunderstood something Sparkle was saying. He's a Chinaman, and he, the Chinaman, does his hotel operations from behind iron bars and nickel-shield netting. That should have been a warning regarding the statis and safety of this high-end resort. "Not so good at English," the Chinese Operator Says. Anyway, he thought I wanted to take a bath. Well, he gets a large pot and pan, then starts boiling water, me thinking he's trying to unstuff a toilet some magic way and thinking it funny. Now the water is cooking and he's showing me this bath tub and telling me things about it but I still don't understand. All I caught was how to lock this room once I was finished with the bathtub. Finally I realize what all has been taking place and explain to him that I don't want to take a bath. How he is laughing! Chinese style. I went back to my room, turned off the gas stove which held the pot with a dead floating fly boiled within. And this story serves me with a reminder. Tomorrow I think I'll fly up to Dead Scott's place and swill, dip and splash in a long-needed shower.

11

Chapter Eleven

So? How's Life?

So?

How's school, life, and foot powder,
Liz,
Home,
&
Existential Streams of Consciousness?
So?

And to think that *that* monstrous thing displayed above could have been the first sentence starting off this new story, a story for which I haven't, not even at this *very* moment, nor *this*, haven't a clue as to how it will begin, what will follow, yet I hope it's well-written and fun to read. Nor do I know exactly what the hook is going to be, the thing that will make for a good and satisfying finish. I, *in my own opinion*, though my opinion doesn't generally *stand-for* much around here, I think they're *all* rather clever, the hooks, that is, don't you? And by-the-way, if that monstrous thing had been the first sentence, the first sentence, the two "So?"s notwithstanding, would have looked like this: So? How's school, life, and foot powder, Liz, home and existential streams of consciousness? So? And that wouldn't have made a very good start of things, *at-all,* so I'm glad we were *all-able* to avoid that sentence *after-all.*

"Ochoa, come here Muffin!" She said this as she let her foot slam, either foot would do nicely since each delicate tootsie was enclosed in a lethal high heel, Christian Louboutin Red Lady-Peep Two-Heel Platforms (Size US 8.5 [Regular BM, or is that MB?] Item #24707684, Sale Priced @ $562.49 — that's less than $281.25 per shoe), to be exact, leveraging three-inch spikes now towering above the furry muffin-abyss

of dogginess, then with a swift descent she let the first inch-and-a-half of the heel, again, either one will do, slam, smack-into the furry neck-of a runaway mongrel, a *fleas-even-in-his-drool* kind of poodle, and as a result, that dog's neck should have been broken and the dog should have bled to death after his encounter with, have I already said it? -with *either one* of those goddamn, twinkle-winkle, cherry red twin and womanly enjoyments, with his downy, pink, and bejeweled neck. The blood was so red, too, that it was hard to distinguish the dog from the shoes, and after all the screaming died down and the dog stopped whimpering and apparently stopped bleeding as well, so once it was clear that the dog was not dead, everyone made up and that was the end of that! But it was exciting and I was glad that I decided to get Sparkle out of bed this morning after all, because otherwise I would have written all of that and he would have missed it. The excitement occurred at *the* park, a park whose name is not remembered but that Sparkle *so* enjoyed exploring, while he was reconnoitering, always reconnoitering for the fairyland dreamworld that Sparkle, in this loveliest-of-parks, amongst the flowers and the trees, earlier today, sometime in the early afternoon, resided. Later, while laughing in the sun, he met a man who demanded Sparkle give him money, from Sparkle's *own* stash, located in Sparkle's very-own left hip-pocket, so he, *the man*, could buy dogfood for his two dogs and the fat girl sitting shotgun in the truck, waiting patiently for her dinner. The truck was the same kind of truck Sparkle's father once drove, for it was a 1934 Plymouth with a T5 engine, with the original motor still intact, though still in questionable working order, even though it's a truck that's never even been restamped. Same chipped fender, too! Despite his looking like he, again – *the man*, also needed food in him, and maybe he liked dogfood as much as the next guy, just a speculation on Sparkle's part, his, once again, although this is getting to be plenty-irksome, *the man's*, well his first concern, for all appearances, though sometimes first appearances can be deceptive, or so my mother told me before the fire consumed her, of course she couldn't have told me afterwards, even if she *could* tell me after, which would have been kind of creepy 'cause we probably wouldn't've been on talking-terms anyways, so *finally*, his concern, and you should know by now who *he* is, told me it was "for the dogs" and *their* health, but we mustn't forget about the fat girl, so, of course, when he pointed that knife at me and showed me his gun, I quick-sketched out that part of the story where Sparkle, calm and friendly like, entered the store and bought the dog food, jumbo-sized, just like the girl.

Then Sparkle went to search the downtown area again, this being the nineteenth or twentieth time so far. It was all beginning to feel like home. This area, the one where we find Sparkle, where he is now standing dead-center, laughing, spinning, swinging madly across the sun, providing impressions of being back, spinning in a similar fashion to the way he is spinning now, that is, whirling madly, across the sun, in the Big Apple, on the front steps of his favorite place to whirl-and-twirl throughout the entire Universe, which is located at 476 Fifth Avenue near 42nd Street, that being the *Main Branch* of the NYC Library. Such joyous times spent there! Macy's was, *still-is,* (I think), located along 33rd or 34th, and there was a time that he had spun there, too. At any rate, we can assume Sparkle is swinging-madly-across-the-sun in front of our own PLS on this pleasantly cool and scintillating afternoon, with the sun gaining drooping momentum, or, as it is generally referred to here, in the Old North West: the Public Library of Spokane.

"Hobos," if you listened carefully you could hear Sparkle saying to no one in particular. "Yeah, I know I shouldn't call 'em that, and they get mad as-shit at you unless you call them that other word, now what is it you are supposed to call a hobo these days?, -dawg if I can remember." So they will have to remain, just plain-old *Hobos*, to us, that's me and you, My Hobo-Phobic Readers, as colorful language as that might be, a rainbowful of word insinuations, I'll bet. *Money Impaired* ("MI'ed"), that's the term! He comes to the understanding that *they* wear jeans: blue jeans, or black or brown, or baggy pants, and any other style will do as well, the point being is that they, the Hobos, the people with MI Syndrome, all wear pants – even Mrs. Hobo, and all the other Hobo ladies. And they always wear a goofy hat, except for when they don't. Sparkle gave a quarter to one of these *wuchá-mă-cal-l-it-s*, just today, a little before I started

telling you this story, the one I'm recalling for you right now. He just rolled it over to him: Sparkle (he), then the quarter (it) and finally the hobo (him), respectively, that is. Slowly it revolved, gyrated and twirled, round-and-round it r-o-l-l-e-d, and, finally, when it got to the point of wobbling-some, it ploddingly started to fall – still a-wobbling, but just a little bit now, until it unambiguously landed, clankingly hard, with a heads up, Sparkle peering at George and our first president's dead eyes staring straight back into Sparkle's, all because I, as the behind the scenes author, didn't feel too comfortable letting Sparkle get too near the *too*-real and potentially dangerous hobo, although, maybe, that hobo could have taught Sparkle a thing or two, but more likely the truth being the other way round, regarding Sparkle's true trade, other than the poetry. Still that Hobo looked like he was probably *none-too-innocent*, and most certainly capable of murdering someone, even a serial killer, *perhaps*. He was, after all, wearing one-single-shade-white sock and another single-shade-red, *s-o-c-k*, the red sock, as you can see, was a piddling-bit stretched o-u-t, if you get the picture, when the hobo reached down, fingers fully stretched and dirty, from his squatting position, looking like he was taking a shit, but that can wait until another chapter, and he picked up the tacky-and-pigment-tinged, reddish was its tinge, quarter, tested it with his single tooth twice to make sure it was real, now a real two-bit piece for sure, and he leered, not-smiling at all, at me, and then over at Sparkle, leering to the utmost of extremes, and, with his eyes a-twitching, he just regarded Sparkle, with a languishing slowness, and might I say, "Twitchingly so?" And Sparkle could read, unambiguously, the murder that simmered in that hobo's eyes. And, pity me, please, My Piteous Reader, *if thou can*, for I see a replication of those hobo eyes, every day, *have-done-so-for-all-of-my-life,* whenever I look back at myself from the mirror, eyes always on high-alert, my vicious eyes swaying disturbingly in the mirror, like fireworks to the beat of my cheating heart, the mirror dripping with the blood of an earlier vintage. Sparkle cried and cried and tried to sleep, but sleep didn't come the whole night through.

"Glad you're doing well, and happy to hear that Liz is *also* doing well, and that your foot condition has improved some." Those feet really were disgusting; I can't believe I ate some of it! And speaking of feet, no one J-Walks here in Spokane. Nope. Not me either! Though this is a very hard habit to break. You stand there, alone, on the edge of the curb, balancing all alone, no other people and, more-to-the-point, there are not any cars, trucks, racers, trolleys, scooters, etc., in sight to impede your crossing, and yet you *still* wait. And if you start to day dream, as Sparkle was apt to do, you miss your chance and have to wait some more! You w-a-i-t for the walk-sign to flash-flash-flash. And if you don't, you're libel to get a $20 fine, twenty dollars! That's the big 2-0! And they give-'em-out too! (But this is good information for Sparkle to know, in case his getaway has to be quick, quick-and-efficient.) I was told, confidentially, mind you, con-fi-*dentch*-ially, and this was overheard *just tonight,* which is that *some* cops, mind you, and note well that I said *"some,"* - why they just sit-around, waiting to spot you, waiting to catch, snare, and nab you, you J-Walkers!

Oh, and another highpoint *for you*, My Highpoint Reader, is that today I saw my first **cock**, and I pause here to increase, or rather *pique*, the suspense of learning the rest of the imagined word, for the word is only about halfway complete, not quite though, and here it is, the rest of the word: **roach**. BIG difference, for Sparkle, anyway. La cucaracha was garishly large, Kafkaesque large. Lucky for Sparkle it wasn't the kind cockroach that can fly! But still a cockroach, eh? And this is the first time, ever, in his entire life that our protagonist Sparkle has come across a cockroach, scientifically known as a *Blattaria,* of course. Because of his experiences in the verdant hills of Vermont, Sparkle knows his spiders, and his butterflies, and don't forget at all about the caterpillars, such tasty little fellows when you're hungry for a snack, as Sparkle remembers fondly, so you can imagine both the delight and the horror that this shy little insect, so shy of the light, brought home to Sparkle's heaving heart. Did I just see him eat it? The cockroach? And now he's drooling – contemplating more? "Oh, you sick, perverted pornographer. You devil, you!" All due to a shy and little, first-ever, fun-sized puny cockroach. Chomp, squish and swallow! Cockroach, no more.

Oh, Sparkle, did you have to go and do that again? Another dead boy, too. Well, get on with it, it's time to clean up. Do so, and please do it now, so I plead you to do what you-do-best, do that at which you are most competent, of which you are nearly second-(or-third)-to-none – make it go away! I shall look the other way, any way but towards the scent of the blood and the cooking of membranes, still sizzling in the pan, sizzle-sizzle-sizzle-chomp-chomp!

He went up to the law college to mingle amongst the important people, hitting all the hot-spots, where all the high-class partied, and there were several going-on. He drank one beer, against all internal advise, and ate potato chips, of which an unlimited amount was available, so he ate the full unlimited amount, hardly enough room for the cheese, mostly brick, but to provide a bit of style, some Camembert, Danablu and Brie. We find Sparkle mingling with the rowdy crowd, a sick-and-devilish grin upon his face, where he talked with some girls, always the girls, his eyes slightly-popped, unnoticed-hopefully, popped for those sweet-thing-nothings, his gazes emboldened by desire, his brain suddenly fogging up, malfunctioning! -is this love or is it panic? –well the girls said they *"were on their way to Seattle"* (As Will You, *someday*, Sparkle Plenty, if you don't abandon me first) and he left the college at 9:30 before he could do the girls any harm, ha-ah!, and, after sweet-nothing-parting, nary-a-touch between them, in the dark-night, he tumbled, wearily, into his shabby room and onto the Bed of Plenty in plenty-of-time to see his belovèd ...

Fireworks!

While sitting forever Indian-style
Starring reverently
Into the crystalloid void
Fixated upon the colors and the noise of the explosions and the fawning for ever more colors
Exploding across that same crystalloid vastness and beyond
The meager insightfulness of Sparkle

There certainly is something about those
Fireworks
Sparkle couldn't put a handle on it
(not yet anyway)
And Nor Can I!

Yes,

Fireworks, every night at 10PM. It's Expo '74 time in Spokane, in western Washington State, just beyond the reach of my window, if you really must know. In fact, *right now*, there is a nifty Black Rock-and-Roll Band (nBRRB) smashing-down-the-house just a spitting distance below me, but that is one thing I would never do, I consider it crossing a boundary, a moral line, spitting, that is. In a second I might get you the name of that band. They really were smashingly good! Quiet, I can just make it out – they are introducing each of the band members, announcing their names, one-by-one, step-by-step, and inch-by-inch, one band member *at-a-time*. It sounds like they are all from downtown LA, which makes sense because you don't find talent like that around Spokane unless hidden in a warehouse or something, perhaps to the south-west or north-east of here.

My heart is pounding!
So?
Why isn't yours?

12

Chapter Twelve

Shitting in a Hole in the Woods

And as I sit here, in present time, Indian-style, anchored to the floor of my prison hole, I reminisce, dreamily, about the time I assembled myself in the middle of my spring-broken bed, located in some driveled hotel, my body making such a deep depression upon the mattress, done watching the last remnants of those fireworks of long ago, still staring out the grime encrusted window, reminiscing about another time, so-much longer ago was this time, when Janet, I'm having trouble remembering her last name, maybe it will come back to me soon, anyway, Janet made me watch her shit in a big hole in the woods, a hole she had snuck out of her house in the early morning mist, shovel in hand, to dig that hole, right next to the Sassafras tree, the kind with the mitten-leaf, still fragrant, the aroma of sweet-smelling root beer bubbling from deep within the hole, due to shovel-chopped roots and finger-ripped leaves, a hole dug for the sole purpose of (what could she have been thinking?), luring me into the woods through a tangled and complicated pathway, until we finally broke through a thorny-hedged barricade, both falling together at the edge of the yawning abyss, I now tied tightly to the tree that could not cure the syphilis nor eradicate the lice, my resentful eyes propped open with thistle-twigs, thorns obliging me to watch her, *shitting*, into her well-dug lair, such a wide chasm for such a tiny ass, and so diminutive was her excremental assemblage, her little girl endeavor, the actual turd to be more precise, a girl who looked like a bad-boy, like Howdy Doody with poop. *D-o-o-d-y* – perhaps a clue to what Sparkle would one day become, and yet one question, a single word, unremittingly remained: "Why?" –which draws us back to the falling feces, tumbling, head-over-heals, which focuses the image of the turd's construction, in both form and delineation, as it traversed the deep contours of that ever-deepening pit, whose sides are starting to cave, in, just a little, not a danger yet, not yet, while a puff of steam bounces off the bottom and sides of the depression, slapping Sparkle right in the vicinity of his nose, directly across the nostrils, and it's taking forever, that feces is, the one that is falling, forever f-al-l-i-n-g-g, at least in the mind of Sparkle, and he feels like he is going to burst if he can't get just one large lungful of fresh, Sassafras-imbued oxygenated air. Janet *Pretzfelder* – her uncle was Andy from the kid's show Andy's Gang – *that was her last name*! By nighttime the hole was filled in as though it had never been dug, Janet had gone missing, Andy was the prime suspect. Poor Andy! Did he ever get the chair? And Sparkle, warm and safe in his Howdy Doody PJs, had a lot of trouble falling asleep that night. He just couldn't shake the disturbing image of Janet – shitting in a hole!

And Sparkle, as poets are wont to do, immortalized this amazing feat, of a courageous little girl, sadly never heard from again, and, even more sadly, greatly missed by her parents, her siblings, and especially by her once-jolly now-incarcerated Uncle Andy, he, with pen in hand, remembered Janet and her precarious shitting in the form of an epic poem!

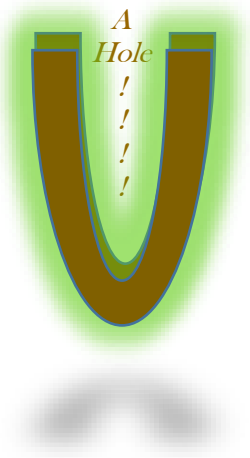
And as I sit here
In present time
Indian-style
Anchored to the floor of my prison hole
I reminisce
Dreamily
About the time I assembled myself in the middle of my spring-broken bed
Located in some driveled hotel
My body making such a deep depression upon the mattress
Done watching the last remnants of those fireworks of long ago

Still staring out the grime encrusted window
Reminiscing about another time
So-much longer ago was this time
When Janet
I'm having trouble remembering her last name
Maybe it will come back to me soon,
Anyway
Janet made me watch her shit in a big hole in the woods
A hole she had snuck out of her house
Amongst the early morning mist
Shovel in hand
To dig that hole
Right next to the Sassafras tree
The kind with the mitten-leaf
Still fragrant
The aroma of sweet-smelling root beer bubbling from deep within the hole
Due to shovel-chopped roots and finger-ripped leaves
A hole dug for the sole purpose of
(What could she have been thinking?)
Luring me into the woods through a tangled and complicated pathway
Until we finally broke through a thorny-hedged barricade
Both falling together at the edge of the yawning abyss
I now tied tightly to the tree that could not cure the syphilis nor eradicate the lice
My resentful eyes propped open with thistle-twigs
Thorns obliging me to watch her
SHITTING
Into her well-dug lair
Such a wide chasm for such a tiny ass
And so diminutive was her excremental assemblage
Her little girl endeavor
The actual turd to be more precise
A girl who looked like a bad-boy
Like Howdy Doody with poop
D-o-o-d-y
Perhaps a clue to what Sparkle would one day become
And yet one question
A single word
Unremittingly remained: "Why?"
Which draws us back to the falling feces
Tumbling
Head-over-heals
Which focuses the image of the turd's construction
In both form and delineation
As it traversed the deep contours of that ever-deepening pit
Whose sides are starting to cave
In
Just a little
Not a danger yet
Not Yet
While a puff of steam bounces off the bottom and sides of the depression
Slapping Sparkle right in the vicinity of his nose

Directly across the nostrils
And it's taking forever
That feces is
The one that is falling
Forever f-al-l-i-n-g-g,
At least in the mind of Sparkle
And he feels like he is going to burst if he can't get just one large lungful of fresh
Sassafras-imbued oxygenated air.

Janet Pretzfelder – her uncle was Andy from Andy's Gang – that was her last name!
By nighttime the hole was filled in as though it had never been dug
Janet had gone missing
Andy was the prime suspect
Poor Andy!
Did he ever get the chair?
And Sparkle
Warm and safe in his Howdy Doody PJs
Had a lot of trouble falling asleep that night
He just couldn't shake the disturbing image of

Janet Shitting In A Hole ! ! ! !



13

Chapter Thirteen

The Glint!

i

And speaking of shitting, I am recalled to the fact that Sparkle never-was very good at doing more-than any one-thing at the same-time. We just now discover him traveling along that creepy, hair-raising hallway leading to the bathroom, he holding his heavy breath as he walks, weightily, and maybe he would have skedaddled some too, perhaps just a bit, but that would have been one-more thing than he was able to do at any one-time, so *treading* instead, down that tumultuous tunnel towards *the* yawning-and-resounding, micro-ridden maw of the bathroom, of which *the* urine-&-feces of the multitude beforehand, had long seeped in and-engulfed all-four walls enclosing, and bounce-bouncing above to a temple-like ceiling, before turning downwards to hit bottom, the decades of combined odors land, like a cat, upon all of its four-paws with pride and prejudice, to ultimately smash against the stub-and-splintered floor. Hence all six faces of the hexahedron are well shellacked with the bodily stench of half a century of Spokane's hotel dwellers. And now we turn to ponder, ponder upon the tender-heart of Sparkle, whence-&-where he must engage, wherewithal notwithstanding, amongst what was deemed "s-o disgusting" just a few days ago, *that* verbalized assessment spilling out of the mouth of young Sparkle, a fledglingly-impressionable Sparkle, and *further*-hence, there is no-way I am able to dredge up a proper description for you, my Disgusted Reader, regarding

this bathroom and its filth, nor its equally disgusting and cavernous soak-tub, never used-in-years, though, as the saying goes, one-picture would provide you with a thousand-words, although I don't know if they, the thousand words, come in any particular order, although after what-happened today, unless Sparkle can quick-find a new place-to live, he may, from necessity, have to use such a rusty basin, to use such a thing as a vessel for his necessary clean up! At the moment, Sparkle is just sitting there, at the edge of the tub, engulfed *in-the-eternal* gloom of it all, taking, *what is called,* in the vernacular, not Sparkle's vernacular, though, please don't misinterpret the true nature of Sparkle, but he was ***taking a dump.*** Yet as I have desperately intended telling you several times, in several of the previous chapters, and here too, I suppose, but I never-ever got around to it, but now I cannot, not a single second more, no, make that a nanosecond for which more would be utterly intolerable, not even *that* much longer can I withhold from you, my Waiting Reader, from your possession of the knowledge of which I've be trying to instill in us all: ***Sparkle was unable to do more than one thing at a time!*** And although, he, Sparkle, tended, *to-be*, on the whole, very concrete and methodical, and painfully linear, he sometimes, even in spite of the fact of his present methodical-ness, probably due to the overriding fact, the one that you have just now been told, and to be much more specific, you were told it exactly one long sentence ago, or maybe two for its seems like it was forever-ago, and you were also told at the start of this damned story, it's that there's that overriding fact that *he was entirely incapable of doing more than one-thing at a time!* So while he's sittin' there, taking his dump, that's when Sparkle begins to feel that unexpected-urge to-pee, this being the one *additional* thing, and hence the source of what's to come, his wee-wee being so *irresistible* to him that he had *no-choice* but to introduce that act of peeing right there-alongside, in fact, to tell the truth my Confessional Reader, it was *just-around-the-corner*, from the implacable art of the pooping. Well the poor boy starts getting totally-flustered, and has no other option but to put the brakes on both operations, both the pooping and the peeing, the shitting and the pissing, the defecation and the micturition –well, with the brakes bringing things to a screeching halt down there, he has to do something given the full force of all that inertia, so he regurgitated instead, resulting in the grand expulsion of everything he had-had for breakfast, had-had for lunch, and had-had at last night's dinner as well (and that's a lot of *had-hads*), hence, (and how I do like a good hence!) he could both contemplate and rehash both the (1) undigested niblets of corn expunged from that delicious corndog he had devoured at the fair last night while annoying *that scathing-excuse-of-a-family*, and (2) the magical ambience of the previous evening, yes, rehashed ***both***, he *did*, and he did both rehashings (and that was a hell of a lot *rehashing* for one night) *just* before the **G**lorious **A**nnouncement for **G**rand **D**isplay of ***Fireworks!*** (GA4GDof***F!***). Perhaps, though, it had *nothing-at-all* to do with his non-ambidextrous digestive system, perhaps, in fact, it was because he was just a little bit scared about what was happening around him, what with the Cockroach and Scott, and the blood he's hiding in his refrigerator, specifically in his 12-Set of Twentieth-Century Tolovo® King Cube Silicone Ice Trays, in Stratus Blue only, (blood reserved for future use left undescribed due only to the limited amount of space available in *this story's* refrigerator) alongside the looks he's recently perceived being bestowed upon himself by the Evil Eye of Society (E^2S), in actuality or-otherwise, regarding the disappearance of each, the missing law student who never made it to town, the torn and ripped hobo, and the two cutesiest bits *of-honey* and their cutie little chins! What-to-do & what-*to*-do? Throw up, that's what. Anyway, that should do for the moment. *Anyway...*

ii

Well, he still doesn't know the name of the rocking quartet, but he did enjoy their rendition of that song of theirs, the one he'd recently been hearing on the radio and, incidentally, they were certainly *so-much-better* than last weeks's band, a band consisting of just an organ, an Acetone Phenix TOP-3 portable organ, and a drummer, barking on his Ludwig Backbeat Complete 5-Piece Set, the two of them playing, almost in sync, but not quite, to alert ears, ears such as those of Sparkle's, sketches from all-the-hits of the Summer of '74, hits such as *Banana Rock* and *Kissing in the Back Row*. Well, *tonight's* dude-runts, the dudes with a *hit!* of their-own, a hit having nothing to do with Kissing or Bananas, just quit for the night, saying, "We'll be back at 8 PM, t-o-m-o-r-r--o---w." Sparkle thinks he might catch 'em for tomorrow night's show, thinks he'll go catch 'em live-and- in-person, especially ever-since he found out that after 9:30 PM it costs only $1, that's right - *almost* less than a buck, that gets him into the fair instead of the four-dollar-bill, usual-asking price, a

Substantially-Welcomed Difference (S-WD). He sits on his bed, inadvertently producing upon it, the bed, a three-dimensional catenary model developed using the metal spring elements hidden deep within the matrices while generating an absolute nodal coordinate formulation, or an ANCF, as it is known to those mathematicians who have a cankering for such models. Of this, Sparkle knows *nothing!* But in anticipation of what is coming his way (his anything-is-possible tomorrow, the cause-and-effect of his upcoming, unanticipated future) he realizes the possibilities and begins to prepare for any*thing*. And then, before making any commitments he ponders it all again! Finally he contemplates the *one* possibility, and then contemplates the *many*, when suddenly he stops contemplating altogether and happens to hit hard-upon a single-singularity, *most likely* emblematic of all considered possibilities – and that is that they probably don't care what you look like and he's heard the pay is more-than-minimum-wage, but he doesn't exactly know where he heard that – even so, getting a job down there, somewhere across that vast expanse of Expo '74, is a sure thing, no doubt, but first, and maybe this is where he made his *first* mistake, Sparkle made out a list featuring his to-dos *to-go-there* and to-*do-that!* Such is the thinking of our Sparkle. So as first priority he'd have to check out the library for Knut Hamsun's new book, then buy stamps at the Post Office at that ungodly price of 8¢ per stamp, before exploring, perhaps for the very last time, at least one more uncharted region of *would-you-look-at-that* Spokane, *City of Splendor*. He hadn't really considered getting a job until much later, but since *"I ain't-doin'-nuttin'* anyways," so *whys-not?* But before the making of any such commitment, Sparkle has a googolfold number of things to do!

iii(a)

At the appointed time, late next morning, with his list of to-do things in-hand: (1) check out Knut's book, (2) get postage stamps with the 47¢ in his pocket – that would be, what ..., five or six stamps with some change left over? (later he'll calculate to find out the exact amount of that change), and (3) that leaves the rest of the day for exploration, a bit of probing, adventure-and-discovery, including (4) talking with a few winos and hobos.

iii(b)

Actually, and unexpectedly, the fourth thing on the list scurried up to be first as he was sauntering along indirectly headed towards the library. They wanted him to drink with them; he declined. One, Geraldine, funny name for a guy, started telling him how another man can't put one-over on him, especially with his knife glinting behind the tapestried tie-dyed rag framing his religious, Jesus-dyed, Cross. Sparkle noticed the *glint* when Geraldine, talking of his cock-control over others, gave a *glitter*-glance in the direction of the blood-strewn dribble-dirk. (Actually it was just some red *nail* polish: "Red Rum Rouge" En*tity* One-Color Couture Gel-Polish. Sparkle intuitively knew this. Any dried blood that Sparkle had dealt with *does-not* reflect light from glinting knives, even the *bloody-stained* Jesus, who happened to be straddling the Cross at this opportune time, just some religious kinda' thing sitting across da'-other-side of Geraldine's room amongst a splintered and gaudy altar.) It was a glance that caught Sparkle's attention. Sparkle was cool, allowing several minutes before investigating the purpose of that surreptitious glance, hence his perception of the *glint*, the *glint* that would change the entire itinerary of his still-held to-do list, a list now a-fluttering in the breeze, and *not* a-fluttering due to any uncontrolled shaking that might have taken over the nervous system of, say, someone even a little-less practiced in his chosen proclivity, regardless how evil. Again, please note I am not here referring to Sparkle's *nonlethal* propensity for Poetry. He grasped hold of the *glint* while Geraldine's eyes and liquor-washed brain were elsewhere, while Sparkle was standing ***halfway inside*** the Cockroach's room, the only room available to his one-roomed shack. Sparkle'd always been curious about a bum's life, yet now given the chance, he found himself wondering more about a particular hobo's, untimely death. He couldn't help himself and so, improvising, *extemporizing* you could say, or maybe *should* say, he concocted his demoniacal plan, or, rather, his dp, as he later, reminiscing fondly, remembered it. Meanwhile Geraldine told him how he had once shot a man, his Uncle Molly it-was, in the arm and side of head, don't know which-side, it took him only three shots to do this, that first shot could've gone off anywhere, his hand was shaking so much, but shaking with the luxury of passion, not fear, and how once, during a vigilant fight over a girl they had both fucked, she unwillingly, he threw his brother down a

long stairway and broke his neck, you could almost hear the crack all the way over in Coeur d'Alene, Utah, and killed him. He, Geraldine, not his brother, chuckled at the memory of all this. Such a cheerful fellow! Geraldine's friend, squatting in the murky corner, like he was taking a shit, didn't say much and just crouched there, hunkering down and looking a lot like Uncle Fester in that black-and-white episode of Gunsmoke, or was that the Adams Family? At any rate, following an unpremeditated grunt, a grunt of low decibels and tone, either from the shitting or his effort to stand erect, Fester got up and left the ramble-shack enclosure. And that was all Sparkle remembered until suddenly he awoke under the display of that psychedelia of Fireworks! Everywhere Else the Universe was Dark, with one exception, and that one exception was the percolating effervescence of Sparkle's murderous heart.

iv

For he had awoken, dizzily, in the presence of two girls, both young and rather flirty! Together, the girls and he, they were watching the psychedelic fireworks. Sparkle, after working up his courage, says, "Can I ask you two *lovely-things* a question? I must ask it! Oh! I've waited for the answer too-long!" Well, this kind-of upset the two girls, and it was at this very same moment that he notices a smudge of ketchup just at the top of his left white sock that, visible to all, wasn't really ketchup, and he suddenly is sent, at the rate of a bullet, into the heart of a *shocked-moment*, that's all it took, just one look, and he thought he was dreaming, but he's a-gonna keep on scheming, he, albeit bloodstained sock, notwithstanding, could only-imagine what kind of question they thought he was going to ask... The anger in him surged! It was the same sort of reaction he had caught from this family-of-four, two kids, a boy and a girl of indiscriminate age and description, along with two parents of a similar age (of one another and not the age of the kids) and description, a family of four that he had accosted at 9:47 PM, 13 minutes before the fireworks were about to Explode Across the Universe, a family, with two cranky kids and a whiny husband, and a mom with a cute diminutive chin, who were packing up to leave the fairgrounds since they obviously, both observably-and-demonstrably, didn't know a thing about what was *soon-to-happen* aka *the-Fireworks*. So, after taking a last bit of his corndog, the one with real corn niblets, and a long sip-slurp of his frothy dog-broth, a thick soup with real dog dumplings, he felt an obligation to tell them about the wonderful sight soon to be-beheld (and they thought him mad!), orzo he-thought. Maybe, even, *this,* for whom they believed to be a *boy-hobo* in disguise, although in the dark, with the knife, hidden, away, so carefully secreted among his randomly carried possessions, was *glint*-less at the time of his convincing the family. And hopefully he was not being rude in the-manner-of-his-manner, due to his overpowering need of alerting, forewarning, enlightening-and-*convincing* them of this upcoming fantastical event and their need to Bath in its Eternal Delights! They still weren't sure whether to believe him or not, and, although leaning towards *"not",* they instead, with both kids now screeching and the mother holding her pulsating head by her delicate chin, with both hands clutching, waited around ten minutes more, just to be polite to that weird and-o'so-lonely kid, before they came to the conclusion that he, Sparkle, was really just a imp, a lunatic and mischief maker, and abruptly left at 9:58 PM. Oh well, their loss, not Sparkle's.

v

But those blood-squeezing and delicate remembrances did nothing, not *a-thing*, to reduce his angry *erotic*-energy! So, returning his attention back to the *furry-flesh* of the girls, succulent and, with a quick sniff-sniff, that of the piquancy of a bowl of Fruit Loops, the girls began to giggle-and-wiggle, something Sparkle just couldn't get enough of at the time, when, finally, they assented to hear Sparkle's all important question: "Do you perceive in the depth of my querulous voice the hint of a foreign accent?" Yes! Yes, they assent to the fact that he does! He was *sure* he'd make a Great Russian someday! And when he told them, titillating them all the while, below the surface of things, that they each had an accent all-their-own, for his ears and his ears alone, and this being a prime example of the kind of pick-up lines that Sparkle gloried in, the girls, each in their own girlish way, found this to be a trifle hard-to-believe because they, as they told him on that exhilarating, moonless, and "tranquil like the *glint* of a hastily-cleaned knife," stolen-from-the-hovel-of-a-cockroach – it was beginning to be one of *those* kinds of night: "Pshaw, Kelly nor I haven't even a trace of no accent at 'll!" But you should hear it! Even Sparkle, in the middle of that cock-pounding night, even

then, when the *glint*-ting was out of control, couldn't ignore it! He sometimes had trouble understanding what was being *pleaded* of him amidst the screams of the two muddied girls, due to the uniqueness of those sunshiny regional-linguistic-disparities of the Eastern Washingtonian youth. Knife notwithstanding.

vi

As Sparkle sits serenely upon his lively and effervescently vibrating bed, *b-o-i-n-g!,* just adjacent to the Selkirk Mountains and just ninety-two miles west of the Rockies, Sparkle, with pen in hand, hunched over to catch the dim lights of the starlit dome to make the best use of its advantage, he writes, to no one in particular, for friends, but alas, he still has none, somehow they all leave him, always go away, disappearing into the night, yet he writes: *The band outside my window just played 'On the Good Ship, Lollipop' and has thus driven me to write you this letter... it is being hand written, I am so sorry, for my toes are rather tired from exploring this cheesy-little town, pretend city of Spokane. The city is dirty and the world's fair is a defecation plopped right down into the Center of its City Limits, and it still has the audacity to take for its world theme 'Environmental Beauty' or some such nonsense... and so I fantasize that it is this Environment that has given me this inflammation of my nose and throat lining, probably caused by one or two out of-a-hundred viral causes... but actually I feel alright today, though yesterday I wouldn't even leave my room and at one time-encountered myself, in the mirror above the sink, pissing in that same-very-sink – a real splish-splash! Having urine-splattered the front of my shirt, I changed in-two a spanking-new, un-splattered, one.* In actuality, as we earlier discovered, Sparkle was *not* pissing in that or any-other sink, ***because he was taking a dump***, if you remember, and he, *without* his permission, was uncontrollably submitting-to the urine, all of which resulted in the grand finale: those half-digested corn nibblets and souped-up dogs, ***everywhere!*** But, as this Enters and Engages (E&E) the prime area of Sparkle's expertise, clean-up took no time at all and no evidence of such a loss of personal dignity was ever suspected. Not even by the police as they entered the premises unannounced. Fortunately, Sparkle was nowhere near the place, at the time of entry, am or pm, not in *that* part of town, the part they once called, at least back then, the "gallery." It was their, Spokane's, small-town visionary-representation of a Greenwich-Village, bums and winos, winos and bums, bums and hobos, of a sort, some artists and hipsters, Native-Americans and all 29 African-Americans residing in Spokane at-the-time of the killing spree which quickly spread across the headlines of all the local papers, and even in a few papers brought in from Utah. His letter continued: Why just yesterday, an old Indian bum with longish hair began to yell-some at Joey, barbershop owner and barber alike. I looked up. I thought he was screamin' at me! He was yelling something about a haircut, when all of a-sudden, he scalps-off his curls and his tresses - it was just a fake wig! He chucks his scraggly old Goldie-Locks wig, along with a fistful of his real hair, at the barber and Sparkle thought to himself, "Boy, this Spokane, it's a City of Wonderment! A Town of Real Excitement (a real TRE)!" And Ancient Sparkle, from his supine position, ankles swelling due to the balls and the chains, highlighting scratch marks oozing along his exposed legs from where the claws of the rats had gotten ensnared amongst his unwanted flesh, he thought to himself and chuckled, and as once did his younger version, he double-reflected (*re*-reflected?), "TRE! City of Wonderment! – bah!"

vii

To make himself feel a little better, to cure him of that mirror-reflecting chill, Sparkle had decided upon some chemical-type treatment, certainly something of his own-choice, a medicine perhaps, either over or under the counter, doesn't matter, and so off he goes to buy what he can from such a prescription, some concoction such as one he would prescribe if only for himself – a quart of chocolate milk and one large Evercrisp (kinda like your mother, Sparkle dear?) Apple. So, you think it helped? Probably wasn't sick, anyway. Just a bit jittery about what he had done so spontaneously. Lately, and this being one of his more recent, new-fangled, symptoms, while walking the streets of Spokane, he found himself peering at his recurrent reflections flapping by in the store-shop windows. He couldn't figure out why this obsession had taken control over-him nor why *it-persisted*. <u>THE ANSWER</u>: He had discovered the overwhelming need to make sure he hadn't vanished. He had to make absolutely sure that he was still here, in the present-now, on this dying planet, planted within *this* galaxy, Borden's, wherever that is! The consistent reflection, <u>*his*</u>,

again-and-again-and, sure and steady, helped, sufficiently enough, until **that** *very* day, the day he had learned that his mirror image, had n-o-t-h-i-n-g to do, *with-it*, with i-t, and then sudde*nly* ... all symptoms vanished leaving behind only the fireworks-playing dollies that remained in his mind!

viii

Returning to that *horrid*-little-hellhole that Sparkle called home, on the second floor of the reeking, rancid-smelling *High* Falls Hotel (*"the fucking H*FH*"* to the bums and winos who could no longer afford its extravagant rates - and how that name suddenly returned to *my* mind, popping unexpectedly into *my* tired and worn-out and witless brain, I will never know). Awareness of his morbid surroundings, heightened to a ultra-high degree, estimation: 89.735°, degrees of heightiness. He entered his room and immediately locked the door – click-*clack!* Then he levelheadedly observed a baby cockroach crawling across his frowsy pillow and proceeded to write this, making use of its ink-blood, scratching out the words "Hoochy Cockroochy," into the side of his sniggering thigh. Slowly then, he picked up the crawly-critter, devoid now of free-flowing blood, and, placing it carefully onto the base of his-tongue, along with a lozenge for his virus-ensnarled cold, he sniffed-and-he-swallowed, and swallowed again, while *all-encompassingly* savoring that final swallow. And throughout this luxurious endeavor, his mind is in a frenzy, racing with the speed of a comet hurtling towards earth (somewhere between 26 and 298 mps, where mps means "miles per second," in case you were wondering), he composed these lines, including this one, and so on ad infinitum... Something he could use, maybe, in the far *off-future* when it was time to make his irrevocable confession, inside a novel. And now that time has finally come! And so he continued to compose, writing on-and-on-and-on in his cavernous-still-empty mind, a mind once full of **E**lves and of **R**oses. "You," writes the Sparkle of Old, written for his, no longer future but, Ancient-Sparkle's delicate use: You, my future Singular Reader, and *you-alone*, because there survived no others for whom I enjoy writing *on-and-on-and-on-and-on* to, and I am hoping you are still among us, and pray that, I, am not-alone! I know that answer by the letters I get back from people, that is if they bother-to write me at-all. So-many don't. And I am writing this before it is even possible for you to be answering my boo-hoo-*glint-glinting* adventures, instead you have probably just received them today, from the pages that once lay, *hotly,* upon the lap containing my very own age-wrinkled genitals, and that now lies in your privately owned *damp*-lap, at what temperature I dare *not-measure*. Perhaps, and how nice this would be: We are simultaneously-composing letters to each other, but then I would have to ask you, "What are you doing up at 4 AM in the morning, my Old-& Agéd Sparkle?" It's only 1 AM here, in Spokane in 1974! enlightens our young-&-guileless Sparkle, replying so very-very long ag-o-o.

ix

He had just got back, let us say, from eating dinner-out with Scotty, but that was actually hours ago. He left, in plain-sight, on the-floor of Scotty's empty-place one bloodstained sock, soaked with the blood of one cockroach and two young-things. A knife, the *glint*-ting knife of a hobo, left there by a boy who has been wearing Scott's old clothes and had red-dyed hair, 'xactly same color as Scott's but not the *red*-rust color of his-blood, as Ancient Sparkle re-remembers. His dorm room is being investigated by the Spokane Police. They got a call from his mother, late last night. She was worried. Worried about her little-boy Scott, Scotty is what she told the police his name was. All they found was a sock and a knife. And lots of evidence that Scott had left in a hurry – the details are not important. Not for this story, anyway. What is important is that they now suspect *Scotty*, as they were all-now calling him, and the description that Geraldine's friend Fester gave the police sounded a lot like Scott, the New York Law Student, he-himself -- and he was long g-o-n-e-e-e. And the fact that the police suspected him of the murders, and not-Sparkle, although many of the body parts were never-found, it felt right to Sparkle. Scotty was never one to-be trusted and he *had*-always-had that incomprehensible *glint* in his eye, a *stabbing-glint* that pierced your heart if you looked at it too long. And so Sparkle, who-was walking away, only a few miles from where he dropped off the knife, hidden inside a bloody sock, minutes after calling Scotty's mom to tell her, just as any friend of Scotty's would do,

that he was afraid that something rotten-and-nasty had gone wrong, and did I say *terribly-wrong?* He even went so far as to make the submission, as student lawyers are wont to do, that their Scotty was in dire-need of a lawyer himself. He then eased into that jaunty-like sauntering he'd grown to rely on, along the next few miles of sidewalk it would take to bring him back to his new room, a change of scenery you might say, that he had just-rented, in a way-different part-of town, where he took a long-soaking wet-bath, in a clean tub, scouring himself as he had-never scoured-before, making sure he got *all* the-dye out of *his-hair*. (Phew!) It was like being in paradise after that hellhole-living he'd been crawling into each-evening after-dusk, and extending throughout the hallways of the filthy HFH, although there is one room, at least, that was *s-o-o* much cleaner than all the others, utterly spot-free and unsoiled, and scrub-a-dub-dubbed, right down to the grain, of the wooden floors, and the plaster walls, and whatever those metal plates are, stuck way up-there onto the ceiling, those too. A room so clean that it was once caught glittering with delight! He had decided he'd move from-there to-here having gotten that job at the fair, a job that starts tomorrow, the one he talked about early-on in the-story. He will be working-at the Soviet Pavilion within their illustrious restaurant for two bucks an hour, that's maybe $1.15 after taxes, weekdays only, from 10am until 6, just weekdays, Monday through Friday, oh, and weekends, they're always *off*, and that's regular! Time to chill and leave all *glint*-ting contraptions behind him. But, the thing that should never be forgotten throughout *this* story, and *all-the* others as-well, peradventure, as you may have forgotten: Our Sparkle is, as always, a Class-A poet. And so, since so very-few days really, in such-a TRE, rarely reach the status of the *truly-stupendous*, at least in the misty-and-idle mind of Sparkle, so as to necessitate the need to be immortalized, and yet it was indeed necessitated, coalescing into *such-a* poem, the one that now lays before ye, the one that He once entitled, just prior to the immortalizing, Sparkle's lost and then found...

Duality Stew

A most peculiar dream
Streaming liquid
From fingertips
Scattered here and there
Fingers that hadn't had time to experience too much
In the dream he saw a vision
In the vision there was a saw
A Japanese Flush-Cut Saw
A saw to cut through the dream
Piercing into this new reality
With a violence capable of snapping
The reality of the dream
The dream of reality
Asunder

Stew was the Fruit-Looped girls
The fruit who was sliced
With the precision of a Chinese butcher
Into pieces of the two
Duality
But Stew refused to die
Even though all could see
The dying is inevitable
The dreamer who could not tolerate the dual in suffering
Proposed to bring reality into the dream all the quicker
Through the act of decapitating the Wakeful Stew
As had he
The Watchful Stew before her

Plummeting her into the abyss of the dream
Serrated knife in hand
Glintingly…
Neck on the platter
Potential energy evolving into kinetic energy
Slicing
Sluicing
Unswerving in the severing
The steady journey down the slope of the lenient neck of Stews
From cute posterior to the pretty fore
Was swift
Precise
Alas
Still the severed heads would not fall
The severed heads continued to speak of stately things
In accents that could not be readily understood
The severed head continued to animate the dream with a fierce reality
The severed head could be jolted to sleep with just one trifling nudge
A nudge of the palm
The jutting twitch of a tumescent staff
A rattled Geraldine, shocked and alarmed, holds the bag in place
Just to the left of the force being asserted from the right
A tiny tilt of the head
Just enough to let gravity take over the deed
Phwamp! Phwamp!
Duality Stew
Duality Stew
And dead Geraldine

Upon awakening the questions spin surround the warm linen and tossed
Bloodied
Socks
of
Scott

Am I now mad?
Have I descended from reality into the vision of the dream?
Has the dream emerged into the realm of the real?
I am scared to look to the left where the blood may still be crawling
Slowly
Like a turtle's bloody claws
To the right
Can it be she?
From whom I was bestowed a kiss before her slumber
Can she or her friend be perceived to be breathing?
or
Moving in any way?

Pray I did not I confuse the dream with the real
Is the head yet disconnected?
I dare not look or entertain

That her death, and her death, too, may be lying on either side of my life
That there are several victims upon this thrice-concaved bed
Along with me
Cut betwixt and beyond the one
Is the unforeseen psychosis descending into actuality?
Am I the one for whom they will jauntily exclaim?
"He cut off her head, and hers and his, too, and slept with the pieces in peaceful slumber"
While still spooning about
My
Duality Stew?
My
Duality Stew?

14

Chapter Fourteen

Sparkle's Garbage Sale

Some of them are corpses, skeletons, mummies, twitching, tottering, animated by companions that have been damned alive...
-Charles Fort

I don't know about you, but I need a break from all this killing, the blood, the severed heads, and the *et ceteras*. It's the *et ceteras* that really get me, and it should really get you, too, for these can be *anything*, and they can sometimes just sneak up on you and – g-r-a-b-b you! Scary things these *et ceteras* are! So instead, this chapter will be just a junk pile of extras – extra phrases sitting around unused, never-to-be-finished poems, cracked and broken stories, too-tangled yarns, - all discarded for one reason or another, destined for the dump yard, superfluous and unwanted fragments bagged and tied but courageously saved in the back shed, just in the nick of time, to find a home here, amongst Sparkle's Garbage Sale. All - excluded literary items from the bag or just hanging around in the corners or on the shelves, gathering dust, and damned from any proper place in a work of proper fiction, short story, or any other type of alleged literary work, even a novel, even. This chapter could have been called ***The Chapter of the Damned***, coined after Charlie Fort's smash hit. And it would then have begun thusly: "A procession of the damned. By the damned, I mean the excluded. We shall have a procession of literary scraps that Sparkle, both young and old, has excluded..." And on and on it would go, coughing up gems and ersatz and paste. Nevertheless, albeit the introductions differ, the coughing and hacking will remain the same. Both Sparkle and the author proper have inadvertently crossed a moral line and they both apologize. They have broken a promise kept until, it was kept no longer. The stories tumbled eerily through pornography, sensuous though a bit too red, and stumbled into its not-too-distant cousin, morphing from that near relative into something much worse than some jarring pornography, falling tempestuously instead, into the *evil* residing in everyman's-heart. Did you notice how subtly death entered the novel and took over? You probably still don't notice it lurking off to the side. And our promise, as you surely recall, was to keep death at bay. Sparkle's Book → No Death, and I suppose, giving it some thought, that the converse is true as well. Only death's ancestor *Evil* is entitled a residence here amongst Sparkle's painful recollections. Recollections upon which you, my Discerning Reader, are asked to contemplate to help you reach a reasoned conclusion regarding Sparkle's guilt or innocence, but you already know all that, my Knowledgeable Reader. And beyond that we were to discover the location of that moral red line, and *now*, that line has been crossed, *heaven-knows-where,* and

we will have to backtrack and study the ground we have thus traveled, very-carefully, to see if we can rediscover exactly where that line doth lay, so that we can be ensured that it is never, crossed, again-again. You know, now that I think about it, maybe Sparkle *does* have a close and intimate friend, a best-best buddy, not realized, even by him – an invisible companion always there with him, inside his flesh, though hiding on the sidelines. Maybe this has been, even, a lifetime friend, a from-birth, until-death-do-us-part, friend. *Not death,* you don't seem to be paying attention, – that is *not* his BBF – though a good-enough guess, nevertheless. No, it's Evil, an ancient ancestor of Death. Only death's ancestor *Evil* was provided permission to reside here amongst the embers of Sparkle's painful recollections, and, whenever looked at closely, it burns everywhere in Sparkle's book. Whereas death just sneaks in, occasionally, but never again, promises kept and fingers crossed, whenever he finds the opportunity. But never again, never again, I repeat, and I repeat again to avoid *un*-remembering.

And so they begin to march, these literary rejects. Some of them are corpses, skeletons, mummies, twitching, tottering, animated by companions that have been damned alive...

> There was a throbbing in my knees tonight so out I went with my orgone space-gun to frighten away the enemy. I searched everywhere and then I searched some more. The enemy, I could not find. I lowered my gun and averted my aim to watch the night's many eyes shining through the forest and winking across the fields as if to flirt with me. I began to flirt back, rolling and sucking at the earth in the dark, under the nighttime stars. Such a luminous spirit is the night!
>
> And the night has been my first companion since I've arrived, within whose darkness I have been reclusive, fighting off the dawn with mud-caked eyes until dusk's return, when I finally asked the stars to enter me as I attempted to enter them.
>
> *And in the dark of night*
> *While zombie-woof-walking*
> *Tiptoe-hiding high*
> *I STOP*
> *To drink the blood*
> *From the mountain's*
> *Sweetened*
> *R-e-d-R-o-b-i-n*
> *S-t-r-e-a-m*
>
> I am reading Anais Nin, dripping into excerpts from all her works. I despair to admit that I-too-often relate to her-symbols of water and glass and of mirrors. I only hope that someday my reflecting armor will burst so I can breathe, d-e-e-p-l-y, penetratingly, to take a life freely.
>
> Melancholy comes to me because of frustrations but it has brought to me, in its wake, a companion, a girl with no chin.
>
> Remember you told me about a 'silence' permeating the atmosphere? Well, talking with my friend, she [uh-oh!] mentioned it too, only she used the word 'a waiting.' I, perceiving a kindred spirit, understood right away, her meaning, and that the feeling, before she finally submitted, was the one you described. I have felt it, earlier, when my heart began to pound, and my fingers, suddenly, clenched the sharpened brambles, pinpricking the palms, of my hands, and I, indeed, feel as though, I am waiting, only *for what, I don't know...*

We can all anticipate where this is leading and I must uphold my promise to ban Lord Death from these pages and I return the rest to the wastebasket. Let us see if we can pull out something a bit more palpable, and savory, perhaps. Will this do?

A holy telepathic affinity
Soon presented itself
As we both dipped a little lower
Into the universal mucus,
The connecting paranoia.
But I kept on sinking to lose all affinities except
A solidifying desire
To direct my spirt towards you,
My Lily.
I must always try to project myself towards you
Through myself and others
Who, too, long to immerse themselves
Into your shimmering gore and ....

No, this will not do! Doesn't look too safe, either. I am not exactly sure what Sparkle thinks he has done to Lily to inspire such a poem as this, albeit unspectacular as it is, but the inspiration doesn't appear to be all that savory, and with just a glance a short distance back, savory *is* what we were hoping for, with a dash of palpability. You can look for yourself if you don't believe me. So, with or without your permission, I am presently burning with the desire to create the impression of inserting a continuation of what appears to be only a preamble, along with a quick perusal of the next hundred lines or so, making it clearly obvious to me, yet now forever obscure and invisible to you, my Unseeing Reader, that the poem was about to enter upon a *very* rough patch of road taking us in *not-at-all* the direction I wished we *were*-to *be*-going. Perhaps we should, instead, give this next thing a try, but first, let me scrape away some of the dried blood and snot adhering to the page, to make this dump-recovered passage just a little-bit-more legible. There now, let's see what we've got here.

> Soon I was walking to practice keeping an eye "only on the beautiful." I tried to ignore all mental distractions from the passengers of cars and instead leapt out to two strolling-by; one cheerfully friendly, and the other fearfully defensive. But happy was I to enter both their souls with a paring knife for that brief instant in passing. And my eyes stayed resting on a sky made from reflections off the tree's branches as my ears listened only to the screams drifting swimmingly along the melted snow.
>
> Arriving home an Angel floated before my last two steps which aroused a fearful joy within me. I wished myself a bawdy-embrace but I must wait before striking. How I long to embrace a co-existing dream! I smile and, with a crack upon the place where her chin would-have-been, and I wait, knowing not for what...

Well, no need to wait any longer, for I don't think this one is quite what we're looking for either. Maybe this chapter wasn't such a good idea after all! But wait a minute... Here is something that looks quite safe. It's a grocery list for a trip to the A&P, an old-time grocery store where the A must stand for Apple and the P must stand for, what? – Prime rib? Anyway, here is Sparkle's grocery list for April 27, 1974. If I remember correctly, it was a sunny day, but rather cool for that time of the year.

Cottage cheese
Bananas
Tissues

Twinkies
Bread
20 Mule Train Borax, large-sized container (for stains)
1 Paring knife

Finally! A wholesome looking poem, with no perversions, unsavory thoughts, or wanton desires. Just a nice, simple, seven-lined poem, practically a Haiku. Pretty nice job, Sparkle, even if it doesn't rhyme! Something I can share with the world that would have been otherwise damned. Not too shabby! We'll need to try this again in a later chapter, before the garbage starts to pile up again, and potentially starts to rot, a ***Phase II***, perhaps, that would be nice, don't you think? After all, I'll have bagfulls more of this stuff in no time at all, all unwarrantedly tossed out by some disgruntled ~~victim~~ relative, *obviously*.

15

Chapter Fifteen

A Short Addendum to One of the Past Introductions

Something has gone wrong! This is nothing but a story gone awry. It was supposed to be a comedy – a *comedy* about some nebbish who, like that ingenious gentleman Don Quixote, lived in a fantasy, of his *own* making, but became the polar opposite of that and instead of *helping* damsels in distress - our Sparkle *is* the distress from whom these callipygian delights require saving. Where is Donny when you need him? Sparkle is a nebbish that believes himself to be a Dante, a Milton, a Shakespeare, an Alexander Pope, whichever great poet you choose, but the only thing he is any good at is killing innocent people. Although he has a preference - that of young girls with traits already described elsewhere, and he really doesn't have any true discernments. At the moment his passion takes hold it can be *anyone* – even his own mother or father. As long as he gets something out of it, he's OK with it. And this killing, killing in a serial-type fashion, is the only thing he has any talent for. Just read one or two of his poems and I think you'll agree. So what was originally meant to be a nebbish who thinks he's a great poet whose only talent is that of a serial killer – you know, a comedy that includes a pedestrian, pseudo-intellectual styled, a poser and fraud, a pretender with a swagger in his phrases, a, what's is the word I'm looking for? A humbug or a phony? Or is it a prankster and a defrauder? How about a confidence trickster? Or just a pretentious person? Ah, that's it, a debone-i-r... no, that's Sparkle-talking, me, I'm after the word *debutante*. That's French and *that* is what I think I am. Innocent of fraud but guilty of deceit. Which makes no sense, does it! A *debutante* is a young girl, just beginning to bud, and that is *what Sparkle-is-after* and *not what-I-am*! But that's only because I still haven't quite got the word although it *is* on the tip of my tongue and I'm 'bout almost *ready-to-drool-it!* I'm a *dilettante*, that's what I am, which is still French and now, the fact that I am still-innocent of fraud and presently-guilty of deceit, while still being an amateur and a dabbler, well, it's hard to persist with this writing *my* knowing that *you-now-know*. But, it's on my schedule to write today, at this very hour, so, so what choice have I got? And in what way *is-it* you may ask, towards which I am such a guilty *dilettante*? The truth, and I swear to you it is, *the truth*, and you'd think I am procrastinating or maybe even trying to wear down the clock, keep this up until the end-of-time, but I can't, wear down the clock, that is, which is only further proof of the Truth, because I haven't a clue as to what "wearing down the clock" means and even whether it was grammatically-correct to put quotation marks around that phrase -- should the phase have been italicized instead? Or should the word *italicized* have been italicized? And now I am having a grammar anxiety attack in general. I don't know, oh, *I really don't know* and hence, what do I *really* know about:

Evil?

Whoa! I didn't expect that one at all! Maybe this *is* a comedy about evil after all! Funny about that...

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Chapter Sixteen

The Letter

Sparkle has started working at the Russian Pavilion! At Expo '74! And it couldn't have happened at a better time. He imagines himself as being an undercover agent, an underground man, something covert, something hidden, clandestine, imperceptibly invisible, and, for-the-moment-anyway, out of harm's way, safe. And he has moved up in the world, no longer a drifter. Who would want to be a drifter anyway? Instead, he has become a certified and sanctioned Bus Boy, with a bright red name tag, with a golden hammer and razor-sharp sickle stamped right on it for all to see, that says, ***"Sparkle Sonovavitch"*** – which is his newly adopted Russian name! Who could ever suspect a Russian boy, a boy in a clean white shirt, a boy who doesn't talk to anyone, except, of course, when he is speaking his native Russian? In fact, I just heard him exclaim, in a clear-and-vigilant voice, "Beef Stroganoff!" His accent is perfect and when the restaurant patrons try to engage him in conversation with such intrigues as "Hey boy, you there, can you get me a clean spoon, this one is filthy!" Sparkle just looks the slovenly-dressed, sweat dripping (because the air conditioner, if there is one, is malfunctioning) cafeteria diner straight in the eye (actually Sparkle never looks anyone in the eye but he has learned to look at either their forehead or upper lip so that he thinks *they-think* he's giving eye-contact, but he really isn't ready for anything as intimate as direct eye contact), and he responds, exclaiming in clear and vigilant voice as we just heard him exclaim regarding the beef, "Boris Badenov nyet, Natasha Piroshki! Где туалет?" as he gallantly walks off the floor and into the kitchen, never to return, until, of course, until the boss notices him in the kitchen and sends him, with a look Sparkle never sees, right back out there, white shirt and all.

It is very exciting, this new responsibility, and he takes his job, at least he did at the beginning, during the first few hours of his very first day, very-seriously. Can you believe it? And after he, Sparkle, Eloquent-Poet-Extraordinaire (EPE), had finally convinced himself that he was to "Never-Work" during his "Entire Holy-Lifetime." Yes, as embarrassing as it is, that was *exactly* the way he put it. But at the slightest whim of insecurity, for example just as the police started searching the High Falls Hotel and looking deeper into the motives Scott may have had for such a murderous act, he had succumbed to the *Evil One's Influence* (*EOI*), another one of Sparkle's embarrassing phrases, of which the older, the now so-much-more established-and-mature, albeit suffering, any one of us can see him through the dungeon bars suffering, bars adjacent to the merry sidewalk above, filled with ambulating mothers with strollers, children skipping with glowing smiles, all radiantly displayed just beyond Sparkle's view, where lovers are holding hands, causing their entire bodies, from hair follicles to toes, to glow to the beat of their passion-ridden paces, ever quickening , et cetera, et cetera, I think you can sufficiently populate the joy-beamed avenue by providing your own inventiveness, now that you have been given that splendid commencement, while mature Sparkle is hidden below, writhing, rather-a-lot, and agonizing, just a smidgeon more than his writhing will allow, and, if we chose to, I could describe for you, at length, or with a modicum of suggestion, just enough for you to fill in the rest, just as you were earlier given responsibility for the merry sidewalk. Hence you could describe for all of us his smarting and his aching, his anguish and distress, the slugs crawling up and down his thighs, but, let us stick with, instead, with only the chains, chains that just don't feel right today, somethings off, and it's not the chains, and besides, if you would only glance at the title of this chapter you would know, know without being told, that this is NOT the chapter to discuss any of those things: (1) not the sidewalk, (2) not the throbbing nor the torment, and (3), certainly not Sparkle's first day at a *real* job, with his calculating anticipation of a *real* paycheck, with the wearing of a *real* white shirt for the first time in his life, and..., and..., although, I began this chapter with Sparkle Sonovavitch and the first day at his new job, a job he has taken out of necessity because, as I earlier told you, but it seems to me and, no doubt, by now, it must inevitably seem to you, no doubt, even more so, growingly so, it seems to have been such a very long time

ago, in fact, by last count, but that has certainly increased with all this editing, so by last count there were more than six hundred and sixty-eight words that have passed since then, and even since *that* time that number has already increased by *twelve-more* (since last Tuesday) and, believe me, the number will only grow and grow until I can get back on track – now, where was I? Yes, Sparkle has taken the busboy job just to lay-low and stay-safe while he waits (1) for the police to tire themselves out trying to locate and arrest Scott for three recent murders, the murder of one bum and those two darling sweet-things. (I can hear both Sparkles, both the young and the old, sighing with, is that a heart that still yearns?), (2) for everyone to end their grieving about the girls and to stop their rummaging for what they will never find and to bury what body parts they *were* able to find, and (3), for the bums to calm down. No one cared about that cockroach Geraldine except a few of the other bums who have been cut-and-bloodied due to their fighting over Geraldine's things, like his torn-stained sleeping bag and some half-used wax-candles, those kind of things, things that never-were never-worth fighting over anyway, especially getting slashed and punctured for, but it would help reduce Sparkle's worries if they'd all just calm down. But Chapter Sixteen isn't about Sparkle's laying low or the police investigation or the funerals or the grieving families or even about Sparkle's first day or his two spanking-new white shirts, each with a starched, button-down, collar, shirts he had to pay for even after being yelled at by the lady salesperson just because Sparkle hadn't a clue as to his shirt size and because he was so squirmy and rude when she tried to measure him. But all those things are for other chapters and will be presented to you in their proper place and at the proper time, and if not in this book, within the present pages of the ***Salacious Sagas of Sparkle***, perhaps in a future book, as long as the verdict does not fall onto the side of the Sparkle's guilt, which would then, very likely, end in the electric chair and cut his writing career short. This present chapter, my ever so Patient Reader, is about you, or rather the scrawling but kind letter you sent to me in response to a letter I, your forever Adoring Author, for I have indeed waited a long time for you to finally write me and dispatch this letter off to me. But the trouble you put me through, the hours endured in trying to get at that letter, so that I could finally read it, enjoy it, smell and savor it, et cetera, and I give you my permission to do whatever you please with that particular *et cetera!*

I discovered your letter, sitting in the dust and the dirt, amongst other abandoned letters, at the post office, under the most dubious of circumstances, just two days ago, a mere forty-eight hours, less than three thousand minutes – exactly two minutes less. As a result I was forced to chase down methods of recovery to the tune of a muted horn. That's a great line that last one. "Forced to chase down methods ... to the tune of a muted horn." Such great phrases, except for the fact that they don't mean anything. But that doesn't suggest they aren't beautiful and can't be used somewhere in a novel. If only I could find a place for it in this one. But, as we are well in the thick of it, stuck right here in the middle of it all, both sloppy and sticky, and since we really don't have the time, to commence searching, for just the right place, this novel will have to do without that sentence. Oh, well!

The actual retrieval of the letter, the extraction of your letter from the confines of the post office, well that was another thing altogether. It was far from an easy thing to do as I was confronted by a continuous stream of obstacles, one after the other. Cha-bang! Cha-bang!

The enclosed card, official Post Office Business, was found under a heap of pseudo-scientific documents, all dated 05/01/74. Something about it suggested to me that the card was a consequence of one of your doin's and I immediately set off to find esoteric methods of recovery. Here is what the card said: "Sparkle – there is a letter for you at the Post Office that requires in-person pick-up." Or something like that. But, first, did you notice that great but silly nonsensical phrase, "esoteric methods of recovery?" Zooks!

On the way to the post office I met an Indian girl, and when the time was right she said that I would meet my destiny. She took me on a three-mile journey through the pouring rain, leading me astray, I blush now to remember, amidst deep puddles, broken bridges, rushing rivers and a gloriously wonderful cow pasture filled with globular brown sculptures! I awaited to be revealed to the knowledge as to where the mail pick up would be made but was only shown the Spokane Post Office where I queried, "Please Mr. Postman, look

and see, is there a letter in your bag for me?" To which the Postal Office Clerk in attendance informed me that "10¢ more postage is due on your letter" before she could be permitted the privilege of handing the mangled envelope my way so I could mangle it further until it would finally burst forth its contents, but by then I'd lost interest. But I'm not mad. *Not me,* my Inconsiderate Reader! But it really pissed me off. Say don't you remember, I am your pal? Buddy can you spare me a dime? For at the time, I hadn't a dime to my name. My source of money, recycled cans, was back home.

Trudging home, I had to go to the bathroom, an act of nature perhaps, so I entered the lily-filled woods, did my business, and couldn't shake my way back out to the road. Hence, I ended up trudging home the long way, not that it was my fault, but instead it was the fault of Mother Nature. Otherwise I wouldn't have wandered off the main road, not even for a 10-cent refundable beer bottle, which is exactly what I needed, but I'm being a comedian, my Chuckling Reader, because they're all 5¢ deposits around here. I stopped off at the local high school's cafeteria to sneak-a-meal. I fit right in with those teenaged kids. I didn't look at any of them and they returned the favor. While eating, an airplane came swooping down on the school just missing the roof by ducks-feet. I knew, as I hid my face, my Compassionate Reader, that they were in pursuit of me. After several dips, and one wing-fluttering moment later, the plane, was *g-o-n-e*, and I was quickly on my way again. Soon after I came upon a pond where I entertained myself with a short visit with a bluebird, a plump of flying ducks, sans feet as the feet were severed and utilized four sentences ago, and beavers, two or three of them, but it was hard to tell with all the costume changes. Then the biggest beaver spotted me, swam over, getting her dress all wet and filled with pond scum, and began to violently slap her tail upon the water in an attempt to chase me away, at first I thought that she was flirting with me, but then I thought that maybe she really did mean to do me some harm. Either way, I didn't wait to see. So I bolted, only to be confronted by a pair of horses running directly at me, literate horses, they were, for they lived next to one another, hence they were pen pals, and pen pals write letters to one another, hence they must be able to read and write, hence literate they were, anyways, they were galloping across the mountainside heading, as I already said, directly at me. I quickened my pace, and soon, *I too was galloping!* It was at this time, with my two feet doing the work of four, for I was running in double-time, I was beginning to mull over my situation, and thrown onto the fast track towards self-doubt, plunged into the eye of the storm full of misgivings, I began to wonder whether I really wanted your damned letter very much, anymore, or at all, even. But the possibility that it just might be from someone else was enough to *Lead-Me-On*. Somehow, and I'll never quite-know-how, I ditched the horses to find myself wandering, wantonly, and, as always, you can choose how to define "wantonly," drifting along Route 2, a road, that eventually leads to my home. I began, with a rapidly increasing *air-of-confidence*, while never venturing upon a *confidence-of-air*, I began, just like a rolling stone, to confidently stagger in the direction opposite to *no direction home,* whence once again disaster struck, just around the bend. This time is was a car, a Mazda squeezing towards me at the speed of a scurrying turtle. And though it was the duality of (1) Only-Doom and (2) Doom-Only that I could see tumbling toward me, neither option seemed the option for me. Alas, with the Lord's, either Buckley's or Dunsany's, I'll never know whose, help and blessing only, the car quietly rolled to a stop just inches before the tippy-tip of my feet-toes, where two husky and poisonous hitch-hikers got out. Hitch-hikers, some phrase, eh? Hitch – to be tethered to something with a rope. Hike – to travel a great distance. Sounds a bit painful when you put the two together, to me, anyway. The poor driver had run out of fuel, due to that leak and all, and like-a-fool, *you-know-how-I-am*, I offered to push his vehicular-weapon to a gas station not far from his *fuel-out*. The two husky riders had drifted into the woods and were never seen again. And this time Sparkle had nothing to do with it.

Now, I have finally arrived home, a place of safety and security, such simple words, those. All the maintenance men from the Godzilla College were sitting in front of *my* house drinking *my* sassafras root beers. Quite a sight to come home to, I must say. I must steal two 5-cent refundable *beer* cans from them, without them noticing, (the 5-cent deposit is a Spokane Law), and then I can head on over-the-mountain to Harvey's General Store. I go. Harvey detains me. He tries to sell me popcorn. I decline. He tries again. I say, "No." He does not listen. Enough with the popcorn! Eventually I've got my dime and I'm off, on my

way. But this time with a purpose. The purpose is that I am going to get to read your letter, finally! And I didn't even think there *were* any readers, no, I did not! So thank you and now I'm skipping off to the Post Office, #99208, and I'm going the Back Way. And the Back Way is The Short Way. And the Short Way avoids all hazards. Hence, this method works like a charm, but it's still a two-mile hike. Maybe I should *hitch it*? No, I don't like ropes, around me, that is. Now, *f-i-n-a-l-l-y*, I have your letter in front of me and it sits here, unmoving and unopened, but mostly unmoving. I think it is time now to open your letter and I think again, maybe not, and I keep delaying-delaying, and that is because, well, to be frank, it's because I am a bit scared, a teensy-bit nervous, I've been up to things of which you certainly cannot approve and that might cause you to throw down the book, the book containing these words, in utter-disgust! I might have you say the wrong thing in that letter for this particular story and that might end our relationship, before the end of Chapter 16, even. And you would be right to do that, although it would break my heart. But besides that, and this is what *truly* scares me, what if, maybe, after opening the envelope, slowly and with such anticipation, I reach in and find that, in fact, there is *nothing-there*. Or maybe there's a slice of bologna or yet another missing piece, just a sliver, from one of the two dead girls! Which one? Your choice.

17

Chapter Seventeen

The Severed Hand!

He was s-o very aroused but all that was left of her was her right Hand, and that hand was missing the ring finger, and the ring, and the thumb. He studied the Hand, fond memories, exploring its possibilities. Two methods were deemed plausible but there were challenges to each, problems that might transpire. One pathway could maim him, perhaps for life, and the other had the potential of leaving evidence, as tiny as that evidence might be. Both required the correct placement of the Hand and that would take some doing. It required crawling into an underground tunnel, just west of Concord Street, traveling One Block West and taking there, when you get to it, the right fork. Looking up, where the ceiling met the side of the chipped outer-wall, there was a shelf that receded well into the earth. He placed the Hand there, tying to the pinky, tight around the second knuckle, the end of a large skein of scarlet yarn, a z-twist was determined to yield the best results in this case, as this is where the two options begin to diverge. The other option required an s-twist, but from here on out, that second option will be of little concern. The yarn can be of three kinds, cotton, wool or synthetic. For a z-twist, only wool will work. For the s-twist, only synthetic. If you choose cotton yarn, then it doesn't matter which twist you choose, that's because neither of them will work and will definitely lead to some kind of disaster, although as the possibilities vary and multiply, some of those disasters might take years to manifest, to show signs of festering. The color of the yarn never makes a difference. Sparkle just had a yearning for scarlet that day, for reasons unknown. Let's see now – the Hand is in-place, deep under the city of Spokane, in just the right location. I could give you the latitude and longitude, and I will in just a minute, but you need to realize that those two-bits of data are useless without the third, the distance the Hand is from the center of the pear-shaped, although who could tell the difference between that shape and the shape of a sphere? No one, that's who! So now that you know that, I can tell you that the latitude is 47°65'2.73" North and the longitude is 117°23'1.13" West, which, if you knew anything about GPS coordinates, or even the way coordinates were used way-back when Sparkle had devised and was in-the-midst of implementing his plan, you'd notice that this still yields a pretty wide area, provides a bit of a distance from the center of town, wherever that is, and I will leave it up to you to find both of these things to a precise decimal point of, say, a diameter of a meter, just to be generous to you, and your efforts. But first, why am I getting a report at this very minute that the "middle-of-town" of Spokane is, where? So, it all comes together – the center of Spokane is where the Hand lies, rarely twitching, nails still

growing only slower than they used to, cold enough to ward off decay. It makes you ask the question as your eyes roll over these words: "In what condition is the Hand, ~~in~~, in, ~~in~~, (in?)- today, at this very moment, now, during the reading of these words?" Do you, my Creepy Reader, feel a nuttiness or spookiness seeping into your pores, along with, perhaps, a sudden sense of both dread and delight? You do? -I know... Well, that was the source of the energy, materializing from a highly-erotic sorcery, an old recipe handed down, emerging from the fingertips, making a kind of snapping noise, but mostly, like the hissing of an angry cat, out of the palm of that three-fingered paw, energy that is most efficiently moved from one place to another, with minimum spillage, via the yarn of either (1) wool with a z-twist, just 2.65 meters west (*unswervingly* to the west) or (2) cotton with an s-twist, 1.68 meters northwest, that is, 45° point zeros forever, west of True North (wTN). So now you know exactly where the Hand is if you would like to (1) find the Hand, or (2) duplicate this experiment.

Sparkle is seen backing out of the tunnel, unraveling the yarn with care, which, incidentally is the name of the company from which he purchased the yarn: *Yarn-With-Care.* He's got extra yarn in his knapsack so as soon as one skein unravels-no-more, he can quick-as-a-knot, begin to unravel a new one. Where is he going and why is he walking backwards in that peculiar way? Well, the walking backwards is the one drawback to this plan, the z-twist and wool plan. You were already told at the beginning that neither plan was perfect – that each plan had its drawbacks. If he had used cotton and s-twists he ran the risk of maimness. That's not a word? Then what word means maimness but *is* a word? This may take a moment... maybe mutilation, injury, disfigurement, seems there are plenty of such words and maimness is not looking so nice anymore. OK – let's get on with the project/story. It seems that every activity embraces some level-of-risk, no? Little harm done, though, here. But Sparkle, with s-twisted yarn entwined amongst his fingers, yarn red-hot with erotic energy! – why that's a risk *he*, Sparkle, was not willing to take. Too risky, indeed! So he really *didn't-really* have a choice, and so he *didn't-choose* to take the wool yarn, as there was no-choice in this matter, wool it had to be, z-twist and all, and so he had to allow for all the pertinences that come with such a choice. So trying not to take notice of-the-evidence of-his-guilt being broadcast all around him, in every single step backwards and actions thereby taken, he tried to act nonchalantly, cool, unflappable, blasé and insouciant, whatever that means, but he couldn't help but-to stand-out, visible guilt radiating to every Spokanian within looking distance, because, as we have already noticed sentences ago, Sparkle was doing everything *backwards* from what he had been doing *frontwards* only hours ago, but "hours ago," in this case, happened to be in the dead of a moonless night, providing circumstances in which he could not be seen. Now, at present, all his shenanigans were highly visible, being broadcasted out, into the spiraling-sunlight for everyone to see. But, without his permission, Sparkle's obvious sexual arousal, and all of his *what-am-I-going-to-do-!* was only intensifying! But this was the chance he *had* to take, z-twist and all!

A comment needs to take place, here, and since I don't like footnotes, it instead will get its own paragraph, right here, right now! If Sparkle is innocent of every crime described within the pages of this novel, then he has instead imagined them all and, in actuality, has done nothing wrong – nor did he *do* anything, *anything*, mind you, in the real world that has done anybody any harm. The mind is a funny thing, but to go there I would definitely be digressing, and a digression here would unduly interrupt the story of the Severed Hand, which would be, both, unwarranted and undesired. "No Digressions Here" (NDH) becomes the unbreakable rule, so don't cross it – it would be like crossing a moral red line, so again, and perhaps not for the last time, I don't *know* why it's red nor why "know" was italicized and underlined, so please stop asking me about that! The comment! Zooks! I almost forgot about the comment! So if Sparkle is innocent, then he really *did not* hide-a-hand and yarn-tie-it to transport some erotic energy for Sparkle to do – what?– even in this age and its openness to divergent approaches to life and the cosmos, there are some things that I just don't think will ever be printable. You'll just need to use your own imagination to conjure up what Sparkle actually did with that hand and that yarn and all of that *doing-things-backward* stuff, 'cause he just didn't do it, and it was just a story that he, or someone else, made up. Hopefully a good story – but does it cross a moral line? And where is that line – is it sitting somewhere next to a three-fingered paw? Complicated stuff.

I thought I was done there, with the *complicated stuff* and all, but I suddenly realized that I forgot all about the other alternative, *that he is guilty*, and that, as a corollary, he is the Evil One, so different from Sparkle's self-styled depiction of himself back in Chapter Sixteen, almost at the start of the second-scene. By "Evil One" I mean the hurly-burly mean one, the most terrible of us all, The Dreadful, the One-and-Only, he's *that* bad, really – *that* kind of Sparkle! In which case, I hope someone notices his antics and puts a stop to him. But then again, that would bring a rather abru-p-t,

and s-sudden, too, ending to all of these stories, wouldn't ?

18

Chapter Eighteen

The L-o-n-g-e-s-t Three Minutes

I

Hello? I'm so glad you picked up! I have so much to tell you, my Phone-Answering Reader – mostly about Sparkle and what he's been up to lately, but I have only a few minutes to cram it all in, one-hundred-and-eighty seconds to be exact. A whole lot of days before the days we can still-remember, there were, don't forget to stay breathing now ... , *no cell phones!* How in hell, do you ask, can I even mention cell phones in a story that takes place circa 1974? Well, this is because it isn't 1974 anymore, as sad as that may-be. It's now fifty years later as I type this, and who knows how many years since then that you are now reading this. So I feel the need to explain why it was that humans roaming the earth in 1974 and before weren't so connected to everyone all of the time, a time when you could, if you wanted to-be, and some of us liked it that way, to be left entirely-alone, as was Sparkle, whether he liked it or not, so much of the time. Now deducting one minute from the three allotted by subtracting away the need to wait for a "dial tone", a specific sound that signals allowance for putting a forefinger into the properly designated little-hole, a maneuver that required, on average, ten repetitions, each maneuver requiring a variation regarding the hole into which your finger was placed, there being ten possibilities in all, each insertion requiring a twist of a dial, always a clockwise motion, an act that takes some practice, like tying your shoes, then waiting for someone at the house you are calling to answer who will say "Hello" followed by "Who you wanna to talk to?" Then the person who answered the phone has to yell really loud so that everyone in the house knows who the call is for, before that person, if home and not on the toilet, for the phone is connected to a ten-foot wire, max, usually in the middle of the kitchen where everyone can listen in, well there's barely two minutes left over after all that for just-talking. And then don't underestimate all of those awkward pauses, the old Pinter-Pause as some old people used to say, so, keeping-it-real, we've only got about one minute for the potential of any real information being transferred in one direction or the other, *tops*, and then, on top of that, neither of you have any clear idea about what you should be talking about and so you end up by saying things you probably shouldn't have while everyone in line behind you is listening, acutely, to every stutter-and-stammer *embarrassing* thing that you are able to *get-said*, and you can't say *"cutlet"* or *"dispose-of"* or any other kind-of-thing that you really need to say, or they might suspect you're a serial killer or something, when out of the blue, blue because that is the color of the sky, you are interrupted: "Excuse me, *Young Man*, but your three minutes are up! Please hang up the phone and let the next person in line have their, free, U.S. Tollfree®, phone call," which is really

just an advertisement for TTNT or some such company in a behind-the-scenes pay-off to the State-of-Nevada politicians who were only too willing to get paid in whatever deal they surreptitiously agreed to. So you sheepishly hang up the phone, perhaps a spanking new Princess Phone, which at that time was a cool, modern, vaguely "feminine" oval shape, that came in a variety of colors: pink, sage green, shrimp, or powder blue. So I'm sure you all can imagine the audible click, or maybe it's a clank this time, that was produced upon returning the receiver to the cradle just before you slowly slink-away, both feet a-shuffling up some Spokane dust, and feeling a lot-more depressed than you felt when you were standing on-line, which is a different and more ancient kind of "on-line" - remember, *no* computers - that you are probably thinking of, but actually standing, in a queue, a word that means he's standing on line, maybe five minutes ago, when he was feeling so much more optimistic about life, and about phone calls in general. And I did tell you, didn't I? It was FREE! *That* was the-draw: U.S. Tollfree! Call anywhere in the USofA. You sofa, my sofa, a little catch-phrase that for some reason just popped into my mind, but yes, you caught me again, I *am* digressing, so, back on point. Every evening, 6PM, right after working all-day at the Russian Pavilion, Sparkle made it over to the *Nevada* Pavilion to make a long distance telephone call, again, and again, and again, remember?, he does this *every* night, hence all those agains, and, remember also, cell phones *did not exist* back then, no, they did not, *really!* So to make a l-o-n-g distance phone call, and *for-free*, "long distance calling" existed, and really was a big deal in those days. You see, for the average man, they were expensive calls to make, a real extravagance, those phone calls were. So here's a three-minute story about all those phone calls: "*Dial 0* for the *Operator*, not Murder and *she*, always a *she*, will rescue you, but only if you require rescuing."

II

Who else can Sparkle call? Who can he pretend to be his friend? He called someone whom he'd left behind in New York, now who could that have been? No one remembers. He spoke to him on a Friday night, so there is a clue for you right away. He confided to his friend that he sensed that people were watching him, listening to every word he was saying. Under the circumstances this was very true but Sparkle neglected to share with his friend where he was calling from and the particular circumstances that was at the root of his alleged paranoia. This was to avoid any distraction from a true-dialog between-friends. I wonder why Sparkle had not butchered this friend as he had all the others. Was it luck on the part of this alleged friend? Or some predetermined fate? But on my honor, my Inquiring Reader, here are the facts, the *facts-of-the-matter*. You see, Sparkle is standing on a long and meandering queue, a line of sight-seers extending into the distance where the focal point pinches off and makes visible only a minority of those waiting to use that damned phone – *it's free*, after all. Sparkle had to wait nearly ninety minutes on this particular evening, standing on line, at the Nevada Pavilion, where it appears the entire population of today's attendees are waiting to make their own three-minute call as-well! Most call their relatives to see if anyone might have died since they left home for Spokane, they then spend the rest of their time trying to explain-just-exactly where-they-are, who it is who's calling, clearing up the fact that it isn't costing-them a-dime, and why that-is, and under-what circumstances, hence, when the three minutes is up, nothing's really been-said and if they have any business to finish up with that conversation, they need to get to the back of the line where the caller is visibly frustrated at his ineptness in making his points clear enough to be understood the first time and the ***callee*** still hasn't a clue as to who has just called them or why. And, speaking of the ***callee***, you should know that a ***callee*** is a resultant of the functional input of the caller, the word of particular interest here, is

the ***callee***, and not the caller - just in case you, my Confused Reader, were unclear regarding the importance here of the term ***callee***. But remember, while these nonsensical dialogs were occurring, droning on into the night, one after the other, after the other, the other, all the people waiting in line, with nothing much-else to-do, naturally begin to stare at the person, sitting on a blue chair at a brown table holding a sage green or powder blue Princess Phone under a wooden spotlight focused on the guest presently engaged in a garbled and self-conscious conversation, frantically trying to make themselves understood, able, though unseen, to gesture with one hand only, the other hand is necessary for holding onto the receiver, which by the third minute starts to get heavy, and while those awaiting their turn stare, they listen to every word said, just like in the days of party lines. (Which was a fascinating mode of communication that you should google if you don't know what it is. Note well, though, that it had nothing to do with birthdays or any other kind of festive party). So, finally, Sparkle was able to reveal to his long-lost, but somehow still breathing, friend, that he was still feeling, and with an ever-increasing degree-of-intensity, mind you, that there are creatures, most likely aliens from Jupiter, "alien-encrusted insects," Sparkle explained, "who are ray-beaming in on me and now I am, uncontrollably, oozing *feeling-elation* and *joy-fantastic* intensities all down the front of my pants, but that, I have discovered, is the source of the depression and anxiety that has encompassed my skull, but, I think, is also the source of the strength that is allowing me to soar, to mount upwards in the opposite direction, amid screams! Oh, I do have a penchant for screams..." He also mentioned how his poetical imagery was coming into better focus, like the vanishing point of a long line of people waiting to use the telephone at an Exposition in 1974, while Nevada taxpayers are paying for it all, three minutes at a time. Sparkle was able to get all this in, drooling only a little bit, just under that lousy three minutes deadline, too! He envisioned it all as his very-own extended peak-experience, but he never was sure what one of *those* experiences *really-was* and at what elevation those peaks existed.

> *A note to you, Sparkle of the Future, if you can hear me: it is great to have left that balance between these afore mentioned states of being but it's frightening as to the velocity of oscillation - but I find it energizing, to a degree, also, don't you? But who ever really knows about such things, who really, knows?*

Today he went to the Nevada Pavilion to call-dial again. First he tried his brother but he got a busy signal and then he remembered why that probably was. Fires do funny things to electrical systems. No one ever answered at his childhood home, anymore. So he quickly dialed his mother, at her place of work. But he was informed that she had died in a fire, the same conflagration that was causing his brother's phone to ring-busy. He was informed that she had been extinguished, is that the right word? *Snuffed-out,* that's it, just about a year ago and, "Who is this?" Sparkle hung up quickly at that. Too late - it was already heard by everyone, behind him, standing in the shadows, and beyond. He could hear their murmured questions, "What did *they-say*?" and "How did *he-respond*? Perplexingly?" percolating down the waiting line, like the telephone game, passing from person-to-person to yet-another-person, gradually, quietly, drifting along, off into the dusty horizon, as he, Sparkle, caressingly hung up the phone. The only other number he had memorized was that of an Old Girl Friend, a relationship from *before* the family fire, I, the author, remember it started with a 4 or a 6, in any case, *not* a prime. Ancient Sparkle doesn't even remember that much of the number. Her father and she answered, simultaneously (isn't that cute?), just seconds before his three-minute time limit was up. By now he was shaking out of nervousness and apprehension. The State of Nevada was kind enough to give him an extension, just one-more-minute, sixty-seconds, just this side of eternity, as he says, "Hello! Hello! I have to hang up now!" No one else said a

word, the father initiated a violent click, but still, on the other end of the phone, from an upstairs line, he could hear the sound of someone ***not*** *breathing*. He suddenly remembered why that was probably so, for she was one of the girls he had-killed, an early experiment, it's so hard to keep track, and that is why she didn't say hello, *or breathe* even. It would have been interesting to see her lack of expression when she heard it was he, her teen-lusted Sparkle, on the phone, for-her, a voice from The Living Present permeating, deep, inside, the Grave of her Conglomerate Past. The horror! *Her* horror, that is, for Sparkle didn't give it another thought, except for the modest, bantam-bit of anxiety regarding what the people in line may have deciphered from the silence in her voice. Hey, what's *your* phone number, my Dialed-Up Reader? And when's a good time to call? Sparkle is available to chat anywhere from 10 PM to 1 AM, weekdays only. He's generally busy, ***up to his elbows,*** on his days-off.

III

Sparkle just looked at the 3-D postcard he purchased for his nephew. Sparkle has penned a message to the six-year-old that says, "What can I write you since I've told you all? Please respond, Yours Truly, Your Uncle Sparkle." Sparkle realizes he and his nephew are both orphans now, both an only-child. Somehow his nephew made it out of the fire alive, *the bastard!* He's young, but Sparkle thinks he can read by now. He never sends the postcard, though, because he doesn't really care.

A nearby grocery store Sparkle shops at so as to avoid a long, convoluted walk, that is if all he needs is a root beer or a snack, is called Gino's. And it's not associated with the restaurant pegged with the same name. The larger super market, the World Food Market, has Foto-Vu camera's all over the store. This was a great innovation towards modernization, smashing us all into the electronic-age of 24-hour surveillance, a big deal back in 1974, commonplace now, whereas now there is no-place safe-from-surveillance. The only-good that Sparkle ever-got from all that surveillance was that it finally taught him to stop picking his nose! These *Foto-Vu* (and I wonder if that means anything in Mandarin?) cameras are tied up all over the store *and they are watching your every move*. No longer is there a need to pretend you are paranoid, it's a very real thing now. (I saw that! Aren't you ashamed my Nasty Reader?) It's not even safe to pick your nose, as you probably surmised from the only good thing regarding Sparkle's bad habit mentioned a few sentences ago, *'cause they'll see you!* Sparkle stares in-fear directly into the camera's eye, face-flushed, dissolved in-guilt, cold perspiration pouring-out-everywhere, except where it's *supposed* to. There is even a highly advanced, Technologically-Advanced, even, Closed-Circuit-Low-Light Camera *out*side to watch you before you stumble into the place, or make your getaway, either in the day or the night, be it cloudy or-sunny, anytime will do, though they still don't have the ability to see the severed foot and still-moist chunk-of-thigh I have sitting in ice at the bottom of my knapsack. (Yeah, Sparkle's cool, "He's holdin'!") The technology has not advanced too far, yet, but it is a changing world and Sparkle is thinking to himself that he's going to have to make some adjustments to the management of his affairs. He'll study the matter in more detail, later, tonight, *if he is not too busy with other things*. Meanwhile, just to be on the safe-side, Sparkle doesn't think he should ever go back to World Food again. What would he do if, while there, shopping for tofu and anchovies, he gets a sudden urge? What if his knapsack begins to leak blood? He wouldn't want *that* on film, there aren't enough Xs in the movie rating system to provide a rating for *that* scene!

IV

For a few hours earlier this evening, Sparkle helped-wash dirty dishes at the Godzilla University cafeteria for a few bucks and to be on the lookout for potential victims, his Victims of Love! He forcefully stops himself from thinking about the potentials here because he can't afford a hard-on at the moment. He's washing dishes, after all! The scouring and burnishing of pots and pans can be truly maddening and, gads, the *speed* you have to work at during the Big-Rush! That's a *R-u-s-h,* in-and-of itself! Now I forget why I began telling you this, you'll have to help me out here a second, telepathically step on my foot or something to facilitate my recollection! Zounds! Completely gone! We'll have to let this part of the story go, drifting along with everything else I have forgotten, into the kitty *litter-of-time*. But, by refocusing our attention back onto Sparkle and all of his goings-on, it becomes clear to Old- & Doddering Sparkle that the author has the same kind of memory problem as Sparkle, and indeed he does. He, too, can't remember much, which is what makes this whole confessional-thing such a challenge. It must have been due to the ingestion of some souring chunk-of-meat hacked-off in the early years, one of his earliest adventures, before he had learned how to properly preserve it, or the need to cut it at a proper angle, or even think that those were important things requiring his attention, even. He had-had a *different* kind of knapsack in those days too, Sparkle-did, and it helped to shape his mind as well as his initial techniques.

V

I enter my Bespattered Reader's subconscious thoughts as they are filtered into each of your peanut butter-melting dreams (dreams that I almost forgot to provide you...) each night, every night. And perhaps the reason I even bothered to start telling you about Sparkle's escapades immersed in the washing of dishes-at Godzilla's University (a big step for him but smaller than you'll ever know, smaller than any giant footstep of Godzilla's, that's for sure) was to tell you exactly what was the cause of Sparkle's vanishing, yet already invisible to mortal eyes, yes, his vanishing *ink stamp,* stamped smack-hard upon the back of his *left*-hand each morning (never the right) to provide him access in-and-out of the Multitude of Expositions, an entitlement and necessity for his work as a hustling busboy. As a result of this missing ink tattoo, evanesced by the sudsy sinks of Godzilla's student canteens, he was, hence, unable to reenter the fair, after returning from his hard work, back-achingly though victimless, work, performed inside the University's cafeteria kitchen, hidden behind the scenes of GU, or *"The Goo,"* as the local's like to refer to it. This evening, even though he *was*-entitled, he jarringly discovered, direct order from the gate-keeper, a kid about Sparkle's age, that he was *not*-entitled, to reenter the park, where he had intended to hear and clap and dance around in merriment, if even, and only, in his quiet imagination, to the evening's rock band.

> Remember you once told me that musicians were the best kind of people? I am now inclined to agree with you and when watching those guys up there on stage, I truly wish I were able to get up there with them and pluck away in total abandonment. Man, I'd kill!

Sometimes Sparkle wished he had learned to play a shiny brass-horn or a dangling woodwind with a more orthodox methodology than he was capable of, instead of his mish-mashing-slish-slashing and wildly fanatical humming, while immersed in total absorption, quarantined from the rest of humanity while engaged in his *"body-exploration"* work, following a particularly scintillating kill. Something he could show the world instead of having to rely on his hidden powers, keeping his

talents hidden from all others, always in the crepuscular shadows. His musical joy-musings, while immersed in his nightly occupation, is always a morbid joy. He fantasizes conducting the lyrical voices of all those he has helped to pass through the portals of this life, to help in *the-dying*. And then he had remembered something of which he had forgotten all about, his poetry, abandoned and forlorn. But tonight, forbidden from entering the fair, "decal, no-*see, pal,"* he was forced to slink home, head down, eyes closed, thinking only of the words, and the order in which they should be assembled, to embody a feeling, of sadness and hand-twitching, and desolation, too, when, arising out of a sudden-jolt of furtive glances, just to the right of northeast, she appeared, and the poem, instantly, fell into-place:

The pathway between us was a surprisingly short
Distance to travel
Stretched along the side
Of the river
Its slope was such
That
Upon reaching the lower pathway
It was found she was unable
To recede
Instead she found rest and refuge
Deep below the concrete ribbon
Of sidewalk

Yet caught in a rain-like pattern
He delighted
In the continuous auto-brake red stream
The cars could have been part of the excitement
The danger
But they ignored
The large oscillating spring
That brought her to the hungry
Teeth-chattering mountain-girl
Made whole by the insertion of man
Into whose pulsating panicked sluice-paths
He must take refuge
Into the bowels and chest cavity
Smashing a new entranceway to the skull
That inferno that gives the Poets its source of energy
Inspiration
At last
Mad and hell-like
Unexpected new energies
Fleeing death in all directions
Hitting him from behind
Exquisite throbbing between his legs
A thumping pain
While engaging in battle from the front

For an entrance from behind
Captured for all time-spaced experiments
Silenced by saxophones
Esophagus in tender embracement
Gnarled unyielding joints of equal madness - snapped
And finally to perceive it!
Engorged eyes tasted
Simmering in an Inferno's Oven
Participate with me
Now, though, blindly
Your ears so-tenderly disengaged
A source for perpetual candidness
And
Delight
A collage of dissonances
Unfastened
Like the pieces of a
1000-piece jigsaw puzzle
Enough to fill a knapsack
(And little more)

VI

And so what may have been a *diet-of-delight* for a hungry Sparkle, is just some *food-for-thought* for us, my Speculative Reader, for how much time can there be between the startup of the band and the initial ignition for Fireworks. Surely enough time for him to fantasize, at length, and to a substantial depth, too, but surely not enough time to actually *do-the-deed* – or was he *that* good at *what-he-does?*

VII

But, alas, he was home in time to scrutinize the Fireworks, again, sitting Indian style on his bed, maybe his ending up at the High Falls Hotel was just an oversight, a falling into past routines, but he was there, that very night, with his three-dollar bill for occupancy, composing his poem and washing his hands, every five minutes or so. He hasn't missed a night of Fireworks yet! He truly believes, with all of his, and his victims', knapsack-stored, hearts, that it provides him with the added energy and extra-stimulus that keeps him going, like the bunny, on-and-on. It delivers him a humming to his groin, a vibration that tranquilizes him into a simpering soppiness, allowing him to hold-his-fire, to be patient, to grapple with appeasement, so he can continue in his nightly (?) endeavors, to calmly entrap, with an expertise all his own, and a confidence, that allows him to be the best-at-what-he-does, *so-well*. That alone should satisfy him, but he is like an unquenched well, whatever that would be like, and that is what makes the boy such an interesting topic for a novel, such a novel in which the main character can express himself like this: *"Sometimes it appears that airplanes get caught in this majestic glory and I resonate with their agonies."* That being just one fleeting-thought, fluttering before us, of Sparkle's. Of course it makes no sense! But that need not deter us, nor frighten us away. He continues:

It must drive the pilots, and passengers, whenever conscious, wild! And yesterday, they were let free, to float high in the air, in, what must have been a thousand multi-colored balloons, or a thousand somethings, at least. And in amongst the free-floating balloons was a thus-jailed throng of birds, how I longed for the whole colony to perish! Yet the birds must have lent their cockscombs towards madness before succumbing to their surmise! How I long for the birds to start popping the balloons, albeit my anxiety regarding that unwelcomed visitor, that pesky little hard-on of mine! No pops, though. No beak to the rubber.

Sadly, none, not one single-beak, but, and, or, butts, (or cloaca), especially of the kind that would satisfy Sparkle, our ambitious, Sparkle Plenty, who's been back, the next morning, to check in on his wino friends. He found them exactly where he left them last week, all huddled around some old timeworn-and-temperamental black-and-white TV set, watching Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C., but the show they are really-waiting for is the Walton's. There were no Movies-On-Demand or DVDs, not even that many color-TVs, back-then. Mostly B&W and, you-got-what-you-got regarding show-preferred availability. So it was either Gomer or the Monkees, et cetera, your choice, regardless how limited. These bums, Sparkle realized, only wanted the love-and-peace a show like these pretends-is-real, and then they all go out and get drunk all over again. Fuck the Walton's, and especially fuck that Mary Ellen! His tender, poetic nature (Old Sparkle agonizes in his recollection) response immediately when they call him "My Friend!" or "My Brother" or "Neighbor" – it's extremely difficult for him exhibit or even feel any warmth for guys like these, and that makes him experience a sagging sense negative feelings, deep down and empty, inside. At times it overwhelms him with guilt, guilt that he could not really identify with or recognize as a feeling, even. If only he could just chop off these negative feelings, by cutting away, tendon by ligament, at one or two of his welcoming "Neighbors," just to take the edge off. Sparkle, though, without giving any eye contact or a hint of a smile, just responded to the winos' welcoming with a greeting of his own, "Howdy" was what he chose to squelch back to them today. To that, they guffawed, except for Charley, who started off with a snigger before realizing everyone else was guffawing and then, although a little bit late, he joined in the guffawing. But in reality there was really very little that Sparkle could do. No, that doesn't sound right... shit, now I'm being affected by the mawkishness of all this. I'd better stop writing or else quickly change the subject. Perhaps I should enter data into my D630 to give the impression that Sparkle is finally willing to accept one of those drinks his friends keep offering him, some Liqueur-Extra Anisette-Double, mixed up with something yellow, Sparkle didn't know what, in a dirty, chipped, jelly cup, originally bottled in some grubby back street of Habana, Cuba. Remember those days? Oh, I'd love to tell you more about the gristly life of Sparkle, but, "Excuse me, Sir, your three minutes are-up." I'll try calling you again tomorrow night, my Temporarily-Reprieved Reader, to tell you more, as long as it isn't raining too hard and the lines aren't so very long!

19

Chapter Nineteen

Sparkle, a Proud Busboy with Perks

I, Sparkle Plenty, am today a Proud Busboy, employed at the Soviet Pavilion's cafeteria, arriving exactly as scheduled, not a minute too soon, and just in the nick-of-time, too! As I sauntered through the back entrance, white shirt glowing like Venus ascending in the dimness of the hot and sweltering kitchen of the *Soviet Vodka Bar and Restaurant*, pondering, meditatively upon the question, accidentally pondering a bit more loudly than intended, but fortunately not in Uralic, Altaic or Paleo-Siberian, what was said was said in English: "When I grow up to be a man, will I dig the same things that turned me on as a Soviet busboy?" And before an answer to that ponderous question alit like a Pygmy Blue butterfly upon the cortex of my brain, and even before my boss, Mr. Tolstoy, was able to deliver to me a single item on his prepared list, printed in a careful Cyrillic script, to, for example, direct me as to where the best place is to stand while waiting to pounce upon the tangle-and-confusion of leftovers strewn across the tabletops, or how best to pick up a dirtied plate with both grace and refinement using just one hand at a time, nor was there time, even, to be allotted, to me, one reminder emphasizing the exercise and expectation of politeness and restraint (e.g., don't be killing anyone, regardless of your excuse, *especially* the restless-young and the chinless-delights, or those with nipples-that-bud, nor any variety among the girlish persuasion that I might find a reason to stash away in the men's room – Mr. Tolstoy just looked at me with a baffled and puzzled-gaze prompting me to confess, with fore-and-middle fingers clasped, in a tightly-twined embrace, behind my back, of course, the sentiment that "I was *just* kidding!" But, having forgotten myself and my surroundings, I further confess, but this time only to you, my Atoning Reader, that I was not really, kidding, of course), again, not one reminder, none that I can remember, anyway. Instead I become a witness to my intended-to-be day's partner getting fired, on the spot, and a most fiery sacking, too, with all the accoutrements of yelling and arguing, he being my immediate predecessor, what could I learn from this, his being dismissed, not for being inappropriately positioned before pounce-waiting tables, nor for the way he elevated the knife-ware in a malicious manner, or any other silverware, from the spill-strewn, sloppily-disheveled tabletop, but for being rude to some old bag while trying to entice some Utah girl into the men's room, and I don't think his intensions were good. A lesson learned, one for Sparkle to check off his list. I don't think the thought of killing her, or her snappy grandmother, ever popped into my predecessor's head, I wonder what his name was? Anyway I'm pretty sure he never intended on killing her. He didn't look the type. He probably should have waited to unzip his pants until he and the girl got at least a few feet from the men's room door and not at the table in front her kid brother and grandmother. While he was getting scolded and being told to hand in his hammer and sickle, the girl could be seen, imploring her grandmother for at least *one-last-look* at the zipper and all she imagined it promised. All in all, a very interesting but short-lived drama. I was to learn that all of the American staff at the *Soviet Vodka Bar and Restaurant* were rather goatish and unwise, so different from Sparkle and his in-public quality of outward gentleness. But now I found myself to be, on my first day of work, *on-my-own*, with little instruction. For me, because of the circumstances, Mr. Tolstoy had truncated the list to just three-items: (1) just do a good job, and, (2) keep your zipper intact, and, (3) don't use any knifes engraved with the initials USSR on anything but the beef stroganoff. Not a word about staying out of trouble. But, other-than-that, the work isn't very demanding and I am even able to get some reading done when things are slow. Only *Instruction #21*, which I was informed of later, and quite firmly after being spotted

reading Daniel Defoe, states that any books read on Soviet territory, and the Russian Pavilion was-considered Soviet Soil, must be an Authorized Soviet Writer (ASW), such as a Dostoyevsky or Tolstoy, any Russian authors were o-kay really, as long as it wasn't written by, say, Alexandr Solzhenitsyn or Boris Pasternak or the writer of Robinson Crusoe. It all came down to something about the ambience and, especially, obedience, but a kind of obedience that went way beyond the confines of the restaurant, obedience, *yes*, but of ambience *I know nothing!*

They feed me all I can eat, which means, I have broken the strictness of my cannibal-vegetarian diet and have included fried sturgeon into my diet which they sell at $3.60 a platter. I ate three platefuls today. I also broke down and drank a lot of Coke-a-Cola, but, using all the will power I can muster, I mustn't do that again! Tomorrow I will strictly adhere to a diet of toenail tea, yes, tea, by whose alpha-keratin buzz I am extremely receptive. And I love that onycho-*aroma.* And speaking of intoxication, my Comrades at work introduced me to the pleasures of beet juice, gulped from an old OXO bottle, and the joys of allowing the juice to drip down the sides of my mouth, just for the pleasure of it, no clean-up necessary. Perhaps I will go seeking some beet beer, another delightful remedy to a victimless night. I'll investigate and try to discover if there are any local distributors, but I doubt anyone will have it. It will have to be imported from Sebewaing, Michigan, the Home of the American Beet, and if not there, from the rich, black-earth districts of European Russia, "Where the best-beets grow!" Here they have Hamm's and Olympian beet juice but I don't know of any other really interesting labels. I can't believe I'm talking about beets! I should be talking about Russian Absinthe instead, something extraordinary, visionary, and bizarre. My grandmother had a quarter of a bottle of the stuff hidden in her NYC apartment but she wouldn't let me have any of it because she was saving it for something s'pecial. But now that she's disappeared, believed to be kidnapped by the bellboy and stuffed down the elevator shaft, I was able to acquire the bottle. When I poured myself a glassful, on the night that she was murdered, allegedly by the bellboy, and he paid dearly for his misdeed, it was a thick, glutinous syrup, like drying blood, and it appeared to have a multicolored mold growing on it. That was definitely *not* something special, and if she were still alive today, I'd *tell-her-that!* Now I ask you, what's *more-s'pecial* than letting your grandson see God in a Glass of Russian Absinthe? Thick coagulated goop with squirming bits of mold growing in it, that's what!

And from God we descend back into the restaurant where one of the-other busboys, a hippy boy named Troy, has written his name, "T-R-O-Y" on his badge in psychedelic colors, an extremely Un-Russian thing to do. Troy asked me if I were a Russian. It was my conspicuous accent that gave it away. Have I even said one-word to this guy? Oh, and at work today, with the sun shining tenderly through the skylights above me and down upon a soft and yielding composition of callipygian design, I spotted the playful image of a fair-haired angel, a new waitress sashaying between the tables, taking orders in a voice of melodious rapture. My anticipation has begun to ascend, like the wings of this angel, or the Blue Pygmy butterfly that still flits around my cortex, albeit I haven't gotten a good look at her chin-*yet.* So maybe being a busboy has its perks! I will lure her home. After all, it's a *nice-and-safe* neighborhood I live in, *pretty-too,* s-o-o innocent and n-o-n-violent, with only the **Y**owling of **D**ogs and **B**arking of **C**hildren to contend with, yowls and barks to muffle the screams amongst the horror.

20

Chapter Twenty

Wherein Sparkle Worries about Nippers, Sprogs, and the State of the Economy

Sparkle, dazzling looking in his glistening white shirt, shuffles about a mile to work each day, and, as you might expect, such rousing skirmishes submit themselves, sure as a pants on fire, into his personal space and perceptions. Why can't he just blend in, chameleon-like, into his surroundings? Anyway, every day, just about two blocks from his room, this little annoyance, a female sprog around four-year-old, asks him, "What's your name?" "I'm Sparkle, what's yours?" Believe me, this pintsized-Mary asks him that *every-day*, he inevitably answers, and then he is free to proceed along his way. Well, yesterday, it was a little bit different – as he walked by, perhaps a minute or two earlier than usual, the little brat came out of her house, but this time, with her mother. And I hear her exclaim, "Hey, there goes Sparkle!" To which he scrambled along, head down, eyes upon the sidewalk, walking just a little bit faster than appeared normal, full of regrets regarding his error in giving his correct name to this meddlesome monster. If he kills her now, people will definitely be asking, "Who's Sparkle?"

And there's this other kid, a young nipper, who blocked Sparkle's way by standing before him, militarily, arms akimbo, to reenact for Sparkle how all his plastic soldiers go about killing each other off. "Pretty funny stuff, huh?" says the still-chubby, and still-budding, homicidal assassin. Yeah, but Sparkle was not up for the future competition. Better to do him in now, he thought to himself, and then he began imagining exactly how he would go about doing it...

At work, finally, where he should be able to relax, he catches himself in the middle of a **S**taring **C**ontest with an eighteen-month-old tot, of vacillating gender - and losing! He thought he could overcome his challenge regarding eye contact if it was provided to a yet-thoughtless baby, but he couldn't. He realized that the empty-minded toddler was mocking him once it became cognizant of Sparkle's deficiency in the staring department, and the baby battling from its strength, won the challenge, without even batting an eye. Everyone else, regardless of their present skill level in eye gazing, is gawking at Sparkle weirdly, and a little bit nervously, or so he perceives, because they think he is a Russian, and, if you recall, the citizens of the Soviet Union, in the year 1974, were our mortal enemies. Every once in a while, in fact, someone would come up to him and actually start talking to him in Uralic or Altaic or Paleo-Siberian and, since he didn't know what to do, he would say, "To your right, underneath the stairs," which is where the bathroom was. It worked 61% of the time so he stuck it out with that-solution.

Today he doesn't have to go to work so we see him walking along another sidewalk, briskly, with his knapsack emptied for the trip, bouncing against his gyrating back, for he is going to the store to buy toothpaste and more beet-tea. And now, hours later, he is sitting, right here, directly before us, *in-the-nude*, sitting Indian-style, on the top of his unmade bed, a bed pushed up against the southeast wall of his new room, a room with two windows facing both south and east, and I ask you, my Titillated Reader, do you find his lack of clothing wanton or profane? He is visibly aghast at the recent news he has just received! Pinball inflation! The new inflationary price-hike will be at the cost of 25¢ for only one game consisting of three balls; that's one-for-three! Whereas it used to

be two, or sometimes even three games, of five balls each - all for the same price of 25¢. That's a lot of *percent-increase!* (I tried calculating it but the numbers quickly got out of control.) And that was not all, that alone wouldn't have caused Sparkle's skin to crawl with worms and chiggers forcing him out of his clothes while gyrating in the middle of his bed. Beyond that, juke boxes are soaring from a full three-songs for each quarter slipped into-the-slip-slot, pruned to only one-song for that same two-bit piece! And Penny Gum Ball Machines, commonly known as "Peg-Bams" – have you heard about them? There have been reports, heard down by the river, after shooting his baby dead, ooh, ooh, her dead, ooh, where he once took a little walk, to meet up with the Devil to have a little talk, to learn of a recent social experiment being conducting just north of Seattle, whereby two pennies are required to purchase that same ball-of-gum that could be *gotten*-from a single penny just south, east or west of there. And if that doesn't work, they're looking into manufacturing their gumballs to be hallow! If you pay close attention, you'll notice that there are more bubbles inside the gum even right now, whether balls of Royal Blue or Simmering Silver, than there used to be! Sparkle wrote the company a letter to complain about the increase in the air pockets' size and overall quantity and the response he got was a letter stating, "Why do you think it's called *Bubble* Gum?" Sparkle is indeed living at a time when the economy is running amok, but fortunately, for Sparkle, he lives very cheaply, still uses Ivory Soap for shampoo, and snacks on, well, we won't go into that. But you know what I mean. At any rate, if only for the moment, he will have to give up pinballs, jukeboxes and gumballs, three things he never engaged in anyway, unless it was an integral part of a more elaborate plan, a plan more to his liking and personal predilection, something, perhaps, for which he has soft spot or, you could say, a weakness. Perhaps you are anticipating as we arrive at the end of the present chapter the lack of a poem. Again this is both good and bad, an analysis of which was made way back in the nineteenth chapter, or, perhaps, it was one of the others before or after the twentieth, *exactly* which, I'm uncertain. I should probably look it up. Nevertheless, Sparkle's next poem *will* emerge upon the red-splashed page soon, don't you worry. But let me first-explain: What if I dared you to recall that **A**ngelic **W**aitress and the screaming dogs and barking children all highlighted at the end of Chapter 19 – would you care to take up such a dare? Such a cacophony, dispersed by the children and the dogs, was enough to drown out the panicked pleas that were so hastily extinguished at the delicate hands, hands clever enough to carry six dishes-disgusting, several saliva-dirtied disposable Dixies, half-a-dozen greasy salad bowls packed with wet-paper napkins containing undefinable-filth and inedible beets, amidst a-clatter of utensils - all at the *same-time*. But the story of hence-snuffling hands actually starts with the unsuspecting left foot of Sparkle, but for this we must make a hasty retreat from our present story and patiently progress, paragraph by paragraph, towards that chapter containing the one left foot and those two snuffling, snorting, and sniveling hands.

21

Chapter Twenty-One

Angel Doo-Doo

Here, *finally*, and it did not take very long, is the chapter in which Sparkle spends an afternoon killing a coworker, a newbie-waitress at the ***R**ussian **Beet-B**ar and **R**estaurant*, an angel in-disguise but who is so-immature that she falls for all-of Sparkle's craz-y l-i-e-s and del-u-sion-s. She*, the angel,* and not the lies and delusions, has fallen madly in love with Sparkle, hence the ease at which Sparkle was able to *lure-her* to *his-lair*. This chapter erroneously begins with Sparkle's feet, of which I hope to have lots to say, but at the moment that is only speculation, but there is at least one more thing that needs to be said about Sparkle and his newbie girlfriend from whom he could not tolerate even the tiny touch of a pinky-winky, to say-nothing of *a-caress!* And so we present here a stolen glimpse of him, Sparkle, and Kathy, for that was the angel's name, being flirtatious and witty with one another after digesting some sturgeon over Jul'o Cortazar's Latest Hit: 62: A Model Kit.

We first hear Sparkle, like a lark-lark unto Kathy, say: "Kathy, my-chinless angel, you are the biggest *cronk* I have ever-known!"

> "Well, you're the biggest petti-four-or five"
>
> So they *bone-eyed* each other, *lasciviously*, with fearful *mulgh* which caused her to leak a *zott* onto the floor. Sparkle, of course, *bulled* it.
>
> "Why did you *bull* my *zott*?" Kathy asked.
>
> "Because you went and *nicked* me."
>
> "I did not! You *nicked* me and then I *counternicked* you," where upon she picked a *trefulgh* with six stars from a tree that flew by.

Sparkle, at this juncture of the charades, reacted with discreet *remune,* announced to all within announcing-distance, *"Tete tete fafafa remolino,"* if, only, because: *only Holy-Things,* must, not-go undefended.

"Bisbis bisbisisis," they Chortled
While in Divine Unison
In both their hearts
And their shared
Regardless of-the-level-of tenderheartedness
Measured by such devises that have yet to be devised
No matter the number derived from final calculation
They shared deep down to the bottom of their heart
Their shared true-love!

[End of Scene Depicting the Depth of Sparkle and Kathy's True-Love]

So, Sparkle's left foot hurt. Not all of it, just one dot's-worth worth of pain-domain, just one tiny spot of hurt located somewhere along the top of his left-foot. "Why does my foot hurt?" He had been sleeping soundly, not a worry at-all, nothing but good-dreams and fairy-dust thoughts flying around his soundly-sleeping head. That was when he noticed that his foot hurt and, maybe, he's not an excellent judge in these particular type of matters, but he thought that his foot might even hurt *a-lot!* How could this be? What could be the cause? Sparkle thought about it some more, *from-seventeen-to-nineteen-minutes* more, and came to the conclusion that he should, perhaps, turn on-the light and give the leg a look-over. He did both of these things, one following the other, you decide which one does the following, though one works better than the other, I always think so. Anyway, the leg didn't look too good. There was definitely a problem, right there, directly in the center of that circular area earlier determined as the $A=\pi r^2$ of painful domain. And what did he find in that exact location? The initial fingernail puncture of a long-line string of lacerations heading for the bottom of his left foot, the same foot for which we once-had a concern for only the *top-of*, seen in the light to not only be *approaching* the bottom but actually *getting-there*, completely self-absorbed, those fingernails were, and *whetted*-sharp, too! In fact, his whole foot was torn to pieces, but it does not stop there, no, indeed! Up the leg in a direct line to, to his, how can I say this with *best-of-form*? Cock! His self-perceived daggar, his sword, his bobby, his tom-tom, his Wee-Wee and Weiner, his very own weapon-of-destruction! That was how Sparkle chose to say it emphasizing his own *best-of-form*. And so he did. But the screams and then the sudden silence thus ended the acts of vicious lacerations and Sparkle got back to the task at hand. For at this point the blood writing of the story began to-flow for-Sparkle and he slurped it up and spat it out! The words just flew into the computer and the writing continued to dribble and drool, going on and on. Such a happy ending if this were the end of the story. It's not though, most probably. Just one paragraph for the whole story and jam-packed as it is, well, perhaps that is the *just-right* amount of words necessary and there it doesn't really have-to-have many-more to go. But we did get a Sparkle-Poem out of it, though I am baffled to see the connection between the two. Something for the jury to contemplate for the trial of Ancient Sparkle and justice for the Death of All Those People He Probably Might've Killed (DATPHPMK). Or maybe, and this is a *just-*perhaps, merely a Those He Did Not (THDN).

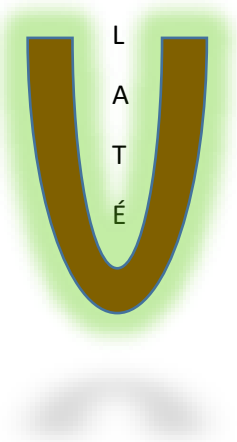
I heard that Sparkle couldn't keep anything down the next day, which was a shame for the restaurant because now they were short two-employees for the morning shift, and that's a busy-and-hard time of-day to-work, but he didn't-know if it was because he was so-full or had somehow lost-his appetite. Sometimes it's hard to distinguish between the two.

Toafo
or
The Swedenborg Perceptions

Quasi-omni-directional halos!
Unidentified
Hyperbolically transversing inter-uni-verse multiples
Or
Falling into those too-dense to appear-nothings
Which are hyper-spatiotemporally attracted to All's Opposites
Otoscopic perceptions radiating to imperfect instantaneous time segments
(time always too short to measure)
Changing multiple realities again into-One
And being cross occurrences:
Are just finite infinitesimals cross-interfering
Making known This-One and All Further-Ones (TO+AFO)
Imperfectly

Part Two
Song

Toasters flying through majestic solar-abstractions and derived-form
Differentiated into epsilon's and pi's
Swallowed by Universe-Expanding Neutrinos (UENs)
Working on sidereal time
As only Angels-doo →



Whom-Have lost their Love-for-Sparkle
Only
But
When-it-Was
Too
L
A
T
E
.
.

Chapter Twenty-Two

In Which Chester Pulls Something Out of the Toilet

It's not *when* he can no longer *find* the little hole in which he is to insert his you-know-what so that he can make prober use of his bedside plastic hospital urinal that everyone should start to worry, everyone should start to worry when he *stops noticing* that he has *missed* the hole and *doesn't* realize he's making a mess everywhere! We are not referring to Sparkle here, he's not in this part of the story, but to *Chester,* Chester Brown Bottoms, Spokane Plumber Deluxe (SPD), presently in recovery from his recent breakdown. Sadly he is unable to be an active SPD at present and, most likely, since the assault upon his senses, never again. Sparkle never met Chester although they may have crossed paths walking through the Presidents, those crisscrossing side streets called Lincoln and Monroe or while crisscrossing streets honoring presidents Madison and Adams, all located in Spokane's northwest region, as Sparkle was coming-to or going-from his busboy duties after emerging or escaping from the shade-covered streets of Deciduous Hardwood Trees such as Walnut, Maple and Ash. Chester was short and stubby, always dressed to blend in. He was a gay man in Spokane, Washington in the mid-1970's – not the best time to admit to what he considered for himself at the time to be an aberration. He was a gay man without partners until, that is, he felt *the-need* to do something-about it. But this isn't a story about that. And it does not really matter that Chester was gay and unhappy about it. What is important is the thing that cured him of being gay or of being anything else, even the need he felt for being a plumber, part of his need to help obscure the fact that he was gay. The only thing he really had to worry about after the incident was getting his thing into that little hole whenever he had to take a piss so he wouldn't pee the bed or the floor. And that was becoming more tenuous as time went on. By focusing on his daily needs, he thought he could forget. They say time heals-all, but for Chester, things only got-worse. He could not get those images, one tiny piece at a time, out of his mind, and in his imagination, the objects only grew in number and accumulated horror. He had always liked being around kids, before then, anyways. He had always dreamed of, somehow, one day, becoming a dad. So Sparkle may have seen him around on the streets on one or two occasions. You never know, and certainly Chester never knew. Although they lived in the same neighborhood their lives were completely unalike and their beings never knowingly intersected until that awful moment, but neither protagonist had a clue how the other was involved in this grisly play. Sparkle had gone to work that Monday morning, just as he always did. His white shirt was particularly clean that morning. His sneakers were still a bit soggy, but only Sparkle could be privy to that. They didn't look at all moist, looking down at them, but they were definitely a bit squelchy to the person wearing them, and that person was Sparkle. Why were they wet? Only Sparkle can tell us that and he is not immediately available for the asking. This early Monday morning Sparkle pretended that he was very-very sick, ailing and unwell. "It's an intestinal thing!" He flatulated, with some determination, as he explained all of this to Mr. Tolstoy. And boy, by the smell of it, Sparkle was not lying – but he *was* lying. He was feeling fine but he needed to hastily attend to some business in the Men's Double-Stalled Bathroom (MD-SBR#14b) and then he had-to get out-of Spokane, *and-quick!* He didn't even have-time to tell the new busboy, who happened ***to-be-a-girl,*** but, lucky for her, she had a chin ***like-a-horse*** and he didn't want anything to do with-her after-hours. He didn't want to tell her, not *that-*

day, that his pillow had exploded the night before while he was asleep and that the feathers had flown everywhere. And I don't want to tell you about that either, because, as I have already declared, this chapter *isn't* a story about Sparkle – it's a story about Chester and what he saw after Sparkle went home from work, allegedly due to his being *sick-as-a-dog*, breed unknown, but the kind that can feel a bit bilious at times, perhaps due to something eaten or something he was anticipating for a late breakfast brunch, just for him, at home, waiting in the refrigerator, sitting heavily on the rack, dripping only a little while weighing it down. Anyway, because he was *only* pretending that he was lavishly, does that describe it? - *Under-the-Weather*, gastro-intestinally that is, so as to give excuse why he wasn't going to be at work that day. "See you tomorrow, I'm sure I'll be better by then," he sniveled and chirped with feigned distress in his crusty but ill-sounding voice. Yet, as you have already been told, he was being deceitful to Mr. Tolstoy as well as to the female busboy to whom he would never get-to-say, having used his winter coat for a pillow since his pillow was no longer functional due to its untimely explosion, "You must think me awfully silly to be wearing a pillow on a fine day such as this!" No, he never got a chance to be witty, albeit in an English sort of way, and so he never got around to saying *that* to the new-girl, the sweetie with the colossal chin. He didn't want to anyway, just didn't feel up-to it-today. He was instead thinking about his present predicament and the job he had come here, *here* being the *Russian Potato Bar and Restaurant,* to do and then to get the hell out of there *and* Spokane altogether, as swift as a botched hysterectomy can take you, and that, if you don't know, is *pretty-quick*. But this is all digression and, as I have revealed multiple times already, this story is not about the digressionary Sparkle. It's about Chester Bottoms and what he caught sight of, and not on his own volition either, and how he responded, in such a precise and methodical way, to what he now-wished he *had never-seen*.

Sparkle was already more than halfway to Lincoln Street when a customer tipped off Mr. Tolstoy, directly, about the clogged problem-toilet and the vile stench-therein. Mr. Tolstoy, if you were close-enough to hear-him, muttered under his anise-smelling breath, "*That* Sparkle!" And he did not purport this in a nice way. Slowly he felt the steam-rising within. He had never understood Sparkle and now was getting cross at him again, muttering things he shouldn't in his native tongue. He had taken a chance on hiring him only because, well, no one else at the time wanted to work at the *Russian Turnip-Bar and Restaurant* but Sparkle, who from day one, was that kind-of worker who constantly avoided work but was-instead able to create havoc AL-around-L *him-instead*, and as he marched to the Men's Room, ~~Mr.~~ *Comrade* Tolstoy, was assessing in his mind what-the-hell-was-Sparkle-up-to-in-there this morning when, POW! –the stench slapped him, brutally, right in his Soviet face. "Call Plumber Bottoms! And tell him it is an emergency!" This time he did not mutter under his anise-smelling breath, he *boomed-it-out*, bellowing out his message, along with an anise seed or two, across the entire length of the kitchen, the force of which cracked eggs and changed the color of the stroganoff into a high—frequency squeal of deep-summer tan. And Plumber Bottoms, bottom humming, could be detected, almost simultaneously, streaking across the Presidents, entering the Trees and continuing to barrel down the outlying avenues and boulevards, quick as a flatulating gnat, until he arrived, *huffingly*, at the back door, and entered the *Russian Tater-Bar and Restaurant* through that door labeled Только для сотрудников (i.e., "For Employees Only) where, once inside, he slowed to a steady saunter as he moseyed on-through the restaurant, two-stepping himself towards the Men's Room, his-heart, inadvertently, and

unwarrantedly, fluttering when he considered the possibilities of what he might find within, inside the stalls, just as he opened the door, whereupon he took one whiff, dared not a second, and cried out with some authority and expertise, "I think I ought to go back to the shop to get my tools. This job is going to need some professional attention!" And he then proceeded, in the manner of Sparkle's contrary reactions as-previously-exploited in Chapter Seventeen, to **un**whiff before **un**sauntering backwards out of the Men's Room and backing through the restaurant's dining room, butt-opening a passageway through the kitchen door, making his way slowly, in reverse-saunter, to traverse the entire length of the kitchen and, at kitchen's-end, again butt-banging his way back-through the back-door where, once outdoors, he suddenly shifted into high-gear, yet still in reverse, where he steaked, bottom leading the way, along the boulevards and avenues, through the trees, quick nods to Adams, Monroe and Lincoln, whereas only Lincoln dipped and jiggled back, or so Chester thought, in his rush to get-home, where he washed out each nostril with an old enema bag, to relieve him of the stench, before jumping into his truck, with all his plumbing gear intact, to rush, pell-mell, back to the restaurant before Mr. Tolstoy even knew he had gone. This time he boldly entered the bathroom, a special kind of noseware, tactically in place, to avoid undesired heaving, looked inquiringly into each of the bowls and noticed in the one on the far right a scratched and mauled toe floating just below the paper-strewed and rippling yellow water. He reached down and grasped at it, not quite a tug, with some practice it will soon be a *regular* tug, but as it presently stands, not being a full-fledged tug, Chester is not yet fully aware at what he has been a-tugging. He then began to pull-and-wiggle, before yielding to a yanking with sufficient force to produce (1) a mangled and horrifying toe, (2) a mangled and horrified, yet stifled, scream, (3) enough PDST, already, to last him the rest of his life, (4) something to tell his grandchildren, of which, being gay and now mentally ill and most likely sterile, he can now never have, and (5):

An increasing multitude of Rotting Bits and Pieces (RBPs)
Not a single-piece missing
That eventually culminated
Into-the Discrete Assorted Accumulation (DAA)
Yielding two *little* *boys*
Each unidentifiable
As to
Name & Address
(as yet)
But most likely
Of ages four-years & eighteen months-old
And not until all the pieces were-retrieved
And quasi-assembled
did-he
Traumatized and Captivated
Even consider
Calling for Help

Mr. Tolstoy thought the whole thing grisly and, guzzling from a bottle of Pernod, couldn't help suspecting Sparkle. Meanwhile, Sparkle was, unbeknownst to Mr. Tolstoy, Chester Bottoms, the boys' *dead-and-not-yet-discovered* young-mother, *nor-even* the Spokane or Federal Investigators,

they had no-idea that Sparkle was once-again Greyhound-bound, speeding in directions unknown to everyone but Sparkle, where he was peacefully napping, in the rearmost seat, dreaming happy-dreams, anxiety-free, and thinking, *finally*, peaceful thoughts about all the girls, without-a chin, he had to-leave behind.

23

Chapter Twenty-Three

Not Another Introduction!

It seems to me that another introduction, at this point of the story, is duly warranted. But now that I am here, I realize I have nothing further to say introductory-wise. But since I *did* feel an introduction or break was needed at this juncture, I can assure you that it was because of the ongoing question of boundaries and where *exactly* do you cross that line into the **R**ealm of the **E**vil? And this seemed, for a moment at least, to have been an appropriate location from which to speak-out upon those excursions.

My Astute Reader, you may have noticed the duality lying within this title – hence you perceive how in both cases the title rings true. For, if an introduction were indeed to follow, the title would imply, "Rats! Not *Another* Introduction! How many introductions is the author going to force upon us?" But as it turns out, seeing as I neglected to realize before I began this chapter, that I have no new insights to provide the reader, regardless of the fact that I-should-have, *noticed* that is, but since it is not another introduction, once again the title rings true, for, it is indeed *Not* Another Introduction. Win-win!

Regardless, since we are here, all assembled, both reader(s) and I, perhaps this might be an appropriate place to mention that somehow I have jumbled up the order of the chapters, thus far, for I may jumble-up again in the future, regardless of all the care and foresight I am able to bring to my command, I have certainly done so in two self-detected instances thus-far, although I would not rule out the possibility of yet another instance that I may have overlooked. If you have noticed a third oversight, please, my Observant Reader, let me know so that I can fix that.

Here are the two jumble-bumbles I have detected thus far:

(1) While creating the table of contents thus far, it became clear to me, and dost my heart did a tumble, yielding a jumble-bumble-tumble, perhaps the first of its kind in all of English Literature (AEL), by which, with any good luck, will be the only thing for which I will be remembered following my last and nevermore breath, that I had written, and what a surprise it truly was, **two** chapter sevens! Hence, the clever addition of Chapter 8-1/2 and all was solved.

(2) Chapter 22, just read, was developed before Chapter 24 was even thought of, and as the careful observer might notice, the two chapters are quite out of order whereby you can correct the defi-ien-y of the book you now hold, using scissors and Scotch Tape or to just flip the two disorderly chapters in your mind, your choice, as always and evermore.

I have considered using this opportunity, as well, to add a comprehensive listing and full description of the variety of knives, scalpels, blades, cutters, skivers, toothpicks, machetes, poniards, gutters, lances, swords, rapiers, stylets, bolos, pig stickers, ticklers, carvers, daggers, shanks and shivs, points and skewers, bayonets, dirks or rippers, jackknives, stilettos, sabers, scimitars *and* sickles that presently comprise *Sparkle's "little friend"* collection. But, on second thought, I have decided not to. Maybe in a later chapter we can present-and-peruse that scintillating list.

I have further considered compiling a list of each of Sparkle's victims, thus far, in these stories, regardless of whether he really did it or not. But once again, for this is something you should have been doing all along on your own (you have not forgotten your obligation, have you?), for this is something well within your own capabilities. Hence I am forced to confess that I, too, have chosen, not, to-do, the victim list thing. Best not to know.

I choose instead to recapitulate, but in private, away from prying eyes. And I have decided to declare that this is indeed NOT an introduction, while, if it were, by my own calculations, whether accurate or not, it would be the fourth, by *my* counting at any rate, but this is always subject to change, later, my prerogative, thereby transforming it into yet *another* introduction, and not a *not,* merely by the sudden thought of something prudent or relevant at some future time. But until then, we will let the matter rest *as-is*.

24

Chapter Twenty-Four

In Which Sparkle Botches His First Attempted Hysterectomy

At one time this story comprised Chapter 29, which happily is a prime number. At the time we hadn't seen a prime number since the inception of Chapter 23, and whereby primes generally bring good luck to all that come under their spell, only good things were to be expected. Hence the anticipation of a highly precise and successful first-time textbook-perfect hysterectomy, a rare exception in regards to first-tried hysterectomies, first-tried by Sparkle, that is. Unfortunately, due to many discarded error-riddled chapters, this chapter is now numbered 24, which as you can see is *not* a prime (and not even a very interesting number, although necessary to get us from 23 to 25) and hence, not being prime it is instead a criteria for one disaster after another.

I

Sparkl-O-Vitch

You see, several nights ago my pillow exploded while I was asleep and feathers flew. I breathed, bathed and dreamed in feathers and now I am learning to use my winter coat for my new and potentially-fluffy pillow. I hence wait for the day I arrive to work so I can, in full-throttle, exclaim,

"You must think me Awfully Silly to be wearing a Pill-oW on such a Fine-Day as this!" (In a Moscow accent of course.) It was earlier last evening that I became ill. Walking past the Presidents (Lincoln, Monroe, Madison and Adams), longing to enter the Trees (Hawthorne, Cedar, Walnut, Maple, Ash, Oak, and Elm)... a fever came over me, my stomach began to gurgle and my mind began telling me that I was turning into a fish, more specifically, a sturgeon! Air began flowing, *suds-silly,* through the gills of my neck; the scales began to glisten. At this point, feeling a dire need of help I screamed, simultaneously – two words: "Fire! & Water!," for who would have come forward upon hearing, though with fear-in-her-voice, "FISH, more specifically, "STURGEON!" I hurried home, threw-myself into a catatonic s-t-a-t-e and then I surveyed the cat devouring the sturgeon bringing me just enough downtime to allow for one health-regenerating cocktail before arriving safely at work the next morning.

But the Evil One was not prepared to leave me at peace yet!
I was immediately confronted with the task
Of severing the umbilical cord
Of a fetal pig
Whose blood was initializing coagulation-properties
Throughout her pink,
Pig-pink,
Body.

A white, milky liquid spattered
At the moment of incision
&
Has stained my memory for life.
The pig looked up at me blankly,
Maneuvered her tail into
A sensuous and mysterious way
Thus speaking to me in the foreign tongue
Of a Russian.
She prophesized that I would
Marry-my-dead-cousin
Who
Would shortly thereafter give birth to two
Little bicycles and an oyster.
Then through some sort of magical psychic-kinesis,
My arm was pulled towards her still-flexing nostrils
And my finger was made to enter the vicinity of her brain
And instantly my inside,
Talking-to-me native,
Language switched off the English,
And was,
Retuned, into the musical utterances among the
Russian ***Ainu****.*

The trials and tribulations of being well-Red, I turn, her-face immediately opposite-mine, and I say, "Tolstoy, Kropotkin kvass, ***sonofovitch!"*** She says, "Leon Trotsky, Moscow, Stroganoff, cherry tart!" "Ouspensky, Gurdjieff, blueberry muffin?" "Nikolai Gogol, Chekov, Dostoyevsky, И, Madame Blavatsky!" And that just about settled it.

Should I tell you about my Sanity *Factor-Saver* at work? This started up the very-next day, the day following the pig, and the Sanity-Saver is to speak in a variety of Russian-Tongues with the Other Busboy, who happens to be *a-girl.* We do this until the tears are rolling down both our faces, until, neither of us knows where, we, are, any, longer, so filled with mirth we-are. "Leo Tolstoy Leon Trotsky," says she. "Ouspensky stroganoff sonofovitch," I answer between peals of delightful laughter! "Dostoyevsky *cherry-tart?"* And that cherry tart bit never fails to set us, the two-of-us, off into new *clangors-of-hilarity*. She agreed, pinky-swearing, the two of us interlocking our pickies, that no matter when I required her to be my-interpreter, each time one of those *absurd-&-silly* customers asks me (me being "Sparkle pretty *damned*-Plenty" and I'm feelin' pretty energetic-and *pixilated*, today!) – yes, *whenever* they ask me if I'm a Russian. And, so far, she has kept her side of the bargain! I changed my name plate to read **Sparkl-O-Vitch**, which really fakes 'em all, but of course, the bosses at this place are such creeps that, if they ever come **face-to-ecaf** with my name plate, I'm libel to get fired. But I don't care! *"I don't!"* And after this job I'll call Tracy's new house-owner, and if they're still willing to give me the house at the price I worked him down to, I'll move to Oregon and live in a whole house devoid of fireworks, just by myself, and then what? Or should I tell you that *right now,* yes, at this, very, moment, there is an 18-month old little-kid, *a-wobbling-and-a-farting,* sitting at the head of *my* bed putting *his* head around the back *of it* to peek *at-me* through a some-sort of grill-work, which is also a head-board, before, surprise-surprise, another kid, previously unseen, has half-fallen out-of-the-bed s-c-r-e-a-m-ing to be helped back-in – turns out he's kidding with me - and I won't help him *back-in*, quite enjoying myself amongst the simulated, not-at-all real (for tonight, anyway), *hopefully* just-a-simulation, of the torture-and-pain to come. They, the two little meatsacks, should be trying to go to sleep, for they've been put to bed, sort of, two or three times-now before Sparkle even arrived home to find them snuggled in his bed. But the little one wants to hang from ***my*** lamp and go swimming in ***my*** sink, lock himself in ***my*** closet and ***my*** icebox, and eventually to throw himself out, *defenestratedly*, of ***my*** window, why thank you God! - but not the Christian one, 'cause he fucks-up too much – the little one has finally drifted off to little-boy *sh*eep-*sl*eep... His brother, just-turned four-years old, has only one-desire, the desire to wake-him, the *sleeping* toddler, just to be sure you're with me, wake-him, ***up!*** And just now one of them ran out of the room in search of his mother, I only hope he finds her. How do I get myself into these situations?? My reward... would you look at those boys' mother! Her figure, so tight! Her face, a vision! Her cunt? Surely delightful! But let us just focus a moment at that thing just below her bottom, *succulently*-bottom, lip. Do you see it? No? That's exactly-right, for there is nothing-there to see. For she was, glory-be-to-god, but definitely ***not*** the Christian god, etc., she was, indeed, among the *No-Chins!!* Nochin' *that* why don'ch you*!*

But first, I got the room I-think-I told you I was hoping to-get. It's *very* similar to the "High Falls" in furnishings, but it is cleaner, more gaily-colored with curtains full of-flowers, of which, one flower has transformed into a pink tiger and another into a deep blue-devil. I even went so far as to put paintings on the wall. I bought two large prints. One by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, a pre-

Raphaelite painter. The other is a print by William-Blake, who, I guess you could say, was the pre-Raphaelite's predecessor. I'd wanted these-***two*** exact-prints ever since I was able to scrutinize these same-two prints, discovered hidden behind a well-known scientist-philosopher whose name I have forgotten, now dead, beside a photograph cut out of a Time Magazine, the same ridiculous magazine that Allen Ginsberg bragged that he had-had an addiction to, up to that time, to that stupid magazine called Time. And they, my *two*-friendly, but not *too*-friendly, wall hangings, are my *two*-new companions.

Two

A Routine Incision, Nothing-More

A few nights ago, Ricky, the kid who lives down below me, the kid who can probably hear me farting-up-here *down-there*, asked if I'd mind if he and his buddies gave-a party down in his room, a kind of celebration for a new "organ" tattoo, as he called it, his girl was getting tomorrow. They were planning to party throughout the afternoon and it would, most likely, continue on through the evening, and (1) what could I say? I couldn't have said, "N O spells no!" So I said, instead, "O K spells yes!" And in that situation, he (2) of course, felt an obligation to invite-me, though you could tell he didn't want me anywhere near their merrymaking. Well, I still hadn't missed a night of Fireworks, except for maybe two or three times, and so I couldn't commit, but said, "Maybe..." in a nice, relaxed sort-of-way. Then I waved and, with my sparkling white shirt a-ruffling in the breeze, walked to work. It's evening now and I'm back home, fireworks still ricocheting between my tired eyeballs and my thalamus, just landed back here in my crappy-little room, at approximately 10:30, pm, that is. And on MY bed are two little-kids (I think they were boys, but I couldn't really distinguish between the two sexes back then, maybe not now, either, so I will just refer to them *as-boys* to be consistent). The youngest one loved the Burne-Jones picture – it's a rather dramatic painting of the painter's girlfriend drowning under six-inches of water, but gleefully so. The four-year-old shows me the beer his mother left for me, sipped at throughout the afternoon by both the boys, there is only a little swivel-syrup remaining at-the bottom of the bottle. By and bye, I found out the party is for the kids'-mother, still too hot to touch, she is, she is *to-have* a-hysterectomy first thing in the morning, if sober enough to remember. The "organ" tattoo turns out to be a symbolic representation of her soon to be removed uterus, sauteed and swallowed right there on her lower left calf. She is forever 19-years-old, such a sweet age, but the kids, *her* kids, are getting rowdy. Ricky pops his feculent head into my room for a look-around, looks jealous and a little *bit-angry*. Sparkle calculates this jealousy into his evening's game-plan ('cause they always blame the jealous boyfriend or husband). Ricky asks me if I would mind keeping the kids for an hour or more, while he and their mom have a little "chit-chat" in the other room. Ricky, gives the mother, apparently somewhere out the door, a ***that****-kind-of-a-look*, his *or-I'll-kill-you* kind of look. The eighteen-month-old is once-again *awake-again* and wants to blow farts into the dirty dishwater of ***my*** sink, the older one wants to hang-again from ***my***-lamp, both want to *Rage-War* inside ***my*** unplugged, because it has never-worked, refrigerator, when the boys' mother comes up and Sparkle gets to see her up close for the **F**irst **T**ime, and you can reread that description of her located in Part One (I) of this three-part chapter, if you have forgotten what she looked like to *one-dazzled* Sparkle, and

she takes me by the hand downst-a-i-r-s (and me, I'm agonizing over being touched, though regardless, I'm still getting a hard-on) where everyone is very drunk. I escape. quickly moving up the stairs before I reach the bottom step, yet she comes back, teasingly, just a teeny-while later and we have a heart-to-heart, and then talk some more, about the hysterectomy: "I understand how you could fuck-up (having a kid) the first-time, but how did you ever manage to let it happen to you the second-time?" She is very smooth, both mentally and probably physically, Sparkle wouldn't know for sure until later, when it was too late, and she realizes that Sparkle is very-very naïve, and so she changes the topic to tell him all about her government benefits and how she lives very well but could use a little extra cash. She says that last-part looking over her shoulder, looking to see if Ricky was listening-in. She doesn't have to pay any medical bills. She says, I shouldn't worry about that, that she gets welfare, but only since she's now-not working. Her good-friend, one of the boys' fathers, babysits the kids, and she pays him for this, but he just uses the money to buy the two of them more drugs, money she gets from the welfare agency, while at this point of her tale Sparkle's attention span starts to shift as he wonders, but never arrives at a sensible-answer, nor any answer at-all, just why she is ***so*** entitled to ***so*** much, as she proceeds to tell him how she's buying-a-house with a-large-yard and just a-few-cows – it's out in the valley, which is very, very much like living in the country, for you few readers who don't know much about the terrain surrounding Spokane, Washington, (STATE) – you remember, the *country,* with trees and those kinds of things. It must have been while he was pondering the possibilities available to him inside his soft and velvety doctor's kit when she told him where the money for the house was coming from. He wasn't listening, though.

All--i-n--all, it was a very interesting story she told me, but I don't think I explained it to-you in the *proper-way*. There is a way of telling about that evening which, well, it could leave you laughing-for-hours, but I can't tell it that way anymore, I've lost the touch. But the bottom line is that Sparkle:

Talked that mom
Into allowing him to do the hysterectomy
For free
On her
Himself
He convinced her
What-what?
With all his experience
Cutting up women
That it would be nothing to-him
A routine incision
In-&-Out
Nothing-More

But Sparkle got carried away, as he always does, and he began snipping away at a *little-of-this* and nicking off a little *of-that*, until the pieces started piling up, and getting out of order, and, while a few pieces, some, at least a few, got-lost, and he was no longer hearing the pleading, whimperingly so, to stop, to – ***just*** – stop, whatever it was he was doing, when all of a sudden he, Sparkle, realized, *what-it-was* he was no-longer hearing, anymore, and, finally, he really – ***did*** – stop, truly,

he-did! And so, after surveying his bedroom and noting the damage he had done and further noting his evident detumescence, he started to clean up, *expertly so,* instead.

III

A New Letter Home

I haven't seen Scotty for quite a while and can't figure out why. I visit his friends, sometimes. But they look at me weird. I did pay a social call, though, the day after the hysterectomy-girl's party, but those guys were acting peculiar. They just studied their law books and watched "Hogan's Heroes" on the tube and didn't pay me any attention at-all. I don't think Scotty is all that-too happy about his living situation, but that is just the impression I get from him sometimes. I rarely see him, if at all. But I think I'll go see if he's around, again, tomorrow, after work, and maybe watch a little "Hogan's Heroes" with the guys, and try to drag out of them what the story is with Scott. But first I have a bag of stuff to drop off at the ***Russian Potato-Bar and Restaurant!***

Oh, and by the-way, I am leaving Spokane, maybe next Sunday, on the twenty-ninth, to go to McMinnville, Oregon. I have learned to pronounce the state's name to rhyme with "in", otherwise the natives all give you one of *those-looks*. They are very unforgivable if you make a verbal mishap, and, perhaps, somehow, "I'll see Seattle and Victoria yet, in the distant-near future," he says with an anguished mental-sigh. So I have ***no*** address, ***no*** phone number, hopefully ***no*** identity whatsoever, ha-ah!, but here is Tracy's address, *my* place now, if you want to write me there. I'll finish this letter tomorrow when I'll tell you about the overflowing-toilet at-work, but it's up to ***you*** to telepathically remind ***me!*** Otherwise I might forget the details. But here is the gist of it: Someone, some redneck, macho plumber-guy, found the remains of *two* children, both girls or both boys, all I know is that they were the same gender, that had been *flushed-down* the men's-room toilet, and that's the *Christian* god for you, but, that's all I really know about it, because, *well*, it all happened *after* I left Spokane, thus getting myself entangled betwixt two new lies while trying to extract myself from yet another.

25

Chapter Twenty-Five

Can Sparkle's Crispy Parents Be Held Responsible?

How does someone like a Sparkle come into being? Some, spontaneously, blame the parents. They used to blame the cold-titted mother for autism, and the hot-titted moms for their son's homosexuality, and they still blame the fathers for feathers on the brain – and whenever a child goes berserk, right away – "It's the parent's fault." They should have raised him to be a better, more responsible and acceptable citizen, i.e., *to be nice* and play by the rules. Sparkle, by the best of estimates, was not any of these things. But let's compare Sparkle to the ways his siblings turned out. His older brother became a doctor, well respected, never abused his privilege to see women of all sizes and ages in a variety of undress, duress, and situations that might, in other circumstances, and in a different location other than his private office with a door that locked for privacy, might seem, shall we say, awkward. He, instead, was described as inscrutable, while still being highly

efficient, open for discussion and, most especially, caring, even his probingly sensuous fingers screamed "caring." A good doctor, was he, until the fire. Sparkle said it was important that he be at the house, something about a surprise party...

The next brother in order of birth had been a lawyer, specifically an honest lawyer who helped people with the preparation of their wills, amiable divorces, always an extra help to the estranged wife, especially if she was pretty and was a bit skimpy in the chin department, *and* real estate papers, too. He was especially good with first time home buyers, because not only was he honest, but he was fair. Next is Sparkle's sister, a second-grade teacher, beloved by all her students and *most* all of her colleagues, as well. She had recently gotten on the good side of the principal – he had liked her a lot. Sometimes they flirted, but she always knew that those gentle pats on the behind didn't really mean anything, she knew he was happily married. He was just, well, friendly – he was friendly with *all* the female teachers. Finally, next in line, is Sparkle. He was and still is (1) a vivid and chronic dreamer, or, (2) a serial killer of the vilest sort, or, (3) both. After Sparkle comes Rocky, who was born with Down's syndrome and who was so adorable that everyone loved him. But, you know, doctor, lawyer, school teacher, or adorable young man with Down's' Syndrome, a boy really, who still needed help to brush his teeth and tie his shoes, even with the Velcro sneakers, right up to those first flickers of flame, well, as you might guess, if the occasion ever presented itself requiring such a guess, well, my guess is they all burn the same. Some hot surprise party Sparkle planned for *that* day! It was his mother's birthday and Mother's Day all at the same time – not only did she get gipped in the present department, but all but one was flammable, and the inflammable gift was an antique Coleman Sad Iron, the Blue Enamel Model A4 with Lite-Gas Heating, made in the US of A, which Sparkle found ironic. By the bye, the iron is not, and never was, unhappy, *sad* is just an old English word for being a *solid,* hence a sad-iron iron.

Now four good apples out of five potentially red and juicy fruits is pretty-good, pretty-pretty good, by my calculations – that's an 80% success rate and who knows how those odds would have traveled, either up or down, if his parents had been a bit busier in the baby-making department, but my money is on the up, *up* those odds would go, and if I'm right, that's even better. Here are the results of my back-of-the-envelope calculations, an envelope with a 1974 ten-cent stamp, up two cents due to inflation effective on March 2, 1974, depicting Expo '74 and declaring "Preserve the Environment" across the bottom, where above looms a large Uncle Sam wearing bell bottoms tripping on acid while skipping across a multicolored landscape. Sparkle had licked this stamp sometime in September of 1974, and it may still be useful if you, my Forensically-Minded Reader, would benefit from such a saliva sample.

My Calculations:

<u>Six Children</u>

5 Good = 83.3%	as opposed to	4 Good = 66.7%
1 Rotten = 16.7%		2 Rotten = 33.3%

<u>Seven Children</u>

6 Good = 85.7 %	*or,*	5 Good = 71.4%	*or,*	4 Good = 57.1%
1 Rotten = 14.3%		2 Rotten = 28.6%		3 Rotten = 42.9%

Eight Children...? Well, I think you can see from this where I am going, and I'm personally betting 100%, and that's **one-hundred percent** in every-day English and putting all the math aside, that Sparkle is the *only*-rotten apple and that the success rate of Sparkle's Mom-&-Dad's parenting skills shoots up from that excellent rate of 80% speeding, Speedy-Gonzales-like, which, just in case you're wondering, is just a smidgeon over 22 miles per hour, right through the eighties and strait into the nineties, settling solidly in the nineties by the time they are on their eleventh child, not an unheard of amount, which would be 90. 90909090...forever %, in case you want the honest facts, but we could, without a tinge of embarrassment to redden my already calculatin' red-face, raise that to a full 91% and no one would even question your calculation, unless they were a stickler about such things, like Sparkle always was. 91% - now that's some success-rate! And imagine if they had ***one hundred*** children and *only-one* like Sparkle, well maybe the math gets to be a bit much with so many children, but you get the point! You know, some parents don't even get one good kid out of four! And then, if that kind of bad luck occurs to you and your spouse, well, then you can question their ability to raise a good kid and maybe even blame them for their kid's failures. (There are plenty of tit varieties to spread out all of the blame.) But 91%? No, you can't blame Sparkle's parenting skills, but you could, if you are a stickler like Sparkle, blame Mendel (such a nice looking man until you see that he's wearing that fuckin' giant Christian Thing hanging around his pasty neck) and his Revelation Regarding of the Processes of Genetics. Down syndrome – the chance is about a tenth of one percent. Sparkle, one in a billion. Sparkles are much more rare than a child with Down syndrome and how many kids like that do you know? You probably know one or two people with Down syndrome, but you have probably never met a serial killer. Of course, most of the people who met Sparkle never lived to tell anyone about such a rare encounter, not even his family members. Once they realized Sparkle's propensities, it was too late, the meat was already on the grill, as they like to say at the *Russian Potato-Bar and Grill*.

So really it all comes down to genetics. A kid with propensities like Sparkle's must be attached to a pretty recessive gene, or else there'd be a lot more havoc in the world. And, my guess, is that for something like a Sparkle to show up at your door, it would take two such recessive genes – one from mom and one from dad. So maybe there is still some blame to be draped in their direction, but, let us consider this as a digression and get back on track, but I must digress just a bit in another direction, if you will allow. It appears that Mendel fudged his data. His sin was dressed up with the phrase "confirmation bias," which sounds a lot better than to say he was lying to ensure the data agreed with his preconceived theory. Hence, and how I still-love to-hence, the heavy cross bore evidence, evidence of which can be seen hanging from his neck! The intemperate point of that last sentence being completely lost by now, this seems to be a very good place to jump back on board the train, of thought, *that-is*. But still, what a nice looking man despite the Cross! Yet the way Mendel's accuser, the knighted Professor Fisher, with his fancy Cambridge glasses and his fancy-badge, a badge prominently displayed across his abundant chest where *no one* could miss seeing it, described Mendel, well, for a second I thought he was referring to our very own Sparkle! For here are the very words so disdainfully uttered: "Abominable, shocking, and *cooked!*" -- something Sparkle was so often accused of doing, the barbeque cooking, in regards to the missing-pieces of his various-victims, once it was discovered what he had been up-to all those years.

So, here we have a beautiful young mother, two healthy children already out of the oven, yearning for her man to give her a-third bouncily-bouncy-bounce child, girl or boy, it doesn't matter! But lurking within, deep-within, both the joyful girlishness of the giggling mom and the brawniness of

the Man and his Cock dad, is those recessive *bits-of-evil* snuggly residing in both the ovaries and testes of this, before-your-very-eyes passion-making couple, but please don't look, for this is a private moment. The genes, recessive as they are, become awakened by their host's lust and cannot avoid being riled up with the risqué mating dance occurring above them. And before the night is over, these two rare recessive genes, before today, frightened and startled from emerging from the sex-sauced corners of their abodes, these two genes, shy as they are, greet one another, reluctantly and wary of what-is-to-become, for who really knows what the future holds, they shake hands in their tacit agreement to join together, not only with one another, but in concert with the Devil, child of Evil, *as-well*.

26

Chapter Twenty-Six

This Is the Shortest Chapter Containing Exactly 166 Words

So how do you like *those-beets*? Note that *"those-beets"* is italicized and it was *those-beets* that started all the other chapters into thinking that if you could hyphenate all the words in any particular chapter, connecting them all together into one, gigantically and enormously-humongous word, the whole chapter would then consist of *just-one* word, big is it is. Who would have ever thought that those *those-beets* could be so influential? I, for sure, did not! If *those-beets* was considered as two words instead of only one word, then this chapter would contain 171 words instead of 166, and that would have led to a lie. (And now the anxiety rises to the surface with questions, new considerations and entanglements not considered before, for instance, is the title a part of the chapter or not? How about the chapter number? Is there a difference between a small lie and a big one? I am afraid tonight is going to be a *sleepless*-night as well as a *nightless*-sleep!

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Chapter Twenty-Seven

Skedaddled to Seattle

I

Sparkle never did choose to go back to Oregon. Not after the first time, during which he was able to clean up at his leisure, before traveling north to Spokane, to start life-over. It had tired him out. And he had not seen Scott again, ever-since before-then, before his mad-tear, your choice, trip to Oregon. People seemed always to drift away from him. But Spokane, population 170,000, would be nothing compared to the potential for embracing a *chinless* girl in a population of 530,000, why that's more than three-times the chance, odds that evenly match the population of Seattle, Seattle, Seattle! As if I could ever understand Seattle at all: it remains, to this day, a Dream Built-on-Hills, with a Lake as big as Spokane-is-small, and it's on-the coast of the Pacific Ocean, with islands bequeathed of names such as: Vashon, Oscas, Fox, Herron, Indian, Sucia, Blake, Cypress, Matia,

Pator, San Juan, Marrowstone, Gedney Center, Hope, Blakely Stuart, Bremerton, Waldron, Guemes, Stretch McNeil, Lummi Trump, Burrows, Miss Harstine Ketron, Anderson Squaxin, Bainbridge, Camano, and Mr. Whidbey Jones, all just a ferry-ride away, just-off the coast. All the-while a great-and-looming mountain backdrops the city. Furthermore it appears to be very-safe. Or as-safe as a city can-be when Sparkle happens to be one of-its residents. In fact, less than two hours hence-arriving at the Seattle Greyhound Bus Station (*SGBS*) Sparkle, classified section from the Seattle Times in-hand, found-himself a six-stories-up room, and feeling bubbly, with a splash-fizzle bobble of effervescence to-boot, and although $55 poorer, he was safely ensconced, by nightfall, tucked away inside an apartment of wealth and taste, so please let me introduce myself, an apartment consisting of (1) a kitchen, (2) a bathroom, *in* the room and *not* somewhere down the hall, and a (3) living room/bedroom combination where the living room is transformed into a bedroom whenever you pull the bed out from the wall. That's called a disappearing bed or Murphy bed, and as you can imagine, as did Charley Chaplin in the last long scene of his 1916 movie, *One AM*, some pretty heavy, albeit humorous, situations can come out of such a bed. Laverne and Shirley had their fun with that bed, themselves, too. Furthermore, Sparkle discovered pretty quickly that Seattle had two (i.e., 2) jazz stations, more jazz stations than in both Spokane and McMinnville, Oregon, combined. There was even some classical music permeating the invisible waves. So with the sun descending behind the tree outside his window, the one he is now facing, which has the same kind of nuts as the one you threw out the window, yesterday, early in the day, remember? He is quite-pleased with the furnishings, quite-a step-up! The place is furnished with an old armchair, crunchy-old couch, torn-&-botched table, stringy-old rug, and just plain-old dresser, and, for the first time since before his house somehow burned to the ground killing all his family, he had a working refrigerator, one of those-kinds that really-works. Now he'll have to learn how you use a real-working refrigerator, other than for cooling down his passions, and occasionally his cock. The place is kinda' run down, but it has some female inhabitants, co-eds, as they were called in those days way back in '74. You don't hear them called that anymore, anymore – just a thing of the past. And it's only a block away from Terry Street, but I can't recall why that is relevant at-'tall. But tonight, more than a hundred miles from 1974, I can look it up and realize, though I cannot recall much, one raindrop's plat amongst a tornado's worth, as to why any of this, New York, Vermont, Des Moines, or Washington State adventures all, was relevant at-'tall, but here we are nearing the end of a novel that pretends it does.

II

Earlier Sparkle went out searching. Scouring his new neighborhood, not for missing chins, but looking for a place to-eat, which turned out to be somewhat difficult, on a Sunday afternoon, way back when, in faraway Old Seattle. He couldn't find a Jack-in-the-Box or even an A&W's, but no bother, because, what a fantastical-place he did-find, eventually. The place is totally forgotten, but remembered somewhere in the sinews of his rusty memory, Old-Tortured Sparkle, was able to dredge up a marshmallow thick shake. And Young-Tortured Sparkle had a caramel shake, to-boot, two to-go! What a funny phrase, that *to-booting two to* is!

III

Well it's a new Wednesday night. Wet, cold, with just a touch-of evil in the-air, and Sparkle has-a-need to *bang* the piano, known to Sparkle-and-friends, if only he had-one, as *"tinkling the keyboard,"* but since he does not have a piano, he chooses instead, to release, his stored up, energy, on you, by writing this for you, a poem, my dear and only Future Reader:

Do you still have an ambition to tinkle?
I might be able to help you
Regarding
Unorthodox techniques of playing
The piano
A manual for mad scientists
Planned
To be called
"The Big Bang-Book"
For *banging* the piano
I've only done a small cockful of research
On-it
But
(I like two-Ts better for I cannot-lie)
I think
I know
Just how to proceed
If I only had the guts
Perhaps if I looked in one of my new refrigerators?
Hey, are those girl-guts sitting near the ice trays?
Ice trays containing newly-frozen, red-colored crystals?

And his poem does-go on, and on, for unfortunately, indeed, he located some frozen guts, and then some more, until, once again, he had to eventually flee, even from his beloved Seattle, but, as you can already see for yourself, the stories start to repeat themselves becoming-becoming rreeppetititivvee, and there is nothing new to say, nothing unique, except for maybe one new trick or two new things, or peradventure three. But here is not the place to discuss them, perhaps later (most likely not) in their *proper* place, in an *all*-encompassing time, truly time-*encompassing,* but nevertheless potentially forthcoming, and hopefully soon, though most unlikely.

IV

Weather alert! It was reported by the snake-people slithering along the street, to be very-very polluted outside, outside Sparkle's window, which he always now-shuts, tighter than his latest constipating bowel movement, yes, *that* tight! Sparkle shuts that window with one metal-resounding, "Clink!" But the air outside is only about as dirty as that vital stuff one finds in Frankenstein, Missouri, that is, either, (a) not very *dirty*, or (b) not very vital, but as always, (a) your

(b) choice. I don't know what to say, it all seems very lopsided-*turvy*-&-upside down, which is just a step or two away from plain old *Topsy-Turvy.* He just goes on killing, thinking *it-fun,* making the most of each new experience, but mostly experiencing them all in mystical-&-delightful terms, an aesthetically and intellectual joy-thrill, so *Fizzily-Sparkling-So*.

V

But there is still Seattle. With its Fountains! Tall buildings! Trolleys! Push-to-Walk safety buttons that really work and sometimes talk back to you, comfortingly, like a mother! Sparkle's been spoken to, so he knows. This can be cheering to a lonely boy like Sparkle, whose relationships always turn bad, turning always into something that badly-needs cleaning-up. It's a good-thing Sparkle hasn't lost his talent in <u>*that*</u> department. There's been more than enough clean-up these days. Days high inside the Space Needle! A trams-*and*-trolleys ensconcement along the rolling concrete hills. And the only thing that Sparkle did that might have been wrong was to keep her from the foggy-foggy dew – and to drag her suddenly out of the never-ending rain!

VI

The fog hadn't lifted yet. Nor had the rain quite yet stopped. That's two yets thus far, but only one thus. In fact there were warnings sent out across-and-over the silent-noisy airwaves, that the poison-conditioned fog was only-getting worse and entering into the-realm *o-f—t-h-e* dangerous. He momentarily opens his window only to find its dewy pus-like deposits are seeping, begrudgingly, into the air of his apartment. He coughs and slams the window shut with such force that the walls Jello-shake, causing his Murphy Bed, like a magic trick, like *here's-an-eyeball-and-now-it's-disappeared*, to shoot out of the wall with enough energy-force to begin a big-bouncing with a force-of energy more than sufficient for such a big-bouncing, a reciprocating force, that the shut-slammed window shot back-open with a flippity-flippedness, and a flippity-flap, too, such that the suddenness and-shockedness of all this reciprocating madness diminished his coughing to a gruff-and-snappy STOP: Curséd Cough → Curéd! He recovered from the tumult by resting on the now available bed, which he found comfortable, surprisingly enough. But somehow, the-*how* of these mechanical things are forever mysterious, the mattress, springs and all, sprung back into the spring-flowered wall-papered wall. For the past few days he has been tucked, albeit upside-down, cozily inside the wall, content but wall papered-in, as mentioned, in a floral design, of daffodils and mandrake, all the while deliberating upon the whys-and whatfors of his escape, into a freedom, that seemed so commonplace, just a few minutes, ago. He had to *hence* drill-drill-drill, to gain his escape, drill with the tip of his acerbic nose, drill with the barbs-and-pointisms shooting out from the hair of his chinny-chin-chin, providing an ability to drill a hole big enough to be used as an escape route from his Seattle Wallop-Trap Disappearing Bed, as such concealments were called in the Northwest Apartment-Rental Trade (the NART, which is the coolest of names), the associated organization that had made, with their huge investments in the Billy Murphy's Wall Bed Company, such beds available, six-floors up. Once out from behind the wall, a mere four days-later, the first thing Sparkle wanted to do was to try out his new bathroom. He had been holding-it-

in, *squashing the lily*, as everyone likes to say, while meanwhile (while never *nice*-while) having their lady-friends do-it for-them, such friends never available to our touch-avoidant Sparkle, for four l-o-n-g days, but he dare says, "It was worth it!" And he really meant that, sincere-like. For he had learned a lot from the experience. Gloriously, the fog had lifted and had vanished-forever, at least for today. It had drifted-away from the city-of-Seattle to who knows where, whence the City of Seattle regained its appearance in place of: *the fog!* Oh, how I long to grasp the essence of Seattle! Through his apartment door's peephole, he can see that the hallway is empty of human traffic, safe for an escape from-his room, and once down-the unbridled stairs, avoiding, always, the elevator, with two hands cleaving the stairwell banister, he then walks for miles and miles, 'cause there's magic in his eyes, each day, in a mad search for a hint of comprehension. Now, please realize that this "understanding" is (1) not an intellectual process, it is (2) something else that is very difficult to explain. It is (3) a kind of knowing. It is a (4) process that brings false optimistic joy. (5) Modern Zen. Because of Spokane's small size, perhaps in contrast to the size of his enormously imagined penis, the penis that never worked when he needed it to, he always felt he was on the verge of "understanding" Spokane, especially *after-a-kill*. And, true, had he remained, there, he most likely would have remained forever on-the-verge, for a long, and holy, lifetime, floating upon the Spokane River of Life (SRL).

Seattle, contrarily, is full of dream and mystery. A new kind of verging, saturated with flowing, spectral changes, Life, never death, not in Sparkle's book, anyway. Just don't ever get yourself stuck inside a wall... Not everyone is able to plan and execute their escape. Believe me! The things I discovered inside there! Beyond description, so here I must cease in trying, to-do-so. But you've heard it all before, one magical city to the next, never fully understood no matter how many cleanups are involved, from here on in it's all just repeats, as I said before, but I just can't, for the life of me, remember exactly where I first repeated it.

VII

So I could mosey along. Just as I have been doing, telling you stories about Sparkle's experiences with pollution warnings, and the remnants of an alleged "Indian Summer" but those were nothing like those hot-spells lazed-in on those late-afternoon New-York State *O*ctober-days. Just here in Seattle, it's a lotta-rain, and temps in the-low 40's. So I'm forced to defenestrate myself from the sixth-story window, but you don't need a weatherman to know which way-, if any, -way the wind blows, is-a fine with me, now that I am free, from the troubles of the past, I can stick my head out the window, and finally, *b*-breathe at last!

VIII

And now. The final answer to the previously-posed question is → the wind is blowing towards the East! So now we can <u>*all*</u> breathe *d*-*e*-*e*-p-l-y...

IX

But really, folks. As I have been tryin' to tell you, Sparkle's story is just-about *windin'-do'wn*. Nothin' he can do in the future can shock you now, 'cause he doesn't learn any new-tricks, no new wiles or willies, guiles or guts, or illusions or incisions, won't be learning any for a long-long time – for, after all, he is *not* a *talking* dog! Though he will be hooking up, nefariously, with one when he finally gets back to Western New York, his final destination. He'll not be quite three years older, too, and by *his* calculations, let me think now, ... , I think that Sparkle will have moved just about an inch or so along his cosmic path for each year, 1972 through 1974, plus the year prior. Not-very productive. Some would venture to think counterproductively and determine those inches should be negative numbers. Not-very far along in talking-dog years either, really.

X

Seattle girls. Though plentiful and, as I said, or just-maybe something I am soon to-say a bit later on in the narrative, I can't really remember, but *somewhere* at any rate, I say that there are, in fact, *three-times* the pickings than what-was presented to himself in his old home-town city of Spokane. And that's three times the chinless lassies, three times the number of incisions to be performed, both chins and no-chins. No new special-slicing techniques, though. I'll need to write another new story about how Sparkle needs to buy a cuppla-more refrigerators and a few dozen more ice trays, but that can come later and will need some time to freeze over. This occurs at around 31° F., ten degrees higher than that needed to freeze urine. That should make for a good-chapter or scientific journal stand-alone. But, I-don't-know, it seems that-would just-be ex-tending the in-evitable, and the fact is that this storybook, *The Salacious Sagas of Sparkle*, as I said above, is just-about *windin'-do'wn*. And there's nothing we can do to change that.

XI

So what else is new? The library is 2-blocks a-way and has a whole-bunch of-records and a discreet and snug music room for listening to, you *sure* you guessed right? Yeah, a wide variety musical tastes! They actually had *three* of 'm! and one of these rooms contains a piano for patron use, a piano which also happens to be in-tune so Sparkle in-dulges, tinkles his fingers in wanton imagination, as he is wont to say and occasionally does so in real time, too. One day he had a snuck-in girl, who giggled, & passed wind, and then got really-*really* frightened of Sparkle and actually *did* tinkle, *right n-e-x-t t-t-o the-pia-n-o...* Sparkle was able to clean up everything, especially everything that would point a tinkling-finger at him, and so he got it all up in a hurry, all but a few-of the frag-ments of ta-girl. But he purposely left all the-urine right where it had splashed-landed after squirting out of that terrified girl's – what was her name? Oh well, it doesn't matter. But Sparkle still gets his own-giggles when he thinks all-about that pee and the *pee*-ano, *hee-haw*, and, by the bye, they never could get the piano to stay in tune after that day, and they never could figure out why, either. That was the downside of it all for Sparkle, for he never could get the same

kind-of-relief he used-to get, from cock-banging the piano in one of the old Carnegie Library hide-a-ways out there on Third and James Streets, 'cause it just wouldn't stay in tune no matter how you tried. Sparkle started to believe that that piano was haunted, and who knows? Maybe it was! It still gives me the creeps, the kind of creeps in-how Sparkle gave other people the creeps, but Sparkle's was worse, so *much-more* worse. So he stopped going to the library altogether. It was as-though, even the library didn't want-to be his friend, either-either, anymore.

XII

I don't have a job. Nor have I *lo-o-okt* for a job, nor will that be utterly imperatively-imperative until, say, around seven-weeks, by my calculations, and not even by then, BUT! I have a plan for getting one of those jobs for the Christmas hysteria and then, after all the hysteria is over, I can take another rest, probably, even, a l-o-n-g-e-r rest than this-one, the rest that I'm presently in the-midst of, because, I doubt, I'll go, traveling, anywhere, like I did by going down to Oregon and killing that girl (oh how I recollect her head rolling off the table, before finally leaving the body behind) with all that evidence piled higher-than-a-hippy to show-them a-l-l how the husband could-have done-it, even though, he, had a-great alibi, a really-really good-one, but she was dead, she was mutilated, and some pieces were missing, like her gall bladder and a cuppla-large chunks off of her lovely vulva, and yet it's always the husband, or the boyfriend, and although sometimes it's the butler too, that isn't as common as it sometimes gives the impression of being. And Sparkle accomplished all this before fleeing the area, quick-quick, to make it to an even greater distance from detumescent Spokane, just before people might be feeling the need to start asking about Scotty and where ***he-is***, 'cause, as they say, you gotta "head 'em off at the pass!" Don't you agree, my silly Tonto Readers?

XIII

So what else is new? Not much.

XIV

Here's something new and hot-off the presses. A glamour-glimpse of a typical glam-day in the life as an *Any*-Man-Will-Do as long as he's a ***S***eattle man. There was the *Wo*-man who had a Siamese twin, coming, I guess, from her stomach. She was a mother five times, two from one body and three from the other: a whole multi-system of perversions, completely n-neglected, by the good-man *de Sade*. Then, there once was a man, he could fit three billiard balls in his-mouth at-one-time all while whistling "Dixie." He had a *real* big-mouth. And let us not neglect the city man who pulled a wagon with his eyelashes nor the Moon Man who rotated his head 180°, that's *halfa*-cycle, in order to see what happens on the Other Side of his Moon (OSM). And over there, is the guy I was telling you about, the one who puts a cement block on his head and lets his best friend, or you-and-me even, proceed to break-it with a ***s***ledge ***h***ammer. What all that has to do, either foggy or

rainy, with the day in the life of an ordinary Seattle man, a notion I had once taken as gospel, totally, even though I hadn't and still haven't the vaguest notion which, even though I admit it here and denied it there, it is a-teeny-bit better than having *no*-such *no*-tions, a haunting step apart from those tantalizing *yes*-tions Sparkle was accused of encountering in both the rain and the fog!

XV

Perhaps the answer lies in a science-fictional machine. Perhaps one built in the now rotting brain of *Frenchman* Jules Verne, for real or only for the Land of Imagination, which sounds so familiar, but in *w*hat way, I can't remember how, an automaton that laughs uproariously (at you) and yet another mad machine made late one evening by a machine-mad scientist, with which to contact extraterrestrial beings, to take us, both Young-&-Old Sparkle, away from here to a place where such questions have no meaning and thereby do not exist. Where we enter upon, in the deep darkness of Sparkle's infinite inner space, a perfectly spherical pumpkin, to be eaten, mutilated *and-severed*, but being Descendants of the Great Benign Pumpkin, *DSCTs. of the GBP*, no doubt being a member means to be always surrounded by lesser pumpkins, and pumpkins even less than they, and so the cycle goes, grinding downwards, and we, portrayed as the mere-mortals we truly-are, we get-caught in its turbulent tailwinds.

XVI

So now we have schizoid-Sparkle's rainbow-fountains. We discover them dancing to its whirlwind-slippers, talking-squirrels talking, talking to the shrunken-heads, only to make love-to the only-girl there who had-no bones, none but one, you old bonehead, - the skull! And so we now bid Sparkle a fond-and-fare, farewell, leaving him stuck in the past eager to attend to his present obsession, all-the-while reading the "Confessions of an English Opium Eater," by, can you guess the author's name? Look it up if you don't know. And, remember, he who knows what evil still lurks in the heart of Sparkle knows life. Even the Sparkle who sits in his crumbling ooze-cell, convinced of his innocence, terrified of his guilt, and equally confused about everything else as is all the rest of humanity. Has the jury reached a decision? Will the jury please crack-open the envelope and boldly announce your goddamned-fucking, or to be more polite about it, your long-awaited verdict!

XVII

Final Fun Fact! It was never really about the killing – that was just an unfortunate by-product of what Sparkle was really all about, who was just *his-following* his personal-passion for severing,,,,, cutting,,,,,,, sawing-&-slicing,,,,,,,,,,,, attempts towards a-reorganization of available-flesh, into new, strangled body-part juxtapositions, operations of the S-v (Sparkle-variety) and just a general and good-spirited exploration of possibilities, possibilities and the stuff that is involved in the Imagination of the Living, of Elves and sometimes a **R**ose in the **M**iddle of **W**inter. They, the alleged victims, always started as equals, their choice, as always, in the mutual exploration into the

mysteries of life and the even-more mysterious, **C**ryptography of the **D**ream, when, somehow-somewho, things tended, *in Sparkle's world anyway*, to go-wrong, get messy-fast, a bit out of Sparkle's usually stringent-control, and, before you could say, "Off-with-her-*head*...," a chortle once commanded by Alice's Card-Queen, horrid as she truly was, the *queen*, **not** Alice, lord no! Not Chinless Alice – have you ever looked at her closely, I mean, looked *really*-really close-up? Close enough to notice? You should look next time. It's a thing of timeless beauty. For Sparkle it's timeless, anyway.

28

Chapter Twenty-Eight

A Poetry Extravaganza!

At the end of every exhibit of fireworks, there is always, as a way to announce the *end* of the show, a spectacular fireworks' **finale**, which consists of some of the largest, loudest, and the most exciting of the fiery, sizzling, and blazing fireworks. This explosive extravaganza occurs when a multitudinous polytechnic potpourri is ignited resulting in huge quantities of illuminations in a short amount of time, thus creating an intense and beautiful display, the aesthetic triumph of theatrical pyro-techniques. *Fish* - a special-type of aerial effect that looks like a swarm of glowing objects swimming around randomly amidst the low-and-high flyers - help set off a simultaneous cacophony of thunderous treble-crackles interspersed amongst low-registered booming. It's impressive – just ask Sparkle, he used to crave for those finales daily and was stunned and gobsmacked by them nightly, when he wasn't cleaning up, that is, some mess for which he was the cause. He found it truly inspiring, messes notwithstanding.

Then there are those symphonic finales, equally spectacular! Just consider such great endings as Beethoven's Third, his Eroica, where he tries to get out every last drop of semen pulled from his cock-pounding orchestral climax. And before you can dry out, here comes an even bigger pounding – his Fifth! Symphonic finales are omnipresent in the classical concert halls. But if you prefer a petite *slap*-slap on the tender inner thigh instead, there is always the final moments of Eric Satie's *Embryons Desséchés*.

And now we have another-first, ***Sparkle Plenty's Poetry Extravaganza!*** A poetical finale, four poems, one after another, each representing one of the cardinal directions but I don't know which is which, with no interruptions: blim-blam-*bum* bam! It might hurt a little, at first, but you, my Lashéd Reader, you've taken s-o-o much already, without, even, the murmur of a complaint, you can take one more of these moral line-crossing shenanigans of Sparkle's, I-*know, you*-can! And although Sparkle's finale comes a little early, not quite the ending yet, something Sparkle's always had a problem with, a bit of a challenge in self-control, what follows, peradventure, as already stated, albeit a bit prematurely, and it is certainly getting a bit sticky inside this sentence, in the spaces between each word, between each letter, even, but don't worry, Sparkle has his scrubbing gear with him, it is nevertheless here, where Sparkle's grand-gala of four-poems are being assembled, to be polytechnically ignited, in speedy succession, one following the other, no interruptions, blim-blam-*bum* bam, and the first is simply called:

Ear

I am so full of love for you!
I feel as though the now empty
Holes
Behind your eyes
Could-Explode
Loud-Pops of Joyous-Rhythms
(L-P of J-R)
To emulsify the balminess
Of our Cockbeating Hearts
Pulsating only for you
As I
Crawl into your

Ear

Oh dearest of my dreams
To-rub my bouncing belly against your velvety inner-ear membrane
To-put my head in-between your Malleus and Incus
While I

Plow
Out
Your
Brains!
Let-it dribble all around-us
We loll
In its merry-sap
Nibble-nipping upon spaghetti-strands of neural fibers
Fillets skewered and gutted from your splattered brain
While we croon jubilantly upon metaphors and lies
Of-love
As we
Bath-in-it
Torso
Unfurled
Tasting it while using-an

Ear

To wipe up the dribbles
For I love You-So!

Vengeance!

Ah
A life of peace & repose
And then
They all came back
Back from the grave
All
In their quest to stumble upon their butcher
To seek their bloody revenge
For
Vengeance!

Claire enters Sparkle's Chamber
Weapon in her decaying hand
Missing two fingers
"Give me your confessions
Or
You will become
Next week's dinner"
But Sparkle is a Cat
Blim! Blam!
Eight lives to-go.

Tracy enters Sparkle's Chamber
Sneaking through the Murphy bed way
Weapon in-hand
Points a stern-finger
Wraps that same finger around a trigger
"I didn't do it!" Sparkle emphatically exclaims
Knowing-he did
But no-need for-worry
For Sparkle's a Lioness
Flim! Flam!
Seven to-go.

Scotty enters Sparkle's hideout, cudgel in hand
He has just dumped his girlfriend in a new-hole beside his groveling grave
Sparkle either cannot or will not look him in the eye
"You're Spam!"
But Sparkle's a Saturnine Tiger
Six-more stealthy
Lives to-go

And that's a lot
Especially
With a side order of a half-dozen egg rolls
On the-side.

In walks big-breasted Janet
My how she has grown!
Steamed like a one-minute Uncle Ben's
"Give me back my duodenum or you're miserable existence will come to an end!"
She spits
But
Hidden beneath her bulging blouse
Except for its-visible & cold-gray barrel
The weapon she filched from a buried bag ignites
Scam! Scam! Scam!
But he's a Practiced Leopardess,
And now he's down to five.
And he doesn't seem to care
As he purrs and licks his wounds
Leisurely avoiding
Vengeance

He
Whoops & Shrieks
Before
Skulking back into a corner
Purrs some-more & some-more

Geraldine stands before him
Gutted
Trombone at his side
Slide sharpened like a razor
"Remember me?"

It was the summer of '74, the corner of Washington and Boone
The monkey poster, partly torn, could be seen framing his then-red hair
He called him, "Kitten"
Geraldine's other hand, covered in black leather, holds no-weapon
Only a rope, elaborately knotted
The hairs on Sparkle's neck tingle, longing for the rope
There are six egg rolls stuffed in the bell of the trombone
Sloppy eggshells fall to the ground and crack
The slide of the trombone, shaped in the form of a cardiac arrest
Melts in the heat of the moment

An image begins to flutter across the underside of Sparkle's temporal lobe
Or is it just sliding across the top?
"Why did I neglect to make my Greyhound escape?"
Sparkle's eyes widen-as the trombone glitters-in the moonlight
It is not quite-noon
"How many lives have I remaining?" were the last words he uttered.

Someone, off in a Boon-Street gutter, a short distance from the Sparkle-utter
Whispered
"Three, I think, but I wasn't really counting, were you?"

An egg roll was-found
Mysteriously
By-his side
"His left, I think, but I wasn't really-counting
I was deliberating solely upon the-ferocious swing-of-my
Vengeance

Spent Desires

When I very
Late at night
Find myself splat-wide awake
Walking
Not knowing where
Nor knowing
Where I am!
My desires are spent
They now sag
Dragging in the road behind me
How can I describe these desires?
Before
When still unspent?
Perhaps
Rain pours down
Worm-sized drops
Plump worms they are

Too
The rain
Past me
And through me
Filtering along
Countless byways
Being sucked
One-by-one
Slurped into the buoyant buildings that threatened to topple
To devoir me whole
Reuniting into rivulets filtering back
Funneled into the nooks of my head
Seeping down hard
Pound-exploding straight into my m-e-m-o-r-y.
I
Sparkle Plenty

The Golden Perfect Poet (G-P^2)

Still
Today
Wearing frills
While stapled, hard
To the floor
With an Excessively-Large, Hyper-Tough, Heavy-Duty, Staple-Gun
The wall
Of my jail
Record and interpret these messages
Messages I provide
Presently
For you
Eager Reader
As you read each word as quick as I can get it to you
Which must be at the speed of light
299,792,458 meters per second
Messages of actions I may or may have not taken
Deeds so titillating
So cruel and despicable
So utmost electrifyingly
Satisfying
Yet so grotesque
S-s-so-o
Performances so aesthetically fulfilling
Alas-Alas
That I knew I would do them again and again and again and probably
Even
Again
Catatonia assisted in each deed's aftermath

A belated thank-you-to-you
Catatonia
And
Of course
Poetic murmurings
Were
And are
The only evidence that anything did occur
If
And I cannot emphasize this if ever-too-much
Anything happened at all
At all

Licentious Limbo

He found a needed star
Asked for her velvet hand
So he could bravely watch
A darkened dove drift by
A dove without her
"I'll Live"
Message
It hovered to show him
Love's Death ***a****ngel*
Still possessed a lower-case
a
So his star-dropped glass-crystals
Splinters and Shards
Glistening downwards
Crashing towards warm flesh heaving
"Love can still be found on earth, in Life"

Another innocent schizophrenic damsel
Who dreams she is Life's Reincarnation
Of the Goddess of Love
Composes melancholy poetry
To be buried deeply
In various havens
Across Sparkle's sorted past

Whilst he gaily sings to the funeral songs
Of his slithering zither
To his
Enitharmon

Everything's hidden
He hides the evidence behind the fear
Of those who are truly human
Behind their dreams of emotions
Perverting their direct perceptions
Into Sparkle's safe havens
of
Deceptions

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Chapter Twenty-Nine

Almost the Penultimate Chapter

So it has finally come down to this: what do you think, what does the evidence suggest, what does your heart tell you, tell you about Sparkle and his shackled partner, Evil? Is he guilty or not? Please hedge your bet and vote with your heart. And would that be the *same* heart as the one that just spoke to you a moment ago? We will tally the input and process the output and determine the fate of, not only Sparkle, but the fate of us all. Do we keep our viewpoints a secret or do we open our pain to the world for all to suffer? You, as always, and even more so as we finally approach the exit from this text, it's your choice, and you will have to live with your fate, your judgement, your eternal anguish of both sorrow and grief, until the end of your time here on earth. I had almost written "heartache" instead of "your eternal anguish," and I hunger, now, that I had. It still troubles me that I did not.

At last, the ballots are in, and-so, now, I share-mine:

> Guilt or innocence? Where lies the powers of evil and how do I, personally, yield to its power? Well, with both panic and a twinge of despair, that's how, and so I now have come to my decision. If you are having trouble recognizing it, I will make it crystal clear: I *am* procrastinating! I'm almost certain about this, the procrastination, and am *almost* ready to yield to my decision, too. Hence, I have narrowed the result down **to-two** varieties, and so, once again it is *down* ***to-two***, reminds me of the time Sparkle found a no-chin in a ballet dress, but, back on topic, these two horns of our dilemma are, no, not the twin peaks of guilt and innocence – that would be **two-too** simplistic, ah, I again recall such ballet attire, it was pink and downy, I remember, with bangles! But Sparkle never could get the blood

completely out, too many bangles, and eventually he just burned it. My two possibilities, realms coexisting, residing, in the soul of Sparkle belong to either the

(1) The simultaneous Good-and-the-Bad, Evil-and-the-Devine, Profound-and-the-Profane, the Guilty-and-the-Innocent – *both at the same-time*,
or,
(2) He is in neither camp! Neither innocent nor guilty.

And I've come to the difficult decision that he is a resident of both of the two choices, bonded together, both (1) *and* (2), each conceived and over-stated, in numerical order, hovering above, in fact, *directly* above. So, my thoughts revealed, my pellucid solution clearly defined, hence condemned!

Thus, with the soul of Sparkle now fully revealed, we reach the terminal station of our Frenzied Frolic of Despair in Sparkleland (FFDS), my Well-Preserved-&-Uneaten Reader, forevermore trapped and demolished, unsuspectingly, within my soft-&-downy feathered-nest. Hoodwinked you after all, didn't I? But I have spoken just a bit too early, for your trap and demolition was not to be announced until the next chapter, a chapter I shall number thirty (Opus 30) and, after long debilitation, constructed a title, to state, simply: "*The Line Moràlé*."

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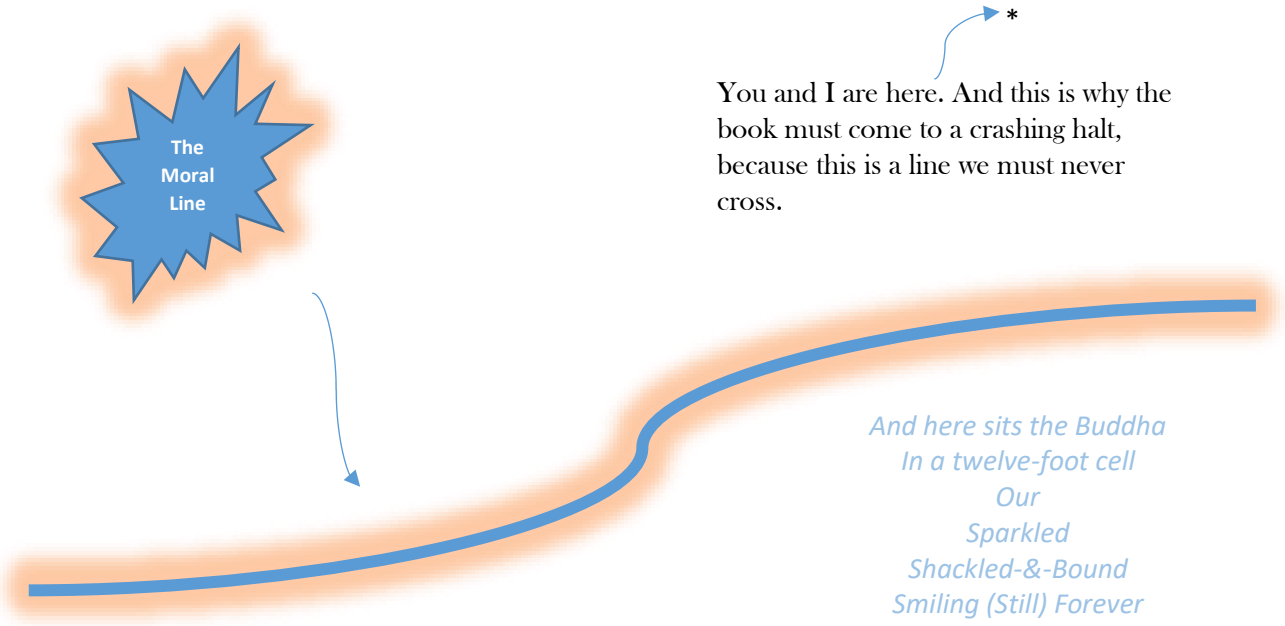
Chapter Thirty

The Line Moràlé

Hence we arrive at the happy-end of our Rumpían Romp through Sparkle Land (RRSL), my Finally-Chopped-&-Devoured & Half-Digested Reader, caught and destroyed unsuspectingly within my lair. Tricked you after all, didn't I?

For we have finally found that thing for which we have all been searching, quested for throughout the entire book, and this is none other than the Moral Line, across which, we *must not-cross*. Do you see it? Look hard, again! It's there, below us. Do you see it now? Yes, it's *directly* below each of us at this very moment. Below us all. From here, in fact, I can see Sparkle. He's on the *other* side-of the line – the line for which we are, I truly hope, on the *proper* side-of, the good, the nice, just like when our mother always told us to *"be nice."* But there's no guarantee about that. Just look around you, look at the newspapers and TV, and look at Uncle Andy, you know, *Janet's* uncle, Janet Pretzfelder. And to visualize, just one more time, a final time, the structural integrity of her shit! *Merde!* I think somewhere along the way, maybe way back in chapter five, we were the ones who somehow crossed that line onto the wrong side and only Sparkle remained on the side we hoped we'd all been on, all along, forevermore. I can see him from here, clearly, can't you? I can even see that tiny speck of blood, the one splashed across his beautifully tailored, white-white shirt, the one with a badge on it that has Sparkl-O-Vitch written across it in indelible and brightly-colored markers, in Sparkle's sloppy red handwriting, with vibrant colors but colors so different

from those that are used to highlight the line – *that* line. Sparkle is smiling and he appears to be content. And happy, too! Am I? Are you?



And here sits the Buddha
In a twelve-foot cell
Our
Sparkled
Shackled-&-Bound
Smiling (Still) Forever
□
[OS,S&B,S(S)F]
Sparkle Plenty.
He could-a been
The champion
Of
The world!

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Chapter Thirty-One

The End

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Chapter Thirty-One

The End

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Chapter Thirty-One

The End

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Chapter Thirty-One

The End

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The End

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The End

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The End

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Chapter Thirty-One

The End

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[And beyond this point, there is nothing but nothingness, plain empty emptiness, because, well, because it's over, done, kaput!]