

That presence, that dream, by means of the vehicle of memory, came back in me; as if I were back in my dream, I returned to Pussycat's room.

It was now late afternoon, which is the time when the sun dies. This sun had already carved a highway for the pirates. A road that was dazzling the eyes of those living marauders and of the dead fish who were floating below that road. Both the pirates and the dead fish, though they were traveling, no longer cared where they were going.

The pirates' teeth were whiter than those of the fish preserved in the brine that was both inside and outside their bodies. As the sun set while all the lights of the world spread, the pirates began to hallucinate.

Pussycat was sitting at her desk. I said, "Hello." Then we went down to supper, together. Lots of schoolgirls were already in the dining room. They had become sick of masturbating.

They sang,

Evening prayer

We spray over everything.

Our kind of coming will never stop.

Just like Jesus Christ comes in our cunts.

I told Pussycat, "I no longer care what my sexuality is." I looked down at the food under the glass counters. Each fake silver container, down there, was holding a different sort of inedible or poisonous substance. Pussycat, because she was mean, told the school food servers exactly what she wanted to eat. I didn't have the courage. I didn't know how to do it.

I whispered, "Rice and salad."

As soon as I had uttered these words, I was more lost than before. Because I hadn't ordered any protein. Any human

knows that you need protein to live. I was announcing out loud, to all the other schoolgirls, that I wanted to die. Every girl looked at me. They were no longer interested in masturbating. Through their looks, they were telling me that I was the stranger, that I would carry strangeness to wherever I wandered. Because their eyes were doing this to me, I wanted to trash their faces, because, after that, I wouldn't care what they thought about me.

Instead of doing what I should have been, getting rid of all schoolgirls, I turned again to the school's menu. There, every item was based on beef.

"Southern beef" was the one I liked best.

All of the schoolgirls were clamoring for their meat when I left to go to the bathroom.

Far from the madding crowd, I found myself inside the school toilet. It was significant that the only way that this room could be entered was from the outside. Baby lobsters, blobsters, in a row were leaning against one of its outer walls. They were miniatures of the dragons who lived in the oceans that lapped the edges of my bed every night, monsters who were ready to devour me as soon as I moved away from my bed.

They were waiting for me. As I looked right into their eyes, they began to glide toward me. There was a wall. I was watching when one entered through a crack.

More penetrated through an increasing number of cracks. My cracks: I was no longer safe.

I fled from the place where we, the girls, had been safe. "The only bathroom in girltown," Pussycat had said. That place, cracked open. Fled in such a panic that I abandoned all my money and my shoes.

I knew that if I went back into there, to get my shoes back so I could walk again, I would lose my life.

I returned to the toilet.

Now I was safe because there was nobody in the place except for one lobster who was such a baby that he or she couldn't hurt a soul. My shoes and ten dollars were still sitting on the floor. I saw that the tiny lobster had emerged from the one crack that was in the wall.

In its bottom.

I took my time picking up my belongings. Lobsters of all sizes were gliding toward me.

Pussycat had come back to me.

### **Pussycat Is Taken from Me**

The days, and mainly the nights, passed without any more incidents, and then it was Christmas. Christmas is the time when schoolgirls are forced to separate from each other.

Every girl had to go back to her family, whether or not she actually had one. I was becoming hysterical at the thought of leaving Pussycat.

I knew that my father's friend, whose daughter's death had inadvertently caused my presence at this girls' school, was going to be with my father and me, for the first time since his child's demise, for the entire holiday.

He was some kind of poet, but poetry didn't do anything for me.

"I know," said my father; his words didn't mean anything to me.

A few days after I had returned to what I thought was my only home, Frost told my father and me what had happened to his child:

"My daughter had been so looking forward to this visit with you. Unfortunately, she died."

"I know," commented my father again. I could hear him saying that these days young girls are dying everywhere.

"There were long rows of stained-glass windows. Voices emerged out of places that couldn't be seen," the poet continued. "As if appearing out of nothing, a huge entranceway to a house rose up in front of our eyes.

"Her first ball! She was so excited. She was enchanted! Just as if I were her, I was enchanted.

"She was my only child. No one could be as seducible, as enchanting as she was.

"This ball formally began when all the fireworks exploded into the sky. And then, the sky. We walked, hand in hand, to that house.

"When we were inside, I saw what I had never before seen:

"Almost all the people were masked. My daughter was the only one who wasn't. She was just as gorgeously dressed as them. She wanted to see everything. I watched her eyes so that I could see everything . . .

". . . her first ball . . .

". . . in these eyes, I saw a child. When I looked the other way, I saw that that child, who was also wearing a mask like everyone else, wasn't recognizable as male or female. I noticed she was staring at my daughter. Then I saw that, under her mask, which she had taken slightly off her face, a mask made

up of layers upon layers of gorgeous owl plumage in grays and browns which the grays only deepened, she looked like my daughter.

"When I returned from the bathroom, my daughter and the girl were conversing with each other and laughing. The stranger had pulled off her mask: her visage was so beautiful, so extraordinary, that all who were standing near them began to stare at the two children.

"My daughter must have also found her extraordinary because she persuaded me to let her take the stranger home with us that night. She wanted to keep her with her.

"I didn't oppose my daughter; I had never opposed her; in fact, until the time of this stranger, I had never seen any reason to stop my daughter from doing what she wanted to do, and had only wanted to feel whatever she was feeling.

"I still don't understand what happened that night. Afterwards, my daughter, who had been my best friend, turned away from me. She wanted solely to be with this girl, whom she still didn't know. Not what I call 'knowing.' She called her Heathcliff. When I questioned Bad Dog about her friend's origins, she almost bit me. She said that it's natural for girls to have best friends.

"She seemed to relent and added, 'Daddy, it was too lonely for me when you were my only companion.'

"I understood because I've always understood what she was feeling.

"Then she asked if the girl who looked exactly like her could move in with us.

"I enquired about the unknown one's origins; I checked up on my daughter's information. I was more than satisfied.

"It's normal for girls to become too close to each other

until it's time for them to go out with boys. Though I'm a poet, I'm not unaware of the ways of the world.

"They spent more time in their bedroom, soon they were getting up so late that they were turning night into day. My daughter was getting less and less sleep; bags appeared under her eyes; the bags became bruises; the bruises were turning black.

"It was at this time that Bad Dog began to tell me about her nightmares. I was her father. Her nightmares were of animals."

I have nightmares and they're not nightmares. I didn't say this out loud because it was men who were doing the talking. I let them. Dreams are the mouths of us girls, and all the poets know this.

"Bad Dog told me that every night a big furry animal sniffed at her body. It—he or she—began to pace. Whenever its nostrils grazed her skin, usually her private parts, she felt a sharp, burning sensation which was so brief that it passed away by the time her consciousness registered that it had taken place. The pain returned—she didn't know from where—and grew until it turned into pleasure; the pleasure became so immense that she lost consciousness.

"From then on, my daughter was interested only in physical pleasure; then she felt so much pleasure for so long a time that she forgot her body.

"I told her that she was becoming sick. I was her father. I told her that she was sick. She had become this way because of selfishness. None of us should think only about ourselves.

"But she no longer cared about me. She spent all her time with that friend of hers called Heathcliff.

"I was her father. I could do nothing anymore."

The poet who had grown old bowed his head. "I hate those girls whose lusts are atrocious."

My father didn't know what he was talking about.

Frost explained. "My life has one purpose. I must decapitate all those girls. They're all too beautiful."

My father began to understand.

The writer described their particulars: "Even though they don't like boys, they follow those punks and let the punks follow them; they live mixed-up in graveyards. All their main organs are tongues, tongues which move in ways that break through the limits of the human imagination. After a girl has licked out a skull that's full of maggots—this is just one example—she places that organ between her girlfriend's lips. Tongues can do far more than this. Girls sit on skulls and go to the bathroom because there are no toilets in graveyards. They wipe themselves with their tongues. All of them are so insane for pleasure that they've forgotten to die and now, some of them aren't even girls."

I was beginning to know fear.

My father was frightened, because he believed his friend.

The latter quickly ended his tale:

"Malnutrition and sleeplessness had weakened her to such an extent that there was nothing I could do for her myself. She had begun to smell. I had no recourse but to call in a doctor even though I knew that she hated them.

"She informed me that, because she was going to have to appear before him, she would now do everything that she could to disobey me.

"I was totally helpless. You understand that I loved her.

"I called in a doctor and she mistreated him and I called

in another doctor and her behavior was fouler, and we went from doctor to doctor as if toward a reign of terror, a reign of the absence of language. The worse she became, the more doctors were called in.

"All of whom told me the same thing: she was going to die real soon.

" 'The girl,' the experts advised, 'doesn't need a physician; she needs a priest.'

"A priest is a man who wields the only knife that can come between two girls. I told my darling that the priest was coming for her between seven and nine the next evening. That he was going to solve all her problems. That she was going to die. Bad Dog looked at me as if her mind was already dead, and then, abruptly and alternately, she vomited over me and rubbed the lower front of her torso, which, I had instructed her, she wasn't supposed to touch.

"She died.

"She died in the arms of her friend before the priest was able to come."

My father was overcome by this story. We had found ourselves in that graveyard where I used to spend as much time as possible in the years when I had been lonely. Before I had been sent away to girls' school.

The section in which I was sitting was dark, grassy. I had been thinking about Pussycat's body, so I didn't notice that I actually was gazing at her. She must have been on a walk. The old poet saw her and screamed. "She's one of the ones!" He picked up a hatchet that was lying by a tree.

Pussycat made a face and dropped out of view.

My father and his closest friend discussed ways and plans to behead all the unnatural girls who had made this graveyard

their home. Girls under the dirt who placed their hands inside each other's cunts and drew them out, muddied and bloodied. Put these fingers into their own mouths. Lips left brown and red.

I knew.

I knew what Pussycat wanted to do to me and I knew that my father wants to kill me, so I left.

Together, Pussycat and I disappeared.

### LOOKING FOR A PUSSYCAT

Finally, Pussycat and I were able to have sex.

I talked to her for hours because I was shy. Then she put an arm around me, my back to her. We were sitting together on a crumbled wall by a duck pond. Dead ducks. I turned around and kissed her, I think because I had been waiting to for a long time and because I believed that I was supposed to and because I wanted her. The moment I put my lips on hers, she did it back to me. She asked me to place laundry clips around the nipple of one of her breasts. When she started to tell me what to do, I did what she ordered because I thought that I should, but I was feeling only curious.

"Doesn't it hurt?" I asked while I was moving my hand away from a clip.

She replied that usually she did this to herself. She had never before allowed anyone to do it to her.

I wasn't feeling anything, or I don't think that I was feeling anything.

Then I did the second thing to her that I had never before done. I was still doing what she told me to do. I was

frightened of hurting her, too scared to do what she desired me to do totally. I was feeling just about every possible feeling that can exist.

She didn't and couldn't get off, either because I was bad at doing exactly what she wanted done to her or because while I was doing those things, the confusion of my emotions was apparent to her.

While we were doing all this, hours passed; when I looked beyond Pussycat, the night was no longer black. Soon it would be no longer night; soon a gull would be honking at the beginning of a cloud and so I told Pussycat aloud that I didn't know what I was doing, that I felt very lost.

Either she didn't understand what I was trying to tell her or else she had no way of dealing with sexual inadequacy and stupidity. I think. Brusquely, she said to me that she came only once a night. She turned me over and climbed on top of me and put three of her fingers into me and she really knew how to do this, how to do this just like I like it, and I came and came and kept coming while I was asking her to put her whole hand in there, but I was too small, and I wanted her to do this to me till after the end of time.

I was able to do for her what she couldn't do for me: under her instructions, I did it for hours, I believe, and so then she wanted it harder than I was giving it to her. I was even more terrified to do this because I feared that I was going to damage, to hurt her; that was just an excuse; I knew that I was unable to give her pleasure.

What I can't accept is that I might not have wanted to give her pleasure. At the end of that night, Pussycat left me.

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At first I wasn't upset, because I didn't understand what was taking place in me and outside me. Afterwards I realized that I was bad at sex and that Pussycat wasn't going to return to me. I wanted her back because I wanted to be alive; I thought that I needed to know who I was so I could be alive.

I didn't understand, at that time, why the loss of Pussycat was the loss of myself. Then I remembered that when we had first met and for a long time after that, we didn't fuck each other. As soon as we started to be sexual with each other, we were that way all the time and everywhere; we turned the world private, into our bed.

By writing this, I'm reversing reality again.

We did that then, reversed reality, for to make the public world private is to destroy privacy, to open yourself up not only to your girl, but to all that lies outside. By fucking each other, Pussycat and I traveled to the edge of a territory that was unknown and, perhaps, unknowable. Into territories whose existences I had never experienced before Pussycat touched me, yet somehow had suspected.

They were the lands of lost memories. Before Pussycat came with me.

My own strangeness made me helpless. I was helpless because of Pussycat. I didn't depend on her; she was wrong about that. Rather, when I was with her, I was a baby: I couldn't name what I was seeing, I couldn't name all that I was hearing. I smelled only Pussycat. There was only Pussycat.

She left me.

It was a dream that led me to the witch.

I dreamt I was in prison. I had no idea why.

Actually, prison wasn't bad. My prison looked like a

spacious cell with two doors. The main door was three windows, each of them like the others, together almost as huge as the wall in which they were set. Beyond their clear glass, a formal garden led to a sea which couldn't be seen.

As I faced the sea, the other door, on my left, gave way to a narrow hall where there was an opening to the outside.

It was a pleasant prison cell.

A lot of girls visited me. So I must have been allowed to have visitors. I didn't smell to the girls because I regularly took a shower under the faucet that sprang out of the hall wall. The faucet was so long and powerful, as if it were a hose, that it shot liquid all the way into the cell.

My girlfriends always asked me the same question. When a girl asked me, "Why don't you escape?" I said, without understanding my own reply, "Because I don't want to abuse my privileges."

When Ariadne agreed to help the man she considered her only love kill her half-brother, she wasn't abusing her privileges. But he didn't believe he was her lover. I wasn't thinking about that when a man walked into my cell. He was so old and fat, he was a poet. He stooped, carried a painting half his size wrapped up in a brown paper bag. Managing somehow to bend down, placed it on the clean cement that was underneath a folding table, the only furniture in the cell.

More girls entered. "Oh," they were saying, "so this is where you've been hiding out."

"But I can leave whenever I want to."

Whenever is the night. I ride my motorcycle between the night as if I'm flying through it. Until the night will end.

I'm on a Virago that feels like my two real ones, only the one I'm on is too high up: I'm riding just outside my control.

Handlebars that think they're the grips of a lateral-raise machine rise up from the bike frame straight into the air. I don't know how to act in the face of this strangeness. So I tuck the chrome under my armpits. I'm still high, not falling, in no way safe. I've become strange. I try bending the silvery bars down as far as they'll go, opposite to how they were, different from prison bars, and I continue to climb the narrow country road on which there are no lights.

Then I descend, still beyond control, down the continuation of the road. Bottom is a top; the top's a ceiling; the ceiling's one of the cement floors of the largest office building in the city. I'm now riding around the edge of its roof, where there's a narrow track, around and around the top of the city.

And below me lies the night. Up here where all is cement, where there is no obstruction to riding. Up here, on top of this building, my bike goes over an edge.

I go down with her. Abandoning her, I grab, as if leaping, at the black metal rail that runs around the building's edge.

There's a slab of hardened cement next to the guard rail from which I'm managing to hang. One of its ends is attached to the roof-floor; the other hovers two or three feet above the floor. A human has enough room to crouch, crunched, there, between cement and cement.

A perfectly round hole in the slab lies over its mirror, its twin, in the cement floor and in the slab under that floor, hole over hole, hole below hole, I fall and crawl, until I reach bottom.

I realize that bottom is the bottom of a parking garage.

All the girls find me in the bottom of this world. They cry, "Oh, you're not dead."

"I didn't die."

"Instead of being dead, you're in the bottom of a car garage."

"I can't stay and talk with you," I say. "Because I've got to get back to prison as quickly as possible, before anyone notices I've escaped. If they have noticed, I'll be killed."

Girls were still piling into my cell, so I began to think maybe it was okay to live here, in girltown, here where I was safe, unlike the rest of England, which was a disaster. Then the police walked in.

They were the visual twins of the Secret Service. They were in my cell because they wanted me. They looked like each other.

I watched them do to the other girls what the fascists did to their victims at the end of *Salò*. I saw blood on one elbow.

All the girls were now males. They were dead. I was about to be offed.

I had to find out why I was bad at having sex, so I visited a witch.

It was difficult to find one. I tried taking a train. When I got off, there weren't any humans.

Instead, there was an ocean. On this ocean, fishing boats slept; the sun, day after day, perhaps days beyond years, had been baking and drying them. As if they were alive.

It was the new world. A signpost said: " ➡ London (You'll Never Get There)."

On the other side of the water, a few buildings rose out of land that was lower than the ocean. Lower, closer to the imaginary center of the earth.

It seemed all sand.

Here decay was in stasis. Buildings and sand were the

same color. The pier had lost its connections to the land. Sun shone over everything.

Hanging from one of the old wooden walls, another sign: "Fish Market." Below "Fish," an arrow pointed to "Restaurant Upstairs, Bar & Grill."

When I saw the half-eaten fish under this sign, I thought of Pussycat.

A piece of paper that had remained glued to what was now too dirty to be a window showed all the food that was offered. The prices were high.

There were no longer humans.

This building's insides were larger than its outside:

A bar whose wood was the same color as the air out there stretched from one side of the room to the other. Small windows behind the bar, when clear enough to be windows, showed sand mixed with fish. Fish sandwiched.

There was no furniture on the other side of the bar. People used to dance there. There were some small folding tables and chairs that faced away from a second group of windows through which the sea could be seen.

The living world had been left to the animals: in the sea, a young seal dove under, leaping upward, a half-circle, fell down again. Long whiskers covering all of her face, an old seal floated past. She no longer blinked: her pupils had become eyes and lay open to all that was outside.

Water was meeting its outside. The two seals remained right here while light withdrew from the rest of the world.

I had to go to the bathroom. At that threshold, I saw a sign posted on the wood that read: "Circe ➡ ."

I followed this arrow through a copse of laurel trees until I

came to a structure that seemed to be a dead hospital. Below an X dug into three words in which there were the traces of a B and a C, someone who could barely write had scrawled "Circe." I had reached my goal.

The sun was no longer.

There was nothing on the walls inside. I seemed to be in a lobby. Since there weren't any receptionists handing out forms, I walked through this vestibule, into a smaller room. Then I waited. No one came for me. I stood up, crossed the hall which I had just walked down. An elevator stood open.

I rode it to the third floor.

The hall I was in was empty. I remember patients shuffling by me. Hospital beds rolled by, under whose sheets there were humans. On each side of the hall, nurses watched this parade. I strolled further down the corridor. A copper plaque off the door of the room on my left said: "Mammary Recovery."

No words can do justice to the charms of the woman who was standing inside. Her eyes were brighter than stars strung through a sky. There was so much charm in her voice that when she spoke, words themselves caressed the enraptured air. No wonder I was faint.

After telling me her name, she said, "Nothing ever happens around here—that's my motto. If you've come on business, gal . . . well, if I were you, I'd get the fuck out of here.

'Hie thee away,  
clit between your legs,'

as the saying goes . . ."

"Please," I begged, "don't add insult to my injuries . . ."

"Oh, you're the artistic type. Well, you're used to begging for everything.

"This town," she continued, "is a plague-ridden countryside where there's nothing but a bunch of corpses who're being pecked to death and vultures who're the peckers. No one can make any money here and our asses are sitting on the faces of the rich. Because they like to live near the source of culture, but they don't want to live in it. Too many poor people in culture. The folk who live here either are worth fortunes or else are fortune-hunters. You must be the latter."

"O Circe!" I exclaimed or explained, "I can't get it up anymore!"

"That has nothing to do with me," she replied.

I wanted it to have something to do with her, I wanted to be cured of the lack of love in me, so I showed her the kiss-off epistle I got from Pussycat.

*I've never been into sex the way you think I am.*

*I'm happy that you're such a lousy fuck because now I've got a girlfriend who is hot; next to her, you're nothing. A half hour after we met, she shoved my body up against the filthy film office wall where I work and she bit me. I still have to wear, when I'm in public, a high collared sweatshirt to cover up the gigantic bruises. Otherwise I'd get arrested. I wish that I could show you all my bruises. After she bit me, I gnawed at her legs. I didn't mark her. Now we spend every minute of the day together and all the nights have turned into sex.*

*If I were you, O<sub>2</sub>, I'd do something radical immediately like change everything about myself. The way you now are, at the edge of death, I don't understand how you're able to*

*stay alive. If the totality of your body and heart acted like your cunt, you'd be at the undertaker's.*

"What a lively ex-girlfriend," Circe commented. I showed her the letter I sent back to Pussycat.

*Dear Pussy,*

*The worst thing was that I was unable to possess you.*

Together, we proceeded into the hospital's operating room, where there hadn't been an operation in years. Here the witch had made her headquarters. While we were going into the room, she informed me that she couldn't cure me. No one is able to resurrect the dead and bring back sexual desire. While she was mumbling, some of her spit hit my face. "But if you pay me enough, anything might happen."

I explained I didn't have any money because my father hadn't sent me to business school. But if she'd cure me, I'd let her fuck me. "I'll do anything so that I can get kissed and loved again."

She led me by my hand into her bedroom. The operating room for breast-cancer patients. The walls were green. A cot stood in its middle. Machines, looking like animals out of Dr. Seuss, extended long rubber tubes to the bed.

The reign of Pentheus had ended. Circe instructed me to spit three times, then drop between my breasts, three times, some pebbles which she had charmed and wrapped in soiled toilet paper. She began to test my virility.

I didn't have any—virility—so she started to walk away: "You can't be cured, dimshit."

"Try me!" I threw myself bodily into her arms and tried to kiss her until I could kiss no more.

"Maybe you've got your genders mixed up," she murmured.

I was so desperate that I began to masturbate. It had nothing to do with her. "No one can cure me," I moaned in the sort of agony that signals the approach of death. "Never again, during all the hardships that life brings, will I be able to seek for comfort. Never again will I know the laughter of a child. These are only some of the joys sexual pleasure brings . . ."

My clit was a little girl who shied away, then dove under a long board of wood. Wood lay under wood; therefore, a hand was formed, its fingers linked, clasping. Beyond, there were pirates.

This little girl said:

"Have to open up. Which is to open outwards. At that time, the sensations will start deep within there.

"But now the water is calm, grows stiff, stands upward. Deep within quite a number of stalks, the water is rising up from the bottom; the marsh is mucking and rising, thickening dead fish skins; there's no need to come when everything is sparks, thick and sparks; I come fast."

After a long silence, the witch came back to me. "Well, there's one person who can cure you. But you'll have to do what she says and not what you say."

Her left hand clasped one of my breasts and by this breast, led me to her bed. What had once been the operating table.

She said that she was going to give me something to drink. A stove was sitting by the sink, which was pretty rusty;

over one of the stove's burners, a pot enormous enough to brew tea for an army. Into the pot, she dropped a bag of beans, forgetting to get rid of its plastic, and a decayed pig's cheek. She didn't put in any water, so everything caught on fire. Circe ran out of the room . . .

While still masturbating, I said to myself,

" . . . calm, just vibrations within gray mist.

"That's just an image.

"Vibrations turn into water as they turn over. The more they're becoming rigid and turning over, the more they're simultaneously moving outward and wanting to do all this more until the whole will be convulsed. Where will I be? But not yet, as yet still thickening miasma, sparks like flies all over each other, each fly a little orgasm until everything is shaking, going down, disappearing in cycles, will never stop, down and down while moving and the rhythms of the universe deepening; how could this stop now?"

I was thirsty, so I took off my clothes.

The witch came back into the room and told me that the tea had fucked up so she was going to feed me. "I'm veggie, so if you're going to be cured, you're going to have to do what I say."

She took a garlic out of a barrel under the sink, peeled off a few of the larger cloves. She got hold of a leek, chopped it up with the garlic, put her hand into some of the dirt on the floor that was coming up through the linoleum, mixed in the garlic and leeks, and rubbed the whole mess into my skin.

I was smelly. We both drank red wine and shared a cigarette.

I couldn't tell what I was smelling anymore. I looked at her.

Just when I thought that all the witch spells were over and that I no longer had to fear what might happen to me, just when I thought that now I was safe, the witch came back, though I hadn't known she had disappeared, wearing a harness and a huge gray dildo. She dipped her instrument into a cracked egg cup and waddled over to me. She dipped her instrument a second time.

I think we were both too drunk to know what was going on. It hurt. Maybe in response to my cries and maybe not, she pulled it out of me so she could rub some of the ointment on my lips.

Now I'm going to interview myself.

Questioner: Did the ointment smell like her?

Me: Yes.

Questioner: How can you best describe the odor?

Me: Like a witch who's just died.

Questioner: What happened next?

Me: She soaked my thighs in sauerkraut juice. I dared to ask her a question.

Questioner: What was that?

Me: Why?

(Pause.)

She said that she wanted to teach me not to take the Mother Nature thing too seriously. To show me that one vegetable is as good as another vegetable. She picked up a nettle stalk and, wearing a glove to protect her hand, began to whip me on my front below my navel.

I decided I had had enough pain. I ran away.

Questioner: There was nothing that you could have done that would have touched her.

Me: I realized that only after I ran away from her.

It was only after I had run away that I knew that she was the only woman on earth who knows everything, and, therefore, the most desirable. If she would only have had pity on my ignorance and have let me battle myself to be with her and have taught me, I who am always so bad, I who have fucked up my whole life, Pussycat, where are you? O witch of the night, where are you? Will I ever talk, *really* talk, to anyone ever again I am this alone if only the witch had loved me, but I don't know where she is anymore. Maybe my sexual parts, which are now dead, were created that way, maybe turned that way by a dead society, maybe buried alive by other witches. I didn't mind her smearing those smelly liquids on me and then spanking me, because I knew that I was guilty, that I was a brat and that I am always a brat, so I need someone to take pity on me, not just anyone. A real witch. But she threw me out.

The witch tossed me out on my head, so now I am exceptionally bad at sex.

Only let me return to my former love, let me return to love even if love did whip me, on the brown tips of my nipples, with nettles. Actually, love did worse to me: She made me walk naked except for a pair of cowboy boots down a highway in Italy. She made me masturbate in a bar in Berlin where a German woman, because she was watching this, became so disgusted that she had to leave. In those days replete with desire

and tears, life was good; now, at night, I sleep with my pillow between my legs and pretend that it's my sweetheart.

Night after night.

Others have been hounded by gods and implacable fate, those three women of the hairs, not only me.

Ariadne loved a guy and committed a crime for him. She abetted in the murder of her half-brother, who happened to be a monster. And in this way unraveled the labyrinth. The man for whom she had done everything, and perhaps more, after she had turned away from everyone in her life in order to be with him, left her. Left alone with no one to turn to, no life.

Like me.

Then I cried aloud, I must get rid of Pussycat!

### IN THE LIGHT OF THE MORNING OF THE WORLD

There are such things as ghosts. Death does not all things end.

Pussycat as a corpse came back to me in a dream.

She was wearing the same hairs she had taken with her to the grave. Standing so close to my head that I could smell her, she said:

"There are such things as ghosts. Death does not all things end.

"And pale yellow escape shades out of vanquished graves."

You see, Pussycat by me was seen to lean over bed, though near the roar of just buried freeway. When I could no longer fall asleep realizing love just dead, my bed and new reigns of chill and pain.

The same she had with her in which she was buried little cunt hairs, the same eyes, one side of her shirt had been burnt, and always worn on finger the ring its pearl had eaten away fire. Surfaces Death's had turned black and blue her lips' liquor. Breathing animation and these words she let go, though thumb bones were rattling their own hand bones:

"Slut, but for better what girl can hope,

"you already asleep, how can?

"Already you have forgotten our desperate crimes:

"my by nocturnal deceptions worn-down window

"through which dropping down a rope to reach you I hanging  
how many times

"by the other snaking around your neck hand!

"Often sex occurred publicly, genitals joined;

"made hot skins our streets.

"Too bad for Our Silent Pact, whose obviously lying promises

"unable-to-hear has torn the winds to pieces!"

"Listen. When I was dying, there was no one. There's no one in my life. I had no one to turn to because I'm alone. If you hadn't deserted me, O<sub>2</sub>, my life wouldn't have turned out this way.

"I would have done anything for you if you had stayed with me. I would still be alive.

"There's no one who gives a shit about me dead. Is there anyone now scaring away all the demons, ghouls, flesh-eating birds, and poisonous snakes who are living in my grave and resting on top of me? No. This is what reality is: instead of you

being with me, as soon as I died, the deaf winds dropped a broken brick on my head.

"This is what happens to those who have loved.

"You're complaining that I left you. But who saw you at my funeral? Who saw you, at that funeral, shed a tear?"

"Perhaps you didn't attend my funeral because you couldn't have borne the reality of so much pain. Perhaps you couldn't bear that I was no longer with you. Perhaps you couldn't bear that I could no longer protect you, especially from the realms of loneliness. Or perhaps you weren't present at my funeral because you didn't want to realize that you're going to die. If that was the case, O<sub>2</sub>, why didn't you just put a halt to my burial? I've seen you do things like that before. Even when you weren't crazy in love. Or why didn't you throw yourself on top of me inside the coffin while it was still in the mortuary? Then, why didn't you start to fingerfuck me? That would have stopped the funeral. Why didn't you throw yourself into my crematory flames? We could have had sex there. I know you're fascinated by Near Eastern cultures. There's a lot of things you could have done if you had wanted to, but you didn't because you didn't want to stop me from dying.

"Hasn't love ever mattered to you?"

"There are some things that you could have done that are normal: you could have bought me perfumes. Do you think I want to smell to everybody for the rest of my life now that I'm dead? You could pick a little flower from a dead person's grave and give it to me. Or you could get me drunk. On red wine. That's the best. Then we'd have a good ol' time.

"There's nothing better to do when you're dead.

"Your problem is, O<sub>2</sub>, you don't know how to love."

I said back that it was she who didn't know how to love and that's why she died. That now I was unable to get it up because I was being faithful to her. That this is how much I love her.

It was she who had abandoned me; never I her.

She or the corpse with hair ignored me just like she had all the time that we were alive.

"Therefore—I've proved it," I positively stated. "You never cared for me."

"Now you have a chance, O<sub>2</sub>," the corpse answered me back, "to make up for all the wrong that you've done to me, a chance to show that you're able to love.

"Remember Liquor and Noun, two of our classmates? They hatched a plot against me: Noun spit her saliva into a glass of red wine; Liquor handed that glass to me. Because they were jealous of the hot sex we were having.

"This is what you're going to do to them: Burn off part of Liquor's leg; then make Noun confess that she likes to kill people. You know, Noun used to be a whore. Not just any whore. She used to walk the streets. Cheap as they come. Not just any streets. The streets that no whore worth her salt would go near. Cheaper than anyone comes because, on that street, she would put her lips around anything. That's why her spittle can now poison anyone. Petale, unlike you, brought flowers to my grave, so Noun spit on them. Then, she spit on Petale. Petale today has wrinkles.

"Remember Lalage? That child who followed me around and loved everything that I touched. Noun has got hold of her. The child, forgetting who Noun was, said my name in front of

her; Noun twisted the child's hair, then hung her from this twist on a nail. No one knows that child's suffering.

"I know that you're a great poet, O<sub>2</sub>, and that you wrote about me all the time in your poetry. I will never deny the love for me that lies in your words; I know, as well as you do, how words lie. I will never put you down or hate you because you lie. I know that I mean everything to you. I swear this, I swear by the Fates, the three hags or that triple barker, and my mother, and may this gentleness in my swearing make the world gentle to me, I swear that I love you and am faithful to you. You wrongly believe that I rejected you. I've never fucked another girl.

"If I'm lying, in any manner, in any possible mode, may a snake who looks like a human cock lie on top of my bones and make his home there, on whatever is left of me, and hiss.

"For I love only you."

Now all my emotions came back to life, woke up like the Sleeping Beauty that all emotions, especially the most horrible ones, are. Free, I was, before I woke up, able to ask Pussycat to tell me what death is like.

Pussycat threw back her long, wet hairs both above and below her and replied:

"Demons live in the netherworld. All of them have cocks.

"It was here that I saw the source of human life, the water of the world. All waters flow down to here, then up again. And here lies the egg, the only phenomenon which is without origin.

"The egg is the one which, every time the world ends, bursts into flames. Its fire eats up all that remains of tripartite reality.

"There's another fire, whose name is Fire-Mare. This is the origin, or story, of that second fire:

"There was a boy who was so upset that there were humans and that humans were having babies that he didn't know what to do.

"He didn't know what to do with his anger so he gave it away to a dead horse. She was sitting in water.

"Replete with anger, she became the entrance to hell.

"There in the southernmost part of the world, flames began to shoot out of her mouth.

"I walked between those lips. There I journeyed down, past the netherworld in which all the demons lived, into a pit which was bottomless. A hole, a cave.

"I was in Hell, where dead people live.

"People die so that they can learn things. This is the reason why those who are living, still alive, travel into the land of the dead. Down there, I asked a corpse why there is evil in this world.

"The corpse, nameless, clarified my question for me: 'There was neither good nor evil until humans were born, until creation began, until humans started having babies.'

"Me: 'Was there anything before humans started fucking and impregnating each other? Anything prior to good and evil?'

"Corpse: 'Yes.'

"Me: 'What?'

"Corpse: 'Amniotic fluid. In other words, inside was outside and is outside, and no inside, no outside, and vice-versa. In other words, the demons. Afterwards, when creation took and is taking place, the demons became corrupted.'

"Me: 'How could they have become corrupted when no corruption existed?'

"Corpse: 'They became replete with anger. They were angry that there were humans, that humans were making babies. The humans were using semen solely to re-create themselves. Note that both men and women have semen.

" 'The demons wanted semen to remain only semen so they took all the semen that they could get their hands on, protected it by locking it up in a cave. A cave deep within, in the darkneses of the highest mountain, where the demons kept their home. Patala, their communal womb. Patala, the name of that underworld part which is the demon body.

" 'Soon the demons owned all the semen. Yet they still didn't want there to be any semen. In the human world. For they had become greedy, antisex, antipornography demons.

" 'When humans were created, they created gods. Due to their nature or to human need, the gods were hungry: the humans had to keep feeding them.

" 'The demons didn't want this type of human procreation either, this creation through imagination. Imagination has its own semen. So the demons stole every morsel that a god was about to munch, to chomp, so the gods began to starve.

" 'Then the whole world lay in starvation, in poverty. All caught in starvation, in poverty, except for those demons who were not of this world. There was almost no more semen anywhere.'

"Now I listened even more carefully to what the corpse was telling me.

"Corpse: ' "Oh, god," scream some of the humans, "how are we going to live? How can we defeat evil? We don't know what evil is, yet here we are, starving. Are we evil's cause? Are we or our gods the cause of our own demise?" ' ' "

"Pussycat, I want to fuck you again," I cried.

She continued to describe what it is to be dead:

"The corpse told me how all the people yelled and demonstrated against the demons who were evil, whose evil was inescapable because the refuge and the castle of the demons was impregnable. Where the semen was hoarded, where all the treasures of the world lay buried.

"And the gods screamed more loudly because they didn't want to starve. Being gods, they were more hysterical, more fearful, more desperate, more emotional than humans.

"The gods realized that they were going to have to ask a demon to help them survive. They turned to the demon who was unlike all other demons. Who had killed his father. Who, being strange, had to be by himself. He lived in a graveyard away from humans and most demons. There he sat, with his snakes and rats, a couple of demonic followers; he didn't care about semen. There he ruled no one in his loneliness.

"Me: 'It's Punk Boy!'

"Corpse: 'One day, Punk Boy's girlfriend, Ratty, asked him why he loved graveyards so much.

" 'Now listen to Punk Boy's words:

" " "I found my father fucking my sister. I stopped that one. After I had sliced off his head, not his dick, I became more alone.

" " "His head fell into my hands and remains there to this day. I call the two halves of this egg-shaped skull *heaven* and *hell*."

" 'Punk Boy's words got his girlfriend hot; everything that existed also turned her on.'

"The corpse paused.

"When Punk Boy heard the gods out, he agreed to fight against his own kind."

"Me: 'Why?'"

"Corpse: 'He had never wanted to remain as he was. Because he was alone, he knew his own kind wasn't his own kind. So he left everyone.'

"This was why Punk Boy lived in a graveyard.'

"Me: 'Wasn't he scared to live in a graveyard?'"

"Corpse: 'If there were going to be possibilities again, there had to be nothingness.'

"Punk Boy agreed, for his own punk purposes, to fight against the demons; he used the earth as his vehicle to travel over the ground of his mind; he defeated his own.

"Afterwards, the demon city was drowning and burning up; the body was drowning and burning up.

"Ratty wanted to go out and watch all this destruction. As if she had never seen it before. Watching the world turn into a grave, from where she was standing, she saw a big, fat rat.

"It sat on her lap.

"Who's this?" asked rat.

"The stupid girl didn't recognize her own child, who, because Punk Boy wouldn't give her a child, was Punk Boy himself, dripping with all the blood and guts of all the demons he had just killed.

"If there were going to be possibilities again, there had to be nothingness.

"Or: here is the world in which the demons have been defeated; here is the graveyard of the world. A baby's crying.

"Seeing the woman he believes to be his mother, the

child reaches for her tit. It's the end, or the beginning, of the world. She's seen horror; she's just seen the world end: she's dripping with blood and guts.

"He wants to drink her up. He's thirstier than any child who doesn't know want. He drinks up all her fear of men and anger at men and horror of them.

"He finishes drinking her; finally freed of horror, she realizes that he's her lover, Punk Boy.

"And that's what it is to be dead," Pussycat told me.

I knew that that wasn't what it was to be dead because, even though Pussycat was appearing as a corpse, she wasn't dead. Pussycat was a liar.

Even back when I used to lie on top of her.

Pussycat had abandoned me; I had always remained faithful to her.

I wanted to tell her what death really is, that death is the loss of love. The only death is the loss of love. I argued with her, because she was a liar, in the same way that she had argued with me. That in dreams lie the beginnings of all things:

"We were in a school. I was following you.

"As soon as we knew that we liked each other, we ran away from that school and from my father. We had lots of sex.

"Remember: when I saw you the next morning, in the light of the morning of the world, you were sitting with a bunch of girls at a table. Right in front of all of them—and I didn't know anyone—*publicly*, you rejected me.

"You don't know anything of all that happened next. You don't know anything about what's inside me.

"You put me in a wasteland and every part of me didn't

want to be there. Thought that, since there was nowhere else to go, I could no longer be. But I couldn't bear not to be. Dragged myself like a pirate whose legs have just been chopped off away from that place to the only other territory I had . . .

"A smidgen of land . . . in my mind . . . remembered . . .

"Searching through my memory, I found the two girls I had loved before I had met you. Before I had met you and so had no one in my life.

"I chose K—— because, since she was a wimp and had followed me around everywhere that she could, she had never frightened me.

"I was shy, but it wasn't as if I had any choice: I phoned K——. As soon as we began speaking to each other, all of my awkwardness about my past went away.

"While she was gossiping to me that now she was a he and living in a male-only society, I reached down to open a carton that someone had just placed at my feet.

"You're a liar, Pussycat. I'm not a great poet yet. I'm going to be. This constitutes further evidence of your ignorance of me.

"Inside the carton lay stacks of my books in Dutch. And the books' publisher was Dutch Penguin? I was a real poet.

"Since I now had credentials, I could contact I——, the other girl. She wouldn't have anything to do with me while I hadn't been . . . but now that I was published by Dutch Penguin . . .

"As in the case of K——, I had loved I—— and then abruptly dropped her.

"I was searching for I——'s phone number. Looking for phone numbers drives me nuts, so at the same time I was flip-

ping casually and carelessly through one of my Dutch books. Inside I saw photo after photo of me almost naked—I used to be in the sex industry—photos that proved my criminal past.

"The only problem was that the past as shown in these photos had never taken place. In one, sporting a feather boa, I was leaning over so deeply that my breasts right up to their nipples hung out of a stripper bra. I looked glam, but the truth is, when I was in the sex biz, I wasn't. Sex biz is low and sleazy.

"I think that this image came from one of your dreams about me."

The dead girl didn't reply. The dead never reply.

"I was hysterical. Almost none of my poems had been left in my book. There were only these depictions of me as sex-queen-publicly-displaying-cunt. I knew who was responsible. It was my agent! She was responsible for all the bad that had ever happened to me . . .

"I *had* to get hold of the only two friends I had left in the world, K—— and I——. I had a phone, but it didn't work. Because I didn't know anyone's number any longer. Each time I dialed a number on the black wall phone, that number led to another number . . . all these numbers formed a labyrinth around me, a labyrinth inside the phone receiver, a labyrinth from which I was never again going to be able to escape. Truly, I was doomed.

"I was doomed to become increasingly lonely.

"I found myself inside a bookstore whose walls were lined with books. To my pleasure, I learned that my friend K——, for whom I had been searching, owned this shop.

"I wanted to hear the reading that was just about to take place, but I had to listen to everything K—— was telling me.

As she spoke, her words turned into life: my agent's confabulating with my publisher; the latter thumbs through my Dutch book and says, 'This stuff's dated.' I know that he's referring to the sex pics of me.

"We should have pictures of her peeing,' he continues.

"I have to hear every single word that these two creeps in my life are saying and, more than ever, I have to be at the poetry reading because the reader is female and Italian, very important categories, but I'm hysterical. I'm hysterical because I'm repeating the question, 'How can I let this book become public? This book which is my book? How can I allow myself to be seen by the public as the lowest porn trash and slut currently alive?' Not that I knew who this 'public' was.

"K—— offered me her phone. It was the first ray of hope in my life. The appearance of hope allowed the commencement of revolt: I know what I'll do! I'll call all my girlfriends!

"I told them over the phone, 'I hope to hell this works—

" 'Girlfriends, you're going to infiltrate Penguin by pretending to be bona fide Penguin workers. After all, none of the real or boss penguins can distinguish one woman from another. Just show some tit. Like me in the photos.

" 'Now you've penetrated Penguin before my books have gone out into the world. Inside Penguin, inside the labyrinth of books, having located my book, on every porn phot of me, you shall stamp in big, bold, black letters: DYKE.

" 'Get it, girls?'

"All of it happened just as I had planned. The big penguins never noticed that their workers had changed nor that the insides of their books were altered. Those guys never read their own books.

"Thus, it is better to be alive than dead," I finished.

As soon as she heard these words, the corpse turned away from me, left me.

But I knew that she wasn't really dead, so I left her.

Free of her former embraces, free for the moment from my desire for sex, I awoke. Awoke, went down to the bottom of the world. Where girls become pirates. In the light of the mourning of the world.

## ANTIGONE'S STORY

*Hegel, or the panopticon, sees all, except for the beginning of the world. In that beginning, which is still beginning, there is a young girl.*

*Her name's not important. She's been called King Pussy, Pussycat, Ostracism, O, Ange. Once she was called Antigone . . .*

### From Antigone's Personal Diary

so I just got out I upped and left put it however you want

because it's all a piece of shit. The world I had been in. I don't have to give you the details because they've been repeated over and over, the whole story, every possible story, again, again, just walk into any bookstore and look at all the stories and they're all ours, anyway they were all mine, those repetitions, which I called representations, to me were prison. Prison. That's where Creon, my so-called dad, but he wasn't my real dad, he just wasn't perverted enough, wanted to put me. Put me away. He wanted to cut off my head and do worse things.

I won't anymore live in a world where paranoia's the only possible act of knowing.

If this new dad had stashed me in prison, that would have been a repetition because . . . you know what prison life is? Prison life's emotional appearance is boredom, then forcible identity-disappearance, because prison existence is repetition upon repetition so I lived in prison even before Creon wished to put me there, even before the future I walked out of, the future of Creon's incarceration of me.

Side-by-side the reign of prison and the reign of lies began:

Don't worry. I'm going to explain this.

None of you knows who my dad is. None of you even knows I had a real dad. But then you don't know me. My dad's name had and has been forgotten because, as a girl once said to me, he was a criminal and a murderer. He was gutter slime, whatever is worse because it can't be mentioned. All that is antithetical to human. My real father was all that is the enemy to humanity. You see that was why I was taught that I didn't have a father.

Taught, among others, by my fake father, Creon.

I know what my real father did. I know exactly what he did so I know how my blood smells. I know what it is to be human and I will never hide this. When they state that my father didn't exist, they're representing my father; all of them represented my father who was my incestuous birth when they said that I was naked, lewd, tormented by extreme wildness.

I want to return to my birth.

Do I have to tell you the names of my birth you who think you're not allowed to say those words?

My real father's creation of a state by patricide hid a worse crime: the disappearance of females.

Whatever I am I'm not a fucking liar I don't even know whether I fuck I got away from all this by a motorcycle. Anti-gone on a motorcycle. While Creon was threatening to shove me into prison, I took money from him, with part of it, bought a Jap bike. So my feet could touch this earth.

I'm going to get out, at that time I told myself, and simultaneously I'm going to learn to see.

I started learning something when I had a dream. The night before I set out on my 1100 into a country which I didn't know. I had been remembering how my sister and I are the only ones left. Perhaps.

During this night:

night—to mountains—there, humans were sitting in pools.

The mountains rose up into ridges, in the darkness. Pools sat almost hidden in the ridges.

All the land, mountains.

Afterwards. I wanted to go back there so I could sit in a hot, black pool. Inside the cold.

*To go is to return.*

When I was finally able to return, a disaster took place. Now I was traveling with a man who was older than me. But I couldn't sink my body in a pool because we had to leave before disaster sat everywhere.

The only hospital to which I could bring the man with whom I was traveling, the only hospital there seemed to be,

was located in the lower, in the dark, green world. Through the night I sat, waiting for him to emerge from surgical operations. There in that waiting room, I dealt with boredom by playing records on a turntable. A record by Arthur Miller. Side 1. Side 2 was all songs.

No one used turntables anymore.

The operations were over; he had come through.

Below the lower earth, earth appeared in the form of a shantytown: narrow paths ran between, and separated from each other, rows of paper-and-aluminum constructions. They seemed to be only walls. Deep holes became visible in the dirt mixed with bits of garbage, strange stains. Laundry hung down from the string loops connected to the paper-aluminum constructions and to the windowless windows.

I walked on top of this dirt, past door after door in the paper-aluminum wall on my right. I opened the fourth. Inside there were two gay men.

There must have been more people inside and all of us must have climbed into a car . . .

In that car as it was moving, a guy who resembled an ex-boyfriend of mine only because he was thin and blond told us, "I'm going to Japan."

Nobody seemed to notice because nobody asked him why.

"I'm going to Japan so that I can be cured of alcoholism. We're all alcoholics."

I thought he had a point. At which point, he vomited all over me.

I told him that we were heading to a disaster, that a major portion of the world was heading toward, and actually in the beginning of, disaster.

That in the mountains, it happened one night. The night when I returned to the mountains. Suddenly inside that night, when someone put his foot down, there was no more ground. All of the ground left was falling fast. That mud lies over mud. Nothing else. "All of this northeastern continent is sinking," I repeat myself so that everyone who is in the car which is moving will understand. "The only way we can stop this, we can save our section of the world from falling without end, is by carrying all of the water which is now part of the land up north, into Canada."

But I knew that that wasn't practical. That our part of the world had to go.

As soon as we came back to the paper-and-aluminum house, the boy vomited over me. I hate the smell of vomit more than anything else in the world except for lobotomy. Perhaps something happened in my childhood which I don't remember. My left hand, with a napkin, moved his insides off my flesh. I carried this paper which I called "the vomit napkin" over to the sink. It was white. Inside there, I washed my left hand more than thoroughly.

While I was washing myself in the sink, I had an image of a tattoo whose style was European graphic novel.

The vomit was gone. Pete, whom I know outside dream, said instead of asked, "Let's see your tats" and, without waiting for my reply, lifted up the back of my T-shirt so I had to move away from the vomit napkin that was sitting in the sink.

In its left corner as I left.

I was thinking, he just wants to see me naked but what the hell. I don't like people seeing me naked.

I was thinking while he was looking at me, it's good for me having him see me.

\* \* \*

up early on my motorcycle next morning bye-bye to daddy I've buried him so it's all over

Memory of Creon's voice: Women must learn to obey as well as men

after a lousy drive through desert 106 degrees beating on my head

how ugly California is when it's, here, away from the ocean. around me, flat land everywhere, but not flat enough to make the sky around it more than sky. Nothing has grown in this yellow-brown. Nothing grows in this yellow-brown. "They go fishing in a swimming pool," a big blonde in a taco shop comments upon this land.

There are almost no roads except for a freeway. When I turn off again, to fill up the bike, a trucker who's standing behind me tells me that he thought that the cop who was behind me on the freeway was going to get me for speeding.

"No, he was racing to the fire."

There had been a second cop who had driven up behind me, then sped off.

All along the roadside there were tiny fires.

A second trucker asks if I'm boiling in my leather jacket. I ask him back what's going to happen with the weather in this part of the world. It's autumn 106 degrees.

He answers me that the weather's like the government: you never know which way it's going to go.

"Sure you do," maybe I'm throwing my weight around,

"you know that it's going to take all your money." I remember an old friend of mine, someone who used to be a friend, a hot-shot media boy, saying in one of his magazine columns that nobody worth anything lives outside New York City. Outside, he said, there's nothing . . .

The trucker and I laugh.

More straight sun and my brains are fried.

I'm on the road and I must be worrying whether bad brains cause bad driving 'cause I start seeing car-and-motorcycle accidents. Can no longer tell which is which. Everything and everyone is all mixed up in these tremendous, differently colored piles, cutoff human limbs and shattered metal, glass shards. I see pavement after pavement covered, smothered, by red. Streaks of red, swipes of red: reflections of the sun left there in the sky. No more a night.

My brains.

I've been on this road several hours: everything's changing:

As if a world begins, hills houses. The entrance to a mountain range inside which roads are winding, ascends and dives through air which appears to be hanging.

I come down through the air into a number of deserted cabooses. One caboose says: "Motel." The mountains are rising up around me.

What did the man who was named Creon say?

Prison's not right for her pagan sort. Find a cave and wall her up in it. Bury her alive—with just enough food so that no one can say that I who am

the State am guilty. And that way she'll have plenty of time to honor all the dead who've been forgotten. While she's starving to death.

. . . I arrive at a sign that says: "No Trespassing: Road Not Maintained."

I decide I'll take a walk.

Everything, under my feet and around me, is brown, except for the greenery which is more extensive than the brown sky. If I keep on hiking, I'm going to come to something.

I climb about a half-hour when I see a mountain the next world over.

There's a clear, simple distinction, in this world, between brown and green; the line of demarcation, according to my vision, lies parallel to my position on my mountain.

When I was a child, I dreamt of a hill which was not yet a mountain. Its form fell between that of a small animal and a cock. Later I saw that shape in the west of England. The top half of the mountain I'm perceiving looks like what I saw in England, in the dream I once had.

The sun is licking part of its surface.

Rewriting while masturbating so that I can write, that is, see, more clearly:

to go in there is to penetrate the mountain: the castle, there are extraordinary pleasures inside the castle, velvets and a feast, the round table, only now it's rectangular

to climb up a crag is to come

I'm going to go in there now: to the water; it's hot; the woods are not the log that sits by the water; not sits, rather lies; flies, roaches, roaches lie everywhere; the flies want to be my skin, but I tell them, "Go away."

it starts deep within, too sunk within those woods to get out. The cold wood has now disappeared because I'm going to come any moment; I become lost in the wood; what love is; coming again is rising over a fence, like, into another territory. Over again. There's no stopping.

The cops haven't yet stopped me for speeding.

The doctor moves his tool right inside my skin, then down my leg. It emerges out of the skin below my right cunt lip: there the doctor makes a hole in my inner thigh while I'm watching him. I'm thinking, I don't want what is happening to me to happen, and simultaneously I'm thinking, it doesn't matter what I think. I know that it doesn't matter what I think and I want to begin to feel again, but it's too scary in this kind of world. When I walk away from the doctor, my stride is so stilted that I'm forced to know that an operation on me has taken place.

Back on my bike

the days of trees, tree after tree, until I stop seeing.

my second night in a town, this time a town which seems to work.

in the center of this town there's still, black water. birds, not humans, live here.

a white mallard is gazing in one direction; a black, the other. a spotted bird moves past the two who don't move. A teenager whose head is shaven walks across the green.

I stop seeing. A woman wearing a pink halter and pink shorts, fat and pretty, tells me that she likes it here, the life, while her boys scream they worship motorcycles, her husband's back where they used to live, down in Bakersfield which must be the hottest place on earth

as if the world no longer exists. My mother's mother who's still wearing her blue-white hair piled in waves on top of her head and looks like Joan Crawford as if Joan Crawford is still alive, remarks, "These are the nights of dread, of grief."

The first part of this going away is the discontinuation of seeing.

Memory of my words to Creon:

I agree, willingly, to your sentencing me to prison,  
to death: I'm leaving your world.  
In silence, in darkness, in solitude.

In the echoing caves of the north wind, now I, a  
child, halloo; on the open mountainside I'm running  
wild with the horses.

I'm seeing in dream:

### The Setup of Night

I'm lucky to have a job in this time of poverty. I'm in Santa Barbara. Down, on part of the beach, because I no longer have a home. This whole area looks like Newport Beach during the jazz festival.

There's lots of music going on so I'm going to stay on these sands even though there's nowhere for me to sleep.

My jewelry's in a box. The box, also, is mine. But my jewelry's the most beautiful of all: it's made out of chunks of colored and almost transparent glass.

All of the people who're now on this beach are girls who have sex with girls. I'm not like them. I, Antigone, no longer have a home.

In other words, I'm *on the beach* and at the same time I'm living at my girlfriend's house which is on the same beach.

I'm living temporarily.

I look at all the people who're inside. Her house. I see in this order: (1) a blond girl; I like how she looks; (2) a gay acupuncturist; (3) myself.

I check out all of the beds that are in this room.

A tall thing is lying on one of them. The acupuncturist, whom I've already seen, has just done it to him. Then, I see that the face is bloody . . . As for the top of that head . . . Whoo! I have no way of handling this sight.

Something, which is now unknown to me, must have taken place in this bedroom before I got here.

Maybe . . . "tall" has something to do with "gay." Now that it's time for me to go to bed, I'm thinking this because a guy whom I believe to be gay is showing me a silver eyelash. He's wearing it: two silver pins piercing the eyelid directly hold the eyelash to the eyelid. Since it's beautiful, both eyelash and eye, I want to own the former even though I'm scared of the pain. I don't actually know that it's painful to wear this.

Despite the pain, I have to pin the eyelash on to my own eye. While I'm doing it, I hardly hurt.

The tall, thin boy has left his eyelash in my hands so I can try it on again.

This time, when I attach it to myself, I have to insert many, many silver pins into the edge of my upper eyelid. Before I do this, I know that I can do this; so then, I do. Now I

never want to again give back the eyelash, but I have to, I have to give both it and my box of jewelry to the boy.

It must be hours past bedtime because I'm in the bedroom. There are so many single cots here that this is, now, a dorm room. I lie on mine. A girl who's pretty walks over, then climbs on me. The weight of her body feels good on top of me. I'm feeling wonderful because we're rubbing cunts even though it's taking a long time for each of us to get off.

She murmurs in my ear, "Fuck me." I shall.

realize that I've been at the top of the world because I'm falling now, long sweeping curves which seem to never end. Miles after miles of curves until there's nothing else but curves. Waking world is the same as dream world so there's no more need to dream. I've stopped seeing. Falling because the top of the world is descending with me; falling without danger because the top of a mountain can't tumble.

I remember I saw a sign which read, "The Shining." I can't return.

Falling until there's a bottom. At this point I cross water. Over a bridge made out of metal.

On this side I'm no longer anywhere so I'm aware I'm beginning to travel.

The night is made out of yellow Jell-O. Diamanda Galás is performing this night. Oh, yes, I know her, I tell a few girls who're younger than me.

The town I'm now in sits on the side of a hill; now and then narrow streets wind, out of it, up to the hill's top; everything resembles the town of Cambria but narrower, darker.

All of us, girls, are standing outside, on a street. This is

DG who's in front of me, but she looks like the Dean of the Chicago Art Institute. Her hair is curly, dirty blond. But . . . people change greatly.

On the other hand, the rock-n-roll crew consists of Ava, a girl whose hair is as dark as the real Diamanda's. But wavy. And some guys, I don't know how many 'cause I'm not looking at them.

Someone whom I don't recognize hands me a plate of yellow Jell-O.

Almost all of these guys, the ones in the rock-n-roll crew, are dating me. The only one who doesn't have anything to do with me is a goon. He's a goon because he pisses over anything he sees that doesn't move. Maybe this is his way of being scared of what does move. But I'm not a psychiatrist.

I'm in a bar with these guys, none of us doing shit, and this goon starts pissing in public. I'm never going to date him, never. But . . . but but but. This is where I stand right now. I went with one of the rockers and it just didn't work out between us. There's this second rocker. I'm into him; I don't know if he has any interest in me. If he doesn't . . . there's only the goon left.

The second rocker is interested in me because he's pulling my body into his. All that I want in this town. Now he's taking me down with him. Down, to the floor. It's made out of wood. We're not exactly in its center, but still, everyone's watching us, everyone who's in this subterranean bar: he rolls on top of me; he's about to fuck me. I never wanted this to happen. At least, not in public. I don't want to be this public. So fuck him! Now I'll never be with anyone again. Not with a man.

I leave the bar.

Death is another bar which lies several steps below the normal world. I'm at its threshold, but not yet in it. Its doorway is doorless.

This is the order of seeing at that threshold:

(1) In front of me and to my left, a guy sitting on a wooden stool, his visage wet with drops.

(2) In front of and below me, drops forming concentric three-quarter circles, drops or "seeds," on worn-down carpet.

(3) In front of me and to my right, the goon stands. From his waist down to his knees, he's naked. In the place of a cock, he has a mass of brown, wrinkled pudding or muddy flesh whose surface is marked by concentric circles. Out of this center pops up a very tiny cat-shaped prick. The texture of this pudding makes me think of elephants.

(3) explains (1) and (2): the goon has just urinated on the sitting guy.

I decide, I've had enough, so I get out. Out of the bar which I must be inside.

One result of all the piss is that I'm hanging out with Diamanda more than I ever have in my life. This, for instance, is exactly what happens when we're in the outside, on a street:

"Do you want to sleep with D?" a girl who's one of her real friends inquires.

The question makes sense to me because I suddenly realize that I have to sleep with someone because I haven't slept with anyone in ages.

Me, Antigone.

But I don't want to know this.

"Of course," I answer. These words, which I said before I thought them, tell me that everyone in the world is in love with Diamanda. Just as I realize this truth, Diamanda walks

on to the street as if the street's now a stage set. I see her this way: she's perching in a recess in a clean and white concrete building.

In there, the singer gossips about the ebony-haired girl, Kava. That Kava isn't her manager or even part of her crew: Kava only performs before she goes on. Actually, Diamanda confides in me, she doesn't like Kava.

Kava's history: she always and only has been a rocker; she used to have something or other to do with the Rolling Stones.

Now I know that Diamanda's attracted to Kava.

I have to get out. Maybe that's why I'm now shopping, why I'm in this yuppie boutique.

Here are only four racks of clothes. It's the disappearance of the world: whenever I turn around and look at any rack that's in this store, the clothes on those shelves are no longer there. I will never have anything to wear.

The only clothes which remain in the world are huge, chenille sweaters: they're piled neatly on the four shelves of one side of one rack. There're only autumn colors: deep oranges, brown which is always only one color, pale blues. I detest all colors except for red and black and they're not colors. I'm aware that I'm going to have to make do. I'm going to have to buy one of these things. And that I will not do, I, Antigone,

I refuse.

I will be \_\_\_\_ instead.

\_\_\_\_ is something impossible.

I'll be a girl pirate.

Flying.

Earth along the northern side of this body of water is calming down into hills. First, into green. Then, into red-

brown-yellow. Increasingly, into more yellow. At the same time, less foliage.

Only earth and sky left. All the people have passed away. There are no more signs pointing to specific geographic locations: there are no more locations.

After people comes gas. "Last Gas Station for 80 Miles." I remember when I was driving through East Germany. When there was an East Germany. On a back road. Away from the Autobahn. The strange bike I was on ran out of fuel.

Finally, a local motorcyclist stopped his bike.

I looked at him, patted my tank. "Gas."

"No gas here," he answered.

All the filling stations are gone.

Brown, red, and yellow curve slightly, descend into brown-yellow. The difference between ascending and descending has disappeared. Blue runs parallel to the horizon.

The flatter the land is becoming, the more I can see of it and of sky. Whatever there is of me, of being apart from water, earth, and sky, has become an act of seeing. Nights I no longer dream; I barely sleep. There's no way for me to return home because there's no one to go back.

I'm not lost. Seeing is becoming broader, higher and lower . . .

. . . petrol tanks sit in a mix of gravel and dirt . . . in the oasis, there are humans . . . a motorcycle kid and his girlfriend lean against a wall stuck in the bottom surface . . . within the restaurant, men with old faces lean over french fries burgers pools of red, here and there a lettuce leaf . . . the only females are waitresses except for the girl who's outside . . .

Humanity's gone away again . . .

Bye-bye . . .

I'm no longer lost nor found. I'm seeing.

Green begins.

As if greenery no longer matters, this greenery which is a town named Walla Walla, outside the greenery, while I'm passing a car that's drifting toward the shoulder, a cop in reflective blue glasses pulls me over for defying the law, then throws me into jail.

Do you remember the sad story of Cepheus's daughter? I write in my jail cell. She was unmarried, therefore an outsider, always in danger. What bitter tears she shed. They dripped from both her mouths. She had been happy before her father tried to murder her. Before the beginning of attempted destruction, she had lived with her father in that chateau, that collection of buildings, of walkways, each construction different from every other, thick greenery above and below, where she had many fabulous adventures.

Like me.

Like me, she had never wanted to leave her home.

She had only been going to a party . . .

As soon as she was at her destination, she no longer knew where she was . . .

In a wood-lined room too large to be a bar, but nevertheless a bar . . . she saw only three people. Two girls and a boy. The boy was blond. Even though he was hunky, he was hot for her. Only because, she thought, I'm a famous poet, even though I'm a child.

Both the boy and Andromeda became sloshed. Within this drunkenness that was like a room, he disappeared.

There were three people in the room that was like a bar. A boy whose hair was light brown stood with two other girls. He couldn't look at anyone else. Andromeda could understand his desire. She had never believed that the blond hunk had wanted her. The three children disappeared so that they could make out hard.

Andromeda was left with the liquor.

When she opened her eyes, the blond boy was holding her whole body and she knew that he liked every part of her, each section of skin, no matter what skin, because his hard cock was poking into her stomach, through her clothes which were between the two of them, but she didn't believe that he wanted her.

As soon as she began to trust him, she started to want him too.

These emotions made her drunk; in the drunkenness, the boy disappeared.

She was alone when child after child showed up for a party. It was going to be huge: she was going to become lonelier.

She had to get out of there because everything that was and that would be in this room would make her lonely.

Andromeda couldn't leave because she no longer knew where the chateau was. After all, her father had wanted to murder her. She hadn't written down its address. She had forgotten. Nor did she know the name of the owner. She didn't know who he was . . . an archbishop . . . something like that.

If only she had someone with whom she could talk. Someone who would understand her. Who might be adult.

She explained to a stranger, a man. Explained that she wanted to go back to the chateau but she didn't know exactly where it was.

He knew that she lived in the south. Inside her eyes she saw a map. Home was in the bottom. ". . . and slightly to the east." Slightly to the east was slightly to the left. "Near Cologne."

"Can I walk to that place?"

"Well . . ." His *well* was a word of doubt. "I'll call you a cab."

She hadn't known that such a thing could be done.

As if the sentence "I'll call you a cab" was a key, or because the increasing numbers of partygoers and soaring drunkenness heralded the emergence, the reign of a large and totally ordered group, Andromeda no longer hesitated. She left the room.

Unlike me, Andromeda didn't come out of incest. Her real father didn't make her mother suicide.

Her real father, not her fake father, tried to kill her.

She fled her real father and remembered that he had attempted to off her because *to get out is to remember*. That is, *to get out is to want to go back to a home to which one can no longer return*.

The beautiful girl got out of that room and found herself in snow. Its night was peaceful. The white snow was the same color as the black sky. She still wanted the blond boy, whose name was Perseus, though she didn't know this, so bad that she was hurting worse than she had ever known, but she couldn't see him. She could see all that lay outside. Snow, as if snow is black. Watched couple after couple, heterosexual, as if in a university, file up the narrow, dirt path to the door of that

great building. The path separated two areas of untouched snow. The walls of that building were brick red.

According to words she was hearing, here and there, these boys, these girls were going to a meeting of the Society of Conservative Youth.

Now she knew that she couldn't return to the party. To what lay inside the barroom.

Those bits of conversations that the beautiful girl just managed to overhear enabled her to start on her way home, back, as the man had shown her, down the white and brown path, here and there obscured by snow drifts. Unable to be certain of her direction, she assured herself, "I won't lose my way as long as I stay to the left."

Like me, she was willing to go to prison, like me willing to die in accordance with her father's orders because she wanted to do anything to get out of the society of which her father was head.

Words to Creon: Creon, I left your lousy world. Only a fool will now attempt to stop us girls. To halt our ecstatic singing. The death of reason isn't blackness, but another kind of light.

Andromeda talked to me. She told me that she was going home, back to her real bed between the living and the dead:

"Like I said," she said, "I was still wet for him. As if desire is muscles, my muscles were so big and tight inside me I had to do something. Then I knew I was where he lived.

"This was the last place I would have expected him to live. A two-story wood filthy ugly suburban house stuck in a small plot between two other ugly houses.

"All of it seemed to be empty. There

"I couldn't stop being cold, I had to  
that I walked through the open door. After  
knock. I found myself in his bedroom.

"There was no one nor any furniture

"A room beyond this room, though  
other house. Through the doorway the  
rooms, I caught a glimpse of a male-female  
you in a second,' the boy cried out drunkenly

"I realized that he must be thinking  
him to go back to work.

"Before he could find out who I actually  
an intruder and that I had broken into  
back to the front door.

"While I moved backward through  
room, I repeated the thought I had when I  
the doorway. 'I had better get out of here before  
finds me breaking the law in his space.' "

Andromeda never veered from her filthy  
the ground. Its sky turned back to black.

She began to see more and more: things  
closer together. She could no longer distinguish  
and concrete. Between what belonged to the  
to the city. She knew that she was at the  
square.

As she kept on walking, of course, she  
her left. A restaurant whose insides were made  
in the shape of a square. There, huge ugly  
round tables; a plant, one or two. She glimpsed  
two or three of the tables, which she thought

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"All of it seemed to be empty. There was still snow.

"I couldn't stop being cold, I had been walking so long that I walked through the open door. After all, I didn't have to knock. I found myself in his bedroom.

"There was no one nor any furniture in the room.

"A room beyond this room, though attached, was in another house. Through the doorway that separated the two rooms, I caught a glimpse of a male-female couple. 'I'll be with you in a second,' the boy cried out drunkenly to me.

"I realized that he must be thinking that I'm summoning him to go back to work.

"Before he could find out who I actually was, that I was an intruder and that I had broken into his house, I headed back to the front door.

"While I moved backward through my boyfriend's bedroom, I repeated the thought I had when I was looking through the doorway. 'I had better get out of here before he returns and finds me breaking the law in his space.' "

Andromeda never veered from her filthy path. Snow covered the ground. Its sky turned back to black.

She began to see more and more: houses. They stood closer together. She could no longer distinguish between dirt and concrete. Between what belonged to the country and what to the city. She knew that she was at the edge of a village square.

As she kept on walking, of course, she saw only what lay on her left. A restaurant whose insides were mainly outsides. Black, in the shape of a square. There, huge umbrellas opened over round tables; a plant, one or two. She glimpsed figures, sitting at two or three of the tables, which she thought were human.

I am no longer human, but outside.

It was at this point that Andromeda knew that she needed to ask for help. That she, according to every social stricture, structure, was hysterical maddened perverse foreign wasteful virginal nymphomaniac secret and smelled lousy. She might no longer know where she was going.

In other words, she needed someone to help her return to a home that no longer was.

She thought: Obviously, there's no one in this restaurant who's going to be willing to get near, much less help, filth like me, because this restaurant's posh. There's a tea shop across the street. In the area I used to be not able to see. I'm looking through its window. Inside, it's half a tea shop, half a butcher's. My sort of people might be in there.

These thoughts must have had something to do with the truth because the inside of the tea shop didn't contradict but rather expanded in detail that which she had partly glimpsed and partly imagined. Inside there were all sorts of small, interesting objects, and dead meat, and the proprietors, an elderly male and an elderly female, large and rather slobby, were kind to her. They knew where her home was located even though she could no longer remember anything.

"We'll call you a cab."

The time that lay between the calling of that cab and its arrival which might not happen:

Andromeda was somewhere else. In a room large enough to be a whole abbey. This room had been carved or hollowed out.

Through a large window that was sitting in front of her eyes, Andromeda saw its replica, or the same window. Saw,

through that window, into the abbey's replica or the same abbey.

Inside there, every person and every object was larger than usual. Two boys as Greek gods or Greek gods who were boys stepped through the farther window or the replica of the window on to the wood plank that connected the two windows. Then, walked through the one in front of Andromeda's eyes, right up to her. She saw!

In the whole of the abbey a play was about to take place. A play or performance art: large objects had been placed, discreetly and precisely, in that space which extended to space in general. As if a language, a language of objects, was being born. Andromeda remembered an early R.E.M. video.

When she looked up to the center of the room's ceiling, she saw a string from the bottom of which hung a bat. Swinging.

"There are wonders!" she gasped to the two who were, perhaps, helping her return home.

Here I am in this jail. I've been here a fucking month now. Maybe I'm here for a purpose 'cause this girl who's really dirty has just given me a message which I'm to deliver for her.

I've become friends with this girl perhaps because she's so filthy. Her filth is anger. When she's really angry, she tells me that she's never going to be let out of this jail—if the authorities have their way.

I've gotten out. They couldn't keep me inside: all I did was speed, while driving, and I wasn't doing that illegally. They put me inside 'cause I'm a girl. I've heard there are societies in

which girls stay in prison until they're married. I'm out now so I'm never going to go back there. Never back to turned bologna thrown down on stale Wonder bread, never back to girls in whom racism is being carved so they can beat up other girls, then emerge as able members of society. I remember. Members. Never back to a town composed of Seventh-Day Adventists; never back to cops behind huge reflecting blue sunglasses; never back to people taught by priests to see demons, by fathers to hunt; never back to criminalization. I'm no longer safe and never have been because I was never going to be dead while alive.

I have this passport the filthy girl obtained for me so that I can deliver her message to Bristol, a town somewhere in England. The filthy girl told me where this town is.

They wouldn't allow us to read newspapers in jail because, they said, we were girls. This paper says that the Republicans won almost every election last week so the religious right's in power. Gingrich, Helms, and all the Seventh-Day Adventists. Instead of reading on, I read what I'm supposed to deliver.

*"(To the smelliest girl there)*

*Old Anchor Inn*

*Bristol, England*

*19/3/94*

*"Dear King,*

*"Even though I'm in a filthy jail, I've accomplished what's necessary.*

*"The ship's bought and fitted with sails etc. She's lying*

*at anchor, in Brighton, ready for sea. A child could sail her . . .*

*"Go back to Brighton. Fuck your sick cat. Bitch. Get the hell back there before any other girl gets wind of what's going on. Of the port we're sailing for. Of the port of buried treasure.*

*"I'll be out of this felthy Americano jail soon."*

To my surprise, I'm finding myself becoming interested, incrementally, the more I keep reading. Now I know why I was in jail. So that I'll keep on reading . . .

. . . and I do:

*"I enclose a copy of the treasure map. Note that the island to which we'll be sailing looks like a dead woman's body. (If it wasn't dead, it couldn't be a map.)*

*"Unfortunately the map in my possession has no markings that indicate the location on the woman's body of the buried treasure.*

*"I do believe that such a map exists."*

Sea- or sex-dreams are filling my heart, and anticipation of days, of nights filled by wonders, times beyond wonder. I'm already floating, which is flying, in the realm of water, from isle to isle.

As I finish myself off by reading the end, I decide, not forgetting my promise to the dirty girl, that I'm going to deliver her

message and then, I'm going to stay with whomever I've just given the letter.

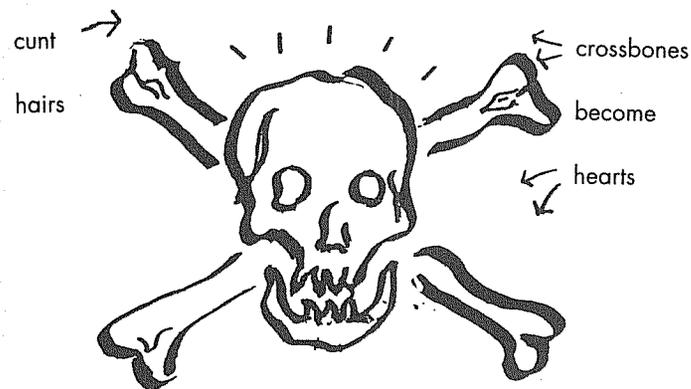
"For the moment I'm in prison, Puss. It no longer matters to me how I landed up here. Any land is bad land. For the moment I'm here and you're there, so you're the one who's going to be running things.

"Now listen, Puss. This is exactly how you're going to run things: in Brighton, which is a good town for pussy, round up whatever mean girls you can find and get. To prepare for sailing. We're going to the island on the map by rowboat because that's the only way to elude the authorities.

"I'll arrive in Brighton before you set sail. This is really what I want to tell you in this letter: watch your fucking head, and don't let your power go to your head. For your power is always mine. You're the king, but you're not the king of anything. Even of girls as greedy, as ravenous, as dreamy as you. Remember, Puss, I know you. You're as nasty as me: you've got a tongue like a razor blade and a worse temper. All the nicest qualities in a girl. Remember that no one has ever come up against me and won. Not even a female. If you try to usurp my power, I'll rip off your pretty head, and it is pretty. Mine's prettier; so is my cunt hair.

Yours,

"P.S. You can trust the child who's delivering this because I made friends with her in hell and so death shall never part us."



For the first time I know her name: *Silver*

... and so I traveled to Bristol, where I met Pussy, who was there nursing her sick cat. I gave her the letter I'd promised to deliver.

Pussy took her cat and returned to her hideout. Back there, in Brighton, we picked up Morgan, Pussycat, Bad Dog, and, afterwards, Black Monk, MD, Virgin Gold, Ostracism, and some others. As according to our instructions...

... for Brighton is the bottom of the world...

### The Beginning of Poetry: The Origins of Piracy

"I want to be a female again."

"What does that mean?" I inquired of Bad Dog, who had been talking to me for several hours over beer and more beer.

"Dogs and murderers."

In the Bald Head Pub.

"Do we know who we are? Mustn't we go back to our past? *Where are the pirates of yesteryear?*"

Bad Dog turned to the rest of the girls, who were more inebriated than the homeless around them, and to the cats, who were eating fish, and to the dead fish. They were all sprawled everywhere. Bad Dog was spewing out her rhetoric probably because she was now too dry to spread anything else.

"Where are those pirates, all men, now?"

"Rotting under our feet," a wit named Morgan whose feet had been cut off in a brawl murmured, "Not all of them were men."

"Where is that male rot, that drool that will never dry though it long ago died and still stinks from here to the China Seas in which ivory is growing, from here to rotting eternity, where are those bearers and carriers of nausea, those vessels of disease as if all they knew how to do was steal what was most pernicious out of Pandora's box? Where are those who masturbated themselves red and dry every day while fantasizing sexual encounters whose excitements, born of horror and pleasure, knew neither the limits of time nor of space?"

"Girls of fortune, we, and this is the first time, here in Brighton, that we call ourselves fortunate, perhaps because we're talking about our past, know that we come from a long and glorious lineage. Of death. For one of the meanings of the word *lineage* is 'dead.'" This smelly dog was looking around her. As usual, her pals had already passed out from drink and were now spread out in typical girl corpse form. "They're all dead."

She finished up: "Dead men don't bite."

Bad Dog should know.

After this girl had made her speech, she went off to find her mother. Brighton Town used to be where English royalty brought their mistresses and young boys for romantic weekends. A dead town.

The girl sang this song while she was looking for her mom,

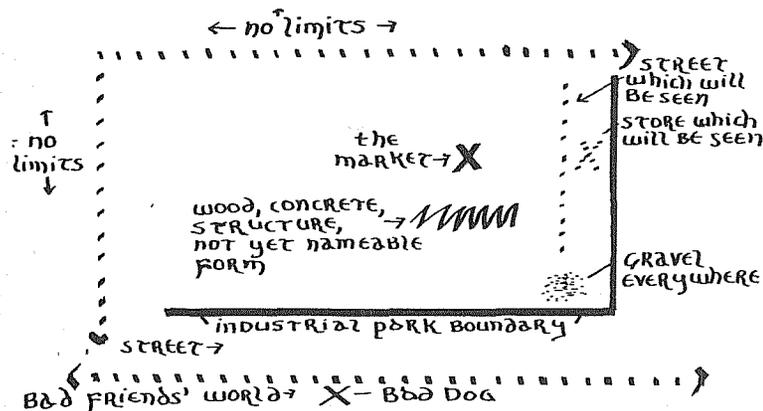
I'm looking for my mom  
Whom I've never known.  
I'm never going to find her  
Like me she had a womb.

She knew that, since her mother lived in the society or world which she had fled, her mother was shopping.

For a mother, shopping is always grocery shopping: Mom was in the mall.

"Don't go in *there*," Bad Dog's girlfriends used to tell her.

"I'm going to go . . ." This time she defied her bad friends because her visionary eye was seeing this map:



Bad Dog crossed over the street.

The grocery store, though it was gigantic, aisle after aisle of vegetables, canned goods, even slabs of meat, was a health-food store. Bad Dog wouldn't eat anything else. Already this store was closing up, for night had started approaching the whole of the earth.

The dirt under her feet, as if the floor was outside, was turning wetter and there was almost no food left on the shelves.

Even Bad Dog had to realize that it was useless to shop any longer. Her mother was nowhere to be found. She had been trying to buy vegetables, but now the girl wanted only to leave the store where her mother was supposed to be.

She crossed a street which she hadn't seen on the map, then entered a store which hadn't yet been visible. She was heading to the east. Now there were all sorts of things, inside, where every item was visible, that could be purchased. Edible and nonedible. Bad Dog began to desire. And she could afford this merchandise . . . as long as she didn't buy everything . . . but she was a greedy dog, a dog who had always been hungry, a dog ready to eat anything, anyone, chomp, chomp.

"I need something to carry all my purchases in, chomp, chomp," Bad Dog, who was a logical dog, told herself. "Look at that black wool Mexican carrier that's hanging from that rack! Right there! Chomp, chomp. I want it." Bad Dog dug up all the goodness that was buried deep down in herself. "Down, dog! You don't have enough money to buy a bag. You're poor, just a mutt. You can carry that Mexican bag around. But you'll have to put it back before you leave the store. You will you will you will."

Since she could only afford to buy the one thing that she

most wanted, Bad Dog went searching for what she wanted the most. As soon as she saw it, she didn't have to think anymore because her wanting was so clear.

"I'm going to buy that turtle."

The turtle was still alive only because it was in a container of water.

Bad Dog sang to her turtle after she had purchased it,

Imagination arises  
when there's no more reason  
so the mind can make  
a kingdom.

Halcyons will cease to prey on fish,  
poisonous leaves become our food  
all sailors be without remorse,  
for your lips have been stained in blood.

Still in that store, Bad Dog was lying on a bed. The room was the roof of the very store in which she had bought the turtle. As she looked up at its ceiling, she saw her turtle shoot across the top of the room.

This was how the turtle shot: its tongue extended clear to the other side, then fastened itself, the disc near the tip of the tongue, which was white paste rather than mucous membrane, onto its prey.

"Cool," said Bad Dog. "Obviously I made the correct purchase."

The screen of the TV that was standing in front of her eyes turned on. The screen was video, since it was slightly larger than a TV would be.

She saw a show that looked like an ad. In it, the turtle was

like a white horse, only stranger. Afterwards, still in the video, a man wearing the kind of crumpled, white suit rich men always sport in the tropics when they're in a movie began talking about the environment to the viewer of the TV. By the end of the video the viewer was watching, the man's clean-shaven visage had become covered in rough growth, in stubble; the white suit was filthy: such changes indicated to the viewer that the speaker had become a revolutionary. Bad Dog liked this turn of affairs! She especially liked this guy now that he was a white or an Hispanic incendiary in his once-white bum's suit!

Environment terrorism erupted on TV. Everything burned down. It erupted through TV: whatever was like a white horse only stranger appeared outside the TV, right in Bad Dog's bedroom.

She began to think about what was stranger than horse or horse all the time because that's what you do when you fall in love. Because she loved horse so much, she knew exactly what it was thinking: it wanted to go outside so it could eat. It was as hungry as Bad Dog. Chomp, chomp. Maybe hungrier.

Bad Dog thought to herself: What decision am I going to make? I know horse wants to trot, gallop, down the stairs that fall from the edge of the terrace that lies off of this room. I should have thought of all this before now. But I'm a bad dog. I should have bought oats at the same time that I bought turtle because oats are what horsies eat. What am I going to do? Should I let horse go outside by himself? It's dangerous in the outside and horse has no protection. Am I hurting horse even worse by shutting him in here with me?

Despite her misgivings, Bad Dog let horse go.

She returned to us and told us that now she knew where pirates came from.

### Bad Dog's Story

"Pirates came from the moment when animals became holy."

"We who are born: The name of our Lord, our Lord of birth, of the Lord of Genealogy, is Prajāpati.

"Prior to all birth, there was only chaos, cruelty, wildness. This god who was wild, outside of life and death, existed before the Lord of Genealogy, before genealogy, before the morning of the world began.

"The Wild God, that pirate, sets all on fire.

"Afraid that he's going to die and even more frightened to live in fear, the Lord of Genealogy begs the Wild God not to set him on fire. 'I'll do anything you want if you let me live.'

"The Wild One answered that there would still be birth and death in this world, that there would still be this world, only if the Lord of Genealogy made him Lord of the Animals, whose name is Pāsupati."

"That's why there are pirates," said Bad Dog.

### Where Boys Come From

It was King Pussy who introduced the punk boys to us. At the time she had met them, her first days in the bottom of this world, she had believed that she would never talk to anyone. That she would always remain Pussy, the girl who lives inside her own head.

They had believed the same about themselves. That they

were rotten. This was how Pussy and the boys got together.

The day on which Pussy introduced them, one afternoon so devoid of sun that it had already become evening, we saw nothing because we were tucked inside the Bald Head, she told us more. More as if moving further out on the ocean. Told us she had encountered them in a restaurant.

Pussy never differentiates between dream and waking.

That restaurant, unlike the rest of the rooms in Brighton, was as large as a New York City art gallery. And as empty. Puss had walked into its upstairs as if into one of her memories.

As soon as she was in there, she had to go to the bathroom.

The bathroom was to a regular one as that restaurant was to the usual Brighton restaurant. While examining her face in the large mirror over the three sinks, she saw a form . . . a man . . . in black leather . . . S&M . . .

He moved into the space that was, at that moment, her space.

Pussy didn't know whether or not to be scared. The more she tried to think, the slower the moments moved. When there was no more time, she yelled out the names of some of those who were outside the bathroom because they worked in the restaurant. She hadn't spoken out loud because she was scared.

Not understanding why she wasn't scared now, she walked out of this bathroom.

Below the two restaurant floors lay a beauty parlor in which all sorts of trinkets were for sale. Bad guys . . . milled about in there. They were wearing black leather.

The joint was a hangout for the punk boys.

The instant that Pussy laid eyes on the boys, she saw an ocean in all its glory. Glory which is infinity. The ocean has no bottom, is all surface. A waterfall looking like a fountain rises out of the surface.

Pussy looked down, saw that she was holding a key. Yellow plastic covered its sides and top; it emitted weird rays.

"This isn't what you're used to," one of the dangerous skinnies explained to the girl, "'cause your life's been defined by poverty, by the roughest possible street conditions."

Pussy knew this was true. She looked around her.

"Our beauty parlor's also an art gallery. This kind of art's quiet, but there's a lot going on here."

This was when Pussy knew that she should listen to the boys.

The day we met them, they explained their origins. In a Christian society, such as the one that's now in the middle of its dying, those who truly believe in Jesus Christ do so by imitating his life. The punk boys wanted to become Antonin Artaud. "A. Our Toad," said the punk boys. In the beginning.

A. Our Toad had been born on September 4, 1896, in Paris. Near the zoo.

While he had been alive, especially as he had grown older, he had had few friends, almost none of them young boys. A few delinquents had followed him around.

"The most alienated of all artistpoets"—this was the kind of thing the romantic boys also told us while they were spitting—"A. Our Toad wrote about himself":

This childkid  
he isn't there



He saw that the electric shock being administered to their skulls was rendering them more willing to die.

"In electroshock therapy, the patient is carefully tied down so that her limbs won't fracture during the convulsions which always accompany this procedure. So that her teeth neither break each other nor bite through the tongue, a spatula is placed inside her mouth.

"After the patient has undergone electroshock, she falls into a coma that lasts between fifteen and thirty minutes. Awakes with only part or none of her memory.

"Dr. Ferdière was attracted by the innocence of this curative procedure. Between May 23 and June 10, 1944, he administered to Our Toad twelve electroshock treatments; in August 1944, twelve; in December 1944, twelve.

"Following one of the treatments, the artistpoet's coma lasted so long that Ferdy decided his patient had died and so sent him, or only his body, off to the mortuary. In there, Arty Toad came back to consciousness.

"Having returned to life, still in that Rodez hospital, Our Toad wrote to another doctor: 'It was you yourself who last August put an end to the electroshock treatments which were so terrible for me, because you realized that this was not a treatment I should have to undergo, that a man like myself did not need to be treated, but, on the contrary, helped in his work. Electroshock, M. Latrémolière, reduces me to despair, it takes away my memory, it dulls my mind and my heart, it turns me into someone who's absent and who knows he is absent and sees himself for weeks in pursuit of his being, like a dead man alongside a living man who is no longer himself, but who insists on the dead man being present even though he can no

longer enter into him. I've a great deal of affection for you and you know it, but if you do not stop these electroshock treatments at once I shall no longer be able to keep you in my heart.'

"A writer, the artistpoet loved to write about other writers:

"For when Poe was found dead one morning on a sidewalk in Baltimore, it was not because of an attack of delirium tremens brought on by alcohol, but because a few bastards who hated his genius and despised his poetry poisoned him to prevent him from living and so from offering that extraordinary terrifying solace that is revealed in his verses.

"'It is permissible,' and this is important,"

said the most romantic of boys,

"to invent one's language, and it is further permissible to make language with extragrammatical meanings, but then these meanings must be valid in themselves. That is, they must come out of anguish. I like the poems of the starving, the sick, the outcast, the poisoned: François Villon, Charles Baudelaire, Edgar Allan Poe, Gérard de Nerval, and the poems of the executed criminals of language who suffer ruin in their writing . . .'"

There were a few boys who, during his lifetime, took the artistpoet's writing seriously. Thought his work on the body of

the family and the family of the body and his intense belief that this body must change and continue to change so important that they began to follow him. They wanted to be him.

A little before eight in the morning on March 4, Our Toad, like a kid, died somewhere in China. At the moment of his death, his language split into forgettable, unreadable fragments.

The boys could no longer follow anyone, for there was no one left to follow. So they traveled to England.

"There were boys and boys and boys.

"Then there was us."

Their first days in that dead town, Brighton, the punk boys didn't know what to do with themselves, so they perused books. Everything they read was about a boy.

The scummy brats told us his story as romantically as they could.

"Though this boy had a girlfriend named Slut Girl, what was most important of all to him was that he never made her pregnant.

"Everyone used to know that."

"There's no more literacy," King Pussy said. Then she passed out.

"What is this shit about us? About women?" roared MD. And kicked a fish.

"Cut off their heads for not wanting women to have lots of babies when they want to have babies," the footless pirate chimed in. No boy contradicted her.

"What no one knows is that, even though Slut Girl didn't want to leave Brat Rat, she wanted to have a baby.

"Slut Girl had two loves: wanting a baby and taking a bath. She didn't give a shit about being clean; she was residing in a graveyard. No, what she adored was to lay for hours in water. When, where there were lots of odors, those of the night, of owls hiding their eyes behind their own feathers, of rose lavender rosemary, of the buds that bloom in the dark. Of the evening and of dreams, snakes in search of rats who were no longer stuffed, leaves drenched in the liquid mud that was falling out of the sky. The perfume or stench of rancid pools caught in the crevices beneath the soil. Slut Girl loved to smell herself.

"Late one night—it was almost morning—while she was in the water, taking a pumice stone, she began to rub at her skin. Scum lay across the water. Out of her own residue, she shaped a boy.

"Bits of crap remained on the water.

"There came a knocking on her door.

"Knock, knock."

"'Oh no,' said Slut Girl. She had no intention of letting anyone in. '———!' for she didn't know what to call her son yet. 'Protect me! Guard my door!'

"Dutifully, this son, wet, leapt to the door, yanked it wide open, then began to beat up the man who was on the other side.

"Punk Boy had been trying to walk into his own home and he was pissed."

"Like me," murmured Pussy.

"Being an elitist, he had no intention of fighting with his own hands. He might get a spot on them. Punk Boy called to some of his skeletons, his lads, the ghoulie tongues and spermy

skins, who always accompanied him. Boys hanging around, trying to jerk off. Being a demon, one of them sliced off the head of Punk Boy's son without any effort.

"Of little Punk Boy.

"When the beautiful girl saw the headless body of her child, she started to cry. Wanting to leave the world, she cried out her eyes. The eyes wandered.

"Punk Boy recognized that he had caused the one with whom he was living to become blind. He had to do something to restore her sight. So she'd again want to see.

"He walked up to the first sentient being whom he caught sight of and cut off the head.

"He picked up this head, which had originally come off an elephant, and placed it on his son's red neck.

"Slut Girl and Punk Boy named their nameless son: *Ganesh.*"

Thus the punk boys told us what it is to be a pirate. We joined up with them. It was only now that we were able to make up the rules of piracy.

### *The Rules of Piracy*

#### 1. Regarding Purpose:

To find that place out of which we come.

##### a. Explanation:

"Gaja" ("elephant") means "the origin and the goal."

i. "ga" = "goal"

ii. "ja" = "origin"

#### 2. Regarding the Identity of All Those Who Undertake the Acts or Infiltrations of Piracy: Half-human half-beast.

##### a. Explanation:

According to the story, which is the only truth around these miserable parts, these dead isles, the elephant sits on the human.

##### b. Explanation of explanation:

The head sits on the body.

#### 3. Regarding Identity:

There are no pirates anymore.

##### a. Explanation:

In the world in which we live, a human isn't an elephant.

##### b. All pirates dream animals.

###### i. Explanation of explanation:

Dreams are manifestations of identities.

#### 4. On Pirate Methods and Methodologies:

Crooked.

##### a. Explanation:

The elephant's trunk is crooked.

"His face, shape of the Self, is crooked."

##### b. There are no pirates anymore so we have to be crooked as hell in order to exist and WE ARE EXISTING.

5. The Purpose of Pirating:  
Stealing.

a. Explanation:

Pirates are the destroyers of all obstacles.

"I bow to the son of Síva, to the embodiment of the giver of gifts who destroys obstacles and fear."

6. Where Pirates Live Free of Authority:  
Caves.

a. Explanation:

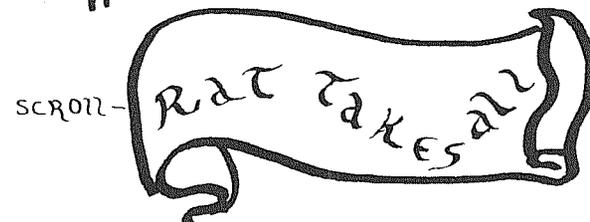
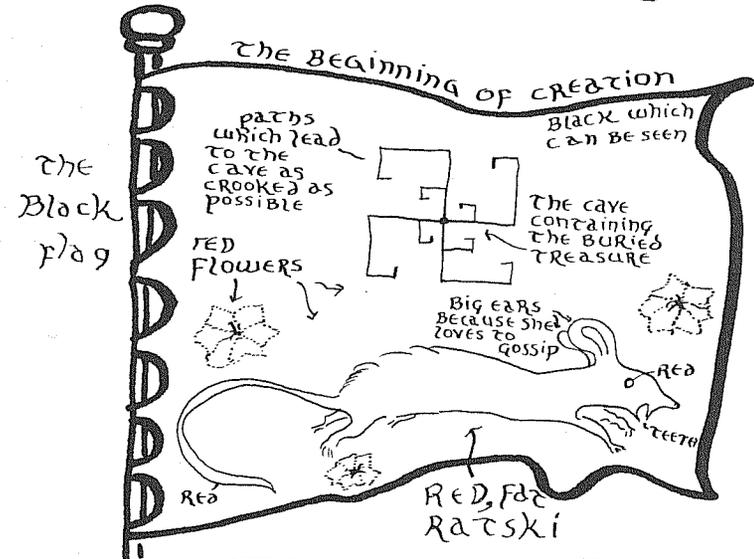
Nothing and no one's straight.

7. Regarding Pirate Purpose:  
To find buried treasure.

8. Regarding Direction of Sailing:  
Buried treasure is hidden in caves at the centers of labyrinths.

the woman's body  
labyrinth.

9.



**Kathy Acker**

a. Explanation:

In the end, rats.

- i. "Musa" ("mouse" or "rat") comes from the root "mus" ("to steal").

Ratski is fat because everything in the world sits inside her belly because she never sits inside any belly because, if she did, she'd tear right through it. Her fur is red. Whenever anyone in the world thinks she's feeling pleasure, it's Ratski who's really feeling this pleasure because Ratski steals everything and anything.

No one ever finds Ratski: she lives inside the interstices of the world. Located between red flowers. The name of each interstice is "intellect."

Ratski's always on the rag.

... and so the reign of girl piracy began ...

In the Days  
of the Pirates

# Pirate Island

Ö's Story, Continued

## DREAMING REALITY

The whole rotten world  
come down and break



and I'm crawling  
through these cracks

I've never had a lover  
not in the world that exists  
I've never wanted one  
piss on my teeth, shit and piss.

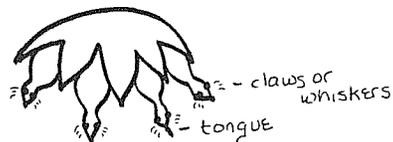
(poem by Ange,  
'cause poetry is what  
fucks up this world)

I wanted to die . . .  
I'm a girl,  
night is my eyes,  
die for a while.

While the world cracks open  
and all the rich men die,  
and all the fucks who've sat on my face,  
those sniveling shites.

We come crawling through these cracks, orphans, lobotomies;  
if you ask me what I want I'll tell you  
I want everything.

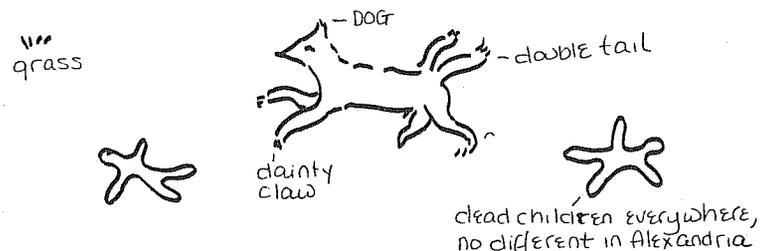
Whole rotten world come down and break.  
Let me spread my legs.



rats coming out  
of broken egg half

Three seats away from us on a Northern tube line, three children argued about which passengers they should mug. The fattest of the two boys spoke in a high feminine voice. Outside the train, the pickpockets waited by ticket booths. As we walked on the garbage, I kicked a turkey bone spotted with blood.

Dogs were sitting everywhere.



"I don't want to ever be here again," I said as we were leaving London.

It was then that we met this other girl. She was one of the strangest things anyone'd want to see. Tiny with hairs so stiff with muck that every disease in the world seemed to have been celebrating her birthday.

Later I would learn that every day *was* this brat's birthday.

We followed her down to a section which seemed to me to be a place where I had already lived.

Ange reminded me that we didn't live anywhere. "There are more dead men here than where we just were."

"That's what I'm looking for."

So we chose a hotel like the brat's hair. Somewhere between dirt and scum.

The brat explained to us that there weren't any dogs in this town, but there had been pirates. She herself lived above this pub where there were a lot of girls like her. That is, as grimy. Almost. Knives were sitting in the walls 'cause most of the girls owned knives and, when they had hair, whether above or below, kept them in there. Some didn't have any teeth and some plucked their teeth right out of their mouths.

They hung with a few boys known as *punk boys*.

Now, the pub was a block from the mucky hotel. These two wooden buildings, each two stories in height, were the

only things that stood up in this part of town. Empty lots, sand, and countryside remained.

I dreamt that this section was city and country because, here, one was the other.

The hotel was a hut because, inside, metal was being changed. The components of computer electromagnetic disease were being transformed into something else. Something like dream.

"You have to go down." That was what the brat had said the first time we met her.

*To forget is to transform or transmute.* I had thought that the practices of alchemy were forgotten. But St. Barbara had said in one of her letters, "When history goes to sleep, we shall walk around the hut."

Now I further understood, but I didn't know, that any metal object, such as a brake lever nut, in itself holds traces of its owner's past. Of all the activities that composed that personal past. To the extent that *personal* means anything. In the hut, the traces of history were removed from each piece of metal.

My father had left me before I was born.

Suddenly I realized that the gimp was explaining to Ange and me that she owned the pub. Though she didn't look like she owned anything.

"I don't want to own," she whispered. "Much less be a landlord. Even of a building that isn't a building 'cause some of its walls are missing and rats live there even though most rats wouldn't go near it even if you paid them.

"This situation's making me so sick that I'm becoming physically sick.

"I wanna go back and be a sailor."

I had the idea that I should hire her to find some real mariners who could get Ange and me to the island on the map.

The gimp or whatever she was couldn't find the island by herself 'cause she didn't have a college diploma and she was a female. A good-for-nothing like Ange and me.

But she wasn't there to ask. Only a silver strand to remind me of her.

That night I dreamt that I left the hut to search for the silver-haired girl. The mist a few feet in front of the edifice was so thick, I could barely make out what lay ahead. As I stepped into that white, I could no longer see.

I turned around and headed for the only place I knew had lights.

There were many people there. The metal-changers. The ones who changed motorcycle nuts.

"They take all their preoccupations out," I said out loud.

The next day, Silver explained things more carefully to me. The reason she was so dirty was that her girls were dirty, being orphans and refugees and other kinds of rejects, even from rich families. They were the kind of girls who have nowhere to go but to a pub. Of course she didn't want to offend these customers by taking a bath or washing her hair in the kitchen sink.

It was then that I perceived how really dirty she was. 'Cause of rats, 'cause I actually saw a rat, there, matting up her hair. In there, in the mat, were also used latex gloves, a knife or two, a broken comb.

The hair smelled like a mixture of rat waste and fish. "The ocean, that repository of our bodies including our shit and piss," further explained Silver, "is where the dead pirates live. Using their eyeballs as money, they buy the goods they

need, for while they were alive, they never bothered to purchase anything.

"Dead pirates are sailors' mates, 'cause to those who don't own homes, death's as common as life."

I realized that she knew human things like angst and loneliness so I started to confide in her. I even showed her the map. Which I shouldn't have, but I'm too trusting.

She coughed a few times to remind me she was sick. "So you'll need a ship and crew."

"I want to go here." And pointed again to the paper.

"You'll have to give me a copy of that map."

"No."

She coughed so violently that I began to feel sorry for her 'cause she took so little care of herself. She even looked like a rat.

"This is what being a landlord does to you," Silver explained further. "COUGH. COUGH. Work all day work all night. Until nothing's left of the world but work. Nothing left in this endlessly lightless reality that can be called *life*. COUGH. COUGH. Owning a pub—it's a dog's life. I'm an old hound dog who's sniffing his way through a world that's dying. COUGH. COUGH."

For a second, her words were making me see what it is to grow old.

"No one cares about an old dog. COUGH. COUGH. And this is why I care for orphaned brats."

"Me and Ange aren't brats."

With this, her voice changed and became a little girl's. "Only thing an old female dog like me can do these days, these nights," though she didn't look so old to me, "is help other little girls find what they're looking for. She shook her silvery

hair. Which would have been silvery if she had ever taken a shower.

I was going down farther than I thought possible.

"Take me with you on your search for buried treasure," she begged.

I went back to the hotel and told Ange everything. That Silver was an old sailor but now kept a public house, and she knew all the girls in Brighton. That she was beginning to take me down.

Ange asked me what I meant by "down," so I told her to fuck off.

Ange took my head down and bashed it.

The next day, Silver brought me to her pub. The Bald Head. This time we weren't going down, for, though from the outside this shelter for drunks looked as if rats were using it for their gym, to my surprise, its insides were clean. Dainty red curtains hung across small windows. The floor, though its surface was sawdust, sparkled.

On the other hand, grimy girls were lying all over the floor except when they were lying on top of each other. At least half of the ones who were still conscious—it was about ten in the morning—were smoking cigars and viler protuberances. Through smoke thick enough to blind a Seeing Eye dog, I thought I was seeing glimpses of gold and silver, not over but inside those delicate bodies, jewelry at the most unlikely places disappearing into skin. Those who were the most drunk were so heavily tattooed I thought I was in a museum of girls lit, no longer by unnatural light, but by the sun that, lighting up the waters at the end of the day, reveals the roads that lead to buried treasure.

I turned to Silver.

"Here are the girls I told you about. The ones for whom you and what's-her-name have been looking. They even have a captain named Pussy."

I must have been looking a bit disapproving 'cause then she said that, though girls might look like alcoholics, I had to learn that when it comes to the sea, appearances are deceptive. Actually they were the toughest old salts she had ever met. They even had an available ship whose name was *Mary* and they had rigged it as well as any vessel, even in the past, has been prepared for the roughest and the most treacherous seas.

"Best of all, it's a rowboat."

"What?"

"Your fucking Pirate Island or whatever you call that dump . . ."

"It's not a *dump*. This *pub* is a dump!"

". . . is only ninety miles from here. It's not as if you and your green-eyed companion are going halfway around the world."

"Where's the captain?" I demanded.

"She's not here 'cause she's off seeing visions."

"Oh."

"But look down here."

I peered below me to where I saw a tall, narrow girl lying between two gigantic wolfhounds.

"She can kill a man at forty yards. While chewing tobacco."

So I sort of saw the point of taking these repulsive girls with us on our search for buried treasure.

Then the silver-haired girl informed me that MD—that was dog-girl's name—could not only shoot, but also took

baths. One of the dogs and the female skeleton now had their tongues entwined around each other's.

Something must have been happening to me, or inside me, I guess one's the other, 'cause I could no longer remember how I had felt when I was a whore.

Outside one of the windows, part of the sky was gray.

The gimp was almost licking my shoulder when I informed her that Ange and me would hire her and several of these girls to take us to the island on Ange's mother's map.

"All of us or nothing," she replied as soon as her tongue was free.

She wore red lipstick the next time that I saw her, though her hair was more voluminous with dirt than before. Owing, like everything else about these girls, to the fertility of rats.

Ange was with me, and the three of us went all the way down, down those Brighton streets that seem so narrow that they fall down. Until, on our right, several piers, each longer than any tampon string I had ever yet seen.

Past pier after pier until we came to one shaped like a crescent.

As if born out of the quartered moon, a boat.

A boat as long and as lean as a wolfhound, and twice as odoriferous. Distorted without the help of sun, for there wasn't much of that in this town of rotting men.

Obviously a number of animals were still living in its hold: in addition to the usual feces, there were many webs, nests, and chewed-up socks. Two colorful fish heads.

All sorts of fungi, mosses, and the beginning of a mussel family were growing over the wood. Ange was so hungry that she wanted to call this ship *Crawling Into My Mouth*.

I told her no, that was a bad idea. A rat slithered out of Silver's hair, so I said, "We don't have to give it a name . . ."

"We don't?"

"Do we know who wrote the map that we're following? Do we know the rubrics of those dead pirates, living in the ruby oceans, who'll guide our steps?" The metal has been changed, I thought: metal tracings or memories overthrown. "No."

And so I turned to Silver. "Tell me, girl, when do we sail?"

"I'm not always a girl." One of her fingers was dipping into the scalp at the spot where the rat had crawled out.

"Oh."

For a second, I remembered a dream that Ange and I once had. But memory was overthrown.

"We sail tomorrow."

## INTO THE STRANGE

"Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum," Silver's voice rang out . . .

and all that's old has turned to scum  
for this world's begun to burn.

Two girls lost on a dead man's chest  
doing what they like to best,  
pecking at unknown alphabets,  
alphabets that lead to gold  
across seas made up of stars,  
dreams glittering under dead men's bones.

Ten filthy girls on a dead man's chest  
doing what they like to best,  
girls who spit right up your ass,  
girls who'll take all that you own,  
knife you in your turned-up breast:

All that you own will turn to scum  
and the world begin to burn . . .

And so we set sail.

Just before leaving, MD had brought her two wolfhounds on board with her. Nobody seemed to think this unusual. They were as tall and as lean as her: all seemed to be continually swaying. Ange said she could smell the booze crawling out of all three of the mouths.

I confided to the silver-haired girl that I had had an affair with a decayed alcoholic back in China that had so devastated me that I can never be close to anyone.

She replied that MD never touched a drop of the stuff. She would swear, as would every girl, that there was no drink on this board.

Rats come out from broken eggs,  
eating all the nights and days,  
then crawl inside our unwashed hairs,  
drinking down the fluids there.

Pussy, the captain, wore a bandage around her eyes because, she explained, a dream had wounded her.

So it was Silver, a few days into the journey, who ordered Bad Dog to be second in command.

This sailor was so ugly that the gulls and more vulturous

birds, in fear, flew away from her. One of these birds became so disconcerted that it flew right through our sail. From then on, we had to use the small motor found in the back of the boat.

This was just one of the ways in which Pussy commanded.

What I remember aren't the details of that which happened between girl and girl. After all is gone, what I remember are the colors of Silver's hairs. How the smell of it was the same as its colors.

Smell and color were the stars that sat on my head every night. Layers sat over layers of stars until there appeared that fabric which the girls named *night*.

Girls passed out on the deck below.

A few of them had vomited into the shreds of the sail. In memory of all childhoods.

Then Silver chose me to be her confidante. She whispered to me that Bad Dog was first mate because, besides being ugly, she had all the characteristics of a horny mongrel with rabies. A rare character in a girl. This mariner was so mean that whenever any part of a girl's body happened to rove within four or so inches of her mouth, she bit it. That is, *the girl*. Dog-face sharpened her teeth about once a month. So it wasn't that the new mate didn't know how to give orders: it was that she barked before thinking.

The girls liked her being in command because none of them wanted that position. Or any position. Moreover, Bad Dog kept the deck clean as a result of her diet. She ate rats. In fact, there was something in Bad Dog that was as emotionless, or nonhuman, as mean cold deceptive and smart, as a rat. In the late afternoon, when the sun was turning the color of blood, after the dog-puss had munched down a score or so of rats—she disdained mice—she'd clean the remnants of their

bones off her teeth with drink. So did the rest of the girls who hadn't champed on rodent fur. Though Silver had said that the ship was clean of such evil.

But Bad Dog became drunker than any other girl because she'd never pass out.

The drunker this square-shaped mate turned, the more sexually attractive. She was so vile, physically, that she was highly attractive to begin with to all but the most confirmed old farts such as Pussycat and Silver. Whenever a young girl, hovering around Bad Dog, became so drunk that she made a direct move for Bad Dog's body, Bad Dog chewed on her.

As the stars sat upon our heads and disappeared and reappeared from our heads, until Ange and I felt that we were being carried into wonder, Bad Dog grew fonder of booze. Soon she was drinking everyone's scotch and beer. Her motor functions, her perceptual faculties, slowed down to such an extent that she was no longer aware of all that was taking place around her.

As all the drunken girls lay there in the stars which were night's flames.

One night, Bad Dog fell onto the deck and cut herself. She lay in her own blood. Another night she turned more violent than usual and cut a child who, probably because she didn't yet know what sex was, thought she was Dog's girlfriend.

It was then that Ange said that Bad Dog really was a dog.

The fonder of drink the mangy sailor became, the more, out of pure viciousness, she encouraged fights among the other girls. Fights often caused by her lies. None of us minded when, one dark night, she disappeared.

Wherever bad girls go.

Pussy didn't notice that anything had happened.

It was as if all this was leading up to something, and when that something happened, it was the last thing that I expected.

### TO ALL THE DEAD DOGS OF THIS WORLD

A few days later, I saw Bad Dog chewing on a rat. I thought, it must be dinnertime. At the same time, because mutt-girl was no longer available to clean our deck, a three-foot-long rat stepped over my foot.

Almost all of the crew happened to be vegetarians.

My vision of Bad Dog munching on a rat, for an unknown reason, had made me hungry. I ran over to the barrel in which most of our perishable food had been stored. As I peered into that darkness, I realized that there were only apples left and that most of them had been chewed by vermin.

I must have dealt with the hunger by falling asleep, because the next thing I knew, the silver-haired girl was whispering in my ear.

Actually she was talking to another girl in front of the barrel behind which I had fallen asleep.

"... the ships I've seen, amuck with blood and fit to sink with precious stones..."

"Where are all those criminal hearts now?"

"Dead, and swimming between the bones of other dead criminals. White bones on white bones."

Where are all those dogs tonight?

For dead dogs cannot bite.

Silver again answered, "To all the dead dogs of this world: You were the roughest the world's ever known and the devil himself was afeared to go to sea with you."

"But what are we going to do about getting our hands on the map?"

I could hear voices all around me. There were two of them. I was back in the hall in which I couldn't see. In the threshold of my parents' bedroom. They were discussing my character in words I could barely hear. For the first time, I knew that I didn't belong in this human world.

"Let's kill 'em," answered Silver.

"I can't kill girls."

"You haven't yet. But they've got the map."

Crouched on the deck slimy with all sorts of mucus, I was missing childhood, or all that I had never known.

Crouched in that dark, in that human and rat spit, I was a child because I was in a world of animosity. My mother was a monster because human mothers always love their daughters and because she wanted to kill me. Since I knew that monsters are born from the imagination, I had to get rid of my imagination.

I had to find out who my mother really was.

"Once we get hold of the map, we won't have to murder 'em," remarked the other girl.

"Who bites? I'll tell you who bites. Dead dogs don't bite."

"You mean even if we get the map and the treasure, they can hurt us in some way?"

I was beginning to recognize this voice.

"Yeah. They'll rat on us to the authorities so they can get their treasure back, or, if not that, so they can ask for justice

and then we'll be hung from the highest yardarm without any clothes on. *Dead dogs don't bite.*"

Now I knew what I knew when I was a child. That they were coming for me . . .

If they found me . . . My heart sat in my mouth. And filled it with blood.

This must have been what it was like when I was a child. All that I could no longer remember.

Girls.

Pussycat—now I could clearly recognize her voice—said she was hungry. She started to walk toward the barrel of vermin and apple. I heard her footsteps.

The winds were blowing through patches of fog so thick with gray that no more objects could be seen. Neither birds nor whatever clouds were moving fast through that sky. Perhaps there was a break in all the gray of the world, for suddenly a separate voice cried out, "Land!"

Then the fog belt lifted and the moon appeared. Through an opening not of but into the sky, I saw that the differences of the world had become visible. In front of my eyes, there was a horizontal line. It was as if the sky had separated itself into two sections. Each area was a different color black.

The stars were opening, and lighting up more and more of the deck. Most of the girls were there, standing and lying below those stars. So much I saw, almost in a dream, for I had not yet recovered from my fear.

I didn't realize that for the time being my life was safe.

"Have any of you," asked the captain whose eyes were bandaged, "have any of you ever seen that land before?"

"Aye, Sir," answered the girl whose golden hairs were try-

ing to fly away, "when I used to ship out with Captain Bonny."

"And what's it called?"

"Pas Sang Rouge. Or Pirate Island. It was a place for mutinied sailors once, thus its rubric, and a hand on board Bonny's boat knew all their names. That hill there . . ."

"I can't see it," said Pussy.

"It's where the pirates cleaned the worms out of their booty and drew up false maps showing where booty was to be found," explained Silver.

"So now we know where we are. All of you, do what you have to do, and so, we'll reach this land!" Pussy walked out, stumbling only slightly, and the rest of the girls, except for those who had passed out on that star-drenched deck, followed her.

I was waiting for them all to go away so I could run to Ange. Who was sleeping, so she was still seeing the splendor of the world. Run to her and tell her all that had just happened and that we still had the chart.

I had to explain to her that these girls didn't mean us any good.

And we should plan our escape.

I saw Silver drawing near to me. I knew that, for the moment, she couldn't harm me because there were too many girls around, even if they were drunk, and because she still didn't know where the map was, so I just stood up thinking that she would think that I had come out on the deck with the other girls as soon as we had heard the cry "Land!"

But before I could, with all those other girls, find my way below deck to the hold, she laid her hand on my shoulder.

I didn't want her to know that I was aware what her plans

really were, her real intentions toward me and Ange. That I knew the crew was a crew of criminals, so I let that hand sit on my shoulder.

I didn't say one word.

Under the still opening stars.

"Look," says the silver-haired girl, "and I'll tell you where we're going to go." Her hand was no longer sitting on my shoulder. "I've been there before: I can show you the ways and the byways and the paths and its labyrinths so you won't become completely lost, utterly scared."

I didn't say a word.

"You're scared."

Now I could feel her hand again.

"Close your eyes." Her voice was in and inside my ear. At this moment, I parted from childhood.

Her other hand closed my eyes. "Where do you want to go most?"

I knew that she was duplicitous, cruel, and powerful and that I shouldn't trust her but, at the same time, I knew that I did trust her, though I didn't know why. I trusted her because I had to because that's how I was.

Her hand had moved deeper, as if pirates were exploring and I was their explored. "I'll take you somewhere you don't know about and then you'll be able to open your eyes."

The stars were still shining, or maybe they weren't, because everything was becoming everything else while the inside, through skin or through the disappearance of difference, turned into outside.

My body took over consciousness. Fell asleep as if in a faint. All was pleasant where I now was, and quiet. Lilac and gray, the water mirrored the air.

I was truly seeing land.

Long, tall trees equaled shadows.

Finally the boat again set sail. Beneath it, the water resembled the air as long as there was no possibility of coming so the coming was more violent. Kept on going because the water and air, mirroring each other, were boundless.

Deeper in there, the animals came out. Fur then fur. There were lots of little animals so I couldn't stop.

"Beep beep," cried the little animals, "beep beep."

"I'm going to find somewhere where the gray is going on there," I said. There was no one to hear me. "I'll go there over again."

I went there over again so green painted the landscape. So intense it could barely be handled.

By the time I could speak again, though I had lost all meaning, Silver was gone.

I couldn't tell Ange what had happened, though I did.

## PISSING IN THE SUN

I know that we change continually when we're alive, but I don't know whether that's true in dreams. And all that's past lives in the realm of dreams.

After I had talked to Ange and cried and she had cried, I must have fallen asleep.

For I was back in China.

The alcoholic's profession was rat-killer. 'Cause we were together in China, he took me out to a Chinese restaurant, where he ate rats. Crunched them up good between his teeth.

I refused to kiss him.

I'm not into guns and he took me to a Chinese shooting gallery where they shot rats and I looked at this object that was in my hands and decided I'd try to use it once. Because I'll try anything. Once.

That was how I began being punished for rat-killing.

I was in back in my room, which is long, far in its back. A tiny mouse scooted across the carpet on which I was kneeling. It walked up to me. As it was trotting across my right arm, I became conscious, for the first time in my life, and saw that it was playing too hard with me. It used its claws and teeth.

I began to wonder about what it might be.

It was walking over the carpet next to the right side of my body, so I put my hand over that bit of cloth and trapped what was under it. Tiny gray popped out between my fingers. But my boyfriend was helping me. I knew this really was a rat, so I put a knife right through its body.

Then I felt guilty, and guilt made me miserable.

Now I started to dream about Silver and not just about pirate girls. I was rising out of a bathtub, while Silver was sitting on its side. For she was the masseuse. I snapped my towel at her and said, "It's wet." For some reason, my action reminded me that there was sexual tension between us. I thought that she wanted me to kiss her, but since I wasn't sure how to kiss a girl I did nothing.

Now this brat and I were having sex on a narrow cot mattress almost the size of a bathroom in a room the same size as the bathroom so it could have been a bathroom. If bathrooms can change. They can. In front of my head, there rose or I saw this wood door through which I could hear the noises from the girl next door. I hadn't heard anything before, not from over

there. She must lead a boring life, I used to think, for she never does anything.

I was hearing myself.

The door opened, even though it was the door to all that lay outside and so, I knew, should be locked. But then I forgot to tell Silver, who happened to be under me, that the front door was open, because I was so interested in fucking.

When all of our fucking was over, I crawled down to between the walls and the bed. To the floor down there. Through a letter slot in the back wall, wetness was coming through. It must have been dribbling down for a while 'cause all of the floor was damp.

Plastic bags had been put on the floor to protect it from all that wetness, but all they did was hide the floor.

Then, the tip of a shovel's head as full of dirt as if it had been digging a grave appeared through the slot. Like a tongue. A tongue's a letter. I knew it was a tongue because I felt it up.

Something under the bed which I couldn't see began tugging at, and holding on to, my bathrobe's hem.

For it was morning and dreams had ended.

While Ange and I had been dreaming, as if we had been dreaming pirate girls, the boat had made a great deal of way. It was now lying about half a mile southeast of earth.

It was the beginning of a world.

Caught in whatever dreams boats dream, dreams of being pursued by bloodthirsty pirates, yet less and less able to move, for the waters around the boat grow thicker and thicker. Caught in a mixture of mud and water, our boat sat.

We had to dig away the slime to free the bottom ribs of the rowboat. As we parted mud from mud, that which looked solid and behaved like liquid from scum, or that which will not

allow itself to be separated, strange vapors rose and insects, those who swim in the air, moved in front of our eyes. As if we were seeing pop art. Their colors were that brilliant. The thin wings and protruding eyeballs, hovering still in our minds, diseased whatever they touched there. Slugs were alive in the brown, and those long worms whose numerous white protuberances had something to do with our sexuality. Or that from which we had come.

In this manner, we were able to approach the shore about which Ange and I had dreamt back in another world.

This was a shore caught between dream and visibility.

I was working my butt off because all of the other pirates except for Ange and Silver, or so I thought, had either passed out due to a bottle of mescal now empty and lying by a rat who must have died from the same thing, or they had no intention of doing anything anymore.

Mud and semiliquid substances so disgusting I didn't want to know what they were, covered me, just as God must have been covered when he made His world.

The ship touched something that felt like earth.

I didn't give a shit 'cause I was staring at Silver. She might be a murderer, but she was beautiful, with her silver hairs thrown all over the winds of the world.

"A bad sign of what's to come," said this girl.

Probably she was talking about the smells that were rising up from me. I knew that she didn't care about me, for she didn't have any feelings like most girls have feelings.

This thing whose hair was gold, who was standing right behind Silver, put her arms around the brat.

The birds were wheeling and shrieking, and I knew their

beaks were sharp as razors, and then they saw us, me and Silver and Gold, these soaring beings who had preceded the insects and worms, and not understanding what they saw, again started to shriek.

It wasn't earth but a rock that had torn through the ship's side. Nevertheless, here lay the beginning of the world. The moment just before it began. Because I could see that which I couldn't yet touch. I saw ponds in the earth, gray and lilac and green, then birds feeding at them. Grass was growing, here and there, in huge tufts and clumps, then not at all. Howsoever it pleased. For the rocks lay in order and then, not: whatever was in front of my eyes seemed to be doing whatsoever it wanted.

Most of the pirates were drunk enough to be as good as dead.

But Silver wanted to explore.

I did too.

Ange reminded me about the past. "The map my dead mother gave us."

"Don't get sentimental."

"Don't you want to find buried treasure?"

"Of course I do." I paused. "That map might have come from your mother's body, but it's dead men's talk. Pirates' tales. Men who cut off women's fingers so they could do worse."

"Ate eyeballs," suggested Ange.

That sounded pretty good. Now this is when I made a really bad mistake, and my first one. Because of this mistake, I would find out who Silver really was.

I was pulling the map, ruined as it was, out of my pocket when I knew that I just had to explore.

Ange called out after me.

Then, Silver. When I saw that she saw that I was following her, I went the other way.

Alone, I reached the forest which I had just seen.

### SILVER'S HAIRS

I saw snakes. I couldn't tell one from the other. They sat on these small rocks in the sun.

One raised his head at me and made a noise like a top when it's spinning. But not really like that. Each sound here was strange to my ears.

I wanted to talk to the snakes, but then I saw a marsh. Up close.

All yellow, it seemed to be in the ground, and, at the same time, it seemed to be growing along the sand like a bramble on steroids.

I followed it to the edge of another body of filthy water. I saw that the marshes were the streets in this nonhuman town. I walked through one, and the next, until so much liquid splashed into my shoes that my footsteps were that of an Abominable Snowman's.

For Nature was metamorphosing me.

Then, as soon as I reached a piece of dry sand, I stuck my butt on it and took off the drowned shoes. Now my feet, when I walked, were going to get all foul and smelly and even bloody from torn skin. The sun was mature the way a piece of fruit gets overripe. Even this air was smellier. A fowl, I think it was a mallard or a duck, I don't know what the difference is, was rising out of a clump of reeds behind me. Soon a great cloud of gulls began to honk.

Through their language, which I didn't understand, I heard, for the first time since I had been alone, what was human.

"Maybe you're only capable of loving one girl and giving her the kind of devotion I'd do anything for. The kind of love a girl dies for. I know that it isn't me you love. And so you don't give a shit about me, and I do you, and I know that you know I love you. That's how you are about everyone: you'd see us dead if it suited you and you wouldn't blink an eyelid."

"That's how I am."

"I still love you and you know that. And I know you don't me. My mother didn't love me and I loved her." Now I recognized the speaker. It was the prettiest girl in the crew, Gold. We called her *Virgin* because her father had raped her. "So I have to do whatever I have to do because I like myself . . ."

"What're you laying on me?" The colder Silver appeared, the angrier she was.

"You were wrong, Silver, about Bad Dog, and you're wrong about these two dumb girls."

"I do what I have to do," replied Silver, "for me and for all pirates."

"I'm going to go against you, Silver. I'm not going to get involved in your murderous plans, even if they involve digging up lots of buried treasure, and when we get back to town, I'm going to tell the authorities all the treacherous things that you've done."

"If you do such a thing as that, you'd better watch out that you possess a memory, 'cause you need a head to possess a memory."

"Do you think I'm scared of you?" and the girl whose hair

was the colors of the sun picked up a stone and threw it at the pirate.

Silver, who knew how to throw, immediately grabbed a rock, which happened to be the largest one around, and slammed it at the other's head.

Blood flowed out of the red dent where the object had hit. As she fell, I saw Silver jump on top of her, then, with a strange expression on her face, leap up and run off.

I felt that I was seeing what I had seen before. Only now I was really seeing it:

A face whose features couldn't yet be seen. Whose silver hairs were thrown all over the winds of the world.

Only I didn't know how to see what I was seeing.

When I looked for the golden-haired girl, she wasn't there.

## Sections from The Chronicles of the Pirates

*As Narrated by One of MD's Wolfhounds*

### THE SINKING OF A SHIP

Since the purpose of these chronicles is to place down for posterity, and whatever shall be after posterity, the histories of the pirate girls, it is not my place to talk about myself. For I am the writer of these chronicles.

Suffice it to say that the family to which I'm genetically tied claims descent from the greatest antiquity.

For my ancestors were there when the world began. For, if this world began by beginning, it must have begun in a division whose double name was, and is, *life/death*. My forebears were there, then, for Hecate had three names, *Uncreate*, *Life*, and *Death*, and three heads, lion, horse, and dog.

The pirate girls say that man defines God. And so the ancient Greeks, that is, men, sick of the priestesses and

fortune-tellers who were controlling the future, transformed Hecate into *Death*. From then on, Hecate was invoked only during clandestine rites of magic, named *black* by the local politicians. And at the same time, I or my family was reduced to ordinary dog.

But I am nevertheless able to grant to any human her heart's desire. Suffice it to say that, like the pirate girls, I will still fuck anything.

—I just decided that I've talked too much about myself.

—*crucified from within by all that's intolerable in the world and proud of it*—that's my kind of writing.

—I shall talk of myself no more

—except to say that I have always been faithful to MD, and ever shall, and she to me and my brother

—and so we came to the new world

—After Silver, Virgin, and The-One-Who-Has-The-Map—that's what we secretly named her—left the ship, all of us, some not noticing that we had reached land, continued to do what we usually did.

We did notice that there was a bad smell.

Pussycat, licking her lips, said that it was rising up from all the dead fish that were lying under us.

Ostracism took her fingers out of Pussycat in order to investigate. When she returned, she said that there were lots of dead fish everywhere.

Pussycat was ready to eat.

"This stink's making me sick," Morgan, or Kiss-of-Rot, added to the conversation. Her face, green, was becoming simultaneously greener and more colorless, so she decided to pass out instead.

Not just Kiss-of-Rot but all of the pirates wanted to return to the Bald Head Pub, the true home of rotten girls where the world was one of comfort. Where dainty red-velvet curtains hang in front of windows whatever the conditions outside. Whatever the time and weather of the world. Where there were neither medical benefits nor class distinctions nor any other amenities to disturb their quiet existence. Where they moved through their orgasms into the imagination of the world.

"Bald Head Pub," said Pussy, their dreamer, "home where and when there's no home to those who don't want one."

Not bothering to listen to their captain, that was usual, these rotten and rotting girls whispered mutiny to each other. Really foul words, especially words which made no sense.

Only the most criminal, the ones who, when they had hair, pulled clumps of it out of their skulls and placed those bundles in front of other people's eyes, Antigone and Pussycat, cursed out loud.

Now it was really stinky. So odoriferous that the clams who were lying in the mud-water below, shell-open, and the fish whose mouths were gaping even though they were dead, could see a wall of smell.

With mouths agape between legs.

Most of the pirates still didn't notice anything.

"I'm going to investigate." Curiosity-mad Antigone dived into the liquid. Being three feet deep, its bottom hit her

head. Sitting up between the open-mouthed fish, she was the first pirate to perceive that the ship was going nowhere.

Now Captain Pussy started to make a speech about shipwrecks, but none of the pirates paid attention because they had begun to fight each other. Water was soaking through everything, water polluted by slime and dead fish heads, fish mouths open as if treasures could be found within. Water mixed with air and earth. Pussycat tried to kick MD, but the sea held her legs back. Half the deck hid under the water. Pussycat and Ostracism, tangled in each other's bodies, didn't notice that they were now lying in mud. Antigone rubbed her eyes with both her hands and got more crap into them. Filled with bits of starfish. When she tried to look through these eyes, the world had changed.

It looked as if the end of the world was the same as its beginning.

The battle broke out in earnest. Drops of water, slime, then blood flew through the lower part of the air. A sore breast, torn flesh at the right shoulder, bruises already turning all the colors of flesh that's already died. The viscous liquor that the girls were now in managed to buffer the worst of the blows, but not some poisonous scratches.

For the ship was sunk. All that could be seen was fingers of wood spread out and sticking up into, stinking up, the sky.

Thus, the girls visited the dead pirates who lived under the water.

Unnoticed, Ange disappeared in the direction her friend had gone.

King Pussy interrupted the speech she was trying to give to mutter, "First ship I ever lost."

It was the first time she had ever been on a ship.

Finally, Pussycat munched on a dead fish.

Wearied beyond endurance, the pirate girls fell back into the world of mud.

### THE FALL OF A KING AND OF THE KINGSHIP OF PUSSY

King Pussy told all the girls who were lying in the mud and the water what was happening to them. According to her dreams. For Pussy no longer needed to be asleep to see dreams.

"All of us are now being tested for AIDS.

"This is how those tests are being done: needles, having been inserted into the lower spine, put in but principally draw out gooey yellow liquid. And a small amount of blood.

"In other words: a cracked egg yolk."

Now Pussy predicted the future:

"Half of the ones who're lying on top of the lofty hospital beds 'cause they're in the middle of being tested are men.

"I was only watching what was going on even though I was supposed to be being tested. But it looked like it hurt to be tested so I asked one guy, 'Does it hurt?'"

"Yes."

Pussy is never too clear about things.

"I know that among these people I'm the only one who's refusing to be tested. And I know that I don't want to know this.

"All of the tests come out negative."

Relieved, MD went back to French-kissing my brother, who had just devoured a rat that wasn't yet dead.

"So I went away with the medical tester," continued Pussy. "I can't remember whether a he or a she." All of the

pirates were now listening entranced to their captain. They didn't mind that they were sitting in mud or that jellyfish particles were dripping off their eyelashes.

"The countryside was anything but beautiful. As soon as we were deep inside that gray and brown straw, she/he tested me, by use of black boxes that looked like Geiger counters, for all major diseases except AIDS.

"I had three of them. I knew this was true 'cause I was watching those needles in the round glass windows waver in the positive. Just a bit positive . . . that's positive.

"I was sick.

"How can this be? I was too terrified to answer myself, so in desperation I asked the Medical Authority.

"It's probably because you have AIDS. That's why most people get many of the kind of diseases you have at the same time.'

"Now I panicked. She/he tested me for AIDS and I had it.

"I was feeling the worst things that it's possible for a human to feel.

"Then reality turned even worse:

"I was sitting in a second-story New York City-like apartment, the usual hole, like the Bald Head Pub, with a bunch of my friends, about half of whom I didn't know. A man, whom I had never seen before, set this room on fire.

"Because he had just been informed that he was positive.

"Through that disintegrating floor, we fell to the ground. Which was the outside. Human-size automata, female, military, eight of them, in two lines, began to advance. A leg rises straight up, another, military style—1, 2, 1, 2—someone must have first activated them, they kept on closing in on us, for

they were planning to annihilate us. That was their one purpose in life. Meanwhile, a missile, flaming right through the sky, hurtled toward us. Similar missiles explode, right there! In the air! Just above our heads! War lies all around us and human limbs are being lopped off!

"I guess I had gotten away from the war, 'cause I was inside a grocery store. Maria, you were in there with me. In that grocery store." We called Maria *Black Monk* 'cause she was as sweet and pure as a holy celibate. "You were crouching down in front of those cash registers so no one could know you were there."

That's typical behavior for Maria. She doesn't want to be part of the human world.

"The cash registers were shelves filled with food. You were crouching down because you were poor and had to steal."

"I will never recognize Restraint," Black Mary announced.

"When I asked you, 'cause even in dream I liked you, what you wanted me to get you, for I see that you were skeletal and homeless, you pointed toward boxes of dried milk. *Carnation*.

"You spoke up for yourself: 'I want to eat white rice, not dried milk. But I don't have money.'

"I knew that there was a causal connection between your two sentences, but I didn't understand what it was.

"Will you steal for me?"

"From then on, we hung out together. In the dream, you were beautiful and suicidal, and I didn't understand how you could be both beautiful and suicidal.

"Nothing anymore made sense.

"Until everyone who had been tested told me that it had

been reported to each of them that they were positive. That the U.S. Army had done this and had activated the female automata. They planned to exterminate all of us."

From then on, Pussy began to talk about herself. It was dream who was talking through her:

"After that war had taken place, the world was changed.

"From that time on, all my dreams were about cats."

The secret is that these girls aren't drunks, but dreamers and poets.

"The war had taken place and then there was a cat which belonged to a man and a woman. These humans were experimental poets and married to each other.

"The cat had the bathroom.

"I had the bedroom, which was in front of the house.

"The cat and I were on a train together. Though she had always been distant to me, now she opened up.

"I explained to the woman, whose name was C, that her pussy had become friendly.

"After Henri G., a psychic in London, had introduced me at a symposium, she said, while I was in full view of the audience, 'Your job will be to improvise on the subject of cats.'

" 'Oh, please. Give me five minutes. I need to figure out what I'm going to say.'

"I started by walking over to the podium which was as tall as me. The larger it grew, the smaller me. As if I was Alice in Wonderland, since this pedestal was only a carton under a carton three times its size, I defeated all of it by carrying it away, and then I could see that the audience was moving backwards.

"I began to talk to them by describing C's pussy. I thought I was making sense, but they kept on laughing and talking among themselves.

"Some of them were lounging menacingly in the doorway to what lay outside.

"At least half of them were outside.

"When I began speaking again, there was no one left to listen to me."

King Pussy had just announced to us that she had failed as our captain. She would no longer be a leader.

"I had no more worth because, instead of an audience, there was a group of seventy-five or so schoolgirls, sitting, as they had been taught to do, in folding chairs in three rows.

"All of these girls came from privileged families.

"Because I no longer did anything successfully, I decided the world was void.

"Then I saw that the lecture hall was the interior of a church. A small church.

"Wooden pews were strewn everywhere, this way, that. Down on them, those who were homeless sat discussing their business among themselves. This is what's going on, I thought, not all that highfalutin culture that I've been part of.

"The homeless ended the meeting.

"I was outside the church with C.

"I wanted to go to a punk bar, but there were no more punk bars anymore, and besides, C, the poet, wanted to go to a nice-girl bar.

"We parted our ways."

As soon as Pussy finished speaking, all the girls cheered, for they thought that she had been speaking about treasure. Clearly, they were going to get more treasure than they had ever seen. They were going to live in silver and gold and do whatever they wanted to do and spit on the world if they could be bothered.

They came out of their sulks and gave another cheer for Pussy their captain that started an echo in a faraway hill, which sent the gulls once more soaring and squalling around the wreck of the ship.

The pirates began to run toward the land, but the muck wouldn't let them. All the dead fish with their mouths agape. They moved, those sailors, however they could, alternately paddled and crawled, until they reached a narrow stream. The beginning of the earth that contained treasure.

## Days That Are to Come

Ø's Story, the End

### BECOMING A RAT

I ran and I ran.

I was sinking down into earth. It was as if the earth around me was opening. Its top was excited—I could see this—excited so that its bottom could open up and the dirt part, dirt from dirt, earth under earth.

I was in the marshes.

There was a lot of dirt underneath. Rich, brown bricks that I thought might be gold but weren't. I knew.

It was seared.

There were bricks of soil, which is shit, everywhere, scattered all over the fallen birds' wings. At this edge of an abyss, lips of grass like tiny swords lay in the sun. Light winds everywhere.

Beyond the marshes, there was nothing but time, so that the earth could take a rest. Where there was time, trees began to appear. Violators stood in the tops of those trees.

The earth opened.

The marshes had begun again because I was standing in stillness. In one of those pools between the trees. Water was air: silver. And then, the water that I was in and seeing started to ripple, for there was trouble underneath it, logs, fish-ferment, which is a combination of fermenting fish and fish shit. It all smelled like rot because it was. It was hot 'cause hot is orgasm. All was rolling and hurting and smelling and it was a strong, rich smell which was rolling over and rolling over and around again: a dog in mud.

The dog's teeth champed on mud which is meat.

My teeth or the world's champed on me or the world.

The trees were long because this whole world was logs. Logs were rolling over reality: turned each other over, turned over on and under each other. Each log-wave began time. And a new room would come into being. Each log-wave-time turned over, was gone.

And again.

My heart leaped up and began to thump, for I thought that I heard something. In this world where I was alone. Which seemed to be without humans. Something which sounded other than the winds creeping low through the reeds, birds' wings on the march, or the rocks under the wrecked ship scraping the sky.

At first, I thought I heard rats.

I was standing at the edge of a small hill. It must have been a young one, for its hair had just started to grow. I

thought it was quivering because I was touching it, but the sound, I saw, came from bits of gravel falling downward, through that stubble.

Something that looked human leapt behind a tall tree.

It might be a possum or a giant rat. I thought.

Smells sat everywhere. They weren't as powerful as the ones that had been down in the marshes. Where trees had begun.

There are times when I get really scared, though I know that I'm brave.

Not knowing what I was seeing, whether dream or real, whether human or animal, brought my steps to a standstill.

In back of me, regarding time and space, was Silver, who wanted to murder me. In front of me, regarding the same, was I didn't know what. In front of me, my inability to know.

I had thought I would never return to Silver and now I was going to. I preferred dangers I knew to those I didn't. And I knew how to handle Silver's sexuality and her viciousness.

Or so I believed.

I didn't know anything about her sexuality and viciousness.

Turning on my heels and looking sharply behind me over my shoulder, I began to retrace my steps in the direction of the boat.

Instantly the strange figure reappeared and, making a wide circuit, commenced cutting me off. Both fear and exertion had tired me, but even if I had just awoke, it would have been useless for me to contend with such an adversary.

For it ran manlike on two legs, but was unlike any man I had ever seen.

Soon I would no longer be able to see. For the sun was ceasing and the stars beginning to gather. Each wept at the other.

I was scared.

I knew that I was scared because I had never cared whether I was alive or dead.

I said, "I who've been dead for so long: I don't know what to do and I don't know how to live and that's who I am."

It was a girl who was standing in front of me. She looked like a rat. For example, her hair was drooling over her face's front.

She stepped back and forth, as if she had to go to the bathroom, and then she threw herself around my feet.

It was Ange. She was the filthiest thing I had ever seen, far more grungy than Silver, for a sail part had been wrapped between her legs, then around one thigh, like a Kotex that's falling off. Otherwise, she had become a rat.

"What happened to you?"

"I got lonely."

It was then that I knew that I was a rat, that we were both rats, just like all the pirate girls, and it had taken all we had been through to make us this.

*Metal-changing.*

So I held on to her and the world disappeared and there were no more rats.

"Ange," I whispered, "Ange."

There was no one there to answer me, so I said her name as much as I wanted.

Maybe, in the future, I would get used to being in this new world.

"Ange. Ange."

Everything was rolling in this gentle motion so everything was alive and the air was warm. I and everything and the warm air turned over and over. Though I was no longer scared, I wondered if it was dangerous to be here 'cause there was no need to end.

"Do you want to stop, Ange?"

"No."

The world was where things grew, just at the top of a slope which was beginning to run downward.

For the two paths had separated.

Here was fur moss and animals.

"Hear come the nights," I said to Ange. They were rushing in, rushing water; the knights held their spears extended. Water was all over the place, had already flooded the world, there was no more ground.

The oceans were everything. The waves on the tops of the waters made, were also, patterns; the patterns were made out of froth, rather than water; the froth made the water visible.

This was the realm of continual ecstasy.

Now everything was wet, dripping with it. Dank and rotten. This world was never going to stop. For those two paths that had opened when this world had begun were now touching each other. Two paths each split into two. Burning. Turning around each other. They were still very dirty and exceedingly smelly.

The odors that had made the colors darken caused the waters to surge.

I looked upon Ange. Her hair was sticking straight out of her head and over her face. It was rat's hair all thick and brown and so stiff nothing would ever make it go down again and her

green eyes were red. These red holes were opening and closing, all of her was opening now around my left leg, so the plains went on yellow and yellow, yellow but with bits of brown like grass, there.

As if all was a surface and the surface, a carpet, a line on or under the carpet, rose up like a snake.

Earth was lying under earth.

*Under the membrane of the earth, the snake pulsed equaled beneath an orgasm, a river.* Every time the snake touched this membrane with its nose, because it couldn't break through because this was the top, it was all orgasms in the plains.

The sun burned down, so the tips of the grass were now red, touches of.

I told her that she was never going to go away from me by telling her that she was a rat.

"If we're rats," she murmured rather than murdered in memory of the pirate girls, "we should act like rats."

"Then we have to eat everything we can scent."

We decided that that would be good behavior.

Ange said that there might be something to scent at the shipwreck or *the place of exile*.

I didn't know what this rat was talking about.

"The boat got wrecked and those girls made me go away from them, they put me into exile."

"That's because you're a rat."

Both of us agreed that we didn't want to be here because we didn't want to be anywhere, so we might as well crawl through this skanky-skunk-wood-tangled-garbage-whatever-it-was called *nature* 'cause there maybe we could find that which could help us, though all of this so-called nature looked

more desolate to me than a city that had burnt down and was remnants of human civilization.

Ange 'n me decided that rats live in cities 'cause rats are highly intelligent.

The sun was getting up so he was mortal like us. It was then I knew that there were dead pirates all around us.

We walked on hands and knees through a bunch of nature that was rotten by nature 'cause nature naturally rots. Like trees 'n wildflowers 'n weeds 'n rocks 'n dead lizards 'n all the childhood neither me nor Ange ever had but we're gonna have 'cause that's our goal in life 'n worms half-squished by these really hideous crabs who were Martians in disguise or in real life. And found dead computer parts.

Slithered around ponds and even through some 'cause Ange wanted to feel what it's like to have piss all over you. I said no because I thought I'd be disgusted, but it smelled kind of good, like I was all safe again, like when you put mud all over you, so then I felt safe enough to remember that I had never felt, that is, been, safe.

We didn't find anything, so this nature was a lot more useless than a decayed city to two girls who had been through everything on their hands and knees.

That's how I felt then.

We came, as if we were coming to an object, to the sounds of birds screaming. And to bits of bird shit. Ange said she was hungry.

"You smell bad enough as it is," I told her.

The harpies above us were still squawking, probably 'cause they were waiting for us to die so they could eat too, when Ange's hand sank into what was mushy.

She started to put this hand on my face, so I informed her that I'd vomit, only the smell of vomit made me more nauseous than the smell of her hand. "You have to suffer and endure terrible conditions if you want to find the source of dreams." I told Ange. "I'm going to make you bathe."

The first time we looked up from this cross between a pond and a puddle in which we were sitting, we saw that we were in a cemetery.

This couldn't be a pirate graveyard 'cause pirates get buried in the sea so they can dream. So this was a rat cemetery.

A different bird was sitting on each tombstone. Most of which were wood 'cause they were sticks.

This death joint was more solemn than a chapel. Neither Ange nor I had ever been in a church. One of the gravestones must have just had some sexual pleasure, 'cause the liquid in which we were cleaning ourselves was still issuing out of it.

We thought of all the dead rats. How humans feared them 'cause humans, above all, fear intelligence. How humans, scared out of their minds, gather whatever intelligence they can put their hands on and put it all in a central penitentiary named *facts*, whereas rats eat everything whether or not they're hungry. Rats: pleasure rules their world.

This is why Ange 'n me would rather be rats.

Ange was the one who said this.

I asked her whether pleasure was equivalent to a rat.

She said that she'd know this as soon as she totally became a rat.

It all had something to do with treasure.

The puddle-pond was located in the center of the cemetery. In this land of the dead, we had already met dead butterflies 'n dogs' teeth but I didn't see how we could use any of this

nature for our own purposes, 'cause all of it was perishing, if not perished, so we decided to keep on crawling.

While we were still sitting there, right in the middle of nature, I told Ange 'bout how there was this guy named Orpheus and he had a girlfriend and we don't know whether or not she was a poet 'cause she was a girl. "Everybody knows that Orpheus, or O, or Or, was the most famous poet who's ever existed in all of human memory, or Greek memory, which soon might not be remembered anymore, and that includes Orpheus's girlfriend even though we don't know who she was."

I said that we know that Orpheus followed her down into the ground, right to this burial ground.

"At that time, there was a cemetery king who was a rat.

"Yo, Orpheus," said Rat, 'you can get your girlfriend back and own her and kiss her all up. All you gotta do is get out of this dead place.'

"I want to get out of this rotting cemetery,' replied Orpheus.

"So go. And don't ever look behind you.'

"What about Eurydice?" Now I remembered. That was the name of Orpheus's girlfriend."

"I've got a girl," mumbled Ange and wriggled over to me and climbed on me 'n made me come a few times.

"The Rat King said, 'She's right behind you where you can't see her.'"

Ange and I, again, started crawling.

"Orpheus, of course, looked behind him, as if *he* walked out of the land of the dead, as if *he* hadn't been changed by going through the land of the dead, as if *he* could be the person he remembered he was. Disobeying Death, or *Identity*, he lost Eurydice."

Ange turned around so she was facing me. "He lost Eurydice 'cause he was ignorant: he never knew who she was, just like we don't know who Eurydice was."

When Ange turned back again, now in post-cemetery domain, she saw exactly what I was seeing.

Silver was standing by.

Night must have come and gone. It was the coldest morning that, still, I have ever known.

Trees were rising up like dogs who forgot they've just been punished. The cold was turning the low-lying sun into ice.

Where Silver was, fog was rising from the ground. Her legs were spread so far apart that she could have been pissing. There was this lizard sitting in her silver hair. Then, all I could see were my lips on those of that white animal . . .

"Aren't you going to talk to me?" The filthy-haired girl's lilac eyes were looking into mine. So were the yellow and red eyes and everything that was living in her hairs.

Ange was muttering that this brat whom we had befriended, or who had befriended us, was a common murderer and a pirate and at the same time should be hung and electrocuted, so I said out loud as loudly as I could, "I know that you and your girls never meant any good to us."

"Well . . ."

"I know that you want to murder me." I was looking deeper into those lilac and black realms.

"Here's the thing," replied Silver as if no emotion had ever shared her world.

And even now, I know the sun is a lizard.

"The thing is," she picked her nose with her grubbiest finger, "we, the girls 'n I, want that treasure and we're going to

get it. There's nothing you can do about this so you might as well be dead, and you have to die to be dead. But before you die, you're going to do one thing, 'cause there's one thing that we want."

"What's that?" asked Ange, all green-eyed and curious. Ange was much braver than me.

"You're going to give up that chart! The original that has pirate blood smeared all over it!" Her legs spread themselves apart farther, and at the same time, the lizard, who had been almost hidden in all that hair, slithered out until it was balanced on two or three strands of thick girl stuff. Its tongue hung out of its mouth, so long that it could lick its own eyes.

"What I mean is," cried the nasty pirate, "we want that map. I myself—understand this, O—would never do anything to hurt you, so I don't give a tinker's damn what happens to you. I don't give a tinker's curse whether or not you're murdered in the process of us getting, and becoming, everything in the world we want."

And this was how I remembered that I still had a treasure map.

"I think you should die," Ange replied to Silver, "and all of your girls should be electrocuted because, according to my acupuncturist, that is the most painful way for humans to die. All of your flesh while you're alive will become shredded living worms because our treasure map is ours."

Silver turned away, she walked away from us just like Orpheus.

Just like the headless writer—though he wasn't headless then—she looked back. Toward me. Eurydice. As if I were dead. As if I were dead to the world, and so the world, now dead, was commencing again in the form of a sun. In the form

of all the treasure that's hidden within the sun. "I'll tell you what I'm going to do, O. Listen here."

My ears were as red as a rose.

"You come over here and slip that chart up into where I keep my treasures and I'll offer you a choice. As soon as all the treasure's been shipped into the ship, you can come on board with us and become one of us, and for the rest of your life, and all your lives after that, your cunt, when you have one, will know what it is to be continually wet, dripping in the winds of the world. There's no use stopping the winds, is there? Think of all the odors coming from the winds. You've never smelled them, have you? Never smelled yourself, have you, girl?"

Pause. "Or you can choose to die."

Pause. "You'll never get a handsomer offer."

Pause. "Either way, that treasure's ours."

"Now you hear me, Silver. Fuck off. That's what I've got to say. I don't want your rotting old cunt anymore. I had forgotten about the treasure map until you threatened Ange 'n me. Ange 'n me, we're going to find the treasure and it'll be ours and that's that.

"If anything, there's murder between us."

There were all sorts of animals in Silver's hair. She pulled a screw out and the white lizard scampered away. Mumbled, "Them that'll die'll be the lucky ones."

After she had stamped away, the green-eyed girl and I just looked at each other.

"We're tougher than pirates," announced Ange, quivering.

"I'm scared."

## PLAYING HOUSE

The actuality was that both of us were scared, so, remaining standing up, we looked for a house in which we could play house 'cause we knew that it wasn't going to be our real home.

Ange said we had to analyze our finances to see what we could afford. Mortgage rates were going up all over the place due to the disintegration of government. She wasn't going to take chances like we had been taking them.

We looked but we couldn't find anything. Just goes to show that nothing ever changes, and, if there's a history of human progress, men have made it up.

But Ange insisted that unless we wanted to become pirates and murder nonpirates we had to live somewhere.

So we started crawling through nature again.

We were inching and grumbling through used beehives and rose petals. I sneezed 'cause I'm allergic to anything natural like the world.

Soon we got all tangled up in these dead wasps and combs that looked like they came from leftover schoolgirls and these kind of crab claws—actually I couldn't tell what they were 'cause Mother Nature is always changing her form. All of them were down in the ground. Just like the teeth Jason had sown in what might now be a post-human world.

One of the teeth caught on some threads that were leaking out of what remained of a pocket in my blue-jean shorts. The map started falling out. That's what made me remember I

Kathy Acker

had a map. Maybe it wasn't drawn by humans, I thought, 'cause maybe criminals aren't human. So I looked down into it to find out what this posthuman world looked like.

Section of the map I'm looking at:

James Baldwin's Novel

Inside the book

colors like I've never seen  
deepest, darkest reds  
no blacks

Next level inside. This is a prison because it's a room of the heart. I'm in the rooms of the heart so there's blood everywhere.

 blood stream



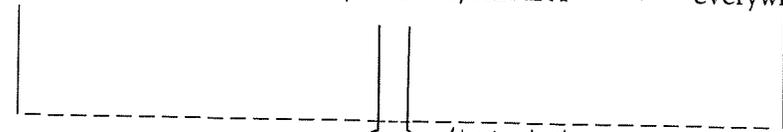
the cell door. this door rises and falls.  
cell doors rise and fall all around. In this level, the third, every detail of the world is magnified as it presents itself to my eyes. this is the presence of the heart—I know this now.

"This is what it's like to be a black man in our society," says Ange.

Days That Are to Come

We returned to the map's insides:

everywhere ← PRISON/BLOOD/HEART → everywhere



light at the end  
of the tunnel

I'm simultaneously terrified  
and in wonder and I can  
never tell anyone this is  
happening

Maybe 'cause of what I'd just seen and maybe 'cause I couldn't describe what I'd just seen, I, with Ange, kept on crawling.

We thought we were back on the beach next to the sea in which lived those men who had also been in Ange's dead mother's cunt. Next to the gray surface of the water where the ship had been and, now, was dead. A dead bird like all who are sleeping and dreaming.

When we walked to the edge of that sand, we saw that there was more sand below us. We were on the top of a cliff. The sun had set; the sea breeze was rustling and tumbling through the woods in the distance. Light seemed to come from nowhere.

We kept on walking. Piles of shit were hidden in the sand. I stepped into one; brown stuck into the crevices of my hiking boots' soles. I loathed this sight, so I told Ange I had to find a bathroom, sooner than possible.

While I was telling Ange I had to go to the bathroom, I was so freaked out about what was on me that I didn't notice that she was already knocking on a door of a log cabin.

"Look, Ange," I said, "a house."

Just like the one Abe Lincoln was born in. Dead crabs were lying outside it.

There were no windows, only porthole-like openings, where its slats didn't manage to meet.

Ange, inside, stared at the floor, parts of which lay above other parts, sometimes so far above that a part was almost touching the ceiling, just like we touch God, while I was washing my hands, then more thoroughly my feet, right in front of the metal stalls found in the bathrooms of schoolgirls.

Then I remembered that there was shit stuck inside the crevices of the soles of my hiking boots. I had to get that out, though I didn't want to, 'cause the shit would contaminate my clean hands, but I made myself do it so I could be like a child.

Meanwhile, according to the map, a ladder led from the center of the large room outside this bathroom to another room.

Ange tried to climb up this ladder and failed.

I wanted to try. So many had tried and failed, but I was determined to succeed.

I fell.

When I started climbing again, I knew that in order to reach the room that was on top I would have to bring something with me. *To bring something with me would be to give something away*, But, I told myself, I don't have anything 'cause I had nothing in childhood.

I started to go up.

I was halfway up the ladder when I saw that ahead of me there weren't any more rungs.

I had nothing to stand on anymore.

I kept moving by pulling myself up by my hands.

When I was almost at that trap door, I saw myself halfway through the opening, which was too small for the rest of my body to pass through.

I could only be pulled through.

Pulled into a room larger than I had ever seen. Where Ange and I would be able to play with each other.

I heard a noise that, at first, sounded like winds.

Ange screaming.

I leaped out of the tangles of that ladder and, rubbing my eyes like a child, ran over, beside the green-eyed girl, to a hole that was lying like a dead rat in the wall and smelling like a girl.

### THE TRUE COLORS OF PIRACY

I peered through the hole:

Sure enough, all the rotten girls were outside. I saw two of them. Silver and that dead girl, Virgin.

They were lounging around, nothing else. Maybe feeling themselves up.

It was quiet and early, so I could still see the chill: white and stiller than time. 'Cause there are no clouds in time. Gold and that brat whose hair was all over the place as if it was the garbage can for the years were wading knee-deep in air so milky that it had to be poisonous.

"Don't let her in. That means *you*," Ange told me.

"I want a truce," the silver-haired girl yelled.

"What do you want a truce for?" I asked. "Get along or we'll shoot you."

"Now, me hearties"—as usual Silver was doing all the talking—"girls should get along with each other and not have fights, 'cause girls aren't violent, and all my nice girls agree with me. And piracy's survived for a long time in this world. So why do you keep prolonging this internecine turbulence?"

"I don't know." Then I caught myself. "Get out of here or Ange 'n me're gonna shoot you."

"I'm gonna shoot you," yelled Ange.

"Girls have to accept girls who aren't like them," the pirate brat pleaded with us. "For this reason, the girls and I have decided to join forces with you even though you've never been to jail or stolen. But dooty is dooty, 'n girls' dooty is to love other girls."

"And all other living beings," added the Virgin. She was masturbating, so my friend followed her example.

I kicked the green-eyed slut hard.

"O," Silver continued, "you 'n me used to be friends, and you know, if you ever saw something you shouldn't have seen, well, you know I get a little drunk sometimes. All of my girls do. It's from living in a society that disrespects its women and hates their bodies. Especially when they masturbate. This makes us turn to drink, though I know that's not the way to deal with certain types of hegemony."

Ange was coming, so I kicked her again.

"The bottom line"—the girl whose hair was silver, though it didn't look so silver after all we had been through,

was still talking to me—"is that girls got to survive. Since *girls* includes us . . ."

"Not you," the Virgin commented.

". . . we need that treasure. That's the bottom line, matey."

The filthiest of all girls, blood hanging like dead rats around her thighs, filthier even than Silver, stepped forward. It was Pussycat.

"Since that treasure came from pirates, that treasure should go to pirates."

She disappeared as fast as she had come.

"Yeah, that's the bottom line." It was Brat-face. "You've got the map. The real one, don't you?"

"Yeah," Ange replied. I kicked her for real.

"That's what we want. As for me, I have no desire to kill you, O. You or your little friend."

For the first time, I was seeing the pirate girls in their true colors. Black and red. They wore their insides on their outsides, blood smeared all over the surfaces. When opened, the heart's blood turns black.

Just like the room in Baldwin's novel.

"So," Silver finished me off, "you give me that map so I can get all the treasure, and then you drop dead. Or, if that normal way doesn't please you, become one of us."

"I have a desire to kill you," was all I said because I wasn't noticing her anymore but rather thinking about how the pirate map that had started all this had come out of Ange's dead mother's box. Just as Ange had come out.

With that, Silver disappeared, dragging Gold with her.

Whereas my mother had tried to off me and killed herself

instead. I clung to Ange in that world that was now deserted. There was no one there but us, so the emptiness of our playhouse would never go away. Brother and sister, we clung to each other.

It was the new world.

Ange and I were waiting for something. 'Cause we were no longer going to play house. We waited past our time. Time was past its birth-time and about to bust through its mucous linings, and this delayed birth, or commencement, of the world set our ears, eyes, and nostrils—especially our nostrils, for we had gotten good at smelling skunk, dead fish, and crab, the three animals this isle was full of—on the alert.

“There are pirates out there,” announced Ange.

I didn't ask where.

The world hadn't yet begun.

So Ange and I discussed whether or not it's right to kill pirates, as if anything that we said or might say bore any relation to what was really happening and what was really going to happen.

Then, the world began.

The viciousness of girls cannot be imagined.

All the pirates appeared.

The fields were lilac, filled with tiny flowers. Then the animals, little bits of fur, specks of gray, the tops of heads. Each time a head stuck out, each head was an orgasm.

A rat was putting her head under her paws and snuffling around. “Sniff,” she snuffled, shuffling, “wuff, wuff.” The rat, at that moment, thought she was a dog 'cause she was looking peering snuffling for a word or a possibility of speaking: “Down there, something's happening! Down there to the side!”

In the side, wood was rolling slowly. A roll of wood. Rolling down into the depths of hell.

The wood descended to where there were dark lands, rivers, everywhere. While the pirate girls shot at us and made blood flow out of the body.

Everywhere rivulets divided the land.

It's not that girls don't kill. A pirate named Pussycat, who was truly the meanest of all the pirates, having run up to Ange, grabbed the gun the green-eyed girl had found, wrenched it from her hands, threw it toward the other pirates, where it landed in a pile of rat shit. The girl pirates didn't care. They were used to bad smells. With one stunning blow, Ostracism's lover laid Ange senseless on the earth.

“Will I see poetry again?” I looked at Ange. “Orpheus couldn't see the violence of *red*. This is all an announcement of the future of death.” All the motorcycles were coming in death; the orgasms caused tears of joy to be on their faces.

King Pussy, who was a rat, stood in front of all of them, all those ratty, now bruised pirates. “I, King Pussy, who see by means of my dreams, have seen wars! Mutilations! Girls dying from brutal mistreatment! The hell with my dreams! Now I see everything differently!”

In the past, King Pussy explained in her declaration of war, girls who had never done anything to anyone were called names and beaten with sticks. “Now we're declaring war! We shall beat up O and Ange, for all the treasure is ours! Ours, the girls'!”

Ange—even though she had passed out—and I were seeing our limbs cut, then spread, over all the dark, rainy Thursdays, Thursdays about to die. Thursdays are always autumns. Thursdays are the days of death because girls put on suits of

earth, suits of shit, buried in the bones of corpses, they crunch on those bones, those bones of shit.

Beaten up always on a Thursday . . .

The pirates had won the war.

Afterwards, sleep elongated to a lake.

For the moment, the pirates were gone. I tried to drag Ange up the ladder, 'cause I knew we'd be safe in that room up there, but the rungs kept falling off. So I took her behind the ladder, to a small space the ladder had obscured. And shut the door so that room could no longer be seen.

If we remained hidden, we might not die.

"Where are those yucky girls?" inquired Kiss-of-Rot, a mangy pirate. For her peck was known as *kiss-of-rose*.

"I, King Pussy, see through my dreams . . ."

King Pussy had to masturbate to see this one:

"I see two girls, can't distinguish all limbs, about to lose energy, dissolving, as if into gasps, hardly see figures. One has hair, one squatting on floor, other kneels beside her.

"Floor?"

"The walls are moving. I can no longer tell—for *to tell is to remember*—where. Like going through narrow halls, shift as turn, another set of halls, just see through a slit."

"That's all you can do is see through a slit?"

"How can I look through it?"

Pussy: "A narrow, vertical slit. Through which these two girls . . ."

"Seeing into what?"

". . . they're in a room. One has hand on the other's face,

the face of the one who's squatting, rubs that cheek, the other's inner thighs are quivering 'cause she's coming, me too it feels so good, they lie on the floor, both on their backs—it's a wood room—'cause they want to rub their asses on the floor."

"One is on top of the other, legs spread, O my God." One of the other pirates was now looking through this hole.

"Where are these two girls, pig-slut?" asked mangy cutoff ears.

"Oh, behind. Just go behind, left, right, it doesn't matter, oh shit, I'm coming again, I'll tell you where I'm coming, where's there's light . . . ah . . . black."

"Oh, shut up, Pussy," said a girl whose tongue had been bitten off. She usually didn't say anything.

The red glare of a torch lighting up the interior of most of the cabin showed me that all of the pirate girls had come and were in full possession of my house. Silver and her bloody cohort, Virgin, stood in front of me.

Behind were the rest of the motley crew, in the infernal light, in the nighttime that belonged to them.

As soon as she had me back again, brat-girl yanked my head up by its tiny hairs and then stuck her hand up me.

## THE VISION PASSES

When the pirate girls blindfolded me, I knew palpable fear. I was terrified of each girl, of what they were going to do to me, for I knew they were going to do something.

What they were going to do to me was my fear.

There were animals everywhere. Not only the wolf-hounds, who were barking, and the birds.

Hands shoved me forward—we'd started walking—pulled me in certain directions.

A rose yes yes rose oh the relief. Rose out front, all the roses were alive.

"I don't want to be blindfolded," I protested. Rose thorns stuck into my skin, stumbling.

The dogs kept barking, the birds and the lizards.

"We could let you die."

"Let's just leave her and let the birds eat her cunt."

"I'm hungry," bespoke another pirate.

"Give her to your dogs, eh, MD?"

But there was every kind of animal everywhere. I could no longer tell where Ange was among all those animals.

The animals are just one animal today, I whispered to myself. One growly bear who clenches paws and takes all into that chest. "I want, I want," says growly bear. And just does what he has to do 'cause he's a he-bear.

"Yump yump yump," which means *give me*. The bear has a big tongue. This makes the outside come while he licks oh my god bees. I'm gonna die coming outside and, of course, inside is all fields 'cause there's constant churning there.

Bear has gone to the roses 'cause both bear and roses can't exist at the same time.

The pirate girls were taking me down a hill.

We were going downhill. I said to myself, Oh yes they can. The bear sits on roses with his big tush. When this fat butt goes down, the roses squish. But bear doesn't care about squished roses: this is what an orgasm is. When the skin of inside the asshole comes out like a rose.

Oh no, I shouldn't be doing this, coming out; asshole skin coming out; but it's okay when it's an orgasm.

Growly bear, I continued, for I had forgotten where I was, puts dildo in his cunt. Is anyone looking at me? he thinks. If so, does their gaze affect me? I'm not interested, thinks growly bear. "Yes! Yes! Yes!" growly bear is shouting, 'cause now he doesn't have to do anything. 'Cause coming so deep in there.

But growly bear isn't that deep yet. Is going to the center, but as yet isn't in the center. Growly bear's where all is turning, metamorphosing. The riches of nature and orgasms are so strong, they metamorphose into convulsions. Where the rain of rose petals reigns.

Again I could smell the sea where the fish are always more rotten than they have been.

Some pirate took off my blindfold. Somehow, seeing had changed. In light that was also dark and dark that was also light, pirates were poring over a map. I didn't have to see to know what they were seeing.

There would be a sign: *dreams end* . . . Then there would be paths and they would get jumbled, and bones, and they all get jumbled, and all of them would combine and then there would be a tall tree that, according to the map, was red.

And off to the side, a boat next to a black stone and a white stone.

"That's where we're going." MD, her two wolfhounds leaping around her, came over to me and pointed toward a plateau. Trees were growing from its top, especially one so tall it seemed to be reaching through the sky. Right before me I saw an anchorage and two stones, one black and one white. MD kissed the dog on the left.

The pirate girls were so eager to find the treasure that they no longer cared about Ange's and my presence.

All of us ascended to the plateau, we dug down. The higher we went up, the more this earth opened.

Until there were only mountains and everything that was rich and brown. And the meeting place between the sky and what lay below it was red.

Now, as the hill began to grow steeper, all the colors changed, for color is the first appearance of the world. The sun was red and the birds' wings, for green is the color of death. Yellow fields rose up as if they were about to break open. "Oh, thank you, little men," cried the pirates. "Come out come out open up we're looking for the treasure." Red was down here, was the cherry. They would have to go down now, there, there where it was brown, go, go into space as space expanded and action burned.

It was all burning as they climbed to the top. There space expanded and, simultaneously, violently contracted.

Each star is a contraction, a burst, when you dive to get treasure.

All of us still had to find the forest, find the lilac water so that what was the most inside, the treasure, could turn out, roll over. So that consciousness or surface, for all is conscious, could faint. Become a feint.

Once the treasure was found, the insides would turn and turn and never stop that. On the other hand, each set of turnings would become more violent and calmer. *The woods* will be the name of all this.

All of us reached the forest. The pirate girls started leaping about and looking for booze and doing whatever pirate girls do regardless of what they're supposed to be doing.

The youngest of them, Black Maria, who was never heard from, cried out in terror.

"Now I see the treasure," shouts King Pussy, for she is the one who sees, and I wasn't blindfolded anymore, and what Pussy had thought was treasure was a dead pirate.

Which goes to show that a dead pirate is better than nothing at all.

Pussy who lives by her dreams wouldn't believe that this wasn't treasure, so she lifted up an arm, then a femur, like there was going to be something besides bones, and MD's dogs were doing the same thing. All the girls started sniffing each other. They threw the bones around and said, generally, that is, that there was no more need for pirates and suchlike history and that now the reigns of all reins could be over.

Antigone decided to celebrate this day in which there was no booze, unless you count fermented rat piss, by changing her name to Angelique, who used to be some whore, because, she told us, she was currently talking to an angel. The angels were larger than humans.

Ange 'n me were still these girls' prisoners and hadn't been allowed to talk to each other. We wanted to get away and be together. "Look at that old skeleton," Ange pointed toward a corner of the crisscrossed jumbled-path cemetery where the pirates were lying.

She said this to the pirates, 'cause she didn't want to act like she was talking to me, but they didn't bother to notice her.

It was a bigger skeleton than all the others. His feet pointed in one direction; his cock, a bone, pointed in the other.

"Let me see the map," added Ange.

Silver was fucking Virgin, so the green-eyed girl just took the map away from her.

"Look." Ange. "Here's a compass. The map says the laby-

rinth begins ESE by E. This must be those guys' last joke. ESE by E is here. His fucking boner is showing us the treasure, O."

I looked down at the map and gazed at that dead cock. Now I knew why I had been searching for men. And hadn't stopped until I had found one. The pirate girls were so into their private world, they didn't notice anything, notice that the world or the sky was shifting again.

Ange and I followed the cock.

We discussed how boners stay alive even after men die . . .

Cocks weren't treasure but pointed to treasure. That's what Ange said.

And so we left the pirate girls to do what pirate girls do.

While we were traveling in the direction the cock told us to, I announced to Ange that I was going to tell her a story about treasure:

"It's a story told by a poet.

"In order to take revenge against a human named Prometheus, who had challenged his inhuman power, God the Father, whose name was Zeus, created the most beautiful woman in the world. He wanted to give her to Prometheus.

"Actually he sent this woman to Prometheus's brother, but Prometheus had already warned his sibling not to accept gifts from the gods.

"Even more furious than before, Zeus chained Prometheus to a stone pillar. There, in the coldest regions of the mountains, a vulture tore into this naked man's liver, and Prometheus said, for his liver became whole so the bird could repierce it, 'There is no end to pain.'

"Prometheus's brother became so terrified that he fucked

the woman, Pandora, who, because she was beautiful, was stupid, dishonest, and a pain in the butt, as opposed to the gut.

"All these events occurred in the golden age of the world, in the beginning of the world. In that age, when and where there was no human suffering, the cause of human suffering lay in a cunt.

"When the man, because he couldn't resist beauty, opened up Pandora's cunt, her evil excretions, her excrement, smelled up the world. So badly that all those who could smell those smells—that is, men—wanted to die, and would have if they couldn't get rid of that which lies within women.

"That's where treasure is," I concluded.

"How can you be you and say this? I thought that you loved me."

"This story isn't saying what *I* say about cunts: this is what that old, dead poet said."

The dead cock was no longer leading us, 'cause we were back at the edge of the water. Were in the middle of a cove, where a gentle slope ran up from the beach to the entrance of a cave.

"Ange," I said, and took her hand.

Together, we entered the opening.

There were no more pirate girls and I didn't care anymore.

It was a large, airy place, with a little spring and a pool of clear water, overhung with ferns. The floor was sand. In a far corner, I saw a box out of which coins and yellow slabs flowed. This had cost such blood and sorrow: what good ships, scuttled in the deep, amassed in blood and guts, what brave humans walking the plank blindfold, shots of the cannon, shame and lies and cruelty, perhaps no man alive can tell.

Yet there were still those on the island who had indulged in blood.

"Come in," I said to Silver.

"I'm doing my dooty," said Silver. "That's our treasure too." She walked into the cave, and then, King Pussy.

We all looked at the money.

"I'd rather go a-pirating," said Silver. "If me and my girls take all this treasure, the reign of girl piracy will stop, and I wouldn't have that happen."

King Pussy was staring out toward the ocean.

I understood, and watched in awe, while those girls walked out of the cave.

Ange and I grabbed all the money we could and got into the rowboat that was hidden by the two, the white and the black, stones.

### **A Prayer for All Sailors**

Halcyons shall cease to prey on fish,

Poisonous leaves become our food,

Be you sailors without remorse

For your lips have been stained in blood.

