

THE MAKING OF THIEVES THEATRE'S LAST STAND

PART II

HOW TO CAPTURE THE ELITE AUDIENCE OF HEINER
MUELLER'S DESPOILED SHORE MEDEAMATERIAL
LANDSCAPE WITH ARGONAUTS

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performed: September 5-8, 12-15, 1991

location: The Living Museum of the NOMAD MONAD
The Hill (Canal at Chrystie Streets)

Cast: Gabriels Manhattan - residents of the lodge known as
Nick Manhattan - The Living Museum of the NOMAD MONAD
Annie - a 13th generation descendant of Pocahontas

Scene: Inside a tipi in a shantytown. Circular fire pit in center, with four stones lining pit to the north, south, east, west. At west end of tipi: mound of sand with ship wreckage sitting on it, including a mast. Audience on the north and south side of tipi in theatre seats, with portraits of shanty residents on the lining of the tipi just above audiences' heads. Between sand mound and fire pit: a snapping turtle hidden in the sand with a model of New York City made of kitsch (like plastic Statue of Liberty, etc.) on its back. Above the turtle/city, at the top/center of the tipi, a dead tree is suspended. Chandeliers made of mailbag rope and -clasps and candles are suspended from the poles about 7 feet off the ground.

Gaby and Annie sit on sand mound. Nick enters with kerosene lamp which he hangs from the top of the mast.

Nick:

They call me Nick Manhattan. They call me Chief. The White Chief, because I live in a tipi at the foot of the Manhattan Bridge in the center of a shantytown village where the braves are a mongrel tribe of Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Natives and Arabs.

We are the wound. The Other. Social stigmata on the body culture. Aliases include pimp, prostitute, beggar, thief, drug addict, alcoholic, homeless. Refugees, we have established a temporary autonomous zone known as The Hill.

One stigma we wear like the mark of Cain. Because many test positive, we all live a zen of the present, doomed/blessed to wander freely and feared. Our intelligence is the intelligence of the virus. We hide behind our aliases. In vain they try to vaccinate our spittle, sex, blood - our communication. But for now paramedics won't enter here, the police only reluctantly. Penis and needle ink is feared more than an uzi. Thus the pen is mightier than the sword. But like Latin, one day we too will become a dead language.

The vaccine will be a crucified dead virus injected in all, residing at the base of the spine, passed on mechanically from generation to generation. The weaker of the tribe will assimilate and come to worship the crucified one, while the stronger will adapt and evolve - there, too, at the base of the spine - to rise as the avant garde of a new language. Gringo Lingo - already the rudimentary rhyme of an outlaw rap - to flower into the mandate: never a revolution, but a constant rebellion. We are temporary only because we are becoming eternal.

The media attempt to point their artillery at us, but we hide behind the alias "homeless," and force them to solicit a response from the Mayors Office on the Homeless: "There's been a long-standing concern that fire or scavenging will do damage to the structure of bridge." She searches inarticulately to name the fear. Fire, gift from our hero thief, our father, Prometheus. Stolen from the gods. And the gods punishing that thief, for they feared he had given man the freedom and autonomy that might one day overthrow them.

Fire - feared by all predators - transformed man from prey into predator. The foxes have lairs, the birds have nests, but the son of man has no place to rest. Except beside his fire. Mouth of the cave, lean-to in the forest, the stretched animal skin in desert or plains - with fire became a home, a temporary autonomous zone.

Scavenging. 99% of man's history has been spent as a hunter/gatherer. But in the short history from the cradle of civilization on, nomads have been held in fear and contempt. Settled wealth saw that they had no possessions and was convinced that they were after theirs. And they were. One tax on civilization has always been the periodic plunder of *its* possessions.

Nomads have always been good warriors... the hardness of their way of life, their anonymity and invisibility... So too the hunter/gatherers of today. Soon NO RADIO signs in all the cars. NO RADIOS, NO VALUABLES, NO NOTHING. What's in the trunk? Maybe some luggage. Vacationing tourists. Fake nomads and fair prey. A set of golf clubs stolen from the trunk of a Mercedes and sold for 1/10th of its value is one man's recreation becoming another man's recreation - is recreation becoming re-creation.

There's a third world and a first world. And no world in between. And the fires of the other tribe are moving closer. At night you can see them on the horizon. The scavenging can be heard right outside the door. And the Mayor's Office had it right: The structure of the bridge, the illusion we have built, is in danger.

(Starts recording of "Despoiled Shore." Hoists up city which is attached to pulleys and uncovers the snapping turtle.)

DESPOILED SHORE MEDEAMATERIAL LANDSCAPE WITH ARGONAUTS

A lake near Straussberg despoiled shore tracks
Of dim-witted Argonauts
Reeds dead branches
THIS TREE WILL NOT OVERGROW ME dead fish
Glisten in the mire cookie boxes feces TROJANS CAMELS
Shredded menstrual napkins the blood
Of the women of Colchis
BUT YOU HAVE TO BE CAREFUL OK
OK OK OK OK
SCUMCUNT I SAY TO HER THAT'S MY MAN
FUCK ME COME ON SWEETIE
Until the Argo crushes his skull the ship that's no longer needed
Hanging in the tree hangar and defecating place for vultures in wait

They sit in the trains faces made of the dailies and spit
Each one a naked member in their pants they stare at lacquered
Flesh gutters that cost three weeks' pay until the lacquer
Cracks open their wives keep dinner warm air the bedding in open windows
brush

The vomit out of their Sunday suits drain pipes
Ejecting babies in batches against the onslaught of maggots
Booze is cheap
Children piss into empty bottles
Dream of a monstrous
Coitus in Chicago
Women smeared with blood
In the morgues
The dead don't stare into windows they don't drum on the john
That's what they are earth shit on by the survivors
SOME OF THEM HUNG FROM LAMP POSTS TONGUES PROTRUDING
IN FRONT OF THEIR BELLIES THE SIGN I AM A COWARD

Yet on the ground Medea cradling]
Her hacked up brother she expert] - this section not spoken
In poisons] until end of improvisation

[Nick picks up turtle by tail and exits.]

Annie:

They called her Pocahontas. Later they would call her Lady Rebecca. Her real name was Matoaka. A princess on both sides. She is my grandmother thirteen generations over. You see...Pocahontas married an Englishman, John Rolfe. Together they had one son, Thomas, who had one daughter, Jane. Jane married a Bolling. The Bollings became the Cabells and well...it went on and on like that until you get to me. I wonder though...if she would have known that when she left her own people and went to the other side...she joined their church...left her own name behind. Bare feet kissed with red clay and berry skin becomes china teacup held in pristine hands under starched lace. Aquirements replace essentials.

They say that John Rolfe loved her, but I don't know. Did he love her? He needed to make peace with the Indians, the Powhatans...the Powhatans were a sect of the Algonquian Indians of Virginia. Virginia was known to them as Tsenacomah. Pocahontas' father, Wahunsenacawh, was what they would call the Mamanatowick or what we would call the Paramount Chief of that sect. The English referred to him as King Powhatan. Anyway, John Rolfe needed to make peace with these Indians for the sake of his exploits.....Tobacco. The thought and the plant are cultivated. Suburban kids sit on cement curbs and inhale the thought. Ritual becomes habit.

Her husband, her children took the knowledge from her people, a people of color and made slaves of another people, people of another color. It would take hours of human labor to cultivate tobacco so that it could become a fertile enterprise. Slaves were the arm and hammer. Hands...spent and covered with resin from pulling the weed now hold pipes coated with a different resin. Still slaves. Slaves to the poison. Her children...her blood...my family.

The Cabells...the family that I mentioned before were big tobacco plantation owners and subsequently big slave owners. These former slaves still hold this name...Cabell...a personalized license plate sports the name. A black kid behind the wheel. Does he know his father pulled tobacco for my father? Is he proud of this name? Am I proud of this name? Neither of us can apologize for the color of our skin.

What plant? What seed of what commodity. Not simply the fabled tobacco kingdom, but the who, what, where, why, how of the poison. Today her children are sick and dying. Onto her now despoiled shore, a new commodity. Commodity...commodity as catalyst for colonization. Cargo from Peru. Remember that story...the Incas pouring molten gold down the conquistador's throat? Young men in the inner city wear gold chains around their necks in memory. Likewise rocks of cocaine are heated in spoons until molten and consumable. In memory. The portraits of chiefs who signed treaties. The gold around their necks congressional medals awarded them. Treaties. John Rolfe married Pocahontas. But still...Inca is Peru...Peru is Inca. You see, it's not really the point to try and change anything. The point is to try to live the question. Pocahontas is my Grandmother. Pocahontas is my Daughter.

Gaby:

They call me Gabriele Manhattan. They call me Mrs. Chief because I've lived in this tipi for nearly 10 months now with my man. I sewed this tipi - put it together in all its detail. The door and smoke flaps face east, for example. That's because the wind and weather seldom come from the east. If it did, the rising smoke from the fire would blow back in on us. These little sticks. They're so that the rain can run all the way down the poles and out, without getting caught on the rope and dripping inside. The tipi lining serves as insulation and directs the air coming in from under the cover up and out, to help drive out the smoke. The lining also serves as a curtain. Without it, the fire would cast a shadow onto the cover, and your enemy outside would know exactly where in the tipi you're standing. The drawings on tipi linings used to tell the story of the family that lived in it. Later, with the encroachment of the white man, the demise of the Indian nations - the perimeter closing in tighter and tighter - the drawings told a larger story: the history of the tribe.

I'm creating a tarot deck. But a very practical tarot deck. These are portraits of our neighbors here on The Hill. Together they comprise the court cards -- the kings, queens, knights and pages that influence the past, present and future. Not in any mystical sense, but practically. They live here. And their portraits in here mean something to me and I think, I hope, they mean something to them. It's their gaze that I work under. Me, the elite art whitey - captor and captive - in a utopia where the thin skin of this canvas is the only thing separating us and them. Because tipis or tents as shelter aren't meant to keep out the elements, the weather. They function more like a permeable membrane. You're not shielded or isolated the way you are in apartments or houses. But in a constant mediated interchange with the outside.

The only evidence of an Indian village in southern Manhattan was found right here. Shell banks were found down on Pearl Street, for example. Right over here was once a freshwater pond, called Collect Pond, with hilly banks to one side. Its perimeter was the present day Bowery, Canal, Centre and Pearl Streets. On one of these hills lived the Warpoes. Warpoes was either the name of the tribe, name of the village or name of the chief. And Warpoes has been translated as meaning "little hill." Practically - that is, etymologically - we just can't find the meaning or root of some words. But the fact that colloquially today this area is called The Hill and that 400 years ago it was called Warpoes or little hill, will perhaps 400 years from now be... well, at least interesting. Garbled and interesting.

Manhattan. The etymology of that word takes me to Mannahattanik... In 1609, Henry Hudson reached the tip of Manhattan Island which was then a wooded area with an Indian village nearby. Twenty-eight canoes full of men, women, and children met him there and brought him ashore to meet their chief who also welcomed and fed him.

Later, Hudson returned the hospitality by inviting him and other chiefs on board his ship and treating them to brandy. This was the first time these Indians had encountered brandy. They all got very drunk. One of them fell into a stupor and stayed on the ship all night. But when he recovered, he was ecstatic over this brand new experience. He had discovered firewater. [pours water into fire burning in pit] -- In alchemy, the studied and diligent quest was the search for spiritual gold within. But the only proof that you found it was the actual concrete gold. -- Two centuries later, the Delawares still had a tradition of the supernatural awe felt at the sight of the great winged vessel, the grand welcoming dance, and a garbled account of the drinking incident. They said the name Mannahattanik meant "the place where we were all drunk."

These Indians that Hudson first met were probably the Warpoes. And 400 years from now, Manhattan may very well still translate into "the place where we were all drunk." Drunk on junk bonds, junk food, junk - as in junkies, junk fame, junk history.

We dedicated this tipi to the memory of those massacred at Wounded Knee. A general Forsyth led the troops into that massacre. That still follows us today because Forsyth Street is right here on our eastern border. And if you go during the day to our northern border, you'll see police shields on all the dashboards of the parked automobiles. And on our western border, there's a whole posse of police cars sitting on the entrance of the Manhattan Bridge. In fact, the whole perimeter seems flanked by new troops poised for a new massacre. But what massacre?... The reason they're parked there is because they're court officers headed for 100 Centre Street, the courthouse, the jail, the tombs.

That site, 100 Centre Street, used to be Collect Pond. But by 1817 it had started to stink -- [throws garbage in fire pit/pond] poison from local breweries and other sources. So, they filled it in. And what they used to fill it in was the dirt from the surrounding hills. Remnants of the Warpoes and everything went into it. Then in 1836, the first prison was built on the site. It got its name - The Tombs - from its Egyptian architecture. Later, it was torn down and rebuilt again, minus the Egyptian architecture. But it was still called the Tombs. Today it's being rebuilt again. But it will still be called the Tombs.

So, you see, the massacre to come, the strange foreboding, the perimeter closing in tighter and tighter... It's all built on top of Collect Pond. History is a symbolic enactment. But my work is very practical. My work here is the practice of ~~time~~ in ~~space~~.
space time.

[stands in sand where turtle/city was and draws circle around herself]

This circle and all that is within and above it is sovereign.

Hehaka Sapa, or Black Elk, belonged to the Oglala division of the Teton Dakota, one of the most powerful branches of the Siouan family. He was born in "the Moon of the Popping Trees [December] on the little Powder River in the winter when the Four Crows were killed in 1863." Related to the great Chief, Crazy Horse, he had known Sitting Bull and Red Cloud and was well acquainted with the early days of his people when they had roamed the Plains; he was also present at the battle of Little Big Horn. Later on in life he travelled with Buffalo Bill to Italy, France and England, where he danced for Queen Victoria. Black Elk possessed unique spiritual power recognized by everyone and had been instructed in his youth in the sacred traditions of his people by the great priests. His father had been a medicine man; several of his brothers also. He spent his last days on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. The following passage is taken from his autobiography which he dictated in 1930-31 to Flaming Rainbow. The configuration of the circle, referred to here by Black Elk and in the next several texts, had a fundamental place in Indian life.

Annie:

YOU HAVE NOTICED THAT EVERYTHING AN INDIAN DOES IS IN A circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round. In the old days when we were a strong and happy people, all our power came to us from the sacred hoop of the nation and so long as the hoop was unbroken the people flourished. The flowering tree was the living center of the hoop, and the circle of the four quarters nourished it. The east gave peace and light, the south gave warmth, the west gave rain, and the north with its cold and mighty wind gave strength and endurance. This knowledge came to us from the outer world with our religion. Everything the Power of the World does is done in a circle. The Sky is round and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball and so are all the stars. The Wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same, and both are round.

Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back again to where they were. The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood and so it is in everything where power moves. Our tipis were round like the nests of birds and these were always set in a circle, the nation's hoop, a nest of many nests where the Great Spirit meant for us to hatch our children.

IMPROVISATION

Gaby: (during her speech, she put fire out with 2 buckets of water and threw Cutty Sark bottle, 3 packs of cigarettes, 1 pack of John Rolfe tobacco, a rubber and a syringe into 'the polluted Collect Pond')

[THE NEW COLOSSUS" by Emma Lazarus]

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Nick: (Pulling packs out of pond and throwing them on shore where Annie is)
"Winston"

Gaby: Surgeon General's Warning: Quitting smoking now greatly reduces serious risks to your health.

Nick: "Marlboro"

Gaby: Surgeon General's Warning: Smoking causes lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema, and may complicate pregnancy.

Nick: "Camel"

Gaby: Surgeon General's Warning: Smoking by pregnant women may result in fetal injury, premature birth or low birth weight.

... Then Annie breaks character (giving audience the momentary feeling that lines were messed up), and from there on out it's all improvised, give or take the following:

Annie: Nick, here you're supposed to say the thing about the camel?

Nick: In the 1950's, Camel cigarettes sponsored the CBS network news. And they dictated to the network that it couldn't show any pictures of camels - which were dirty, stinky animals not to be associated with the smooth, clean cigarettes - nor of anyone smoking a cigar. Camel finally agreed, however, that Winston Churchill could be shown, because he was after all in the news all the time - even though his name was Winston and he wrote a book called Marlborough. But he was never seen without a cigar. Groucho, on the other hand, was still off limits.

Annie: Well then, what? Groucho had a game show. Did he go to another network?

Gaby: It was just the news. We're just talking about the news.

Annie: I see. OK. Just the news.

(Other topics discussed during course of improv:)

Nick a la Groucho: Say the magic word and win the Lotto.

All you need is a dollar and a dream (the 'I'd... ' campaign)

Name: Occupation:
'I'd take a bow - and a stern... '

The evil one: Occupation - fireman
'I'd put out fires but only on my bar-b-que.'
Kids used to want to grow up to be firemen - now they're preaching that if you had a zillion dollars, you wouldn't bother putting out your neighbors' fire.

Nick: John Gotti, occupation: folk hero.
"I'd shoot Trump in the rump and give fireworks to all the people."

Gaby: Takes John Rolfe pack and reads first part of package.

Annie: Reads 2nd part, while Nick pulls condom out of water.

Nick: Reads from condom - "ribbed for her pleasure" maybe.

Annie: Wait. What about the golden fleece? Isn't there a warning on sheepskins that they don't protect against disease?

Gaby: Not yet. But there's supposed to be soon.

(Nick takes syringe out of pond; pricks himself; blows up one rubber glove he's wearing and it's ok; blows up second one and it has hole in it [narrates all this while he's doing it])

Gaby:

Surgeon General's Warning: Sperm cells are strongly antigenic or toxic. They carry on their cell membranes a variety of HLA antigens, all of which are extremely powerful in triggering immune responses. In theory, sperm cells introduced into the female reproductive tract should be detected as foreign and destroyed. Repeated coitus between two sexual partners should, in fact, result in the female's complete immunity to the male's sperm cells. According to the rules of immune response, repeated coitus is no different from the process of vaccination.

... more improv... then bring it to an end and move on...

But on the ground, Medea cradling her hacked up brother
She expert in poisons.

Nick: (repeats) But on the ground, Medea... (and exits)

In the following text (MEDEAMATERIAL), the character of Medea is split between Gaby/Medea and Annie/Pocahontas.

MEDEAMATERIAL LANDSCAPE WITH ARGONAUTS

MEDEA

Jason my first and my last one Nurse
Where is my husband

NURSE

With Creons daughter woman

MEDEA

With Creon you said

NURSE

With Creon's daughter

MEDEA

What did you say with Creon's daughter yes
Why not with Creon's daughter who has power
Over Creon her father who alone
Can grant to us the right to live in Corinth
Or exile us to yet another strange shore
Right now perhaps he is embracing Jason
In supplication her unwrinkled knee
For me and for his sons whom he so loves
Are you crying or laughing Nurse

NURSE

Lady I
Am older than my crying or my laughter

MEDEA

How do you live within your body's ruins
Together with the phantoms of your youth Nurse
Get a mirror this is not Medea
Jason

JASON

Woman what voice is this

MEDEA

I am

Not wanted here oh that some death would take me
Three times five nights now Jason it has been
That you've not asked for me not with your voice
Not with a slave's voice even with neither
Hands nor glance

JASON

What do you want

MEDEA

To die

JASON

I've heard that often

MEDEA

Does this body mean
Nothing to you anymore do you want to drink
My blood

JASON

When will this end

MEDEA

When did it start

JASON

What were you before me woman

MEDEA

Medea

You owe me a brother Jason

JASON

Two children sons I gave you for one brother

MEDEA

You me do you love them Jason your sons
Do you then want them back again your sons
They're yours what can belong to me your slave
All things on me your tool and all things of me
For you I killed for you I did give birth
I who was your bitch who was your whore I
I but a rung on your ladder to fame
Anointed with your feces your foes' blood
And if in memory of your victory
Over my country and my people if
In memory of my treason you desire
A wreath made of their entrails for your brow
They're yours mine are the images of death
The screams of torture are my property
Since I left Colchis left my home to follow
Your bloody tracks the blood of my own kind
Into my new and only home now treason
Blind for the images deaf to the screams
Was I until you chose to tear the net
That woven of my and of your desire
Was once our home and is my exile now
I stand alone disjointed in its mesh
The ashes of your kisses on my lips
Between my teeth the sand grains of our years
And from my skin there's only my own sweat
Your breath it is a stench from alien bed

A husband gives in parting death his wife
My death it has no body but your own
Are you my husband I am still your wife
Oh could I bite her out of you your whore
To whom you have betrayed me and my treason
Which was your wish thanks for your treason
Which gave me back both eyes again to see
The pictures that I saw you paint Jason
With the boots of your crew onto my Colchis
Both ears again to hear the music you played
With your crew's hands and with mine your bitch your whore
Upon the corpses bones graves of my people
And of my brother my brother Jason
Whom I threw unto your pursuers' path
Dismembered by these my sister hands
to aid your flight from the father you had robbed
His and mine father do you love your sons
Do you want to have them back again your sons
You owe me a brother Jason

Whom do you love more the dog or the bitch
When you make pretty eyes both at your father
And his new young bitch and at the king
Of all the dogs here in Corinth her father
Perhaps your place is there then at his trough
Take Jason what you say you gave to me
The fruits of treason that grew from your seed
And stuff them back into your new whore's womb
My bridal gift for your and her wedding
Go with you father who does love you so
He kicks away your mother the barbarian
Who hinders you on your way to the top
Don't you want to sit at royal tables
I was the milkcow who is now your footstool
Don't you do I detect your eyes agleam
With the anticipation of filled bellies

Why do you still cling to the barbarian
Who is your mother and your mark of shame
You're actors the progeny of treason
So sink your teeth into my heart and go
With your father who did the same before you

Leave me the children Jason one more day
Then I will go into my own desert
You owe me a brother Jason
I cannot hate for long that which you love
Love comes and goes I was unwise to have
Forgotten that no grudge shall be between us
My bridal gown take as a gift for your
The word won't easily from my lips your bride
Who will embrace your body who will cry
On your shoulder will sometimes moan in passion
The gown of love my other skin embroidered
By these the hands of her who has been robbed
With gold from Colchis and dyed with the blood
From wedding feasts of fathers brothers sons
It shall encloak your new love just as if
It were my skin I'll be close to you this way
Close to your love which is so far from me
Go now Jason go to your new wedding
I'll turn the bride into a wedding torch
Now watch your mother stage a play for you
You want to see her burning the new bride
The gown of the barbarian has the gift
To fatally weld itself to alien skin
Wounds and scars emit an excellent venom
And the ash that was my heart is spewing fire
The bride is young; how smooth and taut her hide
Not weathered yet from age nor any breeding
Onto her body I shall write my play
I want to hear you laughing when she screams
Ere midnight strikes she'll stand engulfed in flames

My sun will rise o'er Corinth's blackened sky
I want to see you laughing when it rises
To share my joy with you my dearest children
The groom he enters now the bridal chamber
And now he places at the young bride's feet
The barbarian's bridal gown the bridal gift
Soaked with the bitter sweat of my submission
Now watch the whore she struts before the mirror
And now the gold of Colchis seals her pores
And plants a field of knives into her flesh
The barbarian's bridal gown it celebrates
Its wedding Jason to your virgin bride
The first night shall be mine it is the last
She screams now have you ears to hear her screams
Like Colchis screamed while you were in my womb
And still screams have you ears to hear the screams
She burns now laugh I want to see you laugh
My play's a farce a comedy so laugh
What tears tears for the bride oh little ones
My traitors you did not weep in vain
Out of my heart do I desire to cut you
My heartflesh my remembrance my beloved
Give me back my blood out of your veins
Back into my womb with you my entrails
Today is payday Jason your Medea
Will collect her debts today
Now can you laugh death is but a present
And from my hands you shall receive this gift
I cut all ties and left behind the place
I once called home now I will sever us
From here with these my human hands this land
Will not become your home and mock me thus oh
Would I had remained the beast I was
Before my husband took me as his wife

Medea the barbarian now spurned
With these my hands the hands of the barbarian
Hands torn and wracked by needle lye and stone
Will I now break humanity in half
And live within the empty middle I
No woman no man why do you scream worse still
Than death is to grow old you'd kiss the hand
That gave you death if only you knew life
That was Corinth who are you who has dressed
You in the bodies of my little children
What animal is hiding in your eyes
Do you play dead you can't deceive your mother
Actors you are liars and traitors
Inhabited by dogs rats snakes you are
It barks and squeaks and hisses I can hear it
Oh I am wise I am Medea I
Have you no blood left now everything is still
The screams of Colchis silenced too and then nothing

JASON

Medea

MEDIA

Nurse do you know this man

LANDSCAPE WITH ARGONAUTS

Should I speak of me I was
Who is the subject when
They speak of me I who is that
In the rain of birdshit in the hide of lime
Or otherwise I a flag a
Bloody rag hung out a fluttering
Between nothing and no one given there is wind
I excretion of a man I excretion
Of a woman cliché upon cliché I dream hell
That bears my incidental name I fear
Of my incidental name
MY GRANDFATHER WAS
AN IDIOT IN BOEOTIA
I my ocean voyage
I my colonization my
Walk through the city's fringe I my death
In the rain of birdshit in the hide of lime
The anchor is the last umbilical cord
With the horizon the memory of the coast fades
Birds are a goodbye are a hello again
The butchered tree it plows the snake the ocean
Thin between I and no-more-I the hull
SAILOR'S BRIDE IS THE SEA
The dead they say stand at the bottom
Upright swimmers until the bones rest
Fish mating in the disemboweled chest cavity
Sea shells under the skull
Thirst is fire
Water is that which burns the skin
Hunger chews the gums salt the lips
Erotica pricks at the lonely flesh
Until a man reaches for a man
Woman's warmth is a singsong

The stars are cold signposts
The sky an icy look-out
Or the hapless landing against the surf hisses
The pop of beer cans

FROM THE LIFE OF A MAN

Memory of a tank battle
My walk through the city's fringe
Between ruins and rubble grows
THE NEW fuckcells with central heating
The tube vomits world into the livingroom
Wear and tear is part of the plan the dumpster
Serves as graveyard figures among the rubble
Natives of the concrete parade
Of zombies perforated by commercial spots

In the uniforms of yesterday morning's fashion
Today's youth ghosts of
Those killed in the war that will take place tomorrow
BUT WHAT REMAINS IS COURTESY OF THE BOMBS
In the magnificent mating of protein and tin
The children design landscapes made of trash
A woman is the familiar ray of hope

BETWEEN THIGHS

DEATH HAS A PRAYER

Or the Yugoslavian dream
Among broken statues on the run
From an unknown catastrophe
The mother in tow the old one with her yoke
In rusty armor THE FUTURE travels along
A flock of actors passes in step
CAN'T YOU TELL THEY ARE DANGEROUS THEY
ARE ACTORS EACH CHAIR LEG IS ALIVE A DOG
Wordmud from my
Abandoned no man's body
How to find a way out of the thicket

Of my dreams that slowly closes in
Without a sound around me
A shred of Shakespeare
In the bacterial paradise
The sky is a glove gone hunting
Masked with clouds of an unknown type of architecture
Resting on the dead tree the corpse sisters
My fingers play in the vagina
At night in the window between city and landscape
We watched the flies as they died slowly
So Nero stood exultant above Rome
Until the car drove up sand in the transmission
A wolf stood in the street as the car fell apart
A bus trip at early dawn right and left
The sisters steaming under the dresses noon
Sprinkled my hide with their ashes
During the ride we heard the screen rip
And watched the images crash into each other
The forests burned in EASTMAN COLOR
But the voyage had no arrival NO PARKING
At the only crossroads Polypheme
Directed the traffic with one eye
Our port was a dead movie house
On the screen the stars rotted in competition
In the lobby Fritz Lang strangled Boris Karloff
The Southern wind toyed with old posters
OR THE HAPLESS LANDING the dead negroes
Rammed into the swamp like poles
In the uniforms of their enemies
DO YOU REMEMBER DO YOU NO I DON'T
The dried blood
Is smoking in the sun
The theatre of my death
Had opened as I stood between the mountains
In the circle of dead companions on the stone

And the expected airplane appeared above me
Without thinking I knew
This engine was
What my grandmothers used to call God
The airblast swept the corpses off the plateau
And shots rang out after my reeling flight
I felt MY BLOOD step out of MY veins
And turn MY body into the landscape of
MY death

IN THE BACK THE PIG

The rest is poetry who has better teeth
The blood or the stone

All three performers have exited by the end of this text. They slowly
peel the cover of the tipi back, leaving audience exposed to the elements.

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