

Title _Shenanigan Balderdash & Co_____

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Abstract

The story takes place in Marseilles, France, the characters are Ivan, the narrator, Nanaqui, the zombie-ghost of the poet Antonin Artaud, and Sarah, a witch.

Synopsis

pages 2-5 prologue, sort of an introduction to Marseilles and the setting of the action in general

Pages 6-7 dialogue between the zombie-poet and the narrator

pages 8-9 the zombie-poet is out in the streets wandering and the narrator in his apartment

pages 10-11 dialogue between the witch and the narrator

pages 12-15 narrator pondering and dialogue with the zombie-poet

pages 16-17 dialogue between the zombie-poet and the narrator

pages 18-19 dialogue between the witch and the narrator

pages 20-23 narrator thinking

pages 24-27 they want to play soccer with zombie's head, they cut it off, play soccer with it

pages 28-30 they want to paste the head back on the zombie so they go out of town for this

pages 31-32 dialogue between the witch and the narrator

pages 33-35 narrator thinking pages

36-37 the narrator and the witch go to the beach at Cassis near Marseilles

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Shenanigans Balderdash & Co

Ivan de Monbrison

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The world so easy to fight seemed so easy... I think it is Ginsberg on Apollinaire's grave who wrote these lines, back in another era, another world from now. Why am I thinking about this line today? Once again back in good old Marseilles after all these years of dying, craving, loneliness (I love to indulge into self-pity).

Oh my God! It all seems so unreal now to me, those past years, so remote and close by at the same time. But we have bled my friends! We have been betrayed, we have turned into other human beings than the ones we were before going through this ordeal. That is why we must redeem, pray for us Lord of forgive us cause we have sinned. We have parted and we have lied and we have been bad boys and girls (we ought to get spanked).

But who does really give a fuck about this shit, tell me?

Well, who would come to us with open hands like on a cross and bleeding palms and say I forgive you? You think that I am gonna believe this crap?

I can't even start to tell you how lonely I am down here, like you maybe? From here, actually, you don't seem really to care to me.

I can't blame you for that.

I don't really care myself actually, but bless me today, will you? Please, bless me before I die for good, I pray you, cause I don't wanna leave without your pardon...

We have been stranded alone in Marseilles, in this forlorn place full of migrants, beggars, madmen for so many years, in Marseilles we have forgotten our condition, our identity, we have ourselves been led astray, wandering in blazing summer streets with only shadows to walk with us.

Only shadows to speak with.

My God, how did I do this, how did it end up in such a disaster?

How did I came to spend such a long time alone, secluded under the roof of this old building in tiny attic turned into apartment, in tiny shit-hole with only the white gulls, the swifts and the doves for companions?

Marseilles, stranded city on the imaginary tip of the World somehow, scorching place, scorching people.

I can't tell you, I can't start to tell you what it feels like to be there alone, under the roof of a crumbling 19th century building in downtown Marseilles, with the sea always not far away and the living dead Nanaqui, the very ghost of Antonin Artaud the poet, waiting for me to show up there, on the shore of the fabled bay of Cassis. A crowded resort place that is, packed in the summertime by tourists in bathing suits, with cameras hanging on their necks. Maybe I will drag there my own reckless self later on, just to kill the day, one more day to pass in the ever-lasting summer of Marseilles.

I can only hear the cries of the merry the swifts, high in the sky, their wings barely touching the rare clouds of early morning right after dawn. I would like at least once, if I could, to stand up and reach out to those magic birds, which never touch the ground in their lifetime and always belong only to the sky, in order to touch them,

before I die.

But there is the day of our un-death.

At the turning of the last hour, by the graveyard, Nanaqui the living-dead facing the sea and watching sand thrown in the wind with his hand being blown away. Nanaqui the blind, Nanaqui the prophet, the poet, this other self than us, always treading the thin line of the horizon without ever falling on the other side, in this other world than ours.

The seagulls eating dead rats in the street remind him of his mother.

What a strange thinking that is. But, how not to think about one's past without feeling more stuck, deeper still, in unreal future not yet happened but still so predictable. There is the temptation to foresee the future with the help of the past, and therefore to feel that future and past are only one in the end, obviously. Like this long and never ending agony of pitiful mankind still stuck in its cradle after 1000000 years or so of an evolution that is going faster and faster as it is getting near its END. Not even you Nanaqui did not see it coming nor any other living dead in town.

We shall all of us walk lightly at the last hour an invisible line first traced in our heads, then made visible on the ground. A thin line between birth and death, shade and light, within the blinking of an eye, or the flapping of the wing of this very flight of a swift going in circles, lost, at that very moment, above my head.

Then, to un-die, once again and for good, and to get erased forever, and who knows, maybe even saved at the very same time, within the winking of an eye.

We have sewed our shadows together as to form a huge canvas, but a dark canvas on which we could paint in white letters our un-death, letters that would take the shape of the world and start it again altogether, but I can't remember why you came here and what you were actually looking for when you started to dig in my head. Were you looking for gold, for thoughts, for everlasting death? Where you just trying to put some seeds there to see what would spring out of them?

We walk two by two me and Nanaqui, my twin, my shadow in Death, the thin line of the horizon always scared to fall on the other side, always scared to become someone else in spite of us.

Someone actually just fell off of a building and I could hear the long shriek of his or her howling and I could picture the body falling slowly from the balcony down to the concrete of the street below, he or she watching oneself falling slowly to the certainty of death like crazy images of those bodies falling down on 9/11 from those towers, and the sound that they made, the big thump when hitting the ground, the body must have exploded from the inside, the body torn to pieces from the inside, all the organs red open spilling blood like mouths inside, eating the man or the woman alive in his or her instant agony.

Whereas, as I went to climb up to the roof this morning to fix it, in downtown old fucked-up Marseilles with just the gulls and doves for company, watching the endless motion of tiled roofs around me like waves, I could very well figure out this falling and this howling not so far away, until it came to me that it was not a living person who had just fell somewhere from a building, but Nanaqui my brother, the un-dead, trying to commit suicide for one more time with no avail, as he can never never really die, in the end.

Something yet is so weird inside your head.

Walking over and over the thin line of the horizon, watching the gulls, the dead men with their mouths filled with lobsters and angles, no one else would have seen it all but us, out there on the lookout; watching sea and mermaids, men, dead and alive, we have almost forgotten who we really were, and who's blood has indeed been sieving through the palms of our hands from the first day of our crucifixion.

It is you who *walked between the violet and the violet*, you watching *the eternal hour* sink down in the sea as some lost vessel filled up to the brim with gravel. You can clearly see the land as it walks down the beach into the sea and then disappears with bits of roofs her or there emerging out of the waves.

You can still hear the sound of the voice of the dead man that you knew so well and who has forgotten you in the meantime and who has forsaken you too, as you stand now, stranded alone for the rest of your miserable life on this scrap of land, fancying what a bounty life could very well have been for you, if you had been born from another womb.

- Well, everyone wants more or less to come from another womb, Ivan, this is a darn silly thing to say!
- Nanaqui you’ve been dead for such a long time yourself that you must have lost touch with how it really feels to be alive.
- How does it feel then?
- It’s rotten down the core my friend!
- You’re over-reacting as you always do Ivan! Give me a break your life is not THAT bad, after all.
- I have no friends.
- It’s because you don’t want to.
- I have no girlfriend.
- It’s because you’re too neurotic.
- Like what?
- Like you make these silly sounds with your mouth, sucking in your saliva.
- It’s because I am anxious.
- Why are you anxious?
- I am afraid to die, I guess.
- Well, I am dead, and I can tell you that it is not as bad you might think it is.
- You say that because you are famous, you are a famous dead poet.
- First of all I am not so famous...
- Give me a break!
- Ok, ok, I am sort of famous...
- No you are not sort of famous, you are plain real famous, many people know your name in France.
- Yes, but scholars, professors, poets, nothing really alive down here.
- What would be someone really alive for you?
- Young chicks!
- Here we are again! Obsessed with sex, even though you are dead, you never change...He never changes!
- Nothing prevents a zombie from being sex obsessed.
- I know, it’s not illegal yet, but what do you want to get out of this sex drive? You can’t actually feel anything anymore, your senses are numb, your nerves are dead.
- Well, it’s sentimental, you see I am a big sentimental.
- A what!!!?? Hahahahahaha !!!!
- Close your mouth you are gonna eat a fly on top of sucking in your saliva.
- Well, according to your writing, I did not see you as anything close to romantic.
- I didn’t say romantic, I said sentimental.
- It is more or less the same thing.
- No, it is not, you’re English could be improved my friend.
- So, you are sentimental, but dead, and I am alive but single!!! This is insane. You are totally nuts, are you aware of that?
- Well, I did not do it on purpose.
- Did what?
- Become crazy.
- So how did it happen?

- I don't remember well, I was on a ship coming back from Mexico where I visited the Tarahumaras, I had spend a lot of time chewing Peyotl, some magical plant which brings you to another state of consciousness.
- Like heroin?
- Much more romantic than heroin my friend...but you are too young... Then after that, I came back to Europe and decided to go to Ireland. I fucked up totally in Dublin where I was put under arrest. So, at some point I only started to speak in Greek, and I refused to give my real name, then I was sent to various asylums before and during WWII, it was at this time that they gave my electroshock therapy.
- Not much fun...Mmmhh...
- No, I lost my teeth and aged twenty years in a short period of time. That is why I became sentimental.
- But sentimental about what if it is not romanticism?
- About nothing, about myself I guess.
- I am glad that you are a zombie.
- Why?
- If you were a real human being I would have been worried for your mental health, but according to what you just said, there is nothing to worry about, you are insane, and you are dead, so it comes out sort of even at the end.
- That is a good way to sum up my situation. But you, Ivan, alive but single with no friends...I pity you. Do you masturbate sometimes?
- It's not the issue now, and it's private.
- I did not want to intrude, I just wanted to see if I could help you out by...
- Drop the subject!!
- Ok, ok, don't be so sensitive, you are such a sissy.
- I am not.
- You must be a repressed gay.
- You said it before in another book.
- Well, I was right then, look how jittery you get when I bring out the subject.
- Don't you have something else to do now, beside getting on my nerves?
- Well I could go and fix my grave, after all the recent heavy rain it's kind of in a bad shape.
- Please do, I'll meet you by the harbor later.
- All right, see you then Ivan.

And the queer figure of the zombie starts to walk down the path from where they were standing, not far from the sea, never too far from the sea, and then vanishes into the dark.

As he starts walking by himself after leaving Ivan, in the stifling heat of Marseilles all this conversation seemed just baloney to the poet, Nanaqui, indeed the greatest poet of all (he feels proud about it).

– Me! Now back from the dead to address the World!

He wanders for sometimes and almost gets lost with his raving and ranting in the streets of the old city. Those are filled as usual with vagrants, poor fuckers, fat prostitutes, poor Arabs, gulls eating dead rats and other kinds of outcasts that one can expect to find in such bleak places. He can always hear yet, almost like following him, but far, high in the sky, the cries of the swifts flying over his head.

He stops by to eat an ice-cream. Then squats by a decrepit wall with a dog urine smell. Then mutters.

Les âmes faites pour l'invisible.

“The souls made for the invisible”. Did I write that? Did I say it one day in my previous life?

The sky is so bright that it is almost white over his head. He reaches for his hair pulls at it and part of it comes out in his hand, he throws it away still holding the ice-cream cone with the other one. Soon he is done with it, as he can feel the coolness of the ice melting inside his guts.

He suddenly springs back on his feet and finds his way to the old harbor of Marseilles.

Ivan is trapped in his apartment, soliloquizing.

Someone is walking down the corridor, right behind me, I turn around, and I not even see the shape of the living dead walking over his own shadow, back and forth trampling his own body in an attempt to bury it deeper down in the ground.

You were never really born out of this actually, you, Bukowski, Kerouac, Bacon, shapes and shadows, figures and poetry, images, places, paintings, all mingled up together into a ball that one would throw down a bowling alley. Oh, my God, I can hear the seagull cry on the roof or is it some severed head hanging to a lamppost in the street still screaming for help ? (I won't go out there cause it really scares the shit out of me).

Let's go though to buy a canvas to paint this story rather than write it on paper, it would be so much simpler, and English is still such a weird language to me.

Someone has cast a curse on the hero of this story so that he is slowly turning into a dog, and which will soon run away in the moors to chase Sarah the witch (maybe she is the one who beheaded the man down the street some times ago before hanging his head to a post?). Sarah the witch is indeed the black Virgin of Marseilles! The one who's statue is carried out on shoulders before dawn once a year, each spring, through the city of Marseilles up to the Saint-Victor abbey, which stands erect with its own belfries overlooking the harbor, as this procession has been going throughout all the centuries since Medieval Age (and before that even, it was already a holy place in the time where the city was occupied by the Romans).

– Someone is howling in my head right now, is that you Sarah?

– No, Ivan, it's not me.

– I love you Sarah.

– No, you don't, Ivan, you love the character bearing my name in this story, but not the real me.

– I love both of them, the character, and you in flesh and blood.

– No, you've made up the whole thing, anyway I am a witch I can't love anyone, I am only good at casting spells and cursing.

– This is so frustrating.

– Forget it! Where is Nanaqui?

– He just went to Noailles to get some food at the open market up there.

– I hope that he will bring me something too, I am starving...It is funny, I thought that zombies did not really need to eat.

– He does not, but he is not an orthodox zombie too.

– Maybe it comes from the electroshocks they gave him at the asylum in Rodez when he was still alive.

– He likes dead rats too like the herring gulls of Marseilles, you know, the ones that they call "Les Gabians" here.

– You mean those strange gulls which rule over the city roofs, the one which actually embody the dead souls of all the dead people of Marseilles.

– Yes, these huge and white birds that everyone is scared of and which would kick the shit out of any gulls in Hitchcock's movie "The Birds".

– That's a good movie.

– I think it has aged, and this idea of the birds attacking the people of a small town is preposterous.

– It is a symbol, you moron.

– I don't know, I think Hitchcock was a freak.

– You are a freak too Ivan.

– Hold on, I am only trying to survive down here, and on top of it as I am sexually frustrated I could use it as some sort of an excuse here.

– You don't think that Hitchcock was sexually repressed too? I think he was worse than you.

– It can't be worse than me, and beside this you refuse to help me out.

– Like what? Like blowing you for instance?

– That would be a darn good idea!

– Not even in dreams.

– If I give you a fifty?

– A fifty!!!! What!!! What do you think? That I am some kinda a slut or what?

– No...Not really...I was just trying to find a way...let's say....to compensate you...do you see it?

– No, not at all....And on top of it only a fifty! That is so cheap of you! I feel so down now because of you! Bastard.

– Well, you say that you're not a slut, and in the same time that a fifty is not enough, that is a contradiction.

– Fuck you! You perfectly see what I mean!

– So what would be a fair price.

– Let's see....mmmhhh....first of all I am not a slut, and I won't blow you for any price, but just to satisfy your natural curiosity, I would say 600...

- You mean rupees or euros? Hahaha...600 you must be kidding me, even the ghost of Lady Diana must have asked for less....Hahaha!!!
- You are the rudest man I know Ivan, in some countries they would cut off your balls for that, and then you would have to speak with a high pitched voice, like the one that people have when they inhale helium, or like Woody Allen's voice.
- You ARE really a witch...
- Ask Nanaqui to blow you.
- He is disgusting, with his rotten mouth.
- Well, you see, you are picky after all.
- It is you that I love Sarah, not Nanaqui or the ghost of Marilyn Monroe.
- But I like youngsters you know that Ivan, you are too old for me.
- You are not so young yourself.
- But I have a great body, young men love me, they keep following me everywhere I go, and you have a pot belly.
- It's because I drink too much pastis, I will quit pastis so that you can blow me when my pot belly is gone.
- It won't help, beside I am in love with a DJ.
- A DJ....My God...You mean a guy with testicles for cerebral hemispheres.
- That is so cheap of you.
- How old is her?
- He is twenty eight and his name is Gaga.
- Gaga is not a name.
- I know it is his stage name, his real name is Charles-Antoine.
- I bet that Gaga has a very large dick.
- That is not your business. He is very sweet and tender, you are cruel because you are jealous, this is very cheap of you, I am utterly disappointed.
- I am disappointed that you prefer a dick-head with three brain cells to me.
- You don't even know him.
- He is a DJ.
- You're preconceived about everything that's young and new and as an old hag that you are that obviously you don't understand, you feel left out and it makes you bitter, I pity you!
- Cut the shit Sarah, you just love his dick, I don't blame you for that...By the way, who's head was that hanging on a lamppost down my street that I saw earlier on?
- It's was my stepfather's head, I was getting tired of him.
- Well, he seemed like a nice fellow. So you won't blow me, what are you up too then?
- I am gonna get some food like Nanaqui, and then I am gonna see Gaga, there is a huge party up in the Endoume neighborhood later on.
- Can I come?
- You're too old, it's only for youngsters like me.
- But you are 500 years old Sarah.
- Yes, but I still have some good breasts and nice thighs, so that no one can tell.
- You shrewd little bitch.
- See you Ivan!
- Take care baby!

But nothing shall prevail in the end, it will all come out to nothing.

As we watched the soccer game on TV, we pondered about modern warriors going out to vast country to meet other nations in dramatically kind of biblical fight while billions watching them. Billions of ants? Billions of fans waving flags under Russian blue sky. While here, in Marseilles, we can hear the swifts flying around at dawn of July first 2018, next year I'll turn fifty and the world will keep rolling down the alley of the universe like a ball while spinning around at the same time. I'll turn fifty, I am balding with white hair, over my chin some sparse kinda of a beard, living in an attic and working on a novel in another language from my own, oh my God... Thou should flush the toilet now and send me off down the drain.

For me, I should, if I had any balls left, just jump off of my small terrace to end up dismembered down the rue Mazagran where I just moved in five years ago with H el ene who has just left me in the meantime. So I keep writing about a ghost. Who is this ghost, Nanaqui? A second self, some sort of lookalike always watching me from a corner of my mind? My dead father who has been haunting me for thirty four years now? My own madness dressed in a garment of air? Proust theory on Time is right. Man is made out of Time, Time is his very essence, it is precisely what sets the difference between us and the other living creatures, like those birds who keep visiting me and that I feed with grains that I fetch by foot from another part of town, going by the very long avenue du Prado, under the scorching Sun.

Feeding the birds every morning after waking up, actually small grayish turtledoves, smaller than the average pigeons, shy birds, they fly right off my living room through the open bay window at any jerk that I make. Why feeding the birds? For what purpose? They are wild animals, totally self sufficient, so is it me that I am trying to help by feeding them like this? Waiting each morning for, between others, the same couple of turtledoves flying straight into my living room like some blessed creatures born out of the sky.

The poet said *At the second turning of the second stair* , at this very second turning, I am gonna give you a piece of advice my friend, never never turn around and look who's behind you, you might fall off the stairs and break your neck.

Amen.

But who am I to know here of what should be said or not.

What should be seen in the shape of the bird flying so high in the sky that the clouds get one after the other erased by its flying away. Erased and hanging in the sky like blue bits of myself which could fall down in rain at any moment, not flesh but bits of sand and flesh mixed together and turned round into the shape of a ball that could roll down the bowling alley of the Universe for one final strike.

For now, I am stiff as a corpse, I would not dare to move a finger even if I could for fear of being killed right on the spot. The rest of my life is mere confusion. The rest is birds and animals, trees and balloons, weird men writing queer words that no one understand (not even my dead father lying in his grave), not even my old mother in her jewelry store, still selling her necklaces and bracelets at 78. This is quite a while after she first came from Egypt with her family after the revolution by Neguib. She, half Jewish on her mother's side, half Arabic and partly Turkish on her father's side, and maybe neither of the both in the end I am afraid. But who am I to judge her? Just some poor fuck writing on a computer screen the same way that maybe Jean Luc Godard used to make movies, that is with more head than heart, something too intellectual to be felt, a set hollow of ideas getting the reader to nowhere. Or maybe it is actually the other way around? More heart than head....Yes maybe, always a lack of structure down here, always a loose frame inside of which I can't get myself to make a story fit in, with maybe a good line here or there, but nothing more.

I recalled on a previous book a sentence, as a joke, a hindered sexual joke from Lubitsch, the movie is called Cluny Brown, and they say about a young lady "she does sit a horse well", well my American editor corrected it and made me write "she sits on a horse well"...Doesn't mean the same thing to me. Damn Americans, damn editors, and one could say damn me for still trying to write in a language that is not my own. Maybe it is precisely because it is not my language that I want to write in it, I thus avoid a straightforward confrontation with my own self, maybe that is why all this could be called "The Other Self", like if it were the title for a poetry chapbook (no one reads poetry though these days). I noticed that if you try to write a book you forget what has been put in it quite fast after it is done, like when you have a very long conversation with a friend after which you can't remember a word of what you have just said the moment before. Indeed, at the end of the line, to write a book is nothing else than to indulge into a long conversation with a total stranger, you might be telling a story, you might be just thinking out loud on paper without any proper sense of where it is leading you, like me right now, you might be writing about History, Science, Sex, you are always engaging in a conversation. It is just a sophisticated way to socialize, social medias work just the same, it is all just about loneliness, perhaps. Many people have no friends, so they become writers, writers with still no friends, like islands as the other fucker said once. All this crap is bound to fail, obviously.

- Maybe I should pick up this verse burning on the ground a put it in a poem? Says Nanaqui to Ivan.
- Nanaqui...pleaaase...forget poetry for good, on top of it if you were to do that, the poem would stay glued in the palm of your hand and you would never be able to get rid of it.
- I wonder if Sarah is fucking the DJ Gaga right now?
- I am sure she is.
- That is soooo unfair!!!
- why?
- Because he is young.
- So what?

– He could have all the girls he wants I am only a poor zombie.

You see these lines, I have made them up. But there is a real Sarah in real life, she is in love with Gaga, they live in Marseilles, they have sex all the time, she wants to be an actress, she wants to do great things, she is a little older than this century somehow, and like this century it will all end up in dust. I think that she felt gratified at first when I told her that the leading female character here was made out of her, but she has not read the book yet !!! Hahaha !!!! Anyway, it does not matter, my books don't sell. I'd rather fuck Sarah than sell, even if she is not a witch. But somehow I suspect her of being a witch in real life, a modern one though, in some sort of a strange way. Just as I could be Nanaqui, a living dead, because death did walk inside my head when I was fifteen and never came out of it. It is at that early age that I started to write (very very bad) poetry. Why poetry? I don't know, I had never written a line of poetry before that, and then my best friend Bertil let me down, another witch (but worse than Sarah) Jennifer shredded me to pieces to finish me up. I had to paste all the pieces together again, but it was a hard task, I was very young, and it was a tough puzzle. So I did not paste all the pieces together as they should have been, that is why I have an eye on my forehead and my brain is in my belly.

But at the very beginning we all were conned to come up here, in this world, and lead this pitiful life. Alienation is at the roots of our being. *To look at life in the face, to look at it and then to put it away* said Virginia, or didn't she? I can't be too sure if she really wrote this as I heard it in a bad movie about her, but it doesn't matter, to pick up a few heavy stones and walk down inside a river and drown oneself quietly takes a lot of guts. Just like this mad poet who jumps out of the window when the doctor comes in in Mrs Dalloway; she had known it all beforehand, she knew all about it, the suicide, the madness, the writing, and yet without maybe being fully conscious of it, like in a haze of some sort, entangled in herself, and yet so free. All this about writing and suicide was a trap set up earlier on, maybe from childhood, in her mind, it was a bomb left burning on the floor and ready to explode. We have foreseen it all, foretold it all, then we put it away just like that, just like a book that we have just finished to read, that we turn down, the cover facing us with a lovely image set over it, some smiling face, a street, a scenery, something unreal and yet well depicted, that is what literature is about, isn't it *my dear*? Isn't it Sarah? You must be dead tired by now after three days of getting stoned in some mad electronic-music concert up in the North of France, hundreds of youngsters gathered together to dance wildly in a field, all stoned, drunk, half-mad, and then to get back after it's over, for the vast majority of them, to their subdued quiet life, as nothing had happened, and it is you Sarah who did put up all this together, gathered the DJs, the bands, the folks, the tents, the booze, the acoustic, well... And for me, I am still stuck in my attic at Marseilles writing crazy crap on this computer, with a turtledove eating some grains that I fetched to feed it and its kinfolk, out of a bowl, right next to me. If turtledoves could speak, I wonder what they would say to me, would they be grateful to me for feeding them? Would they say that as a human being it is only because I have no friends of my own specie that I feed them? And that if I did have some friends, I would not give a damn about turtledoves, like most of the other human beings.

- Vous allez le tuer, j'espère?
- S'il fallait tuer tous les imbéciles.
- Oui mais ce serait tellement plus commode.

These lines come from an old black and white movie. They just shot through my mind out of the past, like some recollection of time lost (By the way the gentle turtledove is half through its meal right

now, very concentrated, a big scared by a curtain gently stirred by the breeze. Then the bird just turned its head towards me implying to say maybe something like “is there some more for me of this good shit?”, and as I gave no answer, just went away through the opening of the glass door that leads to the small terrace, before flying away out there in the blue sky of Marseilles). What was I saying? Yes, these lines come from the movie “Les Enfants du Paradis”, shot during the war, the second world war. Most of the actors in it weren’t really in the Resistance back then, and one could say that they really made some good money under the Nazi rule over France actually. Well, if I translate what the first character says here, it goes like : “I hope that you are going to kill him”, as he is speaking to a famous actor of the nineteenth century called Frédéric Lemaître who is supposed to fight a duel at dawn (all the characters in the movie were taken by the poet and scenarist Prévert out of real historical figures from fabulous nineteen century in Paris). Frédéric Lemaître is embodied in it by the actor Pierre Brasseur, his interlocutor, who hopes that Frédéric will win is in the movie a famous serial killer of those days, called Lacenaire, interpreted by the actor Marcel Herrand. Then the actor answers (that is Frédéric Lemaître) “if one had to kill all of the fools...”, and the serial killer concludes “Yes but that would be so much convenient...”.

Many of us would secretly agree, that would be really convenient to kill as many of the fools around us as possible. So so convenient indeed! In some very cynical way sure, and the next conclusion would then be that to get at the job as fast as we could... This is a slippery slope my friends, this is a natural tendency in mankind. Maybe that is what the Nazis thought? Sure, but they got at it with more thrill I guess, more excitement than in the movie, as Lacenaire is musing and poised in the movie, it makes it more poetic than scary, which is weird considering that were such scary days, back in the 1940’ s in France. Maybe there is a connection, even an unconscious one, between this line and the occupation of France, I can’t tell, but it was inspired by another movie, a pre-war movie, and it is Jules Berry, another actor of these days who says it in “Le café de Paris” to Véra Korène in 1938 (a refugee Russian born actress).

Well, so many inhabitants of this Earth must have had in mind at some point in his or her Life to kill as much of the fools around as possible. Telling in their mind “fuck off” to the universal brotherhood that Gandhi and Krishnamurti wanted. We can’t delude ourselves any longer, it is crystal clear if one turns on the (fake?) news that we are just a bunch of rats trapped in the same cage, called the global economy.

Aren’t we trapped indeed Nanaqui, my brother from Hell? (The turtledove after flying away just came back and is ferociously hitting at its meal of grains that I have set on the floor now. Obviously its hunger is even stronger than its wariness of the big ape that I am... Yes, of course, we are animals, just like you my dear feathery fellow. Another dove has just flown in in the meantime and while I am writing this, but the first one, as cute as it is, will not share its meal with the second bird, so the competition is fierce I guess even among such kind looking vegetarians beings).

Amen

Is that right or not? But after all this nonsense, this balderdash, baloney, bullshit etc...name is as you wish...after spending days and nights alone in utter suffering Hélène comes back and what? She is puzzled her current boyfriend is a sheer pro-Putin asshole who does not treat her well, and you don't really know what she wants from you and probably neither does she. So we wait for the turtledoves to come back the next morning and we talk for a while with Nanaqui the un-dead, our only real pal on this Earth.

- Why is Sarah such a wicked slut Nanaqui? Is it because she is Portuguese?
- Are you chauvinistic Ivan?
- Not at all, I just said that out of the blue, maybe it is because she looks so cute but deep down inside, hidden, she is a fucking witch.
- That would more be of a good reason to me for her being a witch, the fact that she does not show her true self to the world, but why do you say that she is wicked?
- Because while having sex with her boyfriend Gaga she pulled out her vibrator, the one she used when she was dating Lingam, an Indian female so-called filmmaker of my ass, then of course this poor turd Gaga did not know how to react.
- I wouldn't have known what to do neither, that is a little tricky to show to a guy a vibrator that you shared with a dyke before him.
- I think it was an attempt to castrate him, you know, she is a model, most models are twisted broads.
- It's true that you've had many models Ivan...So on top of being chauvinistic, you are a misogynist...
- Let's not jump to conclusions Nanaqui, it's a rough fight out there, you need to get geared with some weapons on your side.
- So what did you two talk about when you saw Hélène?
- My family, her affair with the pro-Putin turd (who's name is Charles by the way)...
- I am getting mixed up with all these broads.
- Well Hélène was my girlfriend for six years, she lives in Marseilles, she is a nice girl but out of her wits, Sarah is just a young slut....
- "A young slut", she would be pleased to hear or read that I bet.
- She won't, she's almost illiterate...hahaha...
- What a cruel little dwarf you are Ivan, and balding on top of it.
- It's because I am Jewish.
- The balding?
- Not the height issue, my forebears were not fed well in the Shtetls of Ukraine and Bielorussia...
- They escaped the gas chambers?
- My father and her mother after being turned in to the Gestapo by the janitor did manage to escape to Switzerland in a coal wagon hidden there by railwaymen, they spent the end of the war in a refugee camp, his father joined the Free French Forces in the UK, he came back in a tank to France, was out there for the liberation of Paris, threw a German soldier through a window during the fight, and was decorated by Leclerc on Christmas Eve in Strasbourg.
- And I was in an asylum in Rodez writing nonsense in tiny notebooks and loosing my teeth with electroshock therapy on top of it.
- It's because you are not Jewish.
- What is the connection?

- There is none, but us, Jews, we never loose our teeth, we have roots going back to King Salomon...hahaha...
- No I am not Jewish, I am a catholic from Christian Marseilles.
- But Jews and Christians are one and the same Nanaqui! Those are two sects of the same religion, that is so obvious, one kept the Hebrew tradition, the other one switched to Greek.
- What about Latin?
- Latin is just a degenerate shallow language.
- What about Islam?
- Islam is a pagan religion with a varnish of monotheism.
- You're gone get killed if you say that.
- But that's the truth, and it is not derogatory, anyway these are just labels, they don't mean anything, and there is no God after all, we are just mammals fed by tits when we are babies like all the other mammals, and craving for tits even after we grow up.
- Not me cause I am dead.
- And you are a poet on top of it.
- And a fine actor, mind you.
- Yes, it's true that you've done bits of acting, in silent movies, which is good considering how insane you are and your shrieky voice, actually they could have heard you, the spectators would have turned mad back then in the theaters.
- That is so mean Ivan, I have a perfectly normal voice.
- If you were a magpie maybe, as a human being no.
- But I am dead!!! For God sake!!!
- Sorry, I keep forgetting that, you seem so real to me. Ok I am gonna go now, I need to take a shower and do some errands.
- A turtledove just flew in, see.
- Yes, that is a cutie!!! Cuter than all these degenerate subhuman females that I meet out there.
- Let's stick to the birds and forget the females!!!
- High five man!
- High five Nanaqui!!!

– Hello Sarah. So you're not with Gaga?
 – I prefer my vibrator.
 – Well, it's a machine you know.
 – I don't care, it's easier to use, stays stiff all the time, just needs to get plugged for refill, never complains, that's the Future, I don't need a man anymore.
 – What about kids?
 – I will get inseminated.
 – So no use of men anymore?
 – No, it's the time for female power, we're taking over, you guys are gonna get screwed deep.
 – Actually we're not gonna screw at all anymore if I get you well.
 – More or less.
 – So what happened to poor Gaga?
 – He's at the beach with some other guys playing volley.
 – Good for him.
 – Yeah, then he's gonna fuck one of the guys for sure.
 – Why do you say that?
 – Because deep down he is gay.
 – That's also what Nanaqui says about me.
 – Yeah, precisely, you're gay too, but you'd rather ignore it because on top of it you're a coward also.
 – It's always a pleasure talking to you Sarah, you always have a kind thing to say.
 – If you can't take it, just fuck off.
 – Well, I wanted to give you a painting, now I am reconsidering it.
 – A painting!? Thaaaatttt is so niiiiice of you my dear, you should have said it before....I have always told you that you have the most charming eyes.
 – Cut the shit will you.
 – Hahaha...So where is my painting?
 – Back at home.
 – So shall we go now?
 – Ok, I am not sure if you deserve it though, do you wanna walk?
 – Ya, I need to exercise, I put on some weight lately, too much pastry.
 – Like what?
 – Tarte Tropézienne...
 – That is really good...Where do you buy it?
 – There is a small bakery by the harbor, on the corner of rue Sainte et rue de Breteuil where they make the best in town, it's really fantastic.
 – I should try it.
 – You're gonna have a pot belly if you eat too much of this, at your age, if I were you I would skip it.
 – I am not THAT old, I really wonder if you deserve this painting in the end?
 – I can blow you if you want to show my gratitude.
 – That would be a terrific thing to do, I have not been blown in a long time, Nanaqui proposed, but I am not such a big fan of getting blown by a living dead.
 – I can't blame you for that, it must feel weird.

- Yes, all this dead an limp flesh around his mouth, do you wanna take the rue de la Canebière up to the rue Mazagran, it's a ten minutes walk.
- Fine.
- Maybe we can grab something to eat, I'll show you the painting, and you give me this nice blow-job that you promised in return.
- Only if I like the painting though.
- Ok it's a deal.
- Perfect, let's go.
- I can't wait to get my blow job, and don't bite, please...

Sarah grins, and both of them, the short witch with long hair and the balding Jew, walk together awkwardly up the rue de la Canebière among the vagrants, stray dogs, beggars, and freshly stranded migrants from Africa wandering under the scorching Sun.

The misfits...I wonder, who are they nowadays? But who cares? Am I awake or still sleeping?

Nanaqui il est temps que tu dormes, il est temps que tu viennes, il est temps que tu dormes....

I've lost and found again what I was looking for, a piece of myself buried in the ground not far from my dead body. But someone keeps speaking now in my head....Hush please....I would like to sleep, I would like to walk up the hill and contemplate the vast horizon and the sea circled by it, as said the poet before the war. But who are we to dare to speak up here? Who are we indeed? Under our masks of skin we hide behind ourselves all our life long, the rest is just a joke, the rest is just a lie, don't lie to me please, I want to die with open eyes.

Out of town an old prophetess lives, if you go and bring her the skull of a virgin, the skull of a cow, the skull of a frog, she will tell you who you were and who you might become if you live long enough to see it happen.

I have longed to move away from the hissing of the spent lie.

Shut up, please, will you? I am trying to sleep, I am trying to see through the glass of the window pane this other self, behind the skin, hidden under the features of the face.

If you want to get to the beach, just go down the hill to the small bay called a "Calanque", and then you'll find blue and green water, bathers, swimmers, children with their parents, diving in the water, screaming, playing with a dark ball, deep as a dark hole in the center of the universe. And then to lie on the sand on the beach, put the headphones over your ears and listen to an old French song about the pain that comes with love but which is not really pain after all, like Death in love is not really Death after all.

The voice of the singer is sweet, it reminds you of your youth, even though you were something like three or four years old when he sang this in the early seventies. You did not used to like Julien Clerc before, there is something corny about the way he swings with words as if in a soap opera of some kind. But today, on the beach, in 2018, you find it sweet. It reminds you of H el ene, it is like a prophecy which was never fulfilled. That's how love goes, isn't it? like a never kept promise... Then you think about your mother, her selfishness, her harshness, it makes you sad, she is very old and soon she will die, and you don't know what makes you sadder, her selfishness in Life or the idea of her Death. This paradox is whimsical. Now it is early in the morning, you have not slept, you write in a language that isn't yours, and it makes it easier for you to say those intimate things, the words aren't your words, it is like talking to someone that you can't see in the dark, the absence of another face in front of you makes it easier to be bold and straight forward, to get lost into the words, into the swirling sentences, a melody from far away but so near to you in the same time. Maybe it is that this is always the case actually in real life too. That all of us we speak a language that is not really ours, that we borrow the words but that they can never clearly say what we feel, so that there is always this weird discrepancy between words and emotions, so that writing in another language intimate things is not such a big deal in the end. What a relief!!! Tomorrow, which is today, as I have not slept, we will go to Cassis. I feel like drinking some more of this pastis again, this pastis that I had the night before while trying to get some sleep. Now, booze is in my blood, just like my blood, just like my mind flowing down the screen of this machine like fluid ink, like invisible thoughts turned visible on the screen. But is this still writing? Is

writing still possible in the age of the machines and of the “End of the World”, is it not already too late? I think of my father born in the South of France in Montpellier, not too far from Marseilles, in 1941, June first, his parents thought they were safe, then the Nazis invaded the South of France and there was no safe haven anymore in occupied France. A long time after that he had a boy, at the age of twenty seven, in 1969, that was me. I came a year after the students riots in Paris, the year the first man walked on the moon, and now almost fifty years later, thirty three years after his death in January 1984 at the age of forty three, it seems so unreal to me, as Time is getting stretched out between all this abstract dates like a rubber ribbon that could be extended forever without snapping.

In crazy Marseilles, Sarah the witch mating with the un-dead and thus becoming surreal too in the heart of oblivion, the *heart of darkness*, aboard a ship going deep inside dark Africa to meet one's true nature, to meet one's true soul. About the same size as a man walking through a door there is a shadow walking through with him but we don't know who he is, we don't know the whereabouts of this man, who's shadow it is which keeps growing as he goes deeper into the house, to finally find the portrait of himself as a child hanging on a wall.

In Marseilles, one can see, as the shades of the trees keep on turning from black to blue according to the changing of the light, hanging on the balconies, now and then, some laundry drying out in the Sun. We like if it were painted the thin line of the horizon laid on the Mediterranean sea drying out too in the summer's heat as we walk by the huge walls of the Fort Saint-Jean on the harbor entrance. It was built there as much to protect the city from the invaders, the Spanish, the Italians, the Turks as they keep the fierce population of the city subdued. Thus all the guns of the three castles overlooking the harbor: fort Saint-Jean, fort Saint-Nicolas, fort d'Entrecasteaux, were pointed mostly, it is said, not toward the sea but toward the city itself, like a hundred mouths of brass ready to cast their fire and castigate the population of Marseilles in case it were to rise against the monarch. But for now, in scorching July, I can only hear the gentle sound of the turtledoves coming down from the surrounding roofs of the neighborhood and lulling by gently my insane ecstasy.

All the moon long I heard blessed among the stables the nightjars flying with the ricks and the horses flashing into the dark

So another mad and alcoholic poet said once, coming himself out of the dark and raging against the dying of the light.

Sarah the witch is predicting our future, she can see it all, the world turning into a torch and blazing at the very center of the Universe like another Sun and all of them, small men, tiny ants, burning quickly like matches, going from flesh to ashes, and dissolving forever into the Dark. Their black souls sent down to live in Hell forever under the ground somehow, moaning for all Eternity and into the Void.

– Mother, why did I come out of your womb, for what purpose, to what end? So that you would be less lonely, so that you would not need the love of men anymore having the gratuitous love of your son?
– Why should we die and live and die again in the everlasting circles of our birth if it is to end up alone and miserable in the end? If I close my eyes I can clearly see the nightjars making weird sounds in the dark like birds of sorcery that people thought they were in the middle age...

¡Cómo canta la zumaya ay como canta en el árbol

“La zumaya” says this other Spanish poet, the nightjar still singing in Andalusian olive tree making exhausting mad cries that are keeping them all awake throughout the night, while the rapping of mad Sarah occurs in the deep lost forest of la Sainte-Baume by Nanaqui the poet, Nanaqui the un-dead. But Sarah is indeed the dark virgin of Marseilles too, and she is Mary Magdalene who did rest in the cave of the formidable mountain of la Sainte-Baume back then, at the beginning of Time, after *the first birth*

of the simple light under the spinning stars and after the death of Christ, then protected in the cave by some she-wolves and those other beasts of the den.

I live between the heron and the wren. Beasts of the hill and serpents of the den.

Bless us Lord caused we have sinned and we are depraved, and the gypsies are coming on their scraggy horses through the nights to cut our throats open while we sleep.

Amen

- But, as my grandmother used to say when she was puzzled “let’s not suck the elephant’s cock”, which secret meaning has always avoided me, perhaps it mean, let’s not get so worried about whatever troubles that we might have”...? Anyway, Nanaqui, so you’re proposing now to play soccer now with your own head?
- Thaaaaat’s right sir.
- Good! Well, someone needs to take off your head for that matter, do you have any suggestion? Any preference: ax, butcher-knife, sword, with bear hands? With bear hands would be kind of gross, with the veins still tied to the trunk and all the blood flushing out like piss down the toilets...
- With bear hands would be the old way, the rough way, ape like way, if you see what I mean, but I could maybe do it myself?
- You mean tear off your own head?
- Yes, why not?
- Show me...

So Nanaqui grabs his own head by its hair with both hands and first starts pulling them as hard as he can, and the head begins to look more and more elongated but would not come out of his neck, and of course he is quickly turning full red even though he is a living dead and has not much blood left in his body. This throws Sarah in a fit of laughter, which gets her rolling down on the grass of the lawn where they just intend to play soccer with Nanaqui’s head, outside of the palace of the Pharo. At some point Nanaqui pulls so hard that he rips off part of his hair and doing so falls backward on the lawn, with the torn hair soaring first a bit in the air, to end up sprayed all over the grass like long black worms.

Sarah can’t stop laughing so Nanaqui feeling quite offended by all this mockery jumps back on his feet and gives her a kicks on the tits. She screams first out of pain but quickly out of rage, stands up, holding her bruised sagging tits and then leaps on Nanaqui intending to maul his flesh with her long nails. They starts biting, clawing, raging, punching on the lawn like two wild animals. Ivan has to take his gun out of his holster once again (he had already done that in a previous novel) and fires in the air to get them to stop. But they won’t, like mad dogs with no brain cells they go on fighting zooming, bouncing, yelling all over the lawn and of course scaring away all the children playing nearby on the playground, as well as the old folks, who were trying to cool off the day on some nearby benches. In order to bring back some law on this lawn Ivan has no choice but to fire a single bullet at our two fighters. The shot being pretty accurate as he is only standing only five feet away from them. The bullet first gets to Nanaqui’s forehead, digging a nice little hole in it just between the eyes, then, coming out from the back of his head, goes straight to Sarah’s, but sideways this time, that his from temple to temple, making also a nice little tunnel in the witch’s skull. Well, this firing, sobers up our mad folk a little who instantly put an end to this sterile quarrel.

- We still need to cut off your head though. Says Ivan.
- Do you have a knife with you?
- Yes, but it’s a pocket knife, it’s gonna take forever.
- My forehead feels kinda itchy now.
- No wonder, you have a hole in the middle of it.
- Oh, yeah, I can feel it with my finger, I can even feel my brain inside, it is so weird...OH MY GOD!!!
- What?

- I can actually touch my thoughts.
- You mean with your finger through the hole?
- Yep sir.
- Nay, that is not possible, thoughts are like the soul, they can't be actually touched.
- Yes they can, mmmhhhh and they don't seem to like it, one of them just asked me to stop...It says to me that it feels ticklish.
- So you can tickle your own thinking...What a zombie you are, Nanaqui, we should call the kids and show them this marvel.
- Maybe not, Ivan, it will scare the shit out of them again ... Says Sarah.
- Too bad, maybe we could try to take away your brain out of your skull so that we could also see your thoughts and maybe talk to them like you do.
- Yes, but we would have to break his skull for that, and don't forget that we need his skull to play soccer with.
- Yes, you are right Sarah...And he is such an idiot anyway so that I am not sure that it would be worth speaking with his thoughts anyway.
- Mind you Ivan! I am not an idiot, at least for a zombie.
- You always want to invade Africa like the French do...
- I know but it is tempting Ivan, it's because I was born in the time of the French Empire.
- With overpopulation they will come here soon enough anyway.
- So should we cut his head with your knife?
- That is not such a good idea, can't you use a spell on him Sarah.
- Ok, I will give it a try.
- Wait, hold on, I am not sure about this casting a spell on me Sarah, you have not practiced in long time, you might be rusty, who knows what will come out of it.
- Don't be worried Nanaqui, who knows? You might turn out to be more clever in the end.
- Hey Ivan, it's not because you're the author here that you can take advantage of the situation.
- Go for it Sarah...Or the reader will fall asleep soon enough.

So Sarah utters some strange words out of an ancient language, points her hand at Nanaqui, a thunder ball falls on him out of nowhere and boom...a big flash...lot's of smoke...And Nanaqui is gone.

- Sarah, you are indeed rusty, what have you done to him?
- I don't know. Oh, here he is!
- But it's a toad.
- No it's me. Says the toad. It's Nanaqui. I told you that you were rusty Sarah.
- How can you fix this?
- Someone has to kiss him so that he will be changed into a charming prince.
- You kiss him.
- No you.
- Ok, we'll draw straws.

They pick up two twigs, and Sarah draws one out of Ivan's hand.

- You lost Sarah.
- Fuck!

She bends over and reluctantly purses her lips then kisses the toad. BOOM, suddenly Nanaqui is back, but he is no charming prince but an ugly zombie with still a hole in his head.

- So we'll have to do it the rough way now.
- You mean with the pocket knife?
- Yes, you need to squat and put your head on my lap.
- Oh my God...All this for soccer.
- It won't hurt.
- They always say that.
- I am starting now.

Ivan starts to saw gently Nanaqui's flesh around his neck. Blood begins to spill all over the lawn like in a Jackson Pollock's painting, soon enough he gets to the sinews which give in under the pressure of the blade like strings of some queer musical instrument, then more veins, more flesh, and finally he gets to the spine bone. The spine gives him more of a hard time than the flesh so he needs to give some kicking in Nanaqui's head to really break it. "Well", he says, "It's not such a bad thing this kicking as it could be taken as some early warm-up for the upcoming soccer game". After an hour or so of sheer labor, he is finally done with it and can proudly lift Nanaqui's severed head in his hands.

- Are you happy now? Says the head, while the beheaded body rises on his feet again awkwardly.
- Yes, great work, you'll be a perfect soccer ball. You can even blow yourself now if you want.
- You're so gross Ivan.
- Yes, Ivan, and don't forget that I am a lady...Says Sarah.
- If you are a lady Sarah, I am the Prince of Wales.

Ivan lays Nanaqui's head on the grass. Sarah is designated as the goaltender, and Ivan will start with the head at his feet on the other end of the lawn, playing against Nanaqui's body. The game starts, he dribbles past Nanaqui's body, goes for the goal as fast as he can and gives a long kick to it. Sarah jumps to grab the zombie's head in the air, making thus a perfect save, with the small crowd of kids and old folk gathered around the lawn to watch the game applauding the witch's perfect move.

Amen

- Ouch! Why do you have to kick so hard?!!! It's my head you know.
- It's the game man...
- Even your own body is kicking you pretty bad I think...
- He must be jealous.
- Maybe it is that he wants something out of you?
- Like what?
- Like, I don't know, maybe it needs you to provide him a good fuck, to find it a broad or something, maybe it is that your body is tired of being a bachelor?
- But I am a zombie you moron...
- So what? It might not be aware of it.
- You mean my body is not aware that it is the body of a zombie? This is ludicrous.
- No it is not, think about it, no one has ever told your body that it was the body of a zombie...So it might think that it is normal after all.
- Let's play some more, the kids wants to play with us too now.
- Ok cool, it's gonna be more fun, you stay in the goal Sarah, we'll make two teams, me in one with a bunch of kids, and Nanaqui's body in the other with the rest of the kids.
- This is a nightmare Ivan, I had a bad idea...I want to be pasted back to my body, please!
- No, Nanaqui, keep cool, it won't last long. Just stop yelling each time someone hits you in an attempt to take a shot at the goal.
- If you behave Nanaqui, I'll kiss you on the mouth from time to time. Says Sarah.
- Ok, ok, but make it quick, I am tired of being tossed around like that, it makes me dizzy.

So the game goes on for a while, the kids yelling and hitting as hard as they can on the head with bits of flesh and bones scattered around now and then. Nanaqui's body team is winning as the body is a very good player and doesn't care hitting at the head as hard as it can. At some point the head falls into a nearby well, so that some kids need to go and get a bucket and a rope to pull it up back to the surface. When they retrieve the head finally, it's all covered up by the mud that was at the bottom of the well. Now the head is really pissed off and keeps cursing at Ivan and Sarah for getting it all soaked up by mud and its own blood, which keeps dripping down from the severed bottom of the neck. So they decide that it is time to sew it back to the body, the kids seem to be kind of disappointed, but Ivan promises them that they will start another game soon enough with the head of one of the tourists that Nanaqui keeps devouring on a regular basis.

Now they need to sew the head like Frankenstein did with its creature a while ago. Sarah suggests that if they find a viper she might use one of her spell with the viper's skin (used as band aid) to glue back the head to the body. For this matter they need to leave Marseilles and go trekking in the Mountain of the Garlaban not very far from City to the East, with the head in a basket moaning and cursing and the headless body following them gently. After a full day of searching they finally find a viper, but as they are about to kill it and skin it they realize that it is actually the reincarnated soul of one of Ivan's relative on his mother's side. So they spare the viper, asking it, before bidding farewell, if it's aware of any spot in the vicinity where some other vipers could be found. The viper says that there is a good spot not very far from Aubagne in an old forlorn graveyard. The Sun has started setting on the West so it is time to start camping and they decide that they will go looking for more vipers the next day. Everyone is quite hungry, so Nanaqui's body goes hunting for some hunters to eat them before

they kill some innocent animals of the forest. The zombie's body finds two of the motherfuckers...They fire at Nanaqui's beheaded body when they see it coming after them. The bullets go right through the body, digging nice little holes into the dead flesh. Seeing that their firearms won't do, they bravely start to run away as fast as they can. But the zombie is too fast for them. It soon catches up with one of the two and grabs him from behind by the hair and smashes his head on a nearby rock, then, still holding the corpse of the first degenerate subhuman hunter, goes after the other one, trips him down, holds him, but, this time, decides to bring him alive to the camp. The motherfucker who is used of dealing with innocent animals wails and asks for mercy, and each time he does so Nanaqui's body snaps off one of his fingers, by the time Nanaqui gets back to the camp with those two kind of Nazis all the fucker's fingers and toes are broken. They decide to eat the mongrel huntsman alive to teach all the huntsmen on Earth a good lesson. Always a good sport, Ivan rams a long pointed rod in the guy's ass, in order to be able to turn it around, as it starts to roast over the fire. Everyone is merry and happy about all this hitting it back at the fucking degenerate huntsmen congregation. When they start eating the fucker alive his yelling is so loud that it can be heard all the way down to Marseilles inner center. It is such a feast that Nanaqui feels almost sorry that his body killed the first guy as it would have been great indeed to eat him alive too.

On the morning, everyone is feeling good after such a bounty of human flesh. They decide to keep the skulls for future soccer games and start their journey to Aubagne to find a good viper in the graveyard. When they get there, after some searching, they do find a nest of nice vipers trying to get some sleep late in the morning hiding under some flat stones, shielded this way from the blazing rays of the summer's Sun.

– Eeny, meeny, miny, mo. I choose you! Says Sarah to one of the snakes.

The chosen viper does not seem so happy about the pick.

– But it's to help out Nanaqui, he needs to have his head pasted back.

– Well why did you cut his head off in the first place? Asks the viper.

– For soccer, we needed a ball.

– For soccer!!!! You wanna skin me alive for a fucking game for sissies.

– Soccer is not a game for sissies.

– Yes it is! I flatly refuse to give up my skin for such a silly cause.

– Oh my God. What are we gonna do now if the viper does not want to be part of the spell? Sarah, do you have another idea?

– Maybe we could pick up a stray dog and...

– No, no, no...Just forget the animal skinning shit.

– Then the only solution is to sew it back with plain thread and I'll try to put magic balm made out of a bull's semen on it.

– So someone needs to jerk off a bull here, ugh?...

– Precisely.

– You don't have anything easier, would jerking off Emmanuel Macron, or Donald Trump do?

– No presidents have poor semen, not enough brain cells, you can feel it in their semen, only a decent bull would do.

– I know a big 1000 pounds bull in a nearby field, would that do? Says the viper.

– Yes, it would totally, is he gentle?

– Well, it has not killed anyone in the past week, if you call this being nice.

– So we'll draw straws to see who will jerk of the bull.

- Maybe we could try to find another huntsman?
- No we have no time for huntsmen, let's see...all right, here we are, three straws, one for Nanaqui's body, one for you Ivan, one for me.

They draw the straws, Ivan loses, of course...

- I should have cheated. Says Ivan feeling really screwed on this one.
- Let's go! Says the viper.

They follow the viper to a nearby field. Then they get to meet Ulysses, a big black bull drooling among its cows, with a 5 pounds turkey neck between his rear legs.

- I can't do it...
- Yes you can Ivan, don't be such a yellow. Says Nanaqui's head.
- Maybe I should turn you into a cow and then the bull fucks you and we get back the semen that we need from your vagina.
- I am not sure that this is such a good idea...Says Ivan flinching more and more.
- It's a grand idea! Says the viper grinning from ear to ear sadistically (even though a snake has no ear, I am aware of that of course).
- Yes Ivan, see it as the experiment of a lifetime.
- To get rammed by a monster is an experiment? Maybe in jail, but in real life I am not sure about that.
- It's an opportunity to feel the feminine side of you, to get connected with it. Adds the viper still grinning.
- I am gonna feel that all right for sure...My God, his dick is the size of my arm.
- Maybe you will be less of a misogynist after that.
- Can we move on please! I am tired of having no body. Says Nanaqui's head, complaining.
- Keep cool Nanaqui, it's some sort of a coming out for Ivan, he needs to get ready for his mating with the bull.
- I always thought you were gay. He is just ashamed of it.
- Is he? He shouldn't, we vipers, are very open about it.
- Just shut up! Or I will leave you with no head, OK dude?
- All right, stay cool, all of you. Let's go Ivan! Says Sarah.

So Sarah, utters strange words, pointing her fingers in Ivan's direction and turns him into a nice spotted cow with a large cunt. Then they start pushing Ivan (that is now the cow) into the bull's pen. The bull seems to be very interested by the new cow brought to him with such a large cunt.

It's needless to describe here what happened next, but let me tell you that Ivan will never forget it.

After a fifty minutes fuck, they fetch back the cow and pull it back out of the pen, they try to retrieve as much semen they can in a large bucket. After have milked (sort of but it works the same way) a good gallon of semen out of Ivan's cunt, Sarah brings back Ivan to his real shape and the bull seeing that it was a con, seems to be quite disappointed, feeling cheated somehow by this strange party made of a viper, a dead body, a severed head, a writer and a witch. Now that they have the semen, they lay down Nanaqui's body on the ground and start sewing it back to the zombie's head coating the skin of it with the bull's semen, while Sarah utters some more magic words in the same time...And "boom", the body and the head are pasted together once again and Nanaqui jumps around on his feet out of sheer joy.

- Hey! I am back! Gosh, it really does feel good to be in one piece again.
- You can thank Ivan for that. Says Sarah.

- Thank you my friend, I hope that it was not too painful, considering the piece of meat that you had to take down your butts.
- Yes, quite painful, mind you, and as actually I am *the author* in here, so don't ask me how I got stuck in such a weird position.
- It's because you are gay. I keep telling you that book after book.
- Drop it or I cut your head once more.
- I am leaving you guys! Says the viper! Yo! see you around guys!
- Take care!
- Bye...

The viper crawls back to the graveyard where they had found it and they start walking down the hill now on their way back to Marseilles under the grudging but conspicuous eye of the bull.

Amen.

We have never walked the thin line of the horizon without first looking down the abyss.

We have put a dog's face over our own face as a mask and we haven't barked like a dog but we have uttered words which were human still nevertheless.

We have never died the way we should have, thus we have never lived too.

We have watched the last sunset fall over the Earth before its final destruction, we have watched people going on procreating even though they were aware of this destruction, but still craving to perpetuate themselves, like hair-less animals that they are (except for the head...this is so weird, such long hair only on the head, God is really taking us for utter fools...Why do I write like I am always preaching...?).

– You have the hands of a mermaid Sarah. Says Ivan.

– You mean looking like fins of some sort?

– Well, I meant it as a compliment.

– You always fail at making compliments...He is such a failure! You could also say that I have fish scales all over while you are at it.

– You don't like fish?

– You mean as a meal?

– No, I mean that you don't ever turn yourself into a fish to swim and travel abroad.

– I choose to be a bird, it's much faster, it gets tough though sometimes when I need to land at some airport, they are so busy these days, I was even once attacked by American Air Fighters who mistook me for a flying saucer hijacked by some Arabs.

– And?

– They fired cruised missiles at me, but as I am a witch I jammed them up their ass.

– They were not aware that you are a mighty witch.

– Of course.

– You could have showed them your pussy too, it might have worked, they would have lost any focus of their mission.

– I tried first, but I think they were gay.

– Yeah, I dig what you mean Sarah, so many servicemen are gay nowadays they are just too scared to come out of the closet.

– Just like you Ivan.

– I am not gay! I don't like sodomy! So cut the shit! But I bet that they must have enjoyed it then when you shoved the missiles up their smart ass.

– I think so, anyway, I finally landed in glorious America and could get down to what I had to do there.

– Which was?

– To go and meet Native Americans, who are actually the only real Americans out there.

– What did they want out of you?

– They wanted me to help them save what's left of their people.

– With witchcraft?

– Of course What else?

– Nespresso....

– Hahaha, very funny, you watch too much TV.

– I get bored without you Sarah. So what tricks did you do?

- I tried to put some brain cells into Donald's head, but I failed.
- Why?
- Not enough room down there....All clogged with anger, rage, idiocy, fascism...
- No easy task.
- No.
- Maybe he is gay?
- I don't think so, I think he jerks off from time to time while watching military parades on TV, that's it, maybe also when he thinks too hard about his dope, then he must redecorate the whole white house with semen.
- It must stinks, all this semen.
- Yeah....Poor fuck.
- We're better off here in France.
- I am not sure about that yet, we'll see as time goes by, we have our own Nazis here, they want to get power too, and take over the country.
- You have to turn yourself into a rocket Sarah and get us to outer space then we can maybe settle on the moon and create the first human colony there.
- The three of us?
- We can take the viper too.
- Yeah, if the Nazis come to power here like in the US, I'll fly us all to the moon.
- High five Sarah!
- High five Ivan! Let's go and see what the zombie-poet is up too.

And they walk away and slowly vanish into the void.

Amen.

But, there is always the excruciating pain, and the fear of waning away.
Always something lurking behind us, ready to choke us to our death.

We would like to dream, to be at least relieved of this burden that we carry day and night on our shoulders, all this stuff that we have inside and which is eating us alive.

I have tried to paint the ceiling and the walls of my house with figures and faces, I have tried to take all the chaos out of my mind to make it visible and get rid of it, but it did not help much.

We are set in a trap, and no one will set us free. And at the same time we keep destroying the Earth and thus ourselves meticulously. All we can see, all that we can feel passes first through the filter of our senses, so that sometimes when I watch the swifts high in the sky in the summer, I kind of feel relieved for a short while.

We were brought out here walk two by two hand in hand, but I am alone, like so many.

Meaningless words.

An empty mind.

To choke slowly and then to die slowly and to be buried a few feet under the surface of the ground, just as once dead, there was a need for the body to be hidden from human sight, just to keep the masquerade going on for a short while. Before that their children will turn into adults themselves, who will have children to crowd the stages of their own lives, to give substance to a life that has none, caught by hundreds of invisible threads inside the web of their own empty universe.

We used to be hunters-gatherers, we came out of the woods, then we became farmers, we grew herds and harvested fields of corn, rice or wheat, we started to thrive to such an extent that soon enough human beings could be found all over the place, like microbes. Now thousands of years have passed and we are facing extinction, and every single human being carries within himself, on a daily basis somehow, this coming over extinction, in each of his body cells. So we might as well pick up a gun that we would have put on the table before us and blow our brain out to end it all. Or we could jump by the window to try to fly away like a bird, and actually end up being splattered a nice Jackson Pollock's painting on the curb of the street below us. Some optimistic fellows would say that we should strip down our clothes and have sex for ever until we die, as doom is coming over us, but I've the feeling that it has been tried before, like by the Romans for instance, and that it's a just a frustrated guy's fantasy, like living forever in a porn movie surrounded by beautiful women who would fight to their death to have sex with us...hahaha...

To watch a plant grow day after day.

To watch a tree up a hill, taller than all the others around it.

To try to guess why is the horizon so flat that we could lie down on it a sleep forever after that.

But I can't sleep any longer.

I stay awake night after night, with my back aching, listening to all the sounds made by my neighbors, by the bar downstairs, by the traffic nearby.

I wait for dawn to show up and set me free, for it to unlock the door of my mind and let me go out finally, wandering the streets of the huge city like a mad stray dog.

I wait for dawn to let me die quietly for once, without any hope of coming back, so as the poet said (more or less) *at the first turning of the second stair I turned and saw below... the deceitful face of hope and of despair.*

Just like if there were some forgotten corpse jammed in the closet. We don't dare to check out if it is still there. Like in a scary movie, but much more frightening than any movie, as nothing is more horrible than the plain truth of what we are indeed, five feet under the surface of the Earth, still watching, still listening, still aware so that if we were to close our eyes we would fall in the abyss forever.

But *who walked indeed between the violet and the violet*, the poet continues. He has stopped turning over to look back what kind of creature has been following him, and if that were no creature, it could only be himself but wearing its own mask, the mask of its own identity, as he is no Thomas and I am no Ivan, there is only this strange creature who always tread a thin line, ready to fall over at any moment to dissolve slowly under the surface of the sea.

Who walked between the various ranks of various green. Going in white and blue, in Mary's color.
– I don't know Thomas, I can't answer you question, I am just a pale ghost myself, sleepless in a city forsaken by God and stranded on the shores of the Mediterranean sea, the White sea as the Arabs call it, as opposed to the Black sea and the Red sea....Colors again, always colors defining the very outlines of our reality, colors always defining us in the end. I just took off my head to set on the table and watch it speak to me, and as my face kept speaking, I started to put lipstick on the mouth and a wig on the balding head, and see! Now I am a drag-queen, I am neither a man nor a woman anymore, neither dead or alive, like a living dead of some sort, like Nanaqui, the un-dead poet, teeth-less and ugly, and yet so kind.

Something is still burning though. I don't know if it's the full body of a man, or simply his head set on a grate like for a barbecue. It keeps burning on until there is nothing else than flames coloring the pitch darkness of the World. If it were also a body it would already be charred and falling to pieces in front of our very eyes. Like people put in ovens during the second World War by the Nazis, like those persecutors turned to animals once more by madness and sheer sadism

talking of trivial things in ignorance and in knowledge of eternal dolour ...the rhyme goes with color, Mary's colour.

I once bought some oil paint called Mary's color, Thomas, are you aware of that? I am no christian so I don't know what Ash Wednesday is all about, I am sort of jew (65% to be precise) and Thomas was said to be a bit anti-Semitic (no one is perfect, he still a good poet nevertheless) but I don't feel connected to my Judaism, and ethnicity is like your parents, you don't choose it, nor can you get rid of it, but I look so Eastern so that everyone mistake me for an Arab when I am tanned. Hell with it! You can't save the world neither, and even though people are still religious, it is a hollow thing, like in the *Hollow Men* in the poem (that I don't really like), if you really want to make a pun here, a perfunctory pun that would be.

But what is that weird sort of thing set on the mantelpiece burning if is not the hand of a man? Still moving like a spider, could it be an ear, a head, could it be his soul? But no one has a soul anymore down here, not even Nanaqui, the un-dead, always wandering in Marseilles or chewing some bones

sitting on the ground among mangy dogs. So from time to time and for the sheer fun of it, I just pick up a bone and throw it away as hard as I can, to watch Nanaqui unfailingly run after it on his four legs, like a funny and mad Jack Spaniel, drooling all over as he catches up with the bone and brings it back to me wagging his tail. I think that I am obsessed with dogs, don't ask me why here...But I got off from grandiose poetry to trivial stuff about bones and dogs.

I can't quite remember what Thomas Stearn intended to do at the eighth turning of the eleven stair, I guess it might go on like this forever, maybe what we take for great poetry is just a modern way to put some old religious crap in words, maybe it is hollow indeed as maybe he was himself after all. So words don't mean a thing don't they? Well, I just figured out lately that to write is after all like having a chat with the friend, once you close the book and put it away on its shelf, it is all over.

– Hey witchy-bitchy Sarah, what’s up?
– I want to be a big porn-star.
– That’s new. But why, why in hell do you want to be a porn star?
– Because being a witch is outdated nowadays, no one cares about witches, it is totally old fashioned to be a witch, whenever I go to play tennis and people ask me what I do for a living and I say that I am a witch they all laugh...
– It’s because they don’t believe it, they think it is some sort of a joke, I did not know that you played tennis, you must be the first witch to have ever played tennis in World History, are you any good?
– Sort of...But with my spells I can beat anyone if I want to.
– That would be cheating though.
– Life is all about cheating, this honesty crap is Christian outdated shit.
– You might have a point here, honesty does seem to be only for losers, winners don’t give a shit about fair-play.
– You see! Anyway, I am really tired of this witchcraft stuff, I don’t know how to get rid of it though, I want to be a porn star, it is more glamorous.
– But being a porn star has nothing glamorous in it Sarah.
– You watch porn too, I know so, so you can talk.
– I watch porn because no one wants to fuck with me and because masturbation is less tiring than actual fucking.
– You could masturbate using your fantasies.
– I have no fantasies left in me, I am too old for that. But I still think that porn is no good, it makes people look like objects.
– But aren’t we object in this new world where soon we’ll have computer chips in our brains.
– That’s scary, I have to admit it. But there are other things that you could do beside porn.
– Like what...?
– Well, ride horses for instance?
– Can’t ride.
– Join the Navy Seals?
– I don’t like water.
– It’s not about water, it’s a special task force when the government needs to get rid of someone or upset a dictator.
– I am not a big fan of weapons, the world is bad enough as it is.
– Well, maybe you could be a landscape-designer?
– Good idea. First I get into porn, then I’ll be a landscape designer of pussies...hahaha...
– You are stubborn, beside there is no good porn industry in Marseilles.
– I will travel to glorious LA with Nanaqui to become a porn star, like Borat in the movie.
– It all sounds familiar to me.
– Do you want to come over to LA with us?
– They won’t let you in.
– Then I will be a porn star in Paris or Amsterdam.
– Quit the porn stuff, stick to witchcraft, trust me, you are much better off with spells than with dirty dicks.
– Yep, I am not so hot about dicks, I had too many of those in the past, it is always the same thing, like rich food, you get tired of it after a while.

- I am gonna hit at the beach now, wanna come over?
- Let's go, yeah, I will get tanned while you swim like a little fish that you are.

So they both board the bus for Cassis, where the nice beach is, on Castelanne square, South of Marseilles. The ride to Cassis is beautiful, going all the way through the National Park of the Calanques, even though it has been partially burned down recently by shitty Marseillais kids playing with matches. But under the scorching sun, on this charred land, Nature has been already reclaimed its rights, with patches of green grass, bushes and shrubs growing from under the ash and the charred trunks. Then, suddenly, the blue sea shows up like a miracle, a perfect triangle set between the hills of Les Calanques, the huge ocher cliff overlooking the bay of Cassis to its right, standing between the small resort village and the industrial town of La Ciotat.

They promptly get off the bus with a bunch of tourists, walk through the village and a farmer's market on its main square all the way down to the small harbor crammed with fishermen and tourists boats, then go straight to the sand beach which faces the horizon to the South. So it is all blue now everywhere, the sea, the sky, a full world of blueness facing them like Eternity. Maybe a bit too blue actually, so they choose to get back to the harbor and walk all the way to a smaller pebbles beach set on the right of the village. Even though it is still early the place is already quite crowded, but mostly by locals, as most of the tourists prefer to go to the sand beach. From this spot, they can admire both the sea and the undulating line of the hills rising and falling to end up at the huge cliff. They put down their towels on the gray pebbles. Sarah lies down languidly, with a straw hat on her head and some sunglasses ready for a long sunbath, while Ivan is already up to the navel into the chilly and crystal clear water of the bay of Cassis. He puts his goggles on, dives in, and, as he starts crawling around he can see under the surface all kind of colorful fish gliding away before him.

from ear to ear, nothing to be afraid of, nothing to be ashamed, *learn by going* as the poet said. This would happen at the very last moment, right when nothing is left of us but something still burning on the ground, like a flame or more like an inane artifact, a trinket set on a mantle piece of sonorous inanity, so useless, and yet so important at the same time that everything would collapse in the room if we were to try to move it even by an inch. But who would dare, who would dare the parting of the hat from hair? Who is the one listening behind the door, to such an extent that as he leaves his ear stays pasted behind the door that would turn into a peephole, so it would become a seeing ear then and the door itself would turn into a body and start to open itself to walk outside the house and go for a stroll in the woods.

But the cut off hand, the trinket, the artifact of sonorous inanity would still be speaking on the mantle piece of would start crawling on the floor like a spider with fingers to get to your head, to your bed, in your sleep. Enough nightmares though!!! We are not still alive fighting for survival out here to get lost in some mad daydreaming about enchanted things dissolving into one another, evolving, changing, turning each time either speechless or talking, and transmuting from void to reality, from egg to being, from ashes to wandering cloud in the sky.

*Along this sole object honoring the nether...*Just walk along the thin line of the pyre (maybe to the charnel house, maybe to get stuffed in an oven and set aflame to end up like smoke running in a chimney, like the Schutzstaffel told you pointing at the smoke when as a child you asked him about your parents), just try never to trip and fall unexpectedly on the other side, as for then you would never be able to come back after loosing your own gravity.

Maybe there was no pyre, no charnel house, nothing of the sort, we put our hands over our ears in order not to hear the screams, we close our eyes, we are by the sea now, we walk on the sand, soon enough we are old and yet this is already Paradise, and we start for no reason to sing an old anthem that we thought we had forgotten, calling back maybe some angels this way, but for what purpose, to what end, to give what sort of strange meaning to this dead-end of a life? Still watching the reflection of the trinket spent out as it hits, smears, and then run down the blurred mirror five feet away from the bed where you are still lying, waiting for a voice to call you back to your past. You can now after all this turmoil finally watch your own tiny tiny figure glide down the slop of life and to finally end up in the immaculate blueness of the sea at Cassis on a fine day of July. To lie down on your towel, and then forget it all for good, stuck between those fat old women showing their bared breasts to the South, muscular young fellows playing proudly volley ball in the water, as slim girls pass by them excited at the idea of showing off their perfectly fit bodies to those starving males.

Amen.

THE END