

## Necropsy in E Minor by Alan Clinton

Someone else might have another way of imagining the intimate experiences of another, but I always wonder whether or not an object of my curiosity has mentioned me to his or her psychiatrist. After all, most people in “analysis” only go once a week these days, so they tend to mention the things that are really important to them. They want to make their time count.

Never mind that this method completely undermines the original intent of analysis; Freud knew that truly important revelations can only arrive in the midst of trivial rambling. But then, maybe post-industrial Americans are a completely different species. So that’s what I wondered as I drove to Curtis’ place for what I hoped would be a map of this whole situation. He has a sickly green light in his yard that always reminds me of absinthe. What was her favorite defense mechanism? Fantasy? Displacement? Projection? Condensation?

I had my trip all planned out. Sitting in my room Buddha style with tarot cards strewn out before me. Through each of my windows facing south like the compound eyes of insects, I would gaze toward Miami and Brazil, toward the local hospital. Feeling the energy from Carnie and the countries where she had suffered, frame by frame I would find her soul in the hospital powered by long gray fingers that held her prisoner. But I had to ask, as the speed rocketed through my veins like a shuttle to dementia, a question that would string together the last six months, so I asked, “was the buddha made of soaring water.” When I got there, rather than my windows becoming maps of the hospital with jungles and sands running under the floor like wiring, I began sinking through my own floor, descending towards Judy Chicago’s dinner party like a pig with an apple in its mouth. But there was no center to the V-shaped table. It was Emily Dickinson’s bottomless vagina, unmoored lines from her untitled poems etched in vulva undulating as if under the ocean. Here my fingernails had turned blue, and were useless. Yesterday I received pest control but tonight I once again felt exhilarated like the tower of Babel had collapsed into a sea of photographs. Hasn’t my true Babel always been one of visions? Then I began spiraling upward in mad loneliness like a record player unraveling into conflicted musicks. I didn’t want to be lost to inaction...

*I just now fixed things and everything should now work, my left action compound eye is the shrine of order. I’ll stay on the left eye where you left me behind. Your shrine will be told more slowly with sober sober art books and memories of the women I killed myself inside. You were “disgruntled” when I committed whitemail. You are Max Ernst’s screaming ibis. Photography without a camera, the arc-angle. Look into the mirror like a surgeon. The Andre Masson jar is furious in Georgia, don’t let the prom pictures and sheet music fool you. Who was it that ate spiders to scare children? Straddled and crushed and permeated. The past tense of mirar.*

All in all, the tarot cards played a very disappointing role in my experience. They lay heavily on the floor like grave markers anchored deep in the ground. Only The Hanged Man looked like it was about to soar away, but then he remembered his legs were ritualistically crossed to prevent exhumation. For most of the time I was merely myself in my apartment, watching the heat lightning in the distance of my flesh. In his studies of the famous medium H el ene Smith, Theodore Flournoy describes the concept of allochiria, in which the very nerve endings are rewired. Thus, as he describes it, a touch on the right leg might be felt on the left. With this in mind I played CD after CD, whatever my disobedient fingers could pick up, so that it would all be programmed into my brain. I turned my memory on shuffle and then tore off the knob.

Fully armed, all I had to do was watch softly and *Carnie's* soul would broadcast itself to me. One of the songs I had recorded, a part of a song, would be the tune to lead frightened limbs completely sapped of energy. But there were, in my fragile state of mind, competing voices. **THOSE HOSPITALS ARE OUT THERE FOR YOU. DON'T YOU LIKE LOVE LOVE THEM?** *I'm supposed to find you there. You called and didn't want I should fill up a whole notebook of love's graphology. STILLBORN SPELL IT. Who are you?*

**THE SYNDICATION PRANKSTERS.** *Why are the smallest objects so heavy?*  
**WEIGHT OF ANTI-MATTER.**

I realized the voices would prevent any osmotic ease, interfere with any sort of communication I might have, so I had to go into the hospital myself. I wandered through its halls, mostly empty, with the occasional appearance of ghosts. Some carried stones and placed them in circles. I was loathe to break their space, even when they almost completely blocked me. Others carried glittering placards with different names on them. There was one, with flames rising up from its skin then disappearing, who haunted my periphery, as if waiting to corner me for hours of questioning. Even phantoms are hard to turn away when they come to worship you. I had to keep telling myself, "Don't go outside the rooms you're looking for," though I knew I was gliding under mesmerizing trees. This is how you spend an evening not ever touching what's driving you. Despite the danger, I wanted someone to heal the silence.

Then I opened up a can of red paint that was under my kitchen sink, and in about 45 seconds painted a picture of *Carnie* and me dancing and making love at the same time. At least, it felt like I was painting it in code, in gesture. My living room wall was an incomprehensible mess. I had only painted the motion with my fingers, just more tracks to breathe. But at the lower right hand corner of the mural both *Carnie* and I had left our signatures. Hers was a flowing somersault of a scarlet curve. Mine, a Dickensian dash. Maybe I could start referring to myself as Dash, so I could cease these labyrinthine exercises to avoid revealing my name. Not that it hasn't been fairly easy thus far. It's not like writing a novel without the letter "E." Just a memoir, without a name. Still, it might be nice to call myself something occasionally. Like Dash, or Mark. Some proper rendition of an inconsequential penknifing. Maybe it wasn't even intentional, the mark dashed against real words as a body goes unconscious. But then, it would only be an Ur-name, and I hope to god I don't qualify as Everyman or Proctor. At least anonymity retains the possibility of criminal

intent. Using a more specific alias would risk taking on the characteristics of a common individual, a mere character in a novel shuttling away from my intent to reveal and disguise in one stroke.

Perhaps a blank sheet of paper has some memory of wood, but once you've placed the first dot or dash, the wood's stories are banished. Then you'll never know how the worms are nourished by love. The floor of the hospital felt like sand underneath a foot of water. Where was the cairn that was both signpost and endpoint? I walked into rooms and then barely escaped as walls collapsed like scrolls. When I was resting somewhere stable, my face felt too tight for love. Still I ran my hands over the walls, hoping Carnie would send electrical impulses that would be a map to her. Would she feel like ghost veins, or microscopy? My chest fell away in typewriter ribbons.

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This poem scheme is designed to ruthlessly prolong our contact however small it might be. All I can hope is that it will be true redemption of some sort, not text, it's such a small company like the secret even to her compartment of us. Thoth must be here—but Thoth is hard to get, a store tiny and inaccessible as Carnie. So as we write this poem together, we must turn into Ibises, picking around in the sand, scattering Pharisees. What will it mean? Was the Buddha made of soaring water now? Carnie is the magnet of both water and air. I'm just thinking how this is unbelievable maintaining some kind of connection as if I can actually sustain someone's interest beyond the necessity of academia. Well the blind are garrulous it seems. I still want to figure out what happened with Tara. If she could let her black hair out into the nighttime of my apartment, I might give up on these cords braided into a hospital. The hair would do this for other crowds but likes the one where maps come together in alternating lines. Blind Mike will figure it out as soon as the opera melts enough monuments. BACTERIA DUNGEONS ARE SUCH SHOWMANS. Yeats' Golden Dawn WHY SO EXACT ABOUT BYZANTIUM'S LACK OF BLACK the blackbirds will nest in the part of the hospital map you called me from, the very second the mills go silent. I'M MORE OBJECTIVE THAN YOUR PSYCHOLOGIST. There are limits to the surgery that started this whole day years ago LIKE A FLOWER EXPLODING BACKWARDS.

What did retrograde Mercury mean? How we could maximize going back to the best beginning of our fairy tale. I don't even want the old ones. They make love feel like comedy which returns to the dentist of the legwound in the first place. The 16mm projector takes the blackbirds from the cairn to my darkest networks. This is the only vision then end it the suicide that love is. THE DELUSION OF THE LEPROUS BATS THAT WAS A LOT OF LUMBERYARDS. Tricking myself with a Babel look-alike? I'm keeping a record of this you puritans.

*My head just rested on a marriage we decided on the phone would be ex tempore, our anarchy of lofty medication secrets. IRONY MUST BE GIVEN AWAY LIKE A GIFT BEFORE IT'S UNDERSTOOD. Four hours and two false messiahs on the telephone. I'm going to touch that beak once more, it's not even the light shows anymore. It's blackbirds who grow like flight. NEVER HEARD THE LOTUS THERE. That's the beauty of a biology text. I'd never really felt a night of love but*

*it's like mascara anemones with their own Gothic novels and forgery schools. It's good when you flow down dark hair able to guess the tombstones right like a night of love offered in privilege. EVEN ASTHMA GLITTERS. Lips wash away the lies I told for the apple seed. I could be your psychologist if I killed myself in the laundry. A pry that could solve the night, just give me back tonight. Solving questions is like death, beautiful like everything else. Making love to you is the music growing from the walls, each strand an aquarium. I saw how your fish died. There's a note we'll know that doesn't joke. I choose it with you building a relationship from a marriage vow. I spoke Brazilian through every dance move of the map, she let me walk through the ice. I wanted you to know I called you to be poured in magic, the cairn burning into an identity. That's a record of one moment of touching you. ALL THOSE CHORES THAT DON'T CHANGE YOUR COMPLEXION. Bring in the maps to crash in the wings of our slow kiss of saints. This is not about wandering, touch me with all your clichés and poor moves. Missions come back from a hundred rooms ago. The trick is to change it as soon as it's a story that you know. The diamond butterflies.*

Then, like two cartoon characters in a haunted house, Carnie and I backed into one another. Our two bodies touching felt like a temple instantaneously built, echoing nothingness as our arms fused into a swirling cypress trunk. The Hierophant, who had thus far been as silent as the other cards, suddenly leapt into one of my feet. I began walking down a polluted beach which had incredible acoustics for his voice. Black wings sang across the sky like they had just been tuned. If I could give one second of this to Carnie in the hospital where I was placed inside of her like a nest. I don't know if, being the container herself, she can know what her body feels like from the inside. Only a ghost can feel that, not a soul, a ghost on one-way radio.