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# THE FORM AWARDS

By JOSHUA PAUL ROHRMAYER

"The agony of the devoured animal is always far greater than the pleasure of the devourer."

—Arthur Schopenhauer

The stream crept into view and looked as if a mirror had somehow been transformed into smoke, its lustrous glow intact, teeming, full tilt. The delicate and suggestive ebb and flow coiled itself over and around and within itself, the looping of identity, as it seeped in and then, with a gentle hand, ran the fullest section of its index digit's padded terminus over the shuddering sensitivities and reflexive gorges of the POV's self-snaring thickets of axon and dendrite. The prolonged and molassing contact allowed for each serration of the topographic map of the fingerprint's swirl to be felt, each click a booming echo, and each interstitial valley a soothing caress in itself. The stream's ghostly fingertips had been worn to a symbiotic balance of rough callous and a silken glide so perfect that it deserved to be sent straight to its own private wing of the Heaven of Forms.

A data entry slave—poachable concubine object, and mostly blissfully unaware pawn—tapped and sifted her way through another pile of entrant's forms, boardroom deliberation transcripts, memos of varying degrees of urgency, and one more afternoon of being inextricably and pathetically bound to her unfeeling trap of a mind. Her fascination with sociopathic posterboys was not merely about the tingle of the crotch and the corresponding one in the forever-damaged psyche, but also a sad unconscious mewling to the world, a fully molted plea for release from her own predictably batshit machinations. Tap tap tap. Mew mew mew. Tap. Mew. Tap. Mew. Ad nauseum. Theodore Heartthrob Bundy sort of conceals a knowing leer beneath layers of open windows—a desktop image, and a bit of a mirror, too.

*Dear Perfectly Balanced Levels of Coarseness and Smoothness Upon the Pad of an Index*

*Finger,*

*We wish to extend hearty congratulations your way and inform you that you've been chosen to participate in this year's Form Awards. Every year existence is scoured for the Ideal Forms of things, from the eye socket symmetry of larval salmon to the spectacular collapse and explosion of super novae and everything between and beyond.*

*Your presence has been cordially insisted upon for the Highly Insular, Self-Congratulatory Awards Ceremony and Post-Ceremonial Satiation of Carnal Desires Event.*

*Yours in Paying the Price for Perfection, and the Just-So Facsimile of Human Warmth,*

*The Chairpersons of the F.A. Ceremonial Board*

In symbolist's terms, the "Plato's Retreat" of New York City lore is but a decoy for the churning hedonistic guts at the outwardly-creeping center of these annual Form Awards—it's a joke for true insiders to get bored of laughing at within some fraction of a minute—that is its only function for them.

A mass of who's who bipedalists has formed in the South Garden. The individuals within appear to be spotless, interbred incarnations of equal parts Rich, Powerful, Intelligent and Sexy—so purified of lesser qualities and flush to the brim with symmetrically tuned-up minds and bodies that the mass *itself* is luxuriant and vain—were there a mirror large enough and nearby enough,

the crowd-qua-crowd would become transfixed and lost within its own gaze for an indeterminate span of time, then, eventually, snap out of it, remove a 1/100th of a speck of smudged lipstick with an extended pinky, and/or put a single strand of hair back into place before turning away to charitably allow the rest of the world to look upon it and yearn for its attention. Part of being a Platonically perfect Crowd is both defying and meeting various expectations of the Hollywood-saturated minds of their serfdom. Yes, they brandish the poshest martinis and most wildly expensive whiskeys. Yes, they mutually masturbate (conversationally) in pockets of whirlwinds of baiting praise and immaculately executed manipulations of the fawning chit chat towards their own triumphs and personal perfections. Yes, they wear clothing that, per item, costs more than a house for a family of five. Yes, they make even their relative failures look like solid gold monuments of eternal lasting. Where they defy expectations are in the full extents of their hedonism, in their stone-cold sincere praise of tyrannical political figures and the profoundest human tragedies, and in their eccentric daily practices hidden behind the walls of their mansions, yachts, vacation villas, and underground, satin-lined fallout shelters. Layer upon layer of behind-the-scenes featurettes and supposedly candid interviews function as the cleverly woven bulwark and little else.

The men emit witticisms about the unwashed masses from ever so slightly snarled lips. The women issue warm sensual laughter with heads arched back, eyelids drawn just-so, mouths slackened by the instinctual unhinging of statuesque fat-free jawlines, and, in freeze frame, would be indistinguishable from some of the brave and daring sex scenes they've been a part of in their compelling film careers. Then the men and women seamlessly trade places in these respects as signals of their progressive views on the malleability of gender roles. What remains constant is the thick aroma of complete self/group/self-satisfaction. This discursive dance flows

uninterrupted, to the beat of its own rhythmically-/muscularly-taut calm 'n' cool drummer, and even the heaviest imbibers paradoxically hold a steady composure while gloriously loosened by drinks that contain lazily dissipating ice cubes that are individually priced at the equivalent sum of the average person's monthly car payment.

There are twelve fountains spread equidistantly throughout the South Garden, each cycling a liquid combination through serpentine curves of glistening transparent plumbing that guide the substance to a crowning epicenter, which results in a healthy spray encircled by a mist that resembles a rainbow of fireworks displays—the kinds of simplistic knock-off versions that their lessers witness once a year—in the furnace of the first week of July—if that. The water is filtered through state-of-the-art purification equipment made of rare metals and crystalline geodes, all shaped and sharpened with speckless diamond tools assembled by a factory line of golden automatons as well as the loyal, desperate and grateful peasants who remain erect and docile and highly focused along the conveyor belt for 14 to 17 hours per diem. The water has been intermingled with fossil fuels harvested from only the most brutally operated and fascistic of Nation States. The final ingredient in the admixture is a single drop of human blood from each beknighted child laborer that sews their shoes and gowns and neck ties together with spool upon spool of silver thread and needles fashioned from the skeletal remains of only the highest-ranking endangered species. One of the more intoxicated who's whoms is releasing a stream of urine into the northeasternmost fountain while his closest comrades giggle with encouragement.

The view overhead is filled with the most gorgeous of pure white cumulus clouds, defined by the muscley outlines of puffy yet smooth-bumped curvature, which move at a deeply relaxed pace across the bright blue sky that anchors them. Not only is it pretty as a picture, it

actually is one—one so artfully crafted by the chief visual artist of the event that it is only remembered to be a facade when the artist maneuvers the conversation towards her achievements. It reminds someone to finally send that massively overdue postcard of such sights.

One of the expectation-defying elements of the gathering is that—despite what each member of the elite might profess to the groveling public about their religious beliefs—they are fully aware that the currently unbelieved-in pantheon of gods of antiquity is just as existent as any other uncontroversially verifiable reality on Earth. For instance, the previously mentioned urine stream was donated to the fountain by none other than Egypt's (literally) radiant solar deity, Ra. Those in the privileged realm of movers 'n' shakers know that Ra is also the god of Cheerleading and one of his many sub-harems is dedicated solely to housing only the choicest of pom pom shaking acrobats.

The Greco-Roman hybrid Bacchus is traditionally the master of either the pre- or post-ceremonial activities. This year he's overseeing both duties and is currently perched above the crowd and fountains alike in a well-groomed vestibule that's sectioned off with walls made of hundreds of several thousand-year-old Bonsai trees. In the half circle sits a towering throne made primarily of marbled, fatty orca meat, covered in gold leaf. His bountiful midsection folds visibly cascade from underneath his clothes and rest upon the grand ivory tusk armrests at his sides. He is blanketed by a flock of winged nymphets hard at work, dividing the labor of numerous nymphet tasks such as fanning the obese god's forehead with their rapidly flapping wings; hovering with a plump wineskin within effortless reach of his hand; whispering a stream of ego-inflating words and purrs and coos into his ears; massaging his temples, neck and back; dropping various otherworldly-delicious foods into his mouth on-command; and, of course, tending to an unending team-fellatio cause below his flowing robes.

Two hovering nympets lift the narrow end of a purely platinum megaphone to wine-soaked Bacchanalian lips. The god calls out for "Silence!" which is instantly obeyed. The cancerously multiplying voices are chopped off into a massive airless hush.

"Welcome once again to celebrate the crowning achievements of the world! The food and libations are, as always, limitless and perfect! This gathering will once again be a pat on the back that is felt most resoundingly upon the elite members brought here to bear its witness but will be felt in ways unknown throughout the whole of Existence! The pre-ceremonial festivities shall continue until my next announcement! Until then the world remains yours, feast upon it with tremendous gusto, and never forget that it is borne as your bounty!"

A roar of left and right hand upon left and right hands, in a marriage to throat-singing, erupts upon the final exclamation and imperceptibly shakes each fountain and causes each blade of flawlessly manicured grass to bow and tremble before their masters.

Crystal goblets go on filling and draining. Self-worth and intoxicating conversation continue to burst through the seams of humility. Desire is perpetually vanquished in each moment in which it arises, and all is well beyond well in the corral of the South Garden.

A bird's eye glimpses the hoarde as a splitting molecule. The individuals it contains move and shake their way to sun-refracting automobiles that softly hum below the dull roar of creaturely shuffling and speech. The vehicles are basically hybrids of chariots and stretch limos, though not powered by the standard horses or combustibles of yesteryear, but by the intricate internal whirring of current technological innovation. Each vessel is sizable enough to comfortably contain half a dozen elites and contains all of the same amenities that were available to them just before entrance, including a full kitchen staff, AI barkeeps, and numerous intoxicating powders, liquids, and smokeable items on virtually limitless demand and of only the



mind-warply purest grade.

Bacchus ascends to the head of the convoy simply upon the strength of his brigade of bewinged slaves. His robes and corpuscular spillage bounce ever so slightly with the sedated grace of a model's hair in a shampoo/conditioner television ad. A simple command of "Onward!" is bellowed through the sparkling megaphone and the high-class transportation event begins to travel northward to the gleaming central hub where the Big Show is to begin.

Below the floating chariots the ground cowers and acknowledges its place. Gravity is made a fool of in some ways, but still maintains its sway, despite the gap of air. The laughter and consumption of the engorged persons within has made the seamless transition, and while spirits still soar, none of the luxury is appreciated, and its possible existence only acknowledged as a narrowed path of means to a singular, self-contained end. They've taken the directives of Bacchus to heart, and if they hadn't done this before they wouldn't be attending this event anyway. In short, nothing has changed but the spatio-temporal location of the pillage. History and culture and geography be damned.

The caravan streamlines its way through a gold-paved path, flanked by eucalyptus trees, weeping willows, statuesque spider-limbed African baobabs, various palms, towering redwoods, a few sub-species of cyprus, and a host of fruit-bearing canopy trees that usually only thrive in South American rainforests. The panopoly of plantlife eventually relinquishes its shade to the bright blue cathedral ceiling euphemized as 'sky,' exposing the nearing polis, the destination of this hovering river of vehicles transporting an elite and sentient cargo. It recalls the post-poppy field bender of travelers approaching The Emerald City in a classic film that needs no further specification. Like everything else in this place, it exudes perfect symmetry but its overall make-up, even to eyes still several miles away, is of a glass-shard finesse that, to appreciative and

observant minds, would cause a vision of countless seconds upon minutes upon hours upon days upon weeks upon months upon years of slow, determined grunt work—the diligent wielding of glass and steel sanding tools; the rigorous, plodding calculations of blueprint drafting efforts; the hoisting of objects weighing ton upon ton; the vast and complex shipping and receiving networks of materials; the intricate snaking of wires and pipes; the artful mixing and laying of cement; each bead of sweat upon each beleaguered brow; the calloused hands and aching backs of repetitive labor; the sheer astounding beauty of collective will and cooperative organization. But to those within the approaching objects that even bother to look upon this epic achievement, all they see is a place where they will be rewarded with shiny objects and thundering applause—merely yet another object they were born to be entitled to.

The vehicles amass within the docking grove that is outlined with cherry blossom trees, drizzled with flowing, diamond-peppered garlands. The treeline's shade bends over a U-shaped freshwater moat, constructed with stainless steel and overlaid with a thick stratum of marble—harvested from the Taj Mahal—and filled with the delicate and robust unfolding of lotus flowers and a veritable rainbow of ornamental Koi—thick, muscular, and healthy—sedately sashaying through the gentle flow of the small-scale Venetian-style canal.

A circular firing squad of the 542 human beings that built this year's ceremonial nexus forms in the northern oasis. Each member uniformly loads and locks their weapons with echoing clicks and clacks, and their stoic faces barely mask the deep, nameless sadness and resignation radiating beneath their surface. The laughing mouths upon pleasure-saturated faces set upon bodies toned by 5,000 dollar per hour Pilates sessions, purchased with so much expendable time and monetary abundance—these finely tuned and fat-eschewing human shapes all begin to spill out of the legion of hovering vehicles. Some stumble with a practiced elegance; some internally

wobble while fighting against the outward effects of their consumption; some walk with taut chins and desirably shaped noses raised in defiance; and all of them feel nothing but a vibrantly percolating and ever-expanding ecstasy in their hearts, minds and loins. The geometrically-sound circle of indentured servants hoist their firearms in concert. Without pronouncement or fanfare of any kind they point their barrels to their left. A stunted thunder occurs. The circle collapses, widening outward with the procession of spilt blood. The actually present audience barely notices and their banal and cardiacly-chilled chit-chat glides along on uninterrupted, a breathless beatless woosh of pure carbon dioxide.

The swarm of elites are comprised of political figures and other State insiders, too. In fact, they dominate the group, with entertainers and utterly useless celebrifluencers taking a backseat, percentagewise. There is certainly no more equity among this group than there is upon the fractitious, divisive Earth below. Tribalistic instincts are as fresh and potent as ever among the Chosen Few. Political games and class mobility are the fuel-evaporating engine driving this ivory tower gala along its due course—little else can motivate those who mindfully crush their opponents with impunity and climb heirarchical ladders in their sleep. There truly is no rest for the wicked. "Vacation" is predominately a time to mentally mobilize and plan new, Quarterly, dog-eat-dog methods for becoming the most buoyant cream of the proverbial crop. It's also a time to perfect cannibalistic skill sets and new, more efficient ways to stroke and paddle through oceans of innocent blood, of course. To think outside of the box requires developing ways to best sharpen and flex the razor-edged claws that slash the box to ribbons. But today, on this calendar-scorching digit, the Chosen Few can at least *appear* to have kicked off their shoes and set aside a standard conniving calculus—this is their surface-level "reward," and believe them, it feels fucking great, despite the fact that the merciless skull-clubbing barbarians within have

never taken a single sick day. Inner-motivations whirl and churn and chirp and rattle around, no matter what the powerful, symmetrically sexy faces try to wordlessly say to the world they (inwardly, unconsciously) call Obstacle.

It's no accident, or product of poor planning, that the group makes an unnecessarily serpentine walk over to and through the circle of lifeless bodies. There is ample bee-line room to walk past it/them, but instead they amble right on through the geometrically pristine killing field. Babbling film stars, Senators, daytraders, coked-up celebutants, UN representatives, and visionary captains of industry all make a point to continue sipping drinks, insufflating primo concoctions, and flirting and networking with fellow belles of the ball as they guffaw at the human husks below, which their spit-shined, dehydrated animal-flesh footwear is oh-so-terribly bothered to climb over. One particularly smug and ruthless Rockstar takes a generous burning hit of an aqua-tinted glossy methamphetimine chunklette, routed through a spotless ruby pipe as he loudly mocks the asymmetry of a corpse's bloody-rivulets, which circumnavigate a mouth that once lovingly smiled at its wife and children every morning of every pain-tinged work-a-day; over the breakfast table, in the marital bed, at the little league game, in the doctor's office while holding the hand of son and daughter, letting them know that's it's all okay, that the wince of the needle brings a greater inoculatory good, that Daddy is right here and that there's no need to worry their pretty little heads about any little thing.

Two doors weighing 1400 lbs apiece swing wide open. Veneers of baroquely carved marble and ivory overlay both sides of the widening entryway. The intricate scrimshaw depicts things like cherubs in adult film embraces, unnatural chimeras of many kinds, situations of Nature's reddened tooth and claw, trails of beasts lined up like matryoshka Russian nesting dolls in a sequence of hunt-kill-consume—the big fish always being devoured by yet even bigger fish,

as it were. *I looked into the face of death and took its mask off*, screams the highest-end Public Announcement system's speakers. The carpet of the massive foyer consists of a series of burgundy velvet ropes—things usually seen as corralling devices at the cineplex or a four- or five-star hotel or restaraunt—all densely packed together in an evenly undulated pattern, resting as the sturdy comforting ground beneath the stab of stiletto heels and the thousand-dollar-per-sole impact of Italian patent leather.

Political Advisor's specialized form of advisement was to focus very closely and analytically on the use of language in various forms of political rhetoric and served similar functions within Marketing and Advertisement firms, the things that seek to obliterate the ideals of free markets and healthy competition that its representatives give hypnotic unchallenged lip service to. Political Advisor first entered college as a very Romantic humanities nepotist. The love of free-form avant garde poetry and daring and inventive long-form prose was his pre-transformational bread and butter. His interests gradually expanded to the more theoretical wing of such endeavors, attracting the pages of more broadly philosophical descents into the nature of language itself. The Psycho-Linguistics of Gender Hermeneutics sounds more important, lofty and impressive than Communications, or the less stuffy Political Science, while trying to, well, frankly, get laid in college. Critical Theory. Deconstructionism. Phenomenology. Foreign names that just looked great on his shelf, some with weird accent marks that somehow sweeten the aesthetic deal as it were. Pretty and enticing words that injected newcomers with a dose of cool before even getting to the first page. He loved that truth was silly puttied within

these brash pronouncements. He loved the solely deflationary theories that told us that perception wasn't truth, but that it was as good as it gets, and that perception is incredibly malleable, easy prey for manipulation.

This whole attachment to ventures of pure linguistic/'critical' theory all sorta crumbled in upon itself and gave way to a brief infatutory period when endeavors with prefixes like 'psych' and 'neuro' barnacled themselves to his collegiate hull. He quickly abandoned this infatutory period with the slightly more hardened sciences as they often caused him to have bad LSD experience style experiences of unadulterated PANIC: the panic often rationalized itself in his highly rattled mind in the form of focusing in the worst way upon the fact that his mind was mere neuronal chaos and his body a sloppily-evolved house for such neuronal chaos, which he could no longer recognize as being his "own," and then the entire world and all possible worlds then transformed into a wholly heart-stoppingly unreal/meaningless hell-scape that he could never feel even remotely okay with existing within, no matter what position or preoccupation. The sensation of wanting to burst out of his skin became more than mere poetic cliché, and the sense that (one of his favorite avant-garde authors once very accurately described as) every atom of his body felt heightenedly nauseated yet unable to vomit into some kind of catharsis. This sensation would take hold of him by the lapels, first, and then ratchet up to the throat and attendant windpipe and absolutely overwhelm him to the point of crossing the line between suicidal ideation and suicidal plotting.

Throughout all of this he was largely uninterested in politics or commerce or the grand but dull abstractions of economics, all until his gradual disillusionment with high art literary fiction and arm-chair-bound ponder-sessions reached a point of singularity and then, rather suddenly it seemed, collapsed in a rapidfire sequence of epiphanies about the direction this was

all taking him, causing him to discover—in a limbo period of post-escape from the academic tediousness and triviality that he'd come to see his life subsumed by—that he took the deepest pleasure in witnessing the powers of his will and influence unfold upon the widest stage he could conceive of tapping into: the consumer-based economy and the political architecture that hoists it. This newfound pleasure also was one of the main mechanisms releasing him from THE PANIC (along with heavy doses of benzodiazepines and anti-depressants). One of his first anti-depressants (escitalopram) has many brandnames but in Brazil it actually goes by the darkly comedic brandname of Exodus.

This lead him to incrementally weave his way into the upper echelon of unfathomably powerful institutions—from think tanks to political offices, from lobbying firms to financial sector royalty—where he threaded the needle for clients by carefully choosing words within advertisements, made successful leaps of discovery in the science of psychologically manipulating children (post-language-acquisition) from ages 3-10 into almost DNA-penetrating forms of unconscious brand loyalty and high marks in worldview formation. The natural development into the political advisor becoming Political Advisor gave him an even more heightened sense of willfully executed power and self-worth and all aided in the largely unconscious and continual slaying and reslaying of his own dislocated throb of death-anxiety. He'd produce an erection when his choice of terminology or turn of phrase was uttered on the Networks and would often successfully 'use' it if his mark of influence was being repeated frequently enough through the talking-points cloning-sequence often called 'News.'

This fattened tick of a will of his is currently focused upon the nasal ingestion of a series of lines of cocaine layed out in the shape of the word 'FAMILY.' He's positioned away from the bulk of the crowd in a lavatory enclosed in what, to non-Elites, would look like a beautiful

vacation villa where only a person with more digits on their weekly paycheck than commoners would see in a lifetime could ever possibly live. On these ceremonial grounds these apparent villas are strictly used as personal bathrooms, one entrant at a time. 'FAMILY' has now entirely broken the blood-brain barrier and Political Advisor—former theoretical linguist and idealistic artiste in-the-making—is simply (and actually) vibrating with delight; every fibre of his being is simultaneously angelically singing with cloud-parting force and orgasmically moaning with a pleasurable warmth generated by breath and soundwaves.

The ticker tape unspools within, unleashing an inner-narrative, lyrically attaching floods of words and wordlike sensations to the experience of gazing into his own likeness in the mirror, exiting the bathroom, and ambling back to the bustling pile of sentient communication and social glomming, which he was now far more enthusiastic about doing, or so he thought to himself as he realized his legs were just moving him out of the door.

A flock of *Coturnix delegorguei*. The Harlequin Quail. Some of them exacerbate the molting process by dipping their beaks with a gentle-yet-purposeful timidity into the Koi-filled industrially efficient border-waters. They then crank their graceful vertibrate columns and violently nip each delicate, unsmoothable feather at its nerveless bud. The grooming process pleases the aristocratic throngs in a bizarrely counter-intuitive way. They glimpse the animality, which mostly tends to make their neural correlates shudder with a primal fear that runs rampant through the deeper reptilian reaches of their unshakeable physicalist make-up—but at the same time they feel something that a more empathetically-sufficient human mind would call "kinship" or "solidarity" or what more mystically-prone folks would describe as "ineffable," "spiritual" or "transcendent," among many other terms.

This unconscious pantheistic bliss manifests itself as both a pre-homosapien fear and a



contemporary style of ecstasy so overwhelming that it feels quasi-nauseatingly powerful—it plunges so far beneath their conceptions of the bottomline that it becomes ungraspable by words, or the ceaseless march of internal symbolic logic, which sits gurulike at the margins of their mind's eye. In short, they've run into states that only carefully and slowly rehearsed professional bliss-chasing contemplatives are able to handle with willful, fractionally-mobilized, step-by-step preparation via extended fasts and cave-/forest-dwelling jags of pure isolation, where their only companions are German-Expressionistic stalagmites/stalagtites, and the occasional squeaking cacophany of echolocating bewinged creatures—fangs and mammalian skulls entrap a world of subjectivity just as impetrable as any reasonably likely bearer of sentient mental content, forever locked away from the flickering kiss of the strained reaches of language, behavior and even the heroic attempts of magnetic-resonance probing apparati. The digambara monk, if rendered as wordless symbol, would look like a gigantic irradiated human brain, surrounded by cartoonish sun-spokes, with wire-thin emaciated limbs jutting out from its dense musculature.

Political Advisor continues to unspool in a writerly, wildly intoxicated reverie: *He sees a pair of eyes roll upwards beneath the fine tremor of lids as he suddenly realizes his own eyes are doing the same. The mind is a mirror. Smooth surface for laying out cocaine. I choose it because I can't get enough of my own reflection. He chose it because he can't get enough of his own reflection. I am the omniscient third-person, even with regard to myself, he thinks. Himself, I think. His eyes drift upwards beneath lids aflutter and he thinks of those butterfly kisses. The first grade. The playground. The relief of recess. She pinned him down. They simply called the game Girls Chase the Boys. God, I loved that game. He preferred it to the one where he had to be the chaser. Or maybe I didn't? Does that have any bearing on my current proclivities? He accepts the unwilling sense-memory upon his tingling cheek. His lens moves evermore inward. The lash's*

*fanning has slowed. One of her lid's downward brush strokes makes contact with his own upward one, and these thin curves collide and briefly tangle in a moment that went wholly unnoticed until this blownout wildly associative storm of thoughts hum and bzzz their way to the subject of first becoming conscious of the feeling of affection, which was, in retrospect, probably accompanied the purest subliminal ache of stirring loins—pure because I wasn't conscious of it at the time—I simply felt an incredible completeness, a blissful contentment, a shock to the system as it were. I want to hang onto this bliss forever. He thinks that he wants to feel bliss forever. He cannot envision any other way.*

Another 'FAMILY' is moved from the table to his innards where it will shimmer, sparkle, sputter and dissipate, *like All Things*, he thinks.

Spent two days a week shoving rather pricey quantities of oft-jagged euphoria up their/my snout, the nearest conduit to the terrible/beautiful master, the hub of experience, the center of narrative gravity, all transformed into a polis of sheer pleasure, pumping its flood 'round itself. The radiant briefly blinding photoflashbursts of a crackling and snapping electrical whitehothead trumpeted its silent blaring in one set of ears alone. The clearblue afternoon visionmemory of childhood, filling with the unified dart 'n' glide of a school of novelty bubbles, piscine-swimming as ocular candy, good enough to eat and visually revel in. Bubbles become sentient lightbulbs as the sky dims. It's all surreal fireflies and childhood bliss converging with the just-so summer heat of an eternal July 4th, roiling carefree in the head.

The featherless bipeds are so pleased with every last millimeter of their lives and of their currently manipulated bloodstreams and peturbed nervous systems that they begin violently retching upon themselves, splattering the pristine moat and the exotic avianswarm that charges in

tight circles around their weakening knees, scavenging for regurgitated treasures. A beak spears a half-digested chunk of sashimi, glazed with choice bubbly, and the rarest, most potent Absinthe in the known universe. Tosses the bounty half an inch in the air, knocks its head back, gullet agape and slightly atremble in anticipation, the gift plunges into the contracting musculature of the gulp. The triumph over desire burns swift and bright and then extinguishes with a shudder and fizz, instantly recurring and giving rise to stronger gravitational pull, where Want and Need converge as the frenzied mirage of craving. Yielding to compulsive consumption is a virtue and the atmosphere at these Form Awards is thick with such virtuous currents. *I tried to pay attention, but attention paid me*, evaporates off the subwoofer.

*Parasparopagraho Jivanam* [tr. *Souls render service to one another* or *All life is bound together by mutual support and interdependence*] is crudely painted on the Milanese obsidian wall with a parallel sheet of water falling in front of it—the thin crystal-clear movement of simple chemistry and physics on a recycleable track, doing unnoticed magic tricks in the corner for the self-appointed apex of the biosphere. Some guests find themselves puzzling for a moment over whether or not the graffiti was applied while the water was falling or not. It should be mentioned that the Jainist motto is surrounded by a red circle and impaled with a familiar diagonal slash.

While it was being applied earlier Lawyer remarked to the 'artist' that the 'paint' might have to be summoned as genetic evidence in a high-profile case and/or low-profile backroom exchange as leverage. Lawyer sets down the glass on the bookcase, casually pretends to be casually interested in the books, looking like she's looking them over intently, all the while simply focused on appearing interested. A few drinks later she would call this 'Zen bliss' or some other such trite and penniless designation. Narrowing focus down to fleeting moments of

trancelike or catonic egolessness. In a total act of randomness--designed to look solidly deliberate--she swipes *L'Agent Immédiat du Movement Vital Dévoilé dans sa Nature et dans son Mode d'Action chez les Végétaux et chez les Animaux* [tr. *The immediate agent of living movement, its nature and mode of action revealed in plants and animals*] from the shelf. The 'artist' is pretty absorbed in dabbing his childlike scrawl of Eastern esoterica, and he's in a rush to finish before the waterfalls start up and before the final stages of coagulation set in. *Too much money ain't enough money*, says the music. Obsidian has also been used to make weapons and to make scalpels. And, as it turns out, 'larva' is actually Latin for 'ghost.' She holds leatherbound descriptions of osmosis and respiration. Her drink beads up on both sides of the glass. Her lungs collapse and expand in an orderly fashion, most of the time. If pressed, she'd describe the book's aged cover as looking like those rainbowish reflections of spilt gasoline.

Lawyer picks up her glass and, at a snail's pace, tilts her head back, slowly finishing off the potent looking gobletful of a cutting-edge liquid recently dreamt up in a prestigious lab. The long and short is that it has the viscosity and clarity of plain ol' filtered drinking water, but it moves like molasses, but not quite like molasses—more like slow motion footage of regular water being poured. A strange concoction, indeed, but highly desirable for those in the know. And all a part of the current fad of the month amongst the top tier: sexualizing patience. Eroticizing waiting in line for something one doesn't even really want; fetishizing traffic jams and barely missed cabs and elevators. A fractitious sect amongst them think that it's here to stay, everybody else knows it'll be gone in a month—just like the whole deathbed coitus trend of 'yesterday' that's best forgotten. The liquid also, of course, has psychoactive qualities which, like its macroscopic qualities, are rather unique. Essentially, this compound provides the user with the ability to feel however they want to feel. It's reportedly a liquid proof for free will, or at least it is

to the user while they experience the effects and report them while under its libertarian sway. Described, overwhelmingly often, as 'euphoria' and an almost alarming sense of freedom of will. Thoughts didn't simply arise, they were witnessed as being wrenched and raised from nothing, but completely by the command of the thinker. Skepticism abound about this substance, but its usage has been steadily spreading in the short amount of time since its etiological chemist got the parts of its sum just-so and brought it into the world.

On a gondola, afloat upon the indoor section of a canal wide enough to comfortably hold at least four parallel gondola lanes, René Joachim-Henri withdraws the business end of a syringe from the business end of his most recent paramour, Malupute Pangara. Her hair is raven feathers painstakingly cut with surgical artistry into complex layers of severe angles. Unnaturally skyblue irises are motes surrounding the voids. Pupils really *are* just holes in the eyes—two-way channels of empty space. The practiced playful-seductress facial display morphs into one of genuine enjoyment—an expression that all her best acting skills would be powerless to cover up if that were somehow required of her in this post-IV period. René is in a similar state that manifests itself, at first, as a look of deep concentration but quickly fizzles away into a loose unfixed gaze and a slackened jaw that sways gently with the subject's inner breeze. He joins his companion on the floor of the vessel. Their lower limbs accidentally entwine. Both gaze up at the passing portraits on the ceiling above, illuminated by crystalline bulbs that mutate at a glacial pace. Bosch, Goya, Harry Siddons Mowbray, Cassett, Albert Pinkham Ryder. Sometimes long patches of night sky artifice intervened. The occasional Magritte, Dali or Bacon interjects as well. A wordless, barely audible moan seems to be perspiring from them, hovering just above the skin and combining into a singular barely-there murmur.

They drift by a quietly unnerving tableaux and fail to witness any of it. A shirtless Senate Majority Leader genuflecting on both knees towards nothing in particular—ensconced in a velvet-lined alcove. He slurs a few commands and suddenly has an inverted dog dollar hooked around his neck, its spikes pressing into his burntcarrotcolored skin. He's bent above an oversize goblet filled with the actual blood, sweat and tears of local constituents. He thinks about his mother teaching him how to safely cross the street—the importance of looking both ways. He thinks of his father showing him how to tie a proper knot. Several childhood flashes tighten his throat. He's laughing and crying in more or less equal measure. More laughter than tears, in omniscient retrospect. His waste joins theirs. He collapses with a thud and cathartically sighs—post-automanipulated utmost. His skull collides with the goblet, knocking it sideways to the marble floor where it shatters and sends the brutal liquid symbolism into a broken flight pattern then right back down to the splintered mess.

The gondola hovers by, herse-like. Two bodies sag as its cargo. What distinguishes them from corpses exactly? This is a question left hanging like moldy half-dried linens for the so-called experts to tend to. Meanwhile, they're essentially lost to the breeze—technically active MRIs be damned.

Political Advisor is paralytically lodged in a painfully fleeting moment of All Is Well, while somehow still glimpsing through this sense at a mirror which bounces back his undeniable Despair. A large part of his mind chatters blissfully. Confident and prurient urges shlep along the inward timeline with grace. Yet, some charcoal cumuli manages to stroke and crawl through the entire deal—sometimes buried in the background and sometimes held, horrifyingly, at the fore, having broken through the chaotic muck that he's somehow managed to stir (and that has been

stirred without consent) around the protective moat that's flowing strong with denial and enablingness and textbook malfunction.

The nostril slurps more. Again. And again. With knowing. With resignation. With knowing about the knowing about the knowing about the knowing of the resignation *and* knowing about the knowing about the knowing of the resignation. The most recent nasal transgression re-alerts him to the first kiss nostalgia. Her eyelashes. Her scent. Their mutual irretrievable innocence. The terror of memory. 'The Terror of History' as he'd have pinned it down in his accidentally pretentious phase. *A young twentysomething PA is slumped over in a dive bar at noon, wondering, hazily, what he's done with his life, what Life has done with Life, and so on. In a sad crumple he's throned upon the shitter. He digs into a pocket and the hand finds a doable writing utensil. He's painfully aware of the Irish liquid melodrama pumping through his veins. He rolls with it. He pops the cap off the thing and drawls on the wall to his animalistic-bowel-voiding right: THE TERROR OF HISTORY. He feels slightly vindicated. He slowly taps out a segment of Columbia's economy upon his dead library card from yesterwhenever. He feels the universe align with this decision. He sucks it up, olfactory-like. He cares not. He cares. Not. The lack of something never seemed so pregnant with somethingness. So he thinks.*

The writer's bird's-eye view intrudes. It observes the circulatory system in which people star as blood cells in a fast-paced plasma parade through barely pinchable veiny avenues. Blood too spritely to coagulate. It all is unnaturally zoomed in upon as the central P of the View—the heart of the heart of the heart. Pumping hard while bitching ceaselessly about its future and inevitable dying.

The crowd zips toward the Main Hall with the willessness of iron shavings toward the magnet. Each hushed voice layers upon hushed voice to create (hand clutched to wet clay) the relaxing-though-unnerving white noise roar of a theater before the curtains ascends. The collective hummmmmmmmmmm is beside itself. Tuxedos and gowns bounce off of one another like uncertain particles.

Deeper down, a man confesses enormous salacious transgressions to his legally bound pair-bonder. A forelorn chaser of thick wallets tells her husband that she's "Sorry." A triplet of go-getters stroke each other's wrists and thighs and cheekbones and temples while they really believe that—in their severely compromised states—they're being "more real" with one another than they've ever been with anyone. 3,4-methylenedioxy-N-methylamphetamine. A pathetic Presidential candidate has his ankle punctured in order to harvest a few drops of blood, which are then used as ink to sign a solidly irrepeprable contract—one further tightening their binds with a silently-partnered corporate entity and/or shadowed government agency. These bedfellows not only are *not* strange, they squeal with animalistic delight and drone on with professions of deep romantic devotion in the soft cage of the marital sleeping quarters.

Unlike the more pedestrian versions of these back-patting ceremonies, these here Form Awards don't begin with throwaways like "Best Technical Application of Make-Up" or "Best Key Grip's Assistant's Catering Crew Management" or "Best Polisher of Already-Acquired Nobel Prizes"—no, these Form Awards take each and every nominee and winner utmost seriously, no matter what category. Despite the cut-throat nature of these Awards, so many, many, many facets of Life are nominated and awarded that it becomes impossible to play the same heirarchical games that might be intrinsic to other such Earth-bound displays.

The square-jawed, elegantly bestubbed photosession-in-motion conquers the stage. He



anchors some sort of gem upon his left arm, all while keeping him locked tight within the masculine position of the right side of the camera's/viewer's frame. The Gem, it speaks, slightly lessening the dog-whistle sounds emanating from its mid-section: "Tonight, we're here to honor nearly everything!" Hands flapping together on a large scale while mouths hang open and reflexively draw out dumb mindless sound. Engorged grins cause muggings for the artificial sight and memory of the lens.

The lips smear outward into a plump smile, then retract to expose columns of calcinated symmetry known as "teeth," then rise and fall away from each other, exposing a bud-bespeckled tongue and a gullet-void, open-by-close-by-open-by-close.

"We enter these Form Awards as babes within the woods!" Hands meet hands upon hands meeting hands. A familiar yet never-before-heard sound is transferred.

"We're proud to kick off this exceptional event with the "Best Avian Display of Communicative Intelligence While Hunting a Reknowned Prey." Again, the crowd roars with its palms.

A bird of some sort swoops in from the rafters and snatches up the targeted object into its genetically-commanded grip.

The crowd makes the noise that crowds make. An incredible fireworks display is pinned to the screen. A commercial break butts in, as it should. Conscious beings are "invited" to common cause with a multi-national business interest. Individual slices of pre-cut, pre-wrapped molten milk are played up. Family vacation destinations are [wink-and-nudge] suggested. Personally-consumptive units of well-heated and well-salted masses of carbohydrates are hawked as just what the viewer might find enjoyable as an accompanying snack food alongside their daily hypno-therapy sessions—nay—entertainment blocks of time—nay, 'free time.'

Classic cinema is repeatedly raped and reproduced via horrid mutations via trailers for the latest Fri/Sat escapism. Mister Be-Would-President smiles an obvious and calculated-to-be-obvious-but-not-too-obvious mischievous grin at the camera for the benefit of some voting block and/or donating-enterprise.

A mass murder occurs during the “Most Unique and Genius Artist” segment, though no one really notices beyond the crows and vultures who pick the freeze frame clean, down to the skeletal remains. There are some tufts of depressive egos left wafting in the air that cannot be gripped by beaks or talons alone.

Now, returning from our break, we take a peek at the “Most Diligent Earthworm” award. To no one’s surprise, #2987539384 has dominated the votes and slunk their way up to the stage. A soundless ‘Thank God, Etc’ is smudged into the unbreathed air.

“Most Crystal Clear and Shrieking Megaphone” has been tossed aside by “Most Heroin-Addicted Megaphonist,” creating what will surely be next year’s “Most Deafening Megaphone Feedback Loop,” giving it a damning head-start on the competition.

“Meta-Film” is swept away by “Meta-meta-film” and a director with tight curls upon the dome is shoved up upon the stage, against his will, by a battalion of tight-curved clones that are only distinguished from the original by the dead-flesh beige strapped to their feet. The feet shuffle, scrape and glide upon the ill-begotten marble floor, then hush slightly when they meet the burgundy-colored rope that defines the flat dimension below, closest to the obscenity known as ‘the stage.’

“Good evening,” belches the voice.

“Let me just say that I’m a fucking genius and that this awards ceremony is terrifyingly worthless.”

Hisssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssss, go the others.

“I find myself here, against all better instincts, and only willing to dive away from the script because of a suicidal wish. I want to be taken out. I no longer feel any drive or sense of any intrinsic worth in what I do. My art can only shit carbon copy clones at this point. Take me now, dear gods. Take me now!”

The inductee is vaporized. Hands remain clapping as if to the same beat as before.

A break is summoned. Amber waves of grain take root. They sway in an unconsciously sexy manner, as if breathed upon by mythical founding fathers themselves. A voice cuts in. The voice makes pleas of goodwill and a compassion custom-built for what is custom-built to sound as if it’s speaking directly to you, the dear autonomous wallet-keeper. A new voice takes over, it shimmies forth in parallel to a stream of well-cut moving images—beading water on a glass, fan-waving people from the Far East, jets both ascending and unleashing landing gear, the pristine skylines of powerful economic hubs, laundry spinning, iced tea pouring, kids dropped out of glimmering SUVs and shuffled into brand new red brick buildings filled with ivory-smiled adults. Donate, goddammit. Donate. New York, London, Tokyo. The trio shudders and sighs, post-orgiastically, all at once, and then rake in the immense spoils with attuned, gluttonously relaxed enthusiasm.

A pencil-thin intellectual-type removes airspace from right behind the lectern with an Amazonian-fit beaut grasping his skeletal arm. He shoves his spectacles a fraction of an inch back upward, swipes a colony of perspiratory beads from his visage, coughs wetly, twice, then says, “Dearest Overseerers, it shall please you to know that the “Most Well-Organized Hive-Mind of Orcas” award is being granted to a group that truly deserves it. The winner is...”

It's truly unnerving the way in which human female yelps of coital ecstasy often sound almost indistinguishable from shrieks of murder or rape or the reactionary stem-tips of extreme joy, startled surprise or fear; how male grunts of penetrational labor and the passionate chase towards 'a tiny death' (as the French aptly name it) often closely mimic the snorts, huffs 'n'puffs of breath-catching exertion in sport, exercise, and heavy-lifting, the muscle-wearing swing of hammers and axes, the carriage of hefty items in betrembled arm-crooks, the struggle of raising dumbbells, or the razing of one's opponents with knotted fists, etc.

Discoloration sacs flank the bottoms of X's eyes. Three perfect creases denoting agedness and stress/sleeplessness help form the sub-ocular mise-en-scene. This POV pulls back slowly, revealing a sadly knowing and stoic face. Its lips pull apart and begin to hold and release aural content like a begrudging boy allowing its favored animal, once held in convalescing captivity, back into its natural habitat. A sodium-rich line forms along its cheek and profound homosapien emotion is radiated, then gripped, then plunged deep into the chests of those who view these visual stimuli manifest upon their electronic devices of various shapes and high or higher definitions.