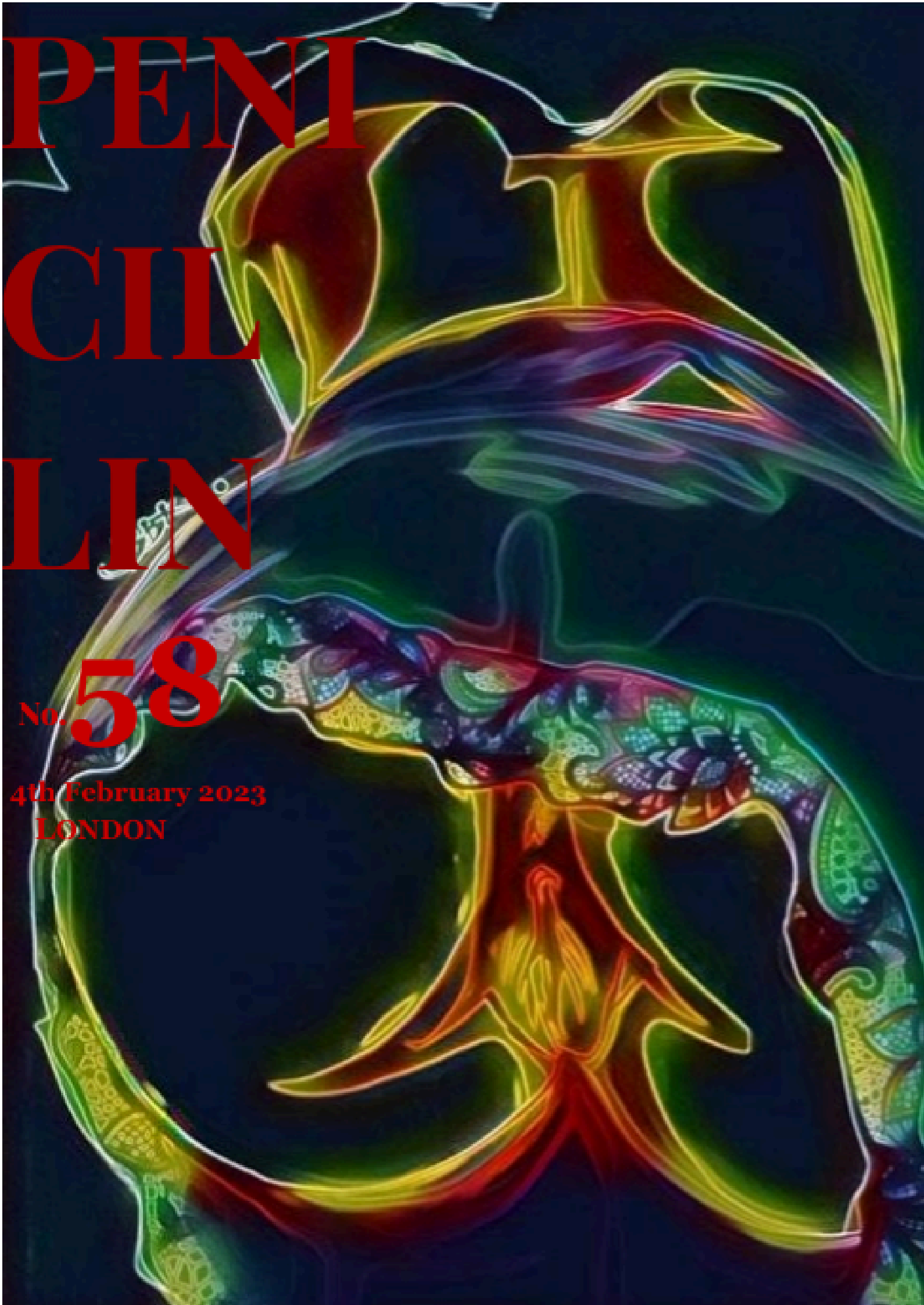
PENICILLIN



No. 58

4th February 2023

LONDON



11840 A ROTARY PHOTO, E.C. MISS LILY ELSIE.

PHOTOGRAPH BY
FOULSHAM & BANFIELD, LTD.,
49, OLD BOND ST., W.

This is the complete eleven volumes of *My Secret Life*, the memoir of a gentleman known only as 'Walter'. It was first published around 1888 & details very explicitly the author's sexual encounters throughout his life. Despite the fact the text is rather repetitive and disorganised, it is recognised as a valuable document in regard to the information it gives about Victorian London, especially on Victorian houses of prostitution. The best guess as to who the author actually is, is Henry Spencer Ashbee, a book collector, writer, and bibliographer who was an expert on erotic books in his day. A New York publisher was arrested in 1932 for printing the first three volumes, and in 1969, a British printer was sent to prison for two years for reprinting it.–Global Grey Ebooks

MY

SECRET LIFE

by an Anonymous Author
1888

VOLUME II
CHAPTER XVI continued

Low class fucksters. • A concupiscent landlady. • Reflexions on my career. • On the sizes of pricks.. • My misconception.

The women there though about the same price, or cheaper, had quite different manners from the Waterlow road ones. There were rarely more than one woman in a house, and always on the ground floor, the landlord or lady living in the back room, or upstairs. The rooms were mostly let to working people, who seemed quiet enough. Lots of children were about, who played in the streets at day, but disappeared if quite young towards dusk. If a man stopped and talked to a gay woman at the door, the children of the house usually went in, always did if more than about ten years old. They drew back as if they knew that a bargain for fucking was to be struck, and I believe knew all about it. They were mostly girls who sleeping in the same room with their parents, I dare say had seen the game of mother and father played often enough. The bigger girls frisked about the streets of an evening with boys of the same age, or not much older. If a woman could get you to enter the passage, she almost pulled you into her room. "Come in, — don't stand

there,-come out of the way of the lodgers, — I'll tell you if you come in,-well make it half-a-crown, -I've got such a nice cunt, — such a fat arse, — feel my bubbies,-look here, — come in, and let me feel your prick." This was all said rapidly, and according to the inducements the woman had to offer. It generally ended in my going in, and the bargain was completed inside. "I'll frig you, — do anything you She, — look here (showing rapidly her breasts, and covering them up again),-here is a big pair of legs (pulling her clothes up), — yes you may fuck me how you like, — oh ! yes I want to piss bad." I have heard this hundreds of times. Once inside I never came out without paying something. The women always said or did just enough to wet my appetite for knowing or seeing a little more, so I paid, and often enough was disappointed, and left; but saw a lot.

In these streets about seven in number, during a period of two or three years, I had many women, even whilst I visited Mary Davis. I dare say fifty women I fucked, and felt as many more before I ceased going to the neighbourhood. Two or three of the adventures there are alone worth writing. At one house I was robbed of a pin whilst actually fucking the woman. A tall broad-built woman of about thirty, was loll-at a door one night. I do not recollect having seen her before, for I knew many women by sight, even though I had not had them. She looked like a coster's wife. I should have passed on, but for the lewd way in which her eyes met mine. I stopped, she instantly looked rapidly up and down the street, went back inside the door-way saying very loudly, "You want my lodger, but she has left here". but as she said this, she stepped inside the front room, and beckoned me in both with hand and head, her eyes wide open, and looking anxious. Slowly I followed in. She was so big that I thought I should like a feel, and if I liked that would pay more, and have more.

"I'll give you a shilling to feel your cunt."

"Very well", said she standing still, and not attempting to lift her clothes slightly as most of the women used to do. I got my hand on her thighs, she pushed it away, retreated towards the bed and sat on it. I took out a shilling, and as usual put it on the mantel-piece.

"There is the money, — let me now."

She no longer resisted, I felt her, and she opened her legs to facilitate my groping. She put her hand on my shoulder. "Is your cock standing?" said she in a whisper. "Yes feel it", said I unbuttoning. She grabbed at it as if she meant to pull it off. Her manners struck me as uncommon, and I began to feel uncomfortable; but under the squeezing of my cock, and the feeling of her cunt the usual desire to leave one's sperm up her came over me. "Let me fuck you,-I'll give you two shillings more." Without reply she fell back on the bed, I began to throw up her clothes. "Oh ! no I can't let you do that." I had when with strange women just then been using French letters, and the fear of infection came over me when she would not submit herself to my inspection. "You have got something the matter with you, and I shan't, I said. "Nothing of the sort", said she angrily, "I'm not gay, — I'm the landlady,-I am married, and have three children, — they are abed in the next room,-you may see them if you like. My lodger's gone,-you've been here afore to see her,-I've seen you afore,-but I'm not gay, and can't have anything the matter with me,-it's

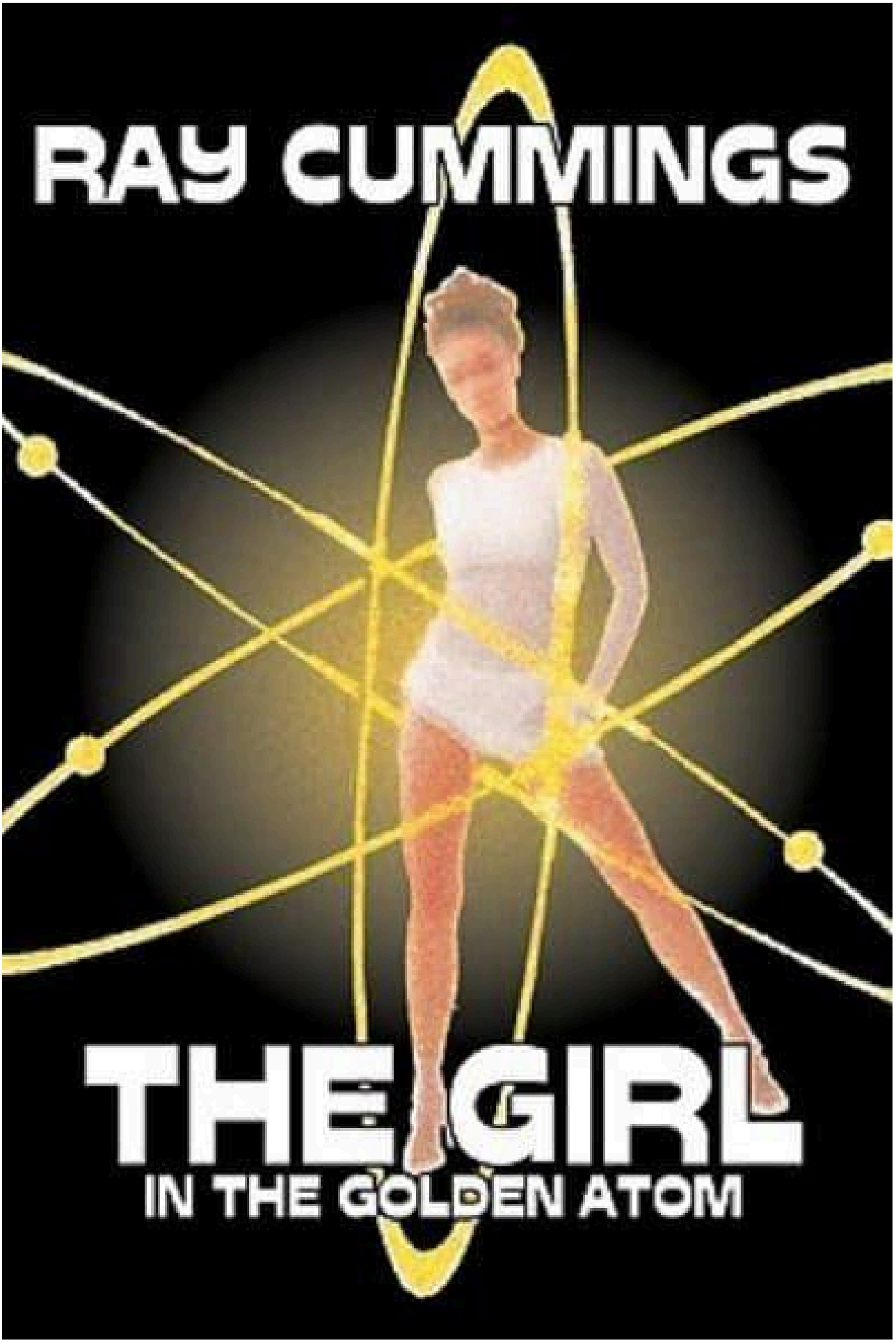
impossible." All this nearly in a whisper. Astonished I laughed. "Don't make a noise", said she, "I don't want the lodgers to know I am in this room, they know it's empty, — come on", and grasping my prick again, she surrendering herself more freely to my investigations.

"Where is your husband?" "Away on a job in the country; I haven't seen him for three months, and have not been touched for that time, so help me God; you may do it without fear,-there then look, if you must", said she, letting me throw up her clothes, and look well at her cunt, which I opened. "I'm a quiet woman." Then she turned round, twisting herself so that she could get hold of my cock as I stood pulling her about. "Come on my dear." The next minute I was spending up her. "Go on, you were so quick, — go on", said she in spasmodic utterances, jerking her bum, clutching me to her, and using the same endearments as any other woman,-women are all the same, from the princess to the peasant. I had spent quickly, but shoved on as well as I could, and in a second or two with a sigh, her cunt relaxed. I moved out of her quickly, for fear of the ladies' fever haunted me a little. She lay with her clothes up to her navel, till I had washed myself. "There is no towel or soap", I said. Then she moved. "I'll get you some, — but don't afear me,-hush !—don't make a noise, — wait five minutes for me, lock the door, and put out the light." I stood aghast at this request; it was in a low neighbourhood, costermongers, tramps, and even a nest of thieves I had heard was not far off. "What the devil does she mean? — what game is up?" came across my mind. "I won't put out the light", I said. "Well hide it in the cupboard, lock the door, and if any one knocks don't answer,-perhaps my late lodger's friends may come, not knowing the has gone, —I don't want any one to know any one is in the room." This was all said in a whisper; she went out, shut the door gently, and walked to the back of the house, leaving her three shillings. I heard her foot-steps, and faintly afterwards the sounds of talking in the back room,-the partitions in the poor houses were thin. I dried my tool with my shirt and sat on the bed, looking round at the poor room, wondering what dodge was up. She did not return, and thinking over the incidents, came to the conclusion that she was not a gay woman. There was just that difference in manners, in getting on to the bed, in taking her pleasures, and in her whole behaviour about the fucking, which there always is between a woman however loose she may be, but who does not fuck professionally, and the regular trader in her charms. I saw it then, and I see it still clearer writing about it now.

Nevertheless I began to think of leaving, feeling uneasy as she did not return for more than ten minutes. With my hat on, I was just about to run off, after hearing a man's footsteps pass along the passage, when I heard a voice cry up the stairs, "Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Brown, I'm going out to get a mouthful of fresh air, —if the children cry, will you see to them?" A shrill voice replied, a female step passed my door, into the street. A second afterwards the door slowly opened (I had unlocked it as I heard what I supposed were her footsteps going along the passage). In she came, holding up her finger for silence, then quietly closing and locking the door, she stood smiling at me. "Don't make a noise, they think I am out", she said.

TO BE CONTINUED

RAY CUMMINGS



THE GIRL IN THE GOLDEN ATOM

THE GIRL IN THE GOLDEN ATOM

(1922)

by Ray Cummings

Reviewed by D for Doom

The Girl in the Golden Atom by Ray Cummings (1887-1957) is one of the early classics of American science fiction. It was originally published in the pulp magazine All-Story Weekly in 1919. Book publication followed in 1922 (apparently in a slightly longer form). It was an immediate success and the basic idea was one that the author returned to rather obsessively in his subsequent incredibly prolific career. It's undeniably a clever idea. A scientist (whose name we are never told) develops an ultra-high power microscope and makes a startling discovery. There really are worlds within worlds. Within the atoms he observes an entire world, with people in it. He speculates that our world may in fact be such a world contained within another infinitely vaster world, and that there may be an infinite number of worlds within worlds within worlds. Within this microscopic world he sees a girl. And he becomes obsessed by her. Somehow he must find a way to enter this microscopic world. He finds a way to do just that. In the process he finds that he may be able to save not just this miniature world but also our own world.

This is definitely not hard science fiction. You just have to accept that these scientist chappies are terribly clever and if they need to reduce themselves to less than the size of atom they just whip up a special potion that does the trick. But this was 1919. This was still the age of the scientific romance, the age of Verne and Wells and Burroughs, when playing around with cool ideas (often with political overtones especially in the case of Wells) was more important than working out plausible theories to explain the events of the tales.

Cummings was less political than Wells but he was influenced by the Great War and uses his story to make some observations on war and the fate of human society. Or in this case human societies. In some cases his observations on these matters become a bit disturbing when he intervenes in a war in the microscopic universe and ponders the possibility of doing something similar in our world. There's certainly an element of scientific

hubris here although I'm not sure just how conscious he was of this or of the staggeringly naïve approach of his scientist hero. He was also presumably influenced by the scientific ferment of that time, with quantum theory and relativity suggesting that universes could be more strange and complex than had ever previously been imagined. In some ways this tale can even be seen as an anticipation of the Many Worlds interpretation of quantum theory although obviously Cummings' idea of a multiplicity of universes is very different from the quantum one. It's an interesting curiosity from the earlier days of science fiction. Not a masterpiece but definitely worth a look.





THE MUMMY

(1932)

Reviewed by D for Doom

The Mummy has always been one of my favourites among Universal's 1930s horror movies. My DVD copy being a very poor one it was not difficult to convince myself that the Blu-Ray release would be a worthwhile purchase.

I've always thought that *The Mummy* can be best appreciated by being seen as both a horror movie and a tragic love story. It was slightly unusual among Universal's early horror offerings in not being based on a classic of gothic literature, although Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's short stories *Lot 249* and *The Ring of Thoth* were certainly influences. Interest in ancient Egypt was already high when the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamen by a British

archaeological expedition in 1922 ignited a full-blown craze. Nina Wilcox Putnam's original screenplay was drastically rewritten by John L. Balderston. The movie was originally going to be about Cagliostro but it eventually evolved into a story much more closely focused on ancient Egypt.

The movie opens with a superbly mounted suspense set-piece as an assistant to Sir Joseph Whemple's 1921 dig unwittingly restores to life the mummy of the high priest Imhotep. The mummy then disappears. A decade later a mysterious Egyptian named Ardeth Bey (Boris Karloff) leads another expedition to an extraordinary find, the tomb of the Princess Ankh-es-en-amon. The audience already knows that Ardeth Bey is in fact Imhotep.

As the story unfolds we learn of the tragic love of Imhotep and Ankh-es-en-amon. Imhotep believes that a young half-American half-Egyptian woman named Helen Grosvener (Zita Johann) is Ankh-es-en-amon reincarnated and he is determined that this time their love will endure.

While Imhotep/Ardeth Bey is certainly ruthless and is certainly a danger to anyone who gets in his way he is never a true monster. He has no interest in killing random strangers or in destroying civilisation or in ushering in a reign of evil. All he wants is to have Ankh-es-en-amon restored to him and for the two lovers to be united forever. He is thus, even by comparison with some of the rather sympathetic Universal monsters, a very sympathetic monster indeed. Karloff doesn't just make him sympathetic; he gives the character a great deal of weight and dignity. If it's not Karloff's greatest performance it's certainly among his very best.

It remains a mystery why anyone ever thought David Manners, who plays Sir Joseph Whemple's son Frank, was worth pushing as a potential star. He had the matinee idol looks certainly but he was always much too bland. Fortunately there's a fine supporting cast here with Edward Van Sloan being particularly good as Doctor Muller, who is Helen's doctor as well as Sir Joseph Whemple's close friend and also happens to be the expert in the occult that such a movie has to have.

This movie also benefits from having one of the best female leads of any of the Universal horror pictures. Zita Johann was known mostly as a stage actor and although her performance is a little stagey that actually suits both the movie and her role perfectly. Most importantly she looks convincingly exotic without coming across as a femme fatale.

This was Karl Freund's first movie as a director and he not only brought the film in on time and on budget, he also added the kind of visual flair and

sophistication you would expect from a man who was one of the greatest of all cinematographers. Despite the potentially lurid subject matter Freund avoids sensationalism. He clearly wants to entertain but he also wants us to take the love story seriously, and he succeeds on both counts. And the movie delivers the chills that a horror movie requires.

Universal had not been making horror movies for very long when this one was made but they were already very very good at the technical side. Jack Pierce's makeup for Karloff is perfect, striking the right balance. It is creepy but it still gives Karloff's character the dignity that the story requires. The sets are wonderful and in general this is one of the handsomest horror films ever made.

The Blu-Ray boasts a superb transfer. It is loaded with extras although personally I found them to be rather disappointing. The commentary track is unfocused, partly because there are just too many people involved, but more seriously they simply have not done their homework (their most egregious error being to credit H. G. Wells as the author of the two short stories that inspired the movie even though a minimal amount of research would have told them that the stories were in fact from the pen of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle). There's a documentary as well but it's rather superficial.

What matters though is that *The Mummy* is one of the greatest of all horror movies and it looks magnificent on Blu-Ray.







PILGRIMAGE

by Eric Vercelli

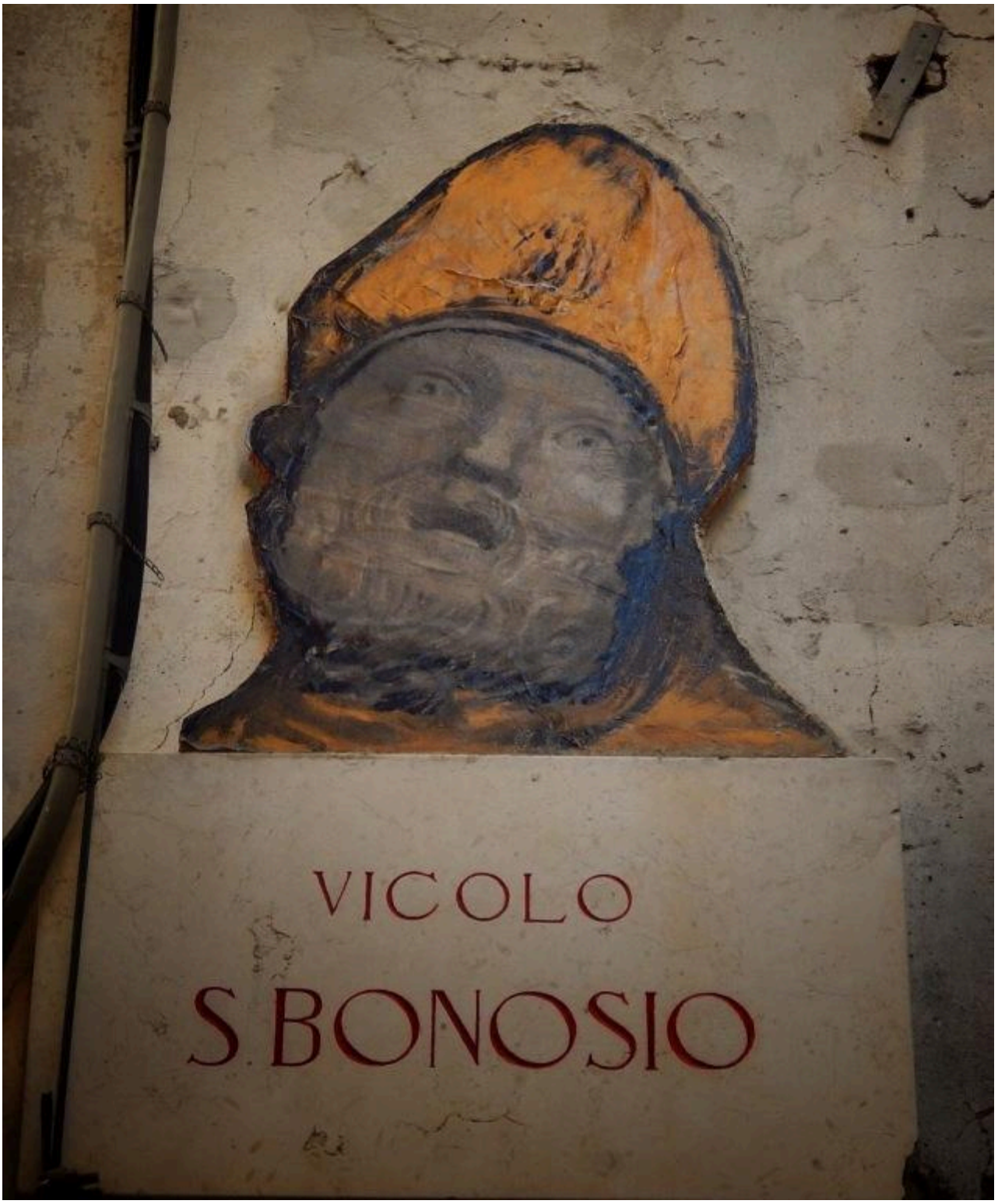
Twenty Seven, Eight, Nine October, Twenty Fifteen



Pellezzano, Early Morning.

Day of the full moon (27)…. restless. She is in Taurus, as am I… and ruled by Venus…. A beautiful autumn day, a perfect day, like Lou Reed's melody, full of saudade, duende, tenderness, peace, longing….. I stroll through Salerno, lurking around the bookshops for a spell, and meander along Corso Vittorio Emanuele, the promenade. I am beginning to recognize people; the girl with pink hair; the old couple walking frailly arm in arm, in their own capsule of time, a slower, gentler time; the always swift and gallant, bearded suit in shades. I walk along the water for the salt air. A mother speaking gently to her child is collecting big golden leaves, freshly fallen. Along Lungomare Trieste to the city park, Villa Comunale di Salerno, to the turtle pond, where lovers gather on benches. Today there are only old men and a few ne'er-do-wells… and pigeons picking at the hearts of the palms encircling the pond. City crews are erecting holiday decorations. A late October day, and warm as it is, I realize Winter is coming.

Across Via Roma to 'Tao Caffè de Simone,' a small, down-to-earth space I am fond of, to take an espresso, and rest the leg.....



I am leaving Salerno for Rome in a few days. I have spent the last three weeks here and feel melancholy in leaving. After a time, you begin to sink into the pace of a place, begin to get attuned to its pulse. The land, the sea, the people.... all these lives living and dying, seasons turning, commuters commuting..... traveling in the manner of dropping oneself into a corner of the world for awhile, immersing in a language foreign to your ear, assimilating the rhythms of the place, cooking with produce grown in the local soil, witnessing the weather interacting with the

landscape, sunrise casting light on morning-misted hillsides, after a deluge…. this experience cultivates compassion for people, buildings, nature… the human endeavoring that carries on everywhere…. only we are normally chained and blinded in our own corner of the world, our own bubbles, our own problems, our own comas, to realize the scope of it all, the beauty of it all… everything: the sublime art in museums, the trash spilling in the gutter……



Vietri sul Mare

It's an outward journey, to travel, but equally a journey within, to extract yourself from your native life and everything familiar; your family, your work, your safety….. and place yourself entirely alone somewhere foreign. When you reach a point in your life, and it's rut, rote, routine…. you have adorned the yoke, fettered yourself, slipped into the role, and then deadened your heart to survive the banality, the prison, the jive, and then, finally, more than anything, you desperately realize:

"I am a free man—and I need my freedom. I need to be alone. I need to ponder my shame and my despair in seclusion; I need the sunshine and the paving stones of the streets without companions, without conversation, face to face with myself, with only the music of my heart for company." – Henry Miller.

Campbell's take on the eternal hero myth…. that point in the arc: withdrawal into the cave, the wilderness, and then, to emerge after the tests and struggles, slaying the dragon, the twin spectres, solitude and loneliness. But not really slaying, more like surrender, acceptance…. like Milarepa, offering himself, putting himself straight into the stubborn demon's mouth…. Iron transformed through the fires of the forge, and the licks of the hammer…. the Phoenix emerging from a cauldron of flame.



"You must slouch at proper angles against the student union wall." – Young Fresh Fellows,"Hang Out Right."

Pema Chödrön writes “To be fully alive, fully human, and completely awake is to be continually thrown out of the nest. To live fully is to be always in no-man’s-land, to experience each moment as completely new and fresh. To live is to be willing to die over and over again.”

Yes.

“Create. Destroy. Repeat.”

I will miss this place, Salerno, Pellezzano, Campania…. the incongruity of the tiny old woman always in trackies I see on the bus each day, and the strange fellow in the colorful hat and shades, always grinding his jaw; the old Pellezzano Barber forever sentineled in the door of his shop, standing in his white long jacket; the pure white bull terrier who lords over Pellezzano square, the grocers Adolfo and Valerio; the baristas at the Puro caffè (hipsters they may be) who know my preference for a caffè and cornetto crema……



Torre la Cerniola, Erchie

Twenty Eight October

The past week or so, in my interactions here, I have been mistaken as Italian…. the moment I speak, however, this impression is gone, gone, gone. My vocabulary grows, but I am lost on the inflections, the stressing of syllables so intrinsic to the language. Any sentence I construct is construed as gibberish; the rhythm is missing, the music….. desperately seeking my mojo… and my autopilot has me uttering Greek, a continually flustering linguistic mix-up. In a sense, Italy is standing on the shoulders of Greece…. the myths and gods and temples and exoduses…. the timeless symbiosis that stirs the Mediterranean…..and so I am not always certain where it is I am….

I take a bus West of Salerno, to Erchie, to see a tower and the sea; where Hercules built a city. Rain falling cold and steady, a gray day. I miss my stop in Erchie and end up in Maiori… a depressed feeling pervades this town like it"s been left out of the glamor the other Amalfi coast towns enjoy. Or maybe it's only the rain. Or maybe it's me. As Nick Cave said, "I can control the weather with my moods. I just can't control my moods."

Having an espresso while waiting for the bus back toward Erchie, young hooligans hanging about. Back in the states, young men find it in fashion to sag their pants, but here in Italy the sag is cut right into the pattern. So the kids enjoy the appearance of walking around with a load of shit in their pants, but maintain a bit of dignity in that they remain belted at the hips, unlike their American counterparts who have ditched all sense of self-respect, appearing like the village idiot…. μαλάκας… gone blind from incessant masturbation. They are bored here, you can smell it…. the seaside town they forgot to blow down….

Making my way back to Erchie, walking along the road, risking the neck. An old man yells at me… Something roughly translating to "Get out of the road you crazy bastard, before you get yourself killed!" The village is quiet, empty. A stray dog wanders the beach. The tower, Torre la Cerniola, is closed to visitors, the season is winding down.

Rain. Horse latitudes…..

NEXT WEEK–POMPEII





“After reading a page of an Ernst Graf book some may feel like washing their hands, or running a bath. Some even throw themselves out of windows.”

THE SONGS OF MALDOROR

by

Le Comte de Lautréamont

He pulls the brass button, and the modern chateau gate rotates on its hinges.

He paces the courtyard, strewn with fine sand, and crosses the eight steps of the stairs. The two statues, placed to the right and left as the guardians of the aristocratic villa, do not bar his passage. He who has denied everything, father, mother, Providence, love, ideal, in order to think only of himself, has been careful not to follow the steps that preceded. He saw him enter a spacious living room on the ground floor, with carnelian woodwork. The son of a family throws himself on a sofa, and the emotion prevents him from speaking. His mother, in the long, dragging robe, hurries around him, and envelops him with his arms. His brothers, younger than himself, group themselves around the piece of furniture, loaded with a burden; they do not know life sufficiently to get a clear idea of the scene that is happening. Finally, the father raises his cane, and lowers on the assistants a look full of authority. Pressing the wrist on the arms of the chair, he moved away from his usual seat, and advanced anxiously, though weakened by the years, towards the immobile body of his first-born. He speaks in a foreign language, and everyone listens to them in a respectful reverie: "Who put the boy in this state? The misty Thames will still carry a considerable amount of silt before my forces are completely exhausted. Conservative laws do not seem to exist in this inhospitable country. He would feel the strength of my arm, if I knew the culprit. Although I have retired, in the remoteness of maritime combats, my Commodore's sword, suspended from the wall, is not yet rusty. Moreover, it is easy to iron the thread. Mervyn, be calm; I will give orders to my servants, in order to find the traces of those whom I

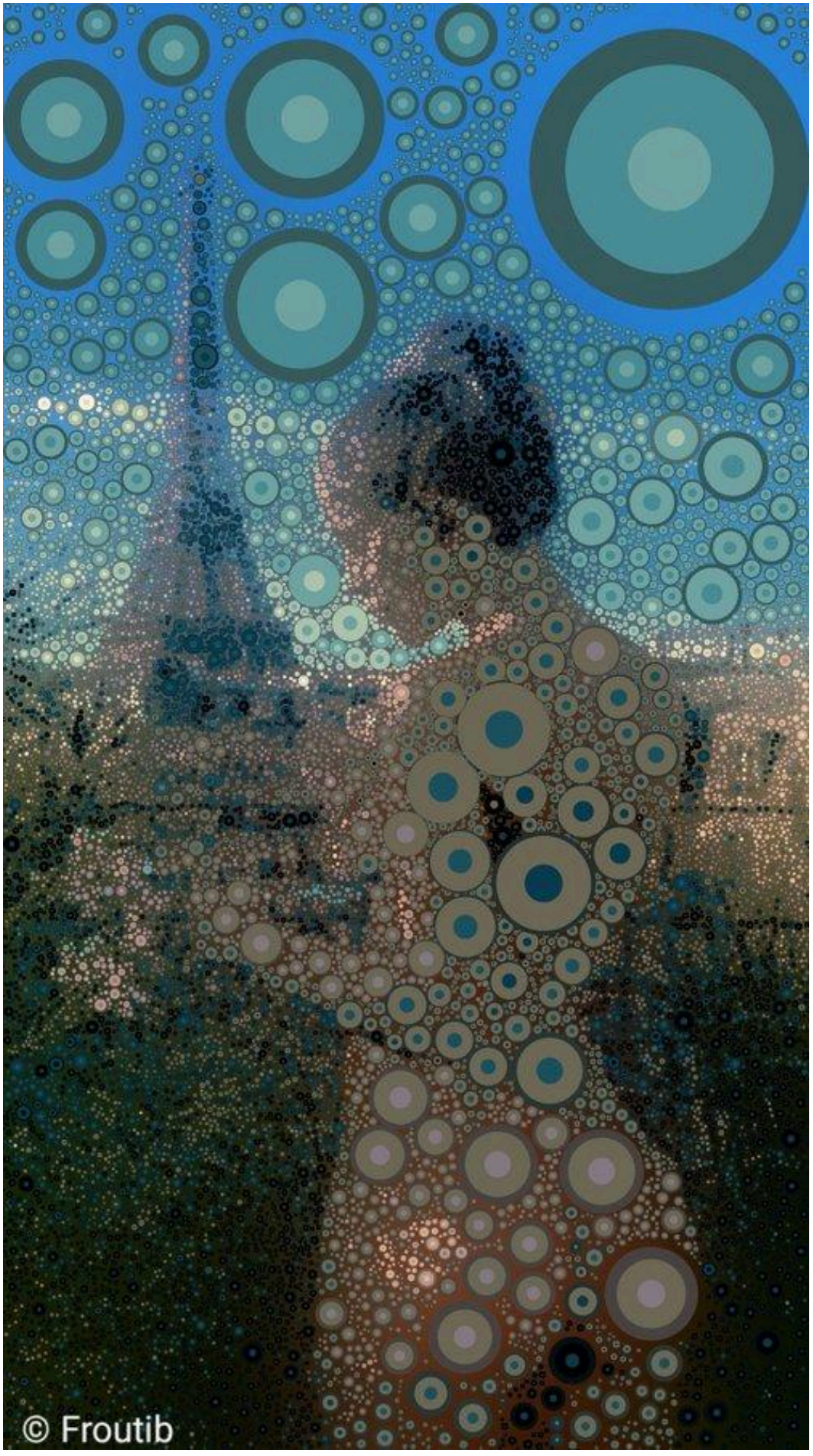
shall henceforth seek, in order to destroy them with my own hand. Woman, take off thence, and go and crouch in a corner; your eyes wait for me, and you better close the duct of your lacrimal glands. My son, I implore you, awaken your senses, and recognize your family; it is your father who speaks to you."

The mother kept aloof, and to obey her master's orders she took a book in her hands, and endeavored to remain quiet, of the danger that the one whom her womb bred. "... Children, go and enjoy yourself in the park, and take care, while admiring the swimming of the swans, not to fall into the pond ... " The brothers, their hands hanging, remain mute; all of them, with their toque surmounted by a feather torn from the wing of the Carolina nightie, with the velvet trousers stopping at their knees, and the red silk stockings, are taken by the hand and withdraw from the drawing-room, being careful not to squeeze the ebony floor tip-toe. I am certain that they will not amuse themselves, and that they will walk with gravity in the paths of plane trees. Their intelligence is precocious. So much the better for them. "... Useless care, I cradle you in my arms, and you are insensitive to my supplications. Would you like to raise your head? I will kiss your knees, if need be. But no ... it falls inert." “My sweet master, if thou permitest thy slave, I shall seek in my apartment a bottle filled with turpentine, and which I usually use when the headache invades my temples, after returning from the theatre; when the reading of a moving narrative, recorded in the British annals of the chivalrous history of our ancestors, throws my thoughtful musing into the peat bogs of slumber." - "Woman, I did not give you the floor, and you had no right to take it. Since our legitimate union, no cloud has come between us. I am satisfied with you, I have never had any reproaches to make to you, and vice versa. Go and fetch in your apartment a bottle filled with turpentine. Find one in the drawers of your commode, and you will not come and tell me. Hurry up the steps of the spiral staircase, and come back to me with a happy face." But the sensitive Londoner has barely reached the first steps (she does not run as fast as a person from the lower classes) when already one of her damsels of atour comes down from the first floor, her cheeks flushed with sweat, with the bottle which, perhaps, contains the liqueur of life in its crystal walls. The young lady bows gracefully in offering her gift, and the mother, with her royal gait, has advanced towards the fringes which border the sofa, the only object which preoccupies her tenderness. The Commodore, with a proud but

benevolent gesture, accepts the bottle from his wife's hands. An Indian scarf is soaked in it, and the head of Mervyn is surrounded by the orbicular meanders of the silk. He breathes salts; he shakes an arm. The traffic revives, and you can hear the joyful cries of a kakato of the Philippines, perched on the window. "Who goes there? Do not stop me. Where am I? Is it a grave that supports my heavy limbs? The planks seem sweet to me... The medallion which contains the portrait of my mother, is it still attached to my neck? ... Back, malefactor, with disheveled head. He could not reach me, and I left a piece of my doublet in his fingers. Untie the chains of the bulldogs, for a recognizable thief can break into our house that night, while we are plunged into sleep. My father and my mother, I recognize you, and I thank you for your care. Call my little brothers. It was for them that I bought some pralines, and I want to kiss them." At these words he falls into a deep, lethargic state. The doctor, who had been summoned in all haste, rubbed his hands and exclaimed: "The crisis has passed. Everything is fine. Tomorrow your son will wake up ready. All of you, go to your respective beds, I order it, that I may remain alone by the side of the patient, until the appearance of the dawn and song of the nightingale."

Maldoror, hidden behind the door, has missed no word. Now he knows the character of the inhabitants of the house, and will act accordingly. He knows where Mervyn lives, and does not want to know more. He entered in a notebook the name of the street and the number of the building. C ' is the main one. It is safe not to forget them. He advances, like a hyena, without being seen, and runs along the sides of the court. He climbs the gate with agility, and entangles himself for a moment in the iron points; with one bound, he is on the road. He walks away at a wolf's pace. "He took me for a malefactor," he exclaimed; "he is an imbecile. I should like to find a man exempt from the accusation which the patient has made against me. I did not take off a bit of his doublet, as he said. Simple hypnagogic hallucination caused by fright. It was not my intention today to take possession of him; for I have other plans for this shy teenager." Go to the side of the swan-lake; and, I will tell you later why there is a completely black one among the troop, and whose body, supporting an anvil, surmounted by the putrefying corpse of a brown crab, inspires with good reason distrust in its other aquatic comrades.

TO BE CONTINUED



***Paris* by Froutib**

SPHYNX

THE IMPOTENCE OF BEING ERNST

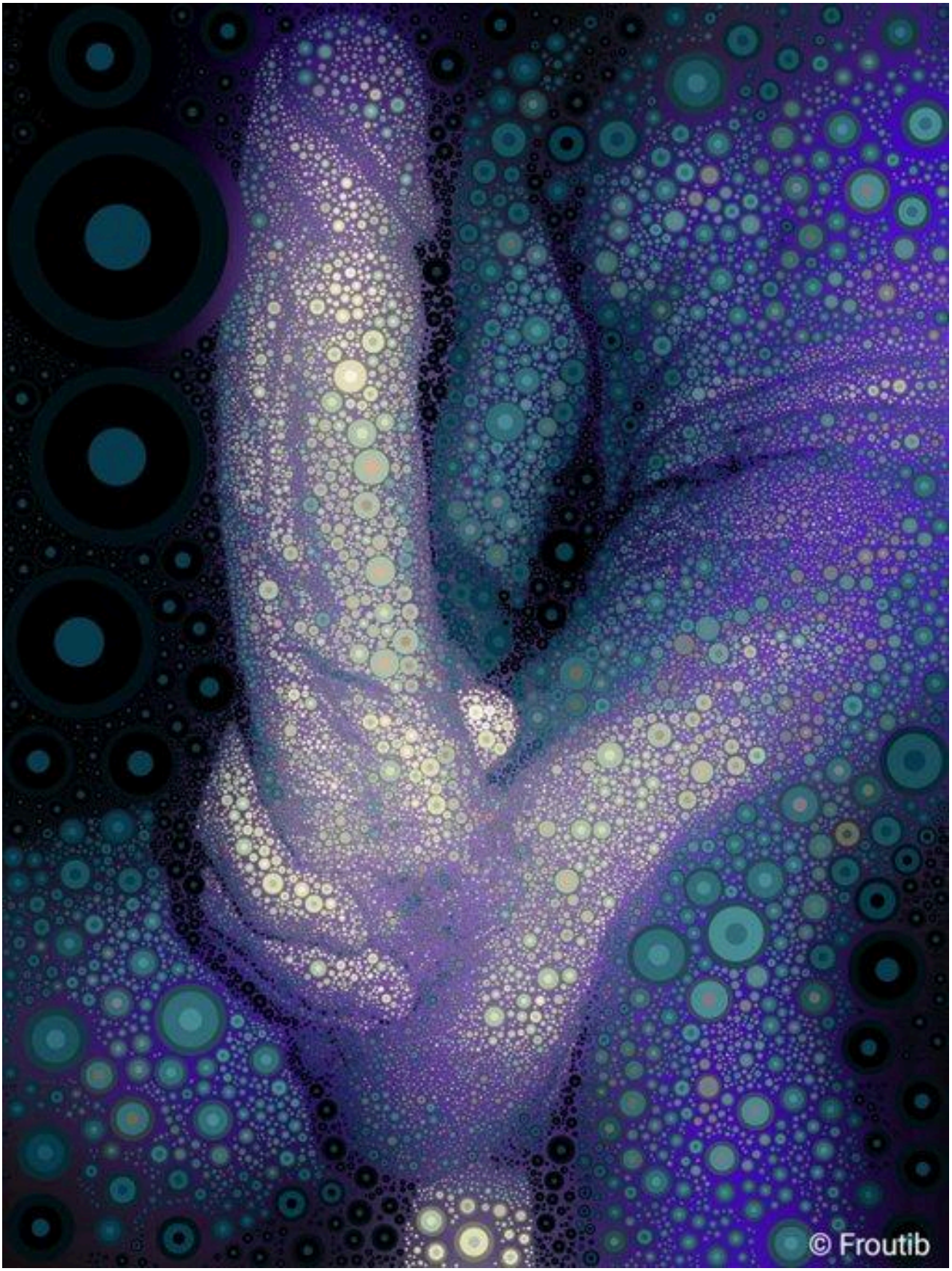
by Ernst Graf

Will you love me when my heartbeat stops?
When my heartbeat stops, will you stay mine?
Will you promise me you'll search for us?
Will you find me after life?
Hailee Steinfeld 'Afterlife'

39
GOOD NIGHT!
STAY WITH GOD

No Time to Die just approaching the end on New Year's Day night and I was reading through all the day's messages between Katharina and me, and she came online and stayed online as if waiting for a goodnight message, and we then had a nice little chat. "Any more dramatic developments I should know about my love?" I asked. "Or can I go to bed now? My life would be so boring without you."

"Just that I have the flu for more than 15 days. I'm still not used to the cold. Even now. Other than that I'm fine. So yes, you can sleep peacefully. Now I'm going to sleep."



***Purple Monster* by Froutib**

I wished her goodnight, sleep tight, mind the bed bugs don't bite "as we say in England".

"I don't expect them to sleep in the cold outside. One day take me to see England." I'm not sure England is ready for you, I opined. But OK. "It's OK. Anyway, one day I will meet her." Then we sent each other hearts and that was it. What a day.

Is there anything better to spend my money on than her?

Trust in myself at the new job. Once I lose this fat face my confidence will return. I AM MACHIAVELLI. My abilities soon stand out from the crowd. I AM BYRON. Three days at home and no alcohol. Turn that into 33 days and I might have a chance to lose this fat face in time for Katharina's birthday.

I messaged her to say I hope she can find somewhere nice to live soon.

"I also hope. I'm desperate for a studio. This is taking away my peace because everything is so difficult my God. But don't worry, the hardest thing you're already helping me with. Sleep well my darling. Good Night! Stay with God (as we say in Brazil)."

I don't want to lose you. I know that.

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WHAT IF I TURN MY BACK ON KATHARINA NOW?

Laid down just before midnight but struggled to sleep. Full of doubts about getting so financially involved with Katharina, but also wondering even if I give her the deposit for a studio, how on earth can she afford to pay the rent, plus bills, plus food, milk & diapers??? Thinking to tell her just to move in with her housemate and let it be. But now in the morning I am thinking remember it is the thrill of going to bed with her and waking up with her in the morning.

That Friday night she was in low cut black dress and then just bra & knickers. You are her only hope.

What if I turn my back on Katharina now?

Remember what Sphynx has been like on all my past visits. Every time the doorbell rang I looked up hoping it was Katharina and it never was. There is no one there I can be with after Katharina. Even that night I met her, I sat there so depressed thinking what a waste of time, until the moment she walked in.

Remember that last visit to Chat Noir, how completely unarousing were those films and nearly always are. How completely pointless Paris will feel after Katharina. If you cut her out of your life and turn your back on her and abandon her.

Alternatively, keep going with Katharina, help her as much as you can at this time when she really needs it, until she is able to get on her feet, and clamber onto first rungs of ladder, and if you see her just 3 days a month you can help her so much with money, and for other 27 days a month you are completely free to do what you want in London, and free to go to Vienna. Even in Paris I will still be free to go to Chat Noir and Pigalle! Just come back to her at night. She is my hotel, that is all.

And I can always withdraw at any future point; don't withdraw now.

"Sex in Paris is so cheap". No, it's not. Money to Madame Victoria, money to girl, and lots more for hotel. That is a lot of outlay for sex with one girl. Alternatively set Katharina up, and give that money to her for three days of sex repeatedly day and night!

It is a good deal for me, and for her.

Costs me NOTHING extra.

That is the beauty of it. People think "oh you are such a sap, this girl is tricking so much money out of you". But really she is not, she has got very little from me. I left her everything in my Will and that costs me nothing, as it is worthless to me when I am gone. I "loan" her the deposit money for her studio, which in 1922 Paris is really not a lot of money, and she will pay me back one day when she can afford it and by then I am retired and desperate for cash. Now I can afford it easily and she cannot, it makes sense.

By staying with her on every Paris trip I just give all my money to her instead of hotel and Madame Victoria and her. That means I will be spending less in Paris than I normally do but she will be getting more from me than she normally does. It is win-win for both of us.

And instead of just getting 30 minutes in a room with her, I get three whole days and nights with her! For less money!

Think how tawdry have been those experiences in Chat Noir and Pigalle. How tawdry that last visit to Vienna.

I need to enjoy this experience with Katharina and take it as far as we can go. I can always go back to my old life afterwards.

I do not have to go to Paris to see her every month. I can drop in or not as I please.

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I LOVE YOU

"I'm glad it worked out in your job. Really very happy. I love you for helping so much. I'm really happy for your achievements. About the hot water bottle. I never had. But I would like."

For the first time last night Katharina used the expression "I love you for…". And I replied by pointing out she can only afford to have the heating on in the place she is living now because she probably doesn't pay for the electricity. Rather vicious. Like a slap. And especially because I seemed to ignore her saying "I love you".

Scorpio: Being an instrument of miraculous change.

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Katharina sent me a long message about all the problems she experienced today–unable to work today, offended by the father of her baby, still sick, more than anything money woes, unable to buy what she needs for her baby–obviously overwhelmed by them. And I felt overwhelmed too, and realising it is never going to end, and I cannot just keep sending massive amounts of money to Paris to keep her head above water there when I am struggling to keep my own head above water here, and realising the option of her moving in with her housemate and them becoming a couple is the best option for all of us.

"I'm sorry. I don't know what else I can say. Realistically perhaps it is best if you move in with your housemate like he suggested. Logically it is the best option, for now. He may be best option to help you get on your feet? A year from now or two, your life may be in much stronger place and you will have other options? I don't say this because I don't love you, I say it because I do love you. With this guy, you maybe won't be stressed and scared how to pay your bills all the

time? It will take the pressure off of you for a while? Until you are in better position to choose other options? I don't know. I don't know what to say. I have a new job now and I need to concentrate on that right now. I cannot spend lots of time travelling right now so I'm hardly ever going to get chance to see you. I am just thinking out loud. You really need to find a French Ernst. I wish I lived in 1922 Paris, as I have said before. Then I would ask you to live with me and things would then be so fucking simple for both of us. There is always light at the end of the tunnel. You have my life insurance and my Will waiting for you, and who knows it could be soon. I hope not, personally. But you never know. I expect I will be able to come to Paris for a Friday and Saturday in February sometimes, maybe we can talk about things then, maybe not. Life is full of twists and turns."

"I'm thinking about what I'm going to do. It will really help me a lot. Maybe it's for the best. Even if I don't love him. But I'm still glad to have met you."

OK I basically just broke up with Katharina. I just had to face the reality. I cannot keep earning money in London to send to her in Paris when I am hardly ever going to get the chance to see her, whether she gets a place of her own or not. I am desperately sad, but it is the only realistic option. Now I can keep my money for myself, and for sure, if I DO see her again in February or March I can splash out and be very generous when I do. But now I have freed myself to go to Paris whichever Friday and Saturday night in February I like, and suddenly the Friday 3rd February, Saturday 4th February (her birthday), coming home Sunday night seems very very attractive.

Suddenly all my options open out again, freedom returns, freedom to go back to Paris and go to Sphynx or Pigalle or Chat Noir as I like.

Realised if I am planning to give money to Katharina for her birthday on 4th February I might as well give it now a month in advance if she needs it now. That seems entirely reasonable. "For all the excitement, happiness and drama haha you have brought into my boring life."

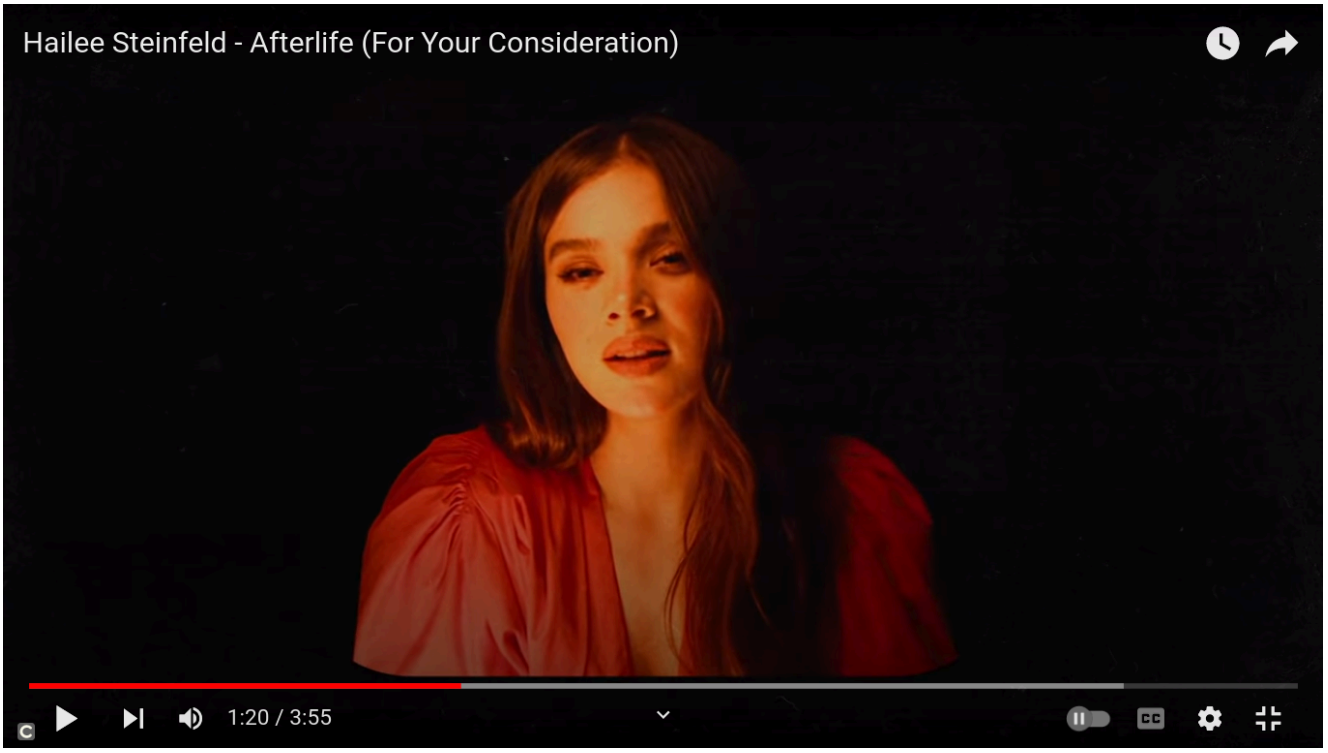
"While in your life nothing happens, mine looks like a hurricane!" she laughed "If it's to compare with yours!"

"I went through my hurricanes when I was your age. Only really came out of them about 12 years ago. Then you walked in the door. On Monday 5th September. About 630pm. You turned my life upside down. More than you know. So thanks for that. You are amazing. I

love you to death. But love. Doesn't pay bills. Alas. Or rent. I wanted a hurricane in my life again. And there you were."

Funny, our relationship started with her seemingly "blown in on a storm", as I have described it many times, and now it ends with her laughingly referring to her life as a hurricane. You could not make it up. Just before I dropped off to sleep in the dark, one final ping on my phone and a final message from Katharina.

"You are so romantic. Your words are beautiful. I feel they are true. Thank you."



ENDNOTES

Your Editor Ernst Graf—A cultured man with a passion for opera & European pornography Marquis de Myocarditis—Close to the action (@ernstgraf) / Twitter

DforDoom—Cult movies, classic movies, horror, cult tv of the 60s & 70s, vintage genre fiction https://princeplanetmovies.blogspot.com and Classic Movie Ramblings and Vintage Pop Fictions

Froutib 🇫🇷Man, 48, erotic art lover. Art is sublimation of life. Life is Art. I ❤️ the beauty of curves and sensuality of forms, without perversity... 🇪🇺🇺🇳 https://twitter.com/froutib

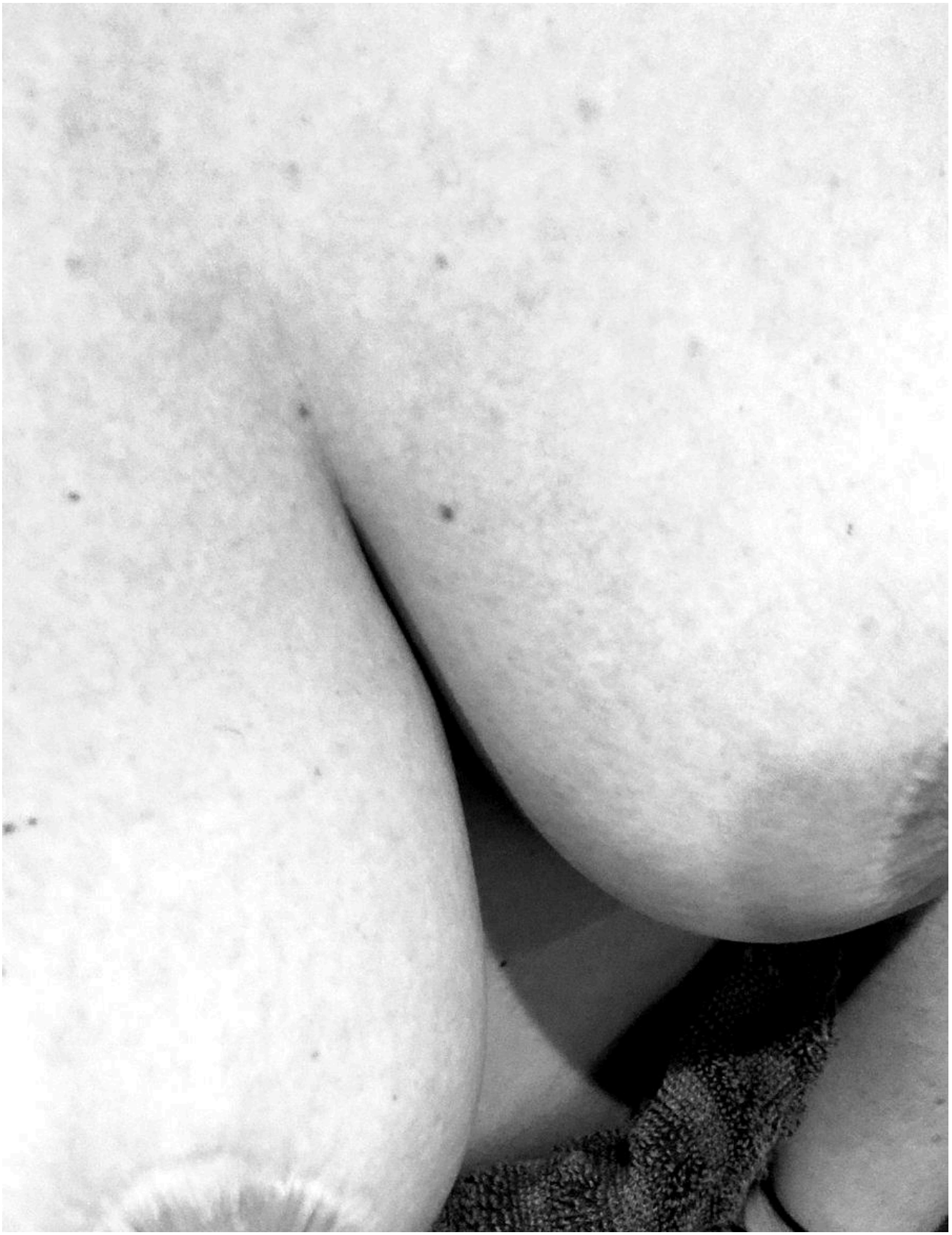
Rebbekkamour aka 'BBK' La nudité dans ce qu'elle a de plus révélateur de nos sentiments les plus profonds. Nudity at its most revealing of our deepest feelings. Rebbekkamour (@BBKmour) / Twitter.

Eric Vercelli—Sono Perso Quando ero piccolo m'innamoravo di tutto Jadis, si je me souviens bien. https://twitter.com/OblivionEric and https://eoblivion.wordpress.com/

Son ame souer—curieux, insatiable, Scorpion, amoureux, amoureux des mots, zèbre, épris de liberté Son ame soeur (@motsbrulants) / Twitter

COVER ART: Rebbekkamour

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When I see you, I wonder how anyone can see you and not fall in love in an instant. When I see you, I wonder how I could attract the attention of this exceptional woman that you are. When I see you, I see the embodiment of my happiness.

Quand je te vois, je me demande comment on peut te voir et ne pas tomber amoureux en un instant. Quand je te vois, je me demande comment j'ai pu attirer l'attention de cette femme exceptionnelle que tu es. Quand je te vois, je vois l'incarnation de mon bonheur.—Son Ame Souer