

Prose and Poems

By Jean-Marie Avril

ODD

It was quiet in the garden; too quiet. For a start the grass did not move. I mean the weed appeared as if it was made of plastic. I approached the grass and touched it. No, it was proper weed. But then, returning to my position of observation, I could again ascertain that it definitely was too tranquil. As I was scrutinizing the garden, I could notice that it was an ordinary garden. I signify to say that it possessed grass, flowers, trees and shrubs. But my mental inspection of it did not deter me to sense that the quality of quietness dominating the garden had something unnatural about it.

I attempted to probe further into this mysterious matter and, from where I was standing, I could distinguish an animal form in a not too distant field. I produced my binoculars and realized I was looking at a dog. It was a Cocker Spaniel and it did not move. I do not signify to tell that it was there, lying quietly and watching over the area surveyed by its field of vision. No, it just simply did not carry out any movement. Perhaps this animal was actually a plastic representation of that particular type of dog and that would indeed supply a reasonable motive for my initial shock at seeing this animal, still and immobile like a statue. However, one thing left my thought slightly uncomfortable with my perception of the animal. It looked too much like a living beast if it would have been purely composed of plastic. What I am attempting to describe is that the likeness of it being a Cocker Spaniel just looked too natural. This creature appeared to be not artificial at all, but a normal biological product of a biological union. The best manner I could utter my thought was that the dog appeared to my cognitive faculty as if it was frozen like in a photography, except that it was there in the flesh, as I was by now convinced that the beast was not made of plastic. I excluded the notion it might have been stuffed, as animal bodies treated in this manner tend to exhibit that peculiarity which distinguishes them from the artificial likeness of an animal and its living counterpart.

I could also reassure myself that the animal was not demised as its eyes were fixed on that larch tree. And then my attention was transported to that specimen of the vegetable realm. The plant was a tall type, its trunk appearing somewhat thin when compared with the exuberant blossoming of leaves that made up the tree's hair, if I may be pardoned for using so fanciful an analogy. This larch tree possessed a hypnotic quality to it and it started to grasp a substantial amount of my entire awareness. It was exercising over me a commanding grip and the pull was stronger than my enfeebled will. And I was forcibly contemplating the living object, the notion arrived in my mind, after a period of time I could not quantify, of a black remote control like those used to operate a television apparatus.

So here was I, immobile like the dog and staring fixedly at the tree, while the visualization of a black, deep black, pitch black remote control took over perhaps a third of or maybe half of my awareness to the point where it actively entered into an open competition with the other sections of my mind dealing with a larch tree. How many long minutes passed, while two objects were the only topics present in my consciousness? I cannot tell! Not can I offer any explanation as to

why this bizarre scenario was taking place. And as if this was not sufficient, a third party emerged into the meanders of my mind. At first it was just a little dot, but it then magnified into the likeness of a cuddly teddy bear, beige in color and this was a grave offence to my taste as I find this color particularly detestable.

So three objects were inhabiting my mind: an earthly larch tree, a visualized pitch black remote control and now this thought of a horrid teddy beige, horrid as the color disgracing the toy was beige and, as I just mentioned a little earlier, I find this texture especially revolting. And then, in my internal territory, commenced a most extraordinary phenomenon. The remote control was advancing towards the bear, slowly but definitely and when the electronic device touched the cuddly toy, it transmitted its blackness to the object and removed the detestable beige. But my ordeal did not terminate then as the black teddy bear disappeared into the remote control that, then, distanced itself away from the range of my inner perception into the deep recesses of my psyche to be replaced, how odd it all is, by this most peculiar visualization: a fried egg.

The larch tree was still somewhere in my perception and awareness of things, seemingly indifferent to the unusual behavior of the two previously visualized objects. The fried egg, on the other hand, was not still. Its yellow was obscene. Why do I use this particular adjective to describe both a color and a component of a fried egg, I do not know. But I remain adamant that my cognitive faculties were alerted by the subtle quality emanating from the yellow of the fried egg. And it was obscene. Could I use the words 'perverted', 'altered', 'distorted', 're-arranged'? My answer would be a firm 'no'. The only formulation retained by my mind is that of obscenity. And then I could notice that the white of the egg was bubbling like hot lava, but no smoke was perceived by my inner eye, only the surreal, or unreal, item that the predominant focus of my inner eye: a fried egg which constitutive parts were behaving in a very abnormal manner; first, the yellow portion was obscene, and I cannot venture into any other descriptions; secondly, the white component was, as said, bubbling like hot lava or boiling water but no smoke or vapor could be sighted while the unnerving phenomenon took place.

And all of a sudden, the visualization vanished as normal perception of things resumed its predominance. The dog barked and ran away before coming back to its former position and moving in anti-clockwise fashion, tail between the legs, for a short period before finally collapsing exhausted on the soil, emitting pitiful noises. The garden has lost its quality of frozen tranquility as the grass was now moving under the effect produced by a seemingly sudden fresh breeze. I remained disoriented for a bit. And since that time, I have been wondering about the nature of forbidden time travel and inter-dimensional promiscuity. Are we now observed by unknown agencies of a surreal that occupy themselves in conducting highly dangerous experiments of a secret science upon our humbled selves? Are we the product of a delirious mind dreaming about perverted items in a distorted universe? Who knows? The mystery deepens further as I have lately started some reverie about red pens made in China journeying across the vast expanse of a violet sky lost in a banal solar system somewhere in the Milky Way...

CHILDHOOD'S FOOD

Saturday lunch time

Oh yeah I'm happy

My best lunch

Yellow and hot

Piling up

From the frying pan

They're rich

They're my

Homeland food

Mum does them

The desert is

The main course

No tomatoes

To eat. Don't like them

No fish to dissect

Don't like fishbone

Just those yellow

Surfaces, flat

With undulations

I spread sugar

On it

I'm greedy on

Them. I love them

Fresh from

The frying pan

Yes! Exactly as

I like them

By the way

My homeland

Is Brittany

WRITING ROOM

Pictures of fairies and flying saucers. Dominating is the Goddess. Telly and PlayStation, DVDs, CDs, books. The room is full of them. It's organized chaos. More organized than chaotic. It's Dynamic Order on a small scale. The room is dynamic. No fussy about the furniture. As I find it. But a good laptop, with the Internet and a printer. French/English dictionary as I translate. Music is accessible. Ashtray is also nearby, but not when I quit smoking. Coffee by my side. So is the hash, but not when I quit it. Floppy disks are nearby. The room is old enough. First floor, English fashion. Or first floor, American fashion. It's cosy enough. It's not pretentious. People may or may not dislike it. The main thing is I like it. Could change the furniture arrangement. Got to keep ready for being on the move. Just in case. The main thing is I arrange this room as feels right. I would have wooden floor with a few rugs but not a carpet covering the whole floor. I'm not English. I like the bare wood, better when old, but not too ancient. There is incense, little statues of deities or other things. There ain't demons in there, except for the DVD collection, but there is Mother Kali, blood thirsty for cosmic purification, Enough pictures, but not too many. Images of the Tree of Life and Brittany. Enough bits of bare wall. Room arrangement is spontaneous. Not hard thinking. Just done so that it feels right. Ready for change. Got to stimulate the mind. I'll leave it at that.

EVEN THE DEVIL GOT SCARED

I give up in trying to find a logical explanation concerning the presence of the Devil in my apartment, 38 Antoine Watteau Street in a very ugly housing estate called the Dervallieres in Nantes, South Brittany. The devil was there in the shape of a man dressed in black, with the stereotype of having a brownish skin and jet black eyes and casting a non-human look.

How, in the time of my fainting, the thing got in the grotesque chapel that I set up within a narrow closet, I don't know. The Devil certainly managed to shake enough so that my hairs turned grey and I probably aged ten years in the time of a few seconds or a little more. I did get my composure back and I was definitely pretty sure of one thing, i.e. the invocations, the evocations, the chanting—call it what you like—did work after months of lugubrious chanting and suspicious gestures following the procedure of bygone days' rituals. As to the nature of the entity, I couldn't answer the burning question. Was it a mental emanation, a psychic projection of an obscure corner of my unconscious or was it a real mythical entity? It could have been all that.

What surprised me in what followed in terms of events was the Devil's attitude. He gave me a lecture so to speak, while being clearly scared. He turned behind him as if followed by a threatening unknown agency. Anyway he told me off in the manner a clergyman or a shrink would. I shouldn't have, in his opinion, carried out the syncretistic mantras and ceremonies which I made up under inspiration. If the function of the visitor is indeed to upset the cosmic mechanics in order to prevent creation to become boring (that's his claim, not mine) the Devil must not be mixed with more ancient and darker entities such as the Great Old Ones. I ought not to have mixed, according to him, the magic of the Necromonicon with medieval witchcraft and, on top of that, my own imagination. Indeed, certain things should always keep their place as now strange interferences have occurred in the sphere beyond human perception and, now, astral chaos is upsetting the welfare of unsuspected agencies and the anarchic routine of impossible demons.

The Devil was now, excuse my French, shitting in his pants, continuing to cast quick glances behind him. It was then that the horror took place. All of a sudden, a deformed and jellyfish-like mass of vapor appeared out of nowhere and the guttural laugh really got me scared. The laughing was crafty and fanatical. The Devil disappeared yelling in the anomaly

come from an unthinkable interdimensional garbage tip. The mad laugh shook my reason to the worse for, after losing consciousness, I found myself in the boring streets running like an ape and barking like a dog.

No amounts of pills, shrinks and straight jackets will reassure me and I would have preferred the electric chair for, each night, the fanatical laugh get louder and louder, closer and closer. The doctors will die too like the Devil and myself as my guardian angel seemed pretty gone too.

THE PAINTING

I've got a painting. Cost me a quid at a charity shop in Nantes, Brittany. But I love it. There's an atmosphere. Science fiction, fairy like, eerie. Difficult to put it. Sombre colours. Mostly a dark green with bits and pieces of blue, yellow, red, red going to pink or purple. The landscape is made of mountains and they look ancient. Three trees and a fence. The trees are of three different species. Above the mountains is a timid sun or moon. Bits of cloud far above. It's the countryside, definitely. Some flowers are surrounding the tree, willow tree like, to the right of the picture. Its colour is dark but not too dark blue going green. Between this tree and the red going to pink tree that has virtually no leaves but some frail branches and the trunk is stocky as opposed to the thinness and tallness of the willow-like tree, which possesses too an abundant foliage. So between the trees is a couple, facing us, the man is to the left and the woman to the right. But they would describe themselves in the opposite fashion. The man's left wrist is chained up to a ball and chain hovering above the humans and the ball is indented and the indented gap is luminous, yellow at the centre and red on the edges. A second chain links the right hand ankle of the woman to the ball. The man and woman heads are surrounded by an aura, again yellow at the centre and red on the edges, but the red is more abundant. It's not great art like Dali. The humans' outlines are cartoons like, a bit clumsy and black. But they're happy, and the picture is wholly atmospheric.

The Call

I perceive

The suggestion

Of you,

Young kitten

Given

To me the insolent

You drive me

To the ascetic

mystic

Of the divine

Pleasure,

endless.

I am

The pilgrim

Who, dwarf

Before You,

Offered You

The dress of silk.

The Black Virgin

Here am I

Before

Your Presence

And the incense

Turns this

Into something sad.

Pessimistic,

You are

The she-philosopher

And your strophes

Refuse

The sprite

That wears out;

But I offer you

the vital milk

For you the virgin ...

Open the pretty chest.

The She-Deceased in the Temple

I approach

The enclosure

In which lies

The She-deceased

Upon the roses,

Upon the rock ...

I must

In accordance with the Book

That intoxicates me

Re-animate the self

Of the goddess.

Rebirth ...

Then, transparent

Lover

According to the gift

That I offer you,

Fluid for a Madonna

Queen of the first water ...

The She-Guardian and the Dream

The she-guardian

Lies dormant!

I want

The milk

Of this god-mother,

Who, in dream,

Brings a fire

That proves to be sap.