

DIOGEN pro culture magazine & DIOGEN pro art magazine -ISSN 2296-0929; ISSN 2296-0910

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## **Philip Lewis Henderson**

### **A Death**

*--for "Mojo"*

They found her one night in the  
bathtub, colder than frozen  
Fish, eyes staring blankly at the  
Cracked ceiling, the filthy curtain  
Gauze drawn back by her  
Bare leg, breasts dried out,  
Hair matted and greasy, body  
Reddened and beaten-down from  
Decades of abuse, yet with a  
Face oddly serene. Frau Isabella  
Katz, forty-six though looking sixty,  
Alone, with no flat-mates, no pets,  
No lovers (though she once had plenty),  
No friends who knew her  
Whereabouts,  
Left (in a stretcher) through

the doorway of her flat  
for the last time.

The autopsy ruled out foul play.  
There were no drugs, no slash  
marks, no vomit in her throat  
no bullets in her head  
Police are still trying to figure out  
what caused her death  
But we all know she died  
from an overdose  
Of Berlin

NEKOPIRATI

## A Poem for Postmodernists

No

No

No

No

No

No

No

No

No

All of this is fake

None of what you are reading

Is real, all of this is fake,

A big dream

Words can't express anything anymore

Forget about the lurid headlines

In newspapers

Forget about Libya,

Forget about the Congo,

Forget about Afghanistan,

Forget about South East Washington,

Or Detroit

Or Camden

Or the barrio next door

To your split-level home

Plug your ears to the gunshots

And screams

Turn up the volume on your iPod

None of this is real,

We can make it all vanish

By waving a little magic wand

(like Tinkerbell)

Weaving little texts

About the lint in our navels

Or the time we lost our underpants

In a Chinese laundry

Who's to say when the flames leap from

Our roofs  
That they are really flames,  
Or that we just think they're flames?  
Can we even call them flames, since  
Language is intrinsically  
Impotent?  
Better not to smell the smoke,  
It would make you choke  
Better to turn on the TV  
And for Christ's sake,  
Keep on Comedy Central  
Baudrillard would agree  
That the cheap jokes are more real  
Than the roof falling on your head

NEKOPIRATI

## A Poem for the Partisans

The average Greek has more black blood  
than a Louisiana quadroon,  
but try telling that to the little old lady  
who spits at *mavros*  
from her *taverna* terrace  
Christianity found its way to Greece  
from Egypt and Palestine  
It is the same "Orthodox" faith,  
but try telling that to the black-clad,  
bearded old twats with tin crosses  
slung around their fat, pimply necks,  
praying for the death of darkies  
Hellenic art found its inspiration  
from Africa  
The torch that "faggot" Socrates  
bore, the torch that got him  
poisoned, the torch that brought light  
to the Dark Continent of Europe  
was lit in Ancient Kemet  
But, again, try telling that  
to the Golden Shower crowd, clad  
in black shirts, holding aloft  
red flags with badly-drawn swastikas,  
screaming about a future  
filled with mustard gas  
and air-raid sirens  
and death camps

Europe began in the Parthenon,  
but it will end in a whorehouse by its ruins  
Some greasy, stinking thug  
drunk on Ouzo  
and *Mein Kampf*  
will light the spark  
that will put out the last lights

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of white civilization  
And all Greece  
will cling to his every stupid word  
like leeches

NEKOPIRATI

## **A Requiem for the American Negro**

*For the people I thought I knew*

*We grew accustomed to humiliation  
Then what is left of Man  
If he is comfortable with that?  
.....  
Are we hit by national blindness  
Or are we suffering from color blindness?*

*Nizar Qabbani, "We Are Accused of Terrorism"*

In the bad old days of  
Nigger Heaven,  
We (at least) had sense enough to  
laugh at Tarzan  
and all those fake celluloid jungles  
he kept swinging in  
Today, we act like his pet chimpanzees  
Hip psychotics,  
Jungle-bunny buffoons,  
Stylish killers  
In black-face,  
Snapping our fingers  
To the beat of our  
Own deaths  
And can't even pull up  
Our fucking pants  
Tahrir Square  
goes up in flames  
While we sit on our fat asses

Dreaming of gold chains  
And gold rims  
And gold teeth  
And “phat” thong-wearing whores  
With gold hair

Every day  
We lie to ourselves  
About our reality  
And the bitter reality of what  
We think is “our” country  
Our “leaders” are cutthroats,  
multi-million dollar clowns  
In Versace suits  
Our “intellectuals” can’t even  
Tell the truth with a  
Gun pointed at their genitals  
Our schools are closing  
Our streets are rotting  
Our houses are falling apart  
And our lives are being snuffed out  
By the thousands  
Every day  
Our minds grow emptier  
Every day  
Our spirits grow coarser  
Every day  
Our bellies grow fatter  
Every day  
(On the fucking food we eat)  
We have forgotten how to talk  
To one another



Like real human beings  
We even think our own deaths  
(to say nothing of our lives)  
are just cheap “nigger” jokes

We've dropped the ball  
That Tunisia picked up  
We're a laughingstock,  
The butt of the world's wisecracks  
We have earned Africa's contempt  
The Diaspora spits at our feet  
We think Duke Ellington  
Is a name brand, or something  
white folks listen to  
when they masturbate  
Like swine  
We gleefully wallow in our  
Smug ignorance  
Having swallowed the twisted visions  
Of our racist killers  
We are happily plunging off the steepest cliff  
In a 4 by 4

We have come to prefer the bitter reassurance  
Of slave shackles  
To the heady uncertainties  
Of freedom  
We think it is better to forget  
like the Jews forgot  
or the Chinese forgot  
or the Japanese forgot  
or the Lebanese forgot  
or the Syrians

or the Puerto Ricans  
or the Italians  
or the Irish  
or the Swedish  
or the Cherokee  
or the Pawnee  
or the Mexicans  
and Guatemalans forgot  
(or are forgetting)  
that the American Dream is  
just that—  
a dream,  
and not reality  
Even the poorest among us  
Forget that far more dreams  
Have been wrecked in  
This shitty nation of ours  
Than have been fulfilled

NEKOPIRATI

## **A Requiem for Uncle Sam**

*For Henry Dumas and Trayvon Martin*

I

Now  
Now is the time to tell the truth  
About you  
There is a conspiracy of silence  
That must be broken  
Concerning you  
An elaborate system of manners  
In referring to you  
Must be violated  
The universe  
Must be exposed  
From the bottom up;  
The cover must be broken,  
The compromises must cease;  
It's high time someone snatched  
The veil from your face;  
You've been too long  
In self-imposed exile  
From reality

If the time comes for me  
To be arrested for saying these things,  
To be sent to Guantanamo Bay,  
Or imprisoned in a lunatic asylum,

Then let the chips fall where they may  
All your Mickey Mouse novelists  
And Hollywood shills  
Can't keep the truth sealed  
Forever  
No secret shall stay hidden,  
Nothing is concealed  
That shall not soon be revealed  
I shall tell the truth  
About You,  
That you live in a bullet-proof  
Glass house  
With no mirrors:  
Only flattering portraits  
Hung on every wall, even  
In your bathroom  
No need to see what  
You really look like, right?  
No need to check if  
All your hundreds of millions  
Of flatterers and flunkies  
Are actually bullshitting  
After all, You think, the world  
Loves you  
Everyone wears your clothes,  
Everyone listens to your music,  
Everyone dines at your tables,  
Eats your food,  
Wipes their ass on toilet paper  
Made in China  
(for you)  
And pukes in the same toilet bowls  
You puke in,

Washes their hands with the same water  
You drink from,  
Reads the same newspapers  
And books  
You not only read, but wrote  
Dreams the same silly fantasies  
You not only dream, but conjured  
Screams the same racist insults  
You not only scream, but invented  
Everyone is walking in lock step  
Behind You, believing all  
Your dreams, all your little  
Fairy tales  
Everyone believes in Santa Claus  
And the Almighty Ringtone,  
In Justin Bieber, Kanye West  
And the War on Terror,  
saline injections, Brazilian waxes  
And the funny little notion  
That Elvis is still alive  
The whole world wants to live on your block,  
Walking your dog,  
Playing your video games,  
Fucking your old lady,  
Or sticking their face in your favorite  
Glory hole,  
Eating chocolate  
And cream  
before bedtime  
No one is allowed to step inside your house,  
Because no one is allowed to see your face  
In fact, You never leave your house  
Although you think the world

Loves You,  
You don't love the world.

Sir, your flunkies and flatters  
Have deceived you  
And as Nizar Qabbani writes,  
It's time to break the cover,  
And let the people pass  
Through the armed guards  
To peep inside your house  
And if the guards hold them  
Back, I shall tell them what's inside  
Worse yet, I shall tell them what's inside  
You  
The world hasn't a clue,  
they don't know  
How flowers and trees  
Make you cringe,  
How a simple act of making love  
Arouses your indignation,  
How the sight of a woman's nipple  
Drives you to homicidal fury...  
How even the sunshine  
And sea breeze  
And fresh vegetables  
And fruits  
Nauseate You...  
Everything, to You,  
Must be contaminated  
Everything must be filled with poison  
Everything must be made ugly  
And useless  
Everything good and true must be rendered obsolete,

Every candlelight must be snuffed out,

Every breath of air must be stilled,

Every laugh must be choked

Or shoved in a barrel...

Every scent of jasmine

Must be fumigated...

Every old house in the world

Must be destroyed...

Beauty and Joy must be criminalized,

And Love made an alibi

For the death penalty...

Every conscience must be erased,

Every mind stuffed with your conceits,

Every bone filled with your cynicism,

Every heart weighed down with your

Hatreds,

And every soul possessed by your

Foul spirit

No

The world has no idea

Of what you have accomplished

In the name of Beelzebub

They have no idea

How you have silenced the world,

Silenced all your musicians,

Snuffed out all your poets,

Starved all your artists,

Bought out all your visionaries,

And assassinated,

Down to the last man

And woman,

Every single one of your leaders

It wasn't (so much) their bodies that you killed,

But their memory  
You shoved them under the rug of  
What you think is your “history”  
Turned them into cheap ad copy  
    For Burger King  
Or stuck them on the shelves of libraries  
Or the storage rooms of museums  
(where Americans never go, anyway)  
Or in the lurid bios  
Of lying historians,  
Eager to reveal all their flaws  
To a perverted public  
You call them heroes now,  
But You called them terrorists  
    When they walked the earth  
You still do, anyway, behind  
Closed doors  
You should know best what a terrorist looks like  
Since You wrote the definitive edition  
On terror  
Stop screaming about the Arabs,  
They are just doing your dirty work  
(like Israel)  
They have learned a lot from You, by the way  
Was Osama Bin Laden not on your payroll?  
Did Saddam Hussein not dine with You  
At the Waldorf-Astoria?  
Was it not true that the lunacy  
Of Sayyid Quttub  
Crystalized  
When he came to your shores?  
And was it not true that Hifter,  
The Nathan Bedford Forrest of Africa,  
Spent twenty years sucking at your



Sagging teat?

Shall I remind you of your crimes  
With yet another roll call?  
Shall I bore the reader (yet again)  
With another long list  
Of your fuck-ups?  
Does Martin King  
Ring a bell  
Or is he just another holiday,  
Another excuse to stay home  
And get drunk while watching  
the Super Bowl?  
Is Malcolm  
Only fit for the prurient speculations  
Of yellow journalists  
Or just a face  
To be slapped on a t-shirt,  
Or a meaningless name emblazoned  
On a ten-dollar baseball cap?  
Is John Brown still just a madman  
    With a funny-looking beard?  
Was Huey Newton just a  
    Cocaine addict?  
Were Sacco and Vanzetti  
Just a couple of terrorists,  
Or was Marcus Garvey just a big-time crook?  
Is Leonard Pelletier just another wild,  
    Drunken Indian  
Like Crazy Horse,  
Or Geronimo, or Sitting Bull,  
Or Tecumseh, or Montezuma,  
Or Atahualpa?  
Was Gabriel Prosser just another bad nigger?

Was Che Guevara just a loud, cigar-chomping  
Spic?

Was Sojourner Truth just another Negress  
with a funny accent?

Or was H. Rap Brown merely guilty  
Of trying to break inside your glass  
House?

How do you strangle a poet?

Better yet, how do you neuter a poet?

Was Walt Whitman safer as a  
Good gray poet

Than the freak who woke up the neighbors  
With his barbaric yawps?

Was Ralph Ellison more to your liking with  
A cocktail shoved under his nose, scribbling a book  
Even he couldn't finish?

Was Kenneth Patchen better off bed-ridden?

Was Baldwin better off in Istanbul

Or St. Paul de Vence?

Or Chester Himes in a wheelchair in Alicante?

Or Wallace Thurman

And Henry Dumas

Dead

And Ambrose Bierce

And Oscar Zeta Acosta

“missing”

(in the same place)?

Remember Conrad Kent Rivers?

Harold Carrington?

Paul Blackburn?

Bob Kaufman?

Carl Solomon?

Countee Cullen?

Claude McKay?

Hart Crane?

Stephen Crane?

Why did Catherine Fuller choose to drown

Rather than go back to New York?

Why did Baldwin choose to die in France

Rather than in New York?

Why did Dumas get a hole in his head

By the NYPD?

Why did Jean Toomer put aside his pen

And join a cult?

Why did Jeffers bury himself

Under a rock?

Why did Tristan Egolf blow his brains out?

Why did David Foster Wallace blow his brains out?

Why did Seymour Krim blow his brains out?

What, exactly, transpired the night before

Wright died?

And did Neruda really die the way the books say

He did?

How do you silence a musician?

Did Jack Purvis really kill himself?

Was Bix the jazz god You insist he was

Or are You ashamed that he dropped

Dead at 28, screaming of “Mexicans” under his bed?

Or Fats Navarro, dead at 25

Or little Hersal Thomas, dead at 16?

What was the real reason Yardbird flew away?

Or why The Prez started drinking

Or why The Hawk stopped eating?

Or why Lady Day

Was arrested on her death bed

With several hundred dollars

Between her thighs?  
Remember Bessie Smith's end  
On the Mississippi backroads?  
Remember Lee Morgan?  
Louis Chauvin?  
Scott Joplin?  
Leon Roppolo's last days in the  
Nut house?  
Or Buddy Bolden's last days in the  
Nut house?  
Or Eric Dolphy, dying on the Ku'damm in Berlin,  
Or Bud Powell's last days in a Parisian stupor?  
Remember Pinetop Smith catching a bullet  
In the gut?  
Remember Jelly's last jam  
Under a hoodoo curse?  
Did the Melrose Brothers  
Ever pay his royalties?  
What became of poor Herbie Nichols  
And his music?  
Or Sam Cooke?  
Or Chano Pozo?  
Or Chu Berry?  
Or Clifford Brown?  
Or Billy Banks?  
Or La Lupe?  
Or Little Walter?  
Or Little Willie John?  
Remember when Gerry Mulligan died  
And You chose to write an obituary of  
Minnesota Fats instead?  
Remember Fletcher Henderson, ending his days  
as a pathetic charity case?  
Remember when they found Wardell Gray

In the desert with a broken neck?

Remember King Curtis, stabbed by junkies on a  
Harlem stoop?

Remember King Oliver, fat, blind, toothless, dying in a  
Run-down pool hall in Savannah?

Or Tommy Ladnier, dying in a Harlem rooming house  
With only a walking stick and a pair of underwear  
To his name?

One could wrap a list of your fuck-ups

Around the world

Several times

And still have room for more

One need not go on

No need to explain why David Walker

Ended his days on a

Boston doorstep

Too many people have perished

On those same doorsteps

They are still perishing,

Their voices drowned out by billions

Of ringtones and screeching cop sirens

Nobody's left to hang around

these stoops

Playing music

Or singing songs

Or reciting poetry

Or serenading a loved one

No one hears the screams of

Children playing

You've killed the children

with gangsta rap,

poisoned school lunches,

play stations, iPods or

Neo-Nazi message boards

Single parents beat them

Within an inch of their lives,

Murderous pedophiles

bugger them in

Every street,

Killer cops and gangstas

Use them for target practice,

And jail-like junior high schools

Teach them the law of the jungle

You've raised a new generation

Of faceless, soulless robots

Not one of them will rock the boat

Not one of them will lift a finger in resistance

Not one of them will give the lie

To all your crackpot sophistry

Everybody knows their place

Everybody knows when to keep

    Their windows closed

One might as well, because outside,

There's nothing but silence

Not even the howling of the wind

Not even the braying of a dog,

The chirp of birds

Or the yowling of cats

Not even the buzz of bees, flies or

    Mosquitoes

We can't even hear the rustling of leaves in the trees

Mother Nature has gone into exile

The sun is afraid to show its face

And roses are too ashamed to open their petals

    In this hell

The present  
We already know about...  
Gangster rap,  
Neo-Nazis,  
The Tea Party,  
A dying economy,  
forest fires,  
oil spills,  
killer cops,  
crime waves,  
Trayvon Martin,  
Amadou Diallo,  
The rotting of Camden,  
The looting of Baghdad,  
The destruction of Libya,  
The destruction of Syria,  
The destruction of Timbuktu,  
The follies of Netanyahu  
And so on, and so on, and so on...  
We already know these things.  
Any fool can grab it off the internet  
And run with it  
But there are lies within truths  
And truths within lies,  
And there is a deeper truth  
Beneath the more obvious ones  
The truth is  
You're finished,  
You've played your last hand  
At History's roulette table  
You have only begun to write the  
Final chapter in your disgraceful  
History

You're a clever sonofabitch, just  
Like your hack writers  
Still trying to figure out the climax  
Oh, but it's got to be good and bloody, you  
Think:  
Lots of screams, gore and special effects  
People falling out of buildings,  
Roofs caving in en-masse  
Massive floods,  
Wars galore,  
Radiation and radon everywhere,  
Mass deaths, choking every boulevard  
One can think of  
The end has to strike us in the face  
Like a stream of piss  
From an elephant

But just perhaps, the end may not be such a  
Goddamned Gotterdammerung after all:  
Just perhaps, centuries later, when  
Some other civilization  
Digs out your archives, they will sit  
Back, shocked and awed  
(at first)  
Wondering just who the fuck  
Were you, anyway?  
What was it really all about?  
The unendurable arrogance,  
The bewildering conceit,  
The mind-numbing vulgarity,  
The boundless greed,  
The endless ethnic, religious and personal  
Hatreds,  
The ignorance, violence and amorality



That made Rome seem like  
The most tepid of English tea parties?  
Future historians will finish your little book  
For you:  
Uncle Sam,  
Thinking himself the most handsome,  
Virile, ball-busting sonofabitch, finally  
Goes to shave off that ugly  
Goatee that's been hanging on his face  
For the past two centuries  
He finally orders a mirror  
(online)  
He will finally see what his face  
Really looks like after all these years;  
He will see the worms hanging out of it,  
The eyeballs dangling loose,  
The skin gone green  
(and he thought he just needed  
A goddamned shave, poor bastard)  
Uncle Sam will put the gun to his own head  
Future folks will read about it  
On page 3,001  
Of the last chapter  
Of the big book called "America"  
The reaction, old chap, will be most unexpected  
It won't have any aura of tragedy  
Or grandeur about it, contrary  
To what you think  
It will just be an end  
People will think it's funny  
In fact, everything in the big American book,  
The last Great American Novel  
(the one American novel that actually  
Tells the truth)

Will be one big laugh  
Even all the bad parts  
Will make them roll on the ground  
The kids dying on the streets  
Of Houston, East St. Louis and East L.A.  
Will move them to tears  
(of laughter)  
The episodes of slavery will make them giggle  
The killing of the Indians, the Chinese, the  
Irish, the Vietnamese, the Iraqis,  
The endless corruption, the endless intrigues,  
The lies, deceit, greed and everything else  
Will be a source of endless wise cracks  
And cheap references  
For limericks  
Jim Crow, lynching and ghettos  
Will fuel nursery rhymes for children

No, it won't be good  
Your memory will be as undignified as your end  
The whole thing will be chiseled in stone  
As a reminder to people of what not  
To be  
You will end up as history's biggest  
Dung-heap,  
A monument to everything wrong  
And the stench will last ten thousand years  
At last, humanity will see the truth  
Behind the Wizard of Oz  
Humanity will see that your  
"Great Experiment"  
Was just a massive miscarriage,  
That your historical conceits were  
Nothing but nonsense,

The arrogance of a bestial thug  
Who thought he held the key  
To God's secrets  
They will see that your culture  
Was just a four hundred year old dope trip,  
History's longest mass evasion of reality  
And they will understand why You  
Wound up here:  
The world needed someplace  
To dump its garbage  
Too bad they dumped You in the backyard  
Of the Iroquois  
There will be no more surprises after reading  
This last, great American book  
No one will be shocked to learn  
Why You killed the Iroquois  
(Millions and millions of them,  
As naturally as You wiped your ass  
With a corncob)  
Nobody will be surprised that  
You turned the kings and queens of Africa  
Into clowns and custodians  
(Or cannon-fodder)  
People will laugh, but with relief  
Knowing that You are gone  
You, who are nothing  
But pure, concentrated Evil  
Whose beacon of hope  
Was nothing more than a policeman's  
Search-light  
Whose "pop music"  
Was the deadliest of siren songs  
Whose whole identity was  
Nothing but a carefully wrought lie

Nobody will be surprised when  
China finally pushed the button  
And silenced You  
They will clearly see that You earned it,  
With every “nigger,” “gook,” “spic” and  
“Kike” from your cankered lips  
With every tug of the lynch rope  
With every thwack from the cop’s baton,  
With every crack from the masters whip  
And every pop from the gangster’s gun

You,  
You who are now reading this  
And foaming at the mouth,  
Cursing me under your foul breath:  
Shut up  
Not even fools want to hear your childish  
Harangues  
It’s time you opened your eyes  
For even the blind can see  
That the “love” the world shows for you  
Is as phony as the “peace” you’ve dumped  
On them  
If you had read your history  
You’d realize that men who shine your shoes  
Or women who open their legs  
Aren’t always doing it  
For love  
Peasants, serfs and peons  
Have lied to lords for millennia  
Why should the cyber-serfs of today  
Not lie to you?  
It’s time to face your coming obsolescence, old man  
After all, you’ve planned it

With your throw-away culture

Do as you wish,

Control everything,

Control our dreams,

Our bowel movements,

Even our very breaths

All the virtual reality tricks

And computer generated technology

Won't save you this time

It's your last dance upon the stage of History

After you're done, please, for the love

Of Christ, just fuck off:

Don't wait for the applause;

There will be none.

Leave God and Humanity in

Peace.

Pick out a nice plot somewhere

In Woodlawn, say a prayer, seal yourself

in your platinum coffin,

and just

die

## **Al-Kaida**

Hamid Henson X is an old Black  
Panther who lives with his  
Two sons in a housing project  
In Fuckaduck, Texas.  
Hamid is revered by the militants,  
Who remember his antics  
During the end of the sixties  
(he burned down Sam Houston Hall  
At his old college, in protest  
Of the racist curriculum)  
Now he is a retired, gentle old man  
With salt-and-pepper hair,  
Who watches the antics of his two sons  
With senile bemusement  
He named them Najibullah and Hajibullah  
Both of them are tall,  
Rather beefy young men in their  
Late-twenties  
They dress like adolescents,  
With long, hanging white tank-tops  
And cut-off shorts  
And askew baseball caps  
For some strange reason  
They even look like adolescents, too...  
They look exactly alike (which is  
To be expected, since they  
Are twins)  
They are also extremely destructive  
In spite of their militant upbringing  
They don't destroy the property of the man,

Or so the denizens of the projects think  
They destroy the lives of their friends  
For kicks  
Just for the hell of it,  
They broke into one of the flats  
    In the projects  
And emptied it out  
And killed the woman who lived there  
And her three children  
They got a slap on the wrist  
For some strange reason  
Their father did time for having a revolver  
In 1970  
Najibullah and Hajibullah never did time  
For anything,  
Not even the multiple times  
They jumped on women they saw  
And raped them on the spot, regardless  
    Of age  
They rarely talk, except to make short,  
    Curt profanities,  
And all the local hoods  
Steer clear of them

“How you doin’, my son?” says Hamid  
To Hajibullah, when he is flying toy airplanes  
In the courtyard.

“Nigger, fuck your faggot ass,” Hajibullah answers.

“Yeah, man,” Hamid continues, talking to  
The reporter who goes to see them one afternoon,  
“I’m really proud of my two sons, I just  
Wish they would get a little bit more

Ambition in themselves. They are really  
Intelligent and real clever, you know.  
They oughta go into the demolition business,  
Or something. Them kids was always  
Fooling around with explosives an'  
Stuff like that. I used to be worried  
They might blow theyselves up, but now I'm  
Used to it. They always been into airplanes  
And when they was younger they used  
To do some strange shit like put C-4  
I had from 'Nam in onea them toy  
Airplanes, an' fly 'em into somea these  
Old broken-down empty flats an' blow 'em  
Up. Man, they was something. If only my  
kids would put they heads together, they  
could make themselves a bundle doing  
that, insteada staying here..."

"But," said the reporter, "when did they  
Start blowing up buildings with toy airplanes?"

"Man," said Hamid X, "when they was thirteen.  
When they got to be fifteen they got together  
with some of the wrong kids in the neighbor-  
hood an' formed this gang called The  
Foundation. They called it by the Arabic  
Name, since I grounded these kids in Islam  
After I converted to the faith myself. I  
Converted in jail, you know."

The whole time, Hamid is laughing  
With fatherly bemusement.

"Man, them kids sure fooled me.



I thought they was gonna get lost like  
So many of these other kids out here,  
Into drugs an' stuff. But they just decided  
To play it cool and just blow up shit. You  
Know—old factories an' shit like that. Fly  
These remote-control toy airplanes with  
C4 and then some explosives they learned  
To make themselves an' what-not. One  
Day they said they was gon' take a trip  
To Afghanistan. Said they wanted to get a  
Deeper grounding in Islam. I paid for the  
Trip. When that September 11<sup>th</sup> thing happened  
My kids had to come home to me, which is  
Why they still here. You remember that,  
Don' chu?"

"Remember what?"

"The World Trade Center Bombing," Hamid X said.

"Man, nigger, that shit's old," Najibullah said.

The reporter looks at the two men strangely.

He pops the inevitable question:

"Were any of you in New York on the night  
Of September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2001?"

"Yeah," spits Hajibullah, "we was there."

"What do you remember about that night?"

"The usual."

“The usual what?”

“Shit getting blown up.”

“Excuse me?”

Najibullah and Hajibullah look at the reporter  
With blank, cold stares.

“Nigger, what you tryna insinuate? That  
We blew the motherfucker up, or  
What?”

Reporter: “No, no—I mean, it does seem strange  
To me that this would happen, and you would  
Be there—“

“Because you right,” Hajibullah spat.

“What do you mean?”

“We blew the mothafuckas up, that’s what we mean.”

“You two blew up the World Trade Center?”

“Yeah.”

The reporter laughs. “I don’t believe this story. This  
Is complete bullshit. Al, shut the cameras off, we  
Can’t film this crap.”

“Good,” Hajibullah spat. “You crackers fall for it  
Every time. Y’all don’t have to believe shit.”

The reporter is still laughing;  
The cameras are now off, though a  
Clown is using a cell-phone to  
Capture what he thinks  
Is a broad joke....

“Okaaaay,” says the reporter, looking  
The two negroes up and down in disbelief.  
“if you *did* do this, please explain  
How you *did* it.”

“Easy,” says Hajibullah. “Najee planted the  
Bombs an’ shit, he had a job cleanin’ them  
Crackas’ floors. Odigo slipped the motha-  
Fucka some bread up front so he’d put  
One on every floor. Najee got out just in time.  
Meanwhile I commandeered an army plane  
By a special remote control device—okay,  
It was this fuckin’ Samsung cellphone an’  
Shit, you dig? Just fooled around with the  
Internal mechanisms and made it so it could  
Fuck with airplane controls. So I just, you  
Know, did it. Ain’ nobody expect no niggers  
To do no shit like this, so we got away with it.  
Motherfuckers out there be lookin’ for some  
Motherfuckin’ Arabs an’ shit—hell, the only  
ARABS you need to look for you lookin’ at  
Right now, stupid-ass.”

The reporter’s wide, stupid grin evaporates.

Najibullah laughs aloud, as does Hamid X.

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“Yeah,” Hajib says, “so whyncha go tell all that shit  
To Mista Murdoch now, mothafucka??”

NEKOPIRATI

## **All In, Out and Down (or, Starving in A Flat)**

Just a few years ago  
You were reaching for the top,  
The best musician in the business  
But typically, Fate intervened,  
And you missed the brass ring  
Maybe it was your fault,  
Maybe not  
Now you are falling down, down  
God has flushed you down  
His holy shit-bowl  
You never treated anybody too badly  
Unlike your booze-hound pals  
Who keep beating up their girlfriends  
and snitching on their mates  
but you're in the goddamned streets  
wandering about,  
looking for coins and stray bills,  
looking for anything  
(even in trash cans)  
Looking in shop windows  
At things you could once afford  
And now only drool over  
In impotent lust  
Your girlfriends are all gone,  
Your wife left you  
Eons ago  
You're out of touch with all your friends,  
You haven't cut your hair in months,  
And your clothes are in tatters

Every now and then you're lucky just to find a room  
In a homeless shelter or, worse,  
A fucking youth hostel

Well, at least you have a room *now*  
Last night, you slept in the train station  
With the cold cutting through your rags  
But you can still hear the motherfuckers  
Upstairs, the people in the street,  
The howling of the wind,  
And it all sounds as if it's laughing at you

Maybe, you'll have better luck tomorrow night  
When you play the piano  
At the Molinari  
It's an okay place,  
The patrons seem to like you  
their piano is out of tune, though  
and the management never pays  
You have to pass the bloody hat around  
and as much as the patrons "like you"  
you never make much more than twenty euro

Well, you think, twenty euro is better than nothing,  
And I'd better be good,  
Even though, last night wasn't so good  
You only got five euro  
From busking in the street  
And even that was stolen by thugs,  
Who beat you up in the end  
And broke your fingers

But still, you think, tomorrow night,  
Broken fingers be damned,

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I'd better make good...

NE KOPIRATI

**April 29, 1976**

*--for Philip Thomas Smith, 1896-1976*

For some reason I can't explain  
The only things I remember  
About this day  
Was that my mother  
Was crying in the toilet  
"He's dying," she told  
My father  
From the toilet  
I know this to be true  
My great-grandfather  
Was dying  
And I didn't want to believe it  
Philip Thomas Smith,  
My namesake,  
The man who raised her  
When she was growing up  
In the forties  
I remember the sobs  
Coming from the toilet  
It may have been a mild,  
Sunny day, I can't really  
Remember  
Nor can I be sure if my father  
Was standing outside the door,  
haranguing her  
For being melodramatic

But for some stupid reason  
The one thing I *do* remember  
Was hanging near the stairwell



And thinking, idly,  
“cry oranges  
And peaches”

It was the silliest thing  
One could hope  
To remember  
But that’s exactly  
What I thought.  
The innocent follies  
of an 8-year old mind  
That has its whole life  
Ahead of it.

The rest of the 29<sup>th</sup> is a blank.  
The morning of the 30<sup>th</sup> I remember  
All too clearly  
It *was* a bright, mild, sunny day  
I was awakened from a very pleasant dream  
By the mournful march  
    Of my mother’s feet  
On the old carpeted stairwell  
The door to our bedroom was open  
And I saw her head shaking  
As it emerged from the bottom  
“He’s dead,” she said, mordantly,  
“Papa Phil is dead.”

## Are You Happy Now?

It's 11:30 Monday night  
And colder than a witches' cunt...  
I'm on a well-paying gig  
At Ciro's, in the hippest  
Part of town.  
I'm on break and sitting  
Near the bandstand, rolling  
A joint, *on the table*,  
Since I never learned to roll  
With my hands.  
I'm down to my undershirt  
In the nightclub heat,  
Surrounded  
By a dozen beer glasses;  
A wine glass three quarters empty,  
Two ash trays filled to the brim,  
Four sets of drummer's brushes, and  
A busted tenor sax reed.  
The club is worse than a sardine can.  
Half the crowd is stoned;  
I hear a harmonica above  
Everyone's screams;  
The trumpet player can't play,  
The drummer can't keep time,  
The sax keeps howling,  
And the lead singer is  
Out of tune.  
And I can't light my joint  
because the fucking  
guitarist next to me  
keeps using my lighter  
For a slide.

## **DON'T TELL ME, I THINK I ALREADY KNOW**

*(for Black Europeans)*

You told me awhile ago they had some Afro-Poles,  
Or some indigenes living in Portugal.  
You didn't tell me what the indigenes looked like, but don't,  
I think I already know.

(Or am I wrong?)

They're probably dark-skinned, or maybe  
They aren't so dark, they don't have to be dark.

And the Afro-Poles? The Afro-Portuguese?

I don't need to guess.

Do they live in small provincial towns

Or in the capital city?

Do they live in every neighborhood

Or are they confined to the "bad" part?

(Or is that "bad" part "bad"  
because *they* happen to be there?)

Do their women desire white men, or don't they?

Do their men desire white women, or don't they?

Or do they just "prefer" to be in

One another's company?

(Don't tell me, I think I already know what they "prefer".)

Do they have a high divorce rate, or

Do they just send their sons

back to the motherland

To find a suitable bride?

Aren't the cops locking up

The cream of their manhood?

Aren't the local whores spitting

on the cream of their manhood?

Don't the locals think their women

Are just cheap prostitutes?

(Or *are* they just cheap prostitutes?)

Don't they have "exotic" nightclubs

where horny white kids can come

to find the “Black Experience,”  
or am I just assuming things?  
Do they have a high suicide rate?  
Aren’t their schools “jungles”  
Where young white children  
“fear for their lives”?  
Don’t tell me, I think I already know.  
I’ll bet “their” government makes promises like,  
“We’ll take you in, you’re Polish now, or Portuguese,”  
or Irish, or Italian, or German or  
whatever,  
But I bet they can’t find jobs,  
and they probably can’t vote,  
and they probably “lie” and “steal things” too,  
and they’ve a “large concentration of AIDS”  
and they are all “dope-pushing drunks,”  
and the young ones hate being “colored”  
and want to be *white* Poles and *white* Portuguese.  
(Or do they just hate being Portuguese, or  
Poles, and want to be  
Africans?)  
Do they kill each other to the sounds of 50 Cent?  
Do they wear Malcolm X ball-park caps?  
Do they straighten their hair?  
Do they wear saggy pants?  
Do they wear spandex?  
Do they wear tattoos?  
Or gold chains?  
(Or worse?)  
  
Don’t tell me, please, I think I already know.  
  
(Or am I wrong??)

## **Fun and Fancy Free**

Let's all make-believe  
the moon is made of  
Green cheese,  
That the sky is rock candy,  
And the sun is a honey-nut  
Cheerio  
That acid rain  
Is just light seasoning  
On the sweet-meats  
Of reality  
That war doesn't exist,  
And nobody starves,  
And we all live in a Paradise  
Pretty enough to give  
Dante a massive hard-on...  
Mushroom clouds  
Are just great big balls  
Of cotton candy  
And massive oil spills  
acres of fudge pudding  
Chernobyl was just a TV show  
That flopped  
And Bhopal  
Was a shitty comic  
Drawn in India  
By second-rate cartoonists  
Nagasaki was just a silly jazz jingle  
Hiroshima was a B-movie  
starring John Wayne  
And Stepinfetchit

Look on the bright side of life  
Think positive  
Be optimistic  
Don't be a Negative Nancy  
Fukushima is a dream  
Conjured up by  
Negative Nancies  
Let's dream a Disney castle  
full of geisha girls  
with huge tits  
instead of busted reactors  
Jasmine and patchouli  
Instead of cesium  
And God's own milk and honey  
Instead of radiation  
Let's make believe  
That when our babies are born  
With six arms  
And eight eyeballs  
We can rip down the drawing  
Of reality  
And sketch a new one  
minus the presence  
Of our fuck-ups

## Hey, Gabbo...

When you get to Heaven  
please tell Allen  
and Ann  
and Amiri  
and Jimmy  
and James  
and Gwendolyn  
and Pablo  
and Ralph  
and Richard  
and Henry  
and Hank  
and Walt  
and Nizar  
and Chinua  
and Chester  
and Ozamu  
and Okada  
and Flannery  
and Ferdydurke

please tell all the cats  
(and chicks)  
at the Pearly Gates

I said, "Hi..."

## **In The Cage**

*--to a young black male, lonely and dejected,  
walking down 42nd Street and Times Square*

Hemmed in between  
two walls, two wretched worlds  
where, on the one hand, lay  
acres of rotting tenements,  
and on the other, a neon-lit,  
cold-blooded affluence,  
my worst fears have been con-  
firmed: there is no hope,  
save for the small hope  
that I can keep myself contained,  
in place and ready for a life  
after this--away from America,  
since America isn't life;  
with all the excitement caused  
by this slapstick scene,  
it's very easy for my soul to  
run amok, seeking shelter  
in the sanctity of Man.  
But it won't find any here:  
the white ones will mock it,  
ignore it, patronize it, or  
run away in abject fright;  
the black ones will ball it up  
in their fists and  
crush it like an egg;  
the Latinos will first ask  
whether or not it speaks Spanish,



and if it doesn't, they'll  
give it like treatment;  
and the Asians, ever so vigilant  
and trustworthy, will start  
shooting at it.

Everybody's crazy, everybody's  
on drugs, everybody's giving  
birth through their assholes  
or their pee-holes, the whole biological-  
sociological-scatological-eschatological-  
social-sexual framework of life turned  
on its head so that what's normal and  
healthy looks wrong.

What can I say?

I'm just swimming desperately  
up a river full of shit  
looking for the land--  
and not only don't I have a paddle,  
I don't even own a boat.

NEKOPIRATI

## Looney Tunes

“What do you think about Berlin?”

Someone asked me in a bar one  
Night.

How do you spell that out  
In simple terms?

It's been four years, I told him, and  
To tell the truth, other than the night skinheads  
Beat me up in Alexanderplatz, two years  
Ago to the night I got booted out of my  
Flat in Neukolln by some kook from  
Cameroon, other than the time I spent a  
Month freezing in a Friedrichshain flat,  
Or going mad on Turmstrasse on an empty  
Stomach, with bills to pay, a novel not  
Finished, a neighbor who kept waking me  
Up in the middle of the night screaming  
About niggers, gooks, Arabs, Turks, monkeys, and  
Other such things, or when my whore  
Neighbor kept having orgies and  
Fighting with all her clients, or the time some ass-  
hole broke into my flat in Kreuzberg and  
Stole half my shit, or when my girl-  
friend left me for some thug in the army,  
taking our five year old daughter with her  
and forbidding me to even see her, or  
when, finally, a drag queen pulled a gun  
on me outside the Markthalle last night  
and called me every name in the book,

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I don't think Berlin's that bad.

It's still a hell of a lot better  
than Boston.

NEKOPIRATI

## Love (2)

It's not the girl  
Whom you dreamt of  
For years, whom you  
Painted in both mind  
And canvas, the invisible vessel  
Into which you poured all  
Your feverish thoughts,  
But the woman  
Who leaves you an email  
One unsuspecting day,  
asking about your doings,  
saying that she missed you  
and, for some reason,  
filling you with a  
bottomless  
anxiety

NEKOPIRATI

## **Love (2012)**

Is like a piece of clay, which  
I endlessly and eagerly mold  
with the hands of my mind, only to  
open them and find  
Nothing.

NEKOPIRATI

## **Mounir**

After he lost his last job  
He spent his days  
In a 4<sup>th</sup> floor flat  
Smoking crack  
One day his benefits ran out  
He begged his girlfriend  
For some extra cash  
That didn't work  
So he slapped her around a bit  
(mostly out of fear)  
That didn't work, either  
She only called the cops  
And had him locked up  
(for a couple years)  
After he got out  
He jacked up a car  
Here and there  
He got something for it  
But as usual it was  
never enough  
One day he figured he'd reached  
the end of his tether  
He stumbled into a bank  
With a crude sign  
He gave to the bankteller  
He didn't say a word  
The sign said it all  
"Hand me all of your cash  
Or I will blow myself up"  
People joked about it  
All over the internet  
After his arrest  
"Typical towelhead"  
Went one,

“Guess he left his bombs  
Back in Baghdad”  
Actually, he was Jordanian  
We knew him in high school,  
At St. Floyd’s, twenty-seven  
Years ago  
Mounir was a cut-up,  
A class clown  
But the guy couldn’t blow up  
A paper bag  
And the only one he ever terrorized  
Was himself:  
By the time he was nineteen  
He had a head full  
Of gray hair

NEKOPIRATI

## **Murdered Poet**

*--for Reginald Lockett*

Here lay, by these  
Breathtaking hills, these  
Cobblestones and  
Picturesque row-houses, the  
Cutesy-poo streetcars, the  
Brand-new Starbucks, and the  
Loveliest airport in the  
Western world—  
Here lay  
Yet another poet  
Yet another voice  
Crushed  
Under the murderous weight  
Of Oakland  
And San Francisco

NEKOPIRATI



## **Niggatown, USA**

Winter has fallen  
Like a massive Klan robe  
Upon Niggatown  
Colored girl singers  
With Alpine locks  
Clutter the magazine shelves  
All the jazz bands  
And blues shouters  
Have been silenced  
And in their wake, one hears  
the din of fools  
Screaming of the chintzy jewels  
they lifted  
From a Korean pawn shop  
The zoot suits, Chesterfields and continentals  
Have been replaced by sagging drawers  
That look like they're filled with shit  
The red dresses, black pumps  
And white gardenias  
Have been traded in  
For cheap spandex  
Botched boob jobs  
And nipple rings

Of course, there's no point  
In crying over spilled beer  
What's done is done  
When in Niggatown,  
You do as the niggas do  
(Or else)

Don't forget your malt liquor bottle

You will need it

(to defend yourself  
after you get wasted,  
for somebody'll  
try to waste you)

Be sure to wobble your head

And swing your ass

From left to right

Let one wrist hang loose

If you are a girl

(and if you're a boy,

Saunter all over the place

Walk with a limp

Grab your nuts

And snarl BITCH)

You have to talk

Really, really LOUD

Like you're trying to reach your prostate

With your esophagus

(This goes for women, too)

Every other word you say

Must be (by law)

NIGGER

BITCH

MOTHERFUCKER

PUSSY

ASSHOLE

FAGGOT

COCKSUCKER

DOG

HOE

And of course, you must go easy

On the witticisms and overall intelligence level

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If you wish to be understood  
by the natives  
and god forbid, always remind people  
that you are not  
gay

NEKOPIRATI

## **NONVIOLENCE**

(in the year of our lord, one thousand, nine hundred and ninety five)

You always get this feeling  
that something's happening,  
that things are going to change--  
but, after all the mumbo-jumbo,  
the whoops and howls,  
the fervid speeches and sermons about "Freedom!"  
and "Manhood!",  
everybody gets his goddamn check,  
and his goddamn picture taken,  
and then down a few goddamn cocktails  
and then each and every goddamn, super-important asshole  
goes home,  
back to suburb and townhouse,  
back to rotting project,  
back to stinky cold-water flats where the ceilings  
sag so low  
there's not even room for the rats to crawl.

## Ode to a long forgotten cornetist

*For Buddy Bolden, Buddy Petit and Chris Kelly*

The jazz czars are still claiming  
you were “out of tune,”  
“too loud,” “too rough,”  
used “too much vibrato”  
and “couldn’t read music”;  
they clearly prefer today’s darlings  
who squeal like slaughtered pigs  
or roll on the stage of various  
“jazz festivals,” so-called  
They’ve even stolen your cocky walk,  
Your clothes (bad imitations  
of your box-backs and Stetsons  
and high-buttoned shoes);  
true, their wardrobes are better tailored,  
their playing a lot more elegant  
But they have had it easy  
Your father was castrated  
And hung from a telephone pole  
When you were four  
You did hard time in tubercular slums  
And Jim-Crowed omnibuses  
You played the Storyville circuit  
For chicken-sandwiches and ruckus juice  
You hustled nickels and dimes  
In pool-halls and back-alleys  
You were shunned worse than a leper  
You sought love in stinky cribs  
And cathouses, where a fat octoroon

Gave you syphilis  
You ended your days in the colored ward  
Of the lunatic asylum  
You never cut any records  
(save for that wax cylinder historians  
keep talking about, and which has  
never turned up, anyway)  
We don't even have a picture of you  
For the cover of Down Beat  
We can only hear echoes of you  
In your long-dead disciples  
(behind the crackles  
And pops of worn-down 78s)  
And each of their harsh chords  
Tells a story about ourselves  
And about you  
That some of us are too afraid  
to listen to.

NEKOPIRATI

## **Hail to the Golden Dawn**

Brothers, we salute you, O  
Golden Dawn, we congratulate you  
for beating up niggers  
and kicking the asses of gooks  
and faggots  
who dared suggest they  
were as human, as noble and  
refined as you.  
We salute you and your  
machine guns, as well as  
the cops and senators  
waiting in the wings  
with zyklon-b  
We are happy,  
happy with the way things  
are turning out in the streets  
of Athens.  
We are happy to report that the cops  
would rather hunt jungle-bunnies  
and sand monkeys  
rather than round up the Russian Mafia  
and their junky acolytes.  
We are happy to report that Zorba the Greek  
is now a rabid anti-Semite.  
We are happy to report that the world  
is turning a blind eye  
while your influence spreads like a forest blaze  
throughout the white world,  
and that one day, each and every  
white nation  
will hold aloft the banner of your badly-drawn swastika  
and scream WHITE POWER  
while dropping the bomb  
and sending us all to Heaven  
where a smiling, benevolent white God  
will greet us

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in the Golden Dawn  
of the hereafter.

NEKOPIRATI



## **Our Little Global Village**

*--for everyone who believes in Globalization*

Deep down in the jungles of India,  
Or Brazil, or Gabon  
Or the concrete jungles of Paris  
Or New York, or Tokyo  
Or the plastic jungles of Dubai  
Or Singapore, or Sydney  
We all put the same letters  
In the same mailboxes;  
We all give the same thumbs-up  
To the same policemen  
On the same beat;  
We all send the same messages  
And the same "Tweets"  
To the same friends that we meet  
On the same websites,  
On the same hour,  
Of the same day.  
We all grin the same grin  
Showing teeth that have been  
Brushed with the same toothpaste;  
We all think the same thoughts  
About the same things we  
See on the same television sets  
Made by the same corporations  
Who make the same houses  
We live in, the same bubble-gum  
Our children chew, the same trash cans  
We use to dispose of the same trash.  
On the radio, we hear that other children

Have been killed by the same bombs and bullets  
And same poisonous crops  
Made by the same corporations  
That made the same toilets that won't flush,  
The same cabinets that won't close,  
The same carpets that smell of the same disinfectants  
that our neighbors, who are the same as us, use.  
We go to sleep and dream the same dreams  
We dreamt the night before;  
We wake up in the morning to eat the same cereal  
We ate the morning previous;  
We pick up the same paper  
And read about the same bombs and bullets  
Made by the same corporations  
That kill the same people  
we laughed the same laugh about  
the other day,  
eating the same bag of stale corn chips  
we bought the previous week,  
taking the same cheap drugs  
we bought from the same crooks  
who sold us the same TVs that broadcast  
the same stupidity,  
Wearing the same crappy clothes that lend us  
the same vulgarity,  
eating the same bad food that gives us  
the same heartburn,  
Having the same dull sex that gives us  
The same deadly germs,  
And lands us in the same hospitals  
Where, in the end, the same nurses  
And orderlies  
will pull the same sheets  
Over our eyes—

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which, undoubtedly, shall all have  
the same contact lenses,  
made by the same corporations  
that killed us.

NEKOPIRATI

## **Paper Bag, Casablanca**

Walking out of the hotel  
I found to my right  
In the middle of the sidewalk  
A teenaged Moroccan  
About five feet nine  
Light brown skinned  
Standing with his face  
Buried in a paper bag.  
He appeared to be endlessly  
Blowing up the bag.  
Okay, I thought:  
If a guy wants to stand in the  
Middle of a busy street  
Blowing up a paper bag  
It's his business,  
Whatever floats his boat.  
I walked around for a few hours  
Brought a newspaper  
Had lunch  
And a glass of mint tea  
Took pictures of the *medina*  
And the souk off Boulevard Mohammed Cinq  
Had another glass of tea  
Then a Coke  
And came back to the hotel.  
The teenaged Moroccan  
Was still there,  
In the same spot,  
Still trying to blow up  
The paper  
Bag

## **PRINCESSE LOINTAINE**

**(Leila)**

In the privacy of my cheaply rented room we made love  
in secrecy  
and often in the closet  
to muffle the sounds of our passions  
in order to keep the prying eyes of the furtive crowds  
outside

out of our crappy lives.

But on the streets we pretended not to know each other  
to pay hateful homage to those  
for whom such love did not exist,  
and in a city where every stone had been laid  
and every road paved  
to crush all dreams  
and render life joyless.

When we went to Luxor,  
she had to pretend she was somebody else,  
and fake a Spanish accent.

She told me she was going crazy,  
that she wanted to commit suicide.

Why couldn't I have just rejected her as a half-mad westernized  
nympho totally cut off from her culture?

Maybe, then, I might not have been so hurt  
when I saw her slide into ruin  
in Egypt's desolate streets.

She loved me, she said.

And I loved her, too.

\*

One day I will remember how it had all come to pass,  
how one of my friends  
so-called  
shot himself because of her  
and how her husband(so-called)  
became a killer because of her  
and how the cops wouldn't leave the two of us alone.  
A whole frenzy of intrigue  
played out beneath a hideous skyline  
choked with rotting tenements, skyscraper  
hotels, and lousy cheap billboards  
of pale-blond whores.  
But I, too, am an artist.  
One day I will paint a picture of Leila  
--if I still have her photo--  
in such a way that everyone  
as Langston Hughes said  
will see how beautiful she was,  
and be ashamed,--  
that the sick world that they help to keep running  
led to her suicide.

But only a cheap, crumpled note remains of her,  
which she hastily scribbled to me during one flighty interlude  
of passion. It's in Arabic, no doubt.  
Yet I can't read it,--  
her handwriting is indecipherable.

And I've forgotten the language.

## Reflections on Berlin

Yes: here we are, in the  
Cold, cold North, walking  
Up and down these streets  
Full of loose cobbles and dog shit,  
The air stinking of burning coal  
And coffee-houses, the neighborhood  
Full of cold, icy, hatchet-faced  
Youngsters, mostly in their twenties,  
Some pushing thirty, and here and there  
Some throwbacks to the Third Reich  
Who, surprisingly, don't say a  
Mumbling word to the black guy  
Passing them, trying  
To find Life.

\*

Has he come close to finding Life?  
I don't know.  
It's not just the large, gloomy, grey  
Altbau tenements, nor the broken bottles  
and graffiti, nor the obscene  
Neon glare of Ku'damm, nor the rash  
Of Turkish hash-houses  
And pink-topped telephone booths.  
It's not even those ugly coats chicks  
Wear:  
It's something deeper.  
Sometimes he feels as if he's

Sitting among the angels.

Other times, he feels he's

Getting his ass kicked up and down

These cute, cobbled streets.

The U-Bahn is a tomb of the living dead

Where these caricatures of people,

Half-crazed and totally trapped, huddle

In these ugly spotted seats listening

To some other half-crazed creatures

Talking shit about themselves, or "*auslanders*" or  
"niggers".

The half-crazed creatures themselves

Are seemingly the folk who

Give Berlin its reputation

For open-mindedness:

Unfortunately, their

Open-mindedness and

"relaxed" attitude

does not always extend to you.

And one hears it every day, in

The restaurants, in the shopping centers,

In the movie houses, in the *bordelles*,

In the *markthallen*: everywhere

You go, walking these mean streets,

These whispered and not-so-whispered comments

About "niggers" taking over Berlin, or

Some such foolishness.

You know they are directed at you,

Which is why—in spite of your friends'

Admonishments—you never learned

German.



## **The Fool on the Hill**

The fool on the hill  
Wears rags and smells  
Like encrusted urine,  
Because he doesn't own  
A bathtub  
It's not because he's lazy;  
He can't afford one  
Even so, the fucked-up tar-  
Paper shack  
Where he lives with his  
Fat, toothless, brain-  
Damaged wife  
And all six of their filthy kids  
Is so decrepit  
That any effort to install plumbing  
Will destroy it  
Like his father,  
And his father before him  
And his father before that father  
And so on  
(for six generations)  
They have lived in the same  
Fucked-up tar-paper shack,  
Which was a replacement  
For another fucked-up tar-  
Paper shack  
Which burned down in 1868  
The glorious Commonwealth  
Has not bothered him

One bit

It has allotted him

All the space

And all the freedom

To do as he pleases

He guzzles moonshine

As he pleases,

He fires his rusty revolver in the air

As he pleases,

And pisses in the stream

And shits in the woods

As he pleases

No one dare reproach him

He never throws anything away,

Not even the old shit-pot

His great-great-grandfather used

(He is still using it)

Not the old whisky barrel

That a great-great-great uncle owned

(he brought it over

From the Highlands)

Untold years of junk

Pile high around his

Tar-paper shack,

Smelling worse than the outhouse

He and his family still use

The one television set he owns

Is powered by a brand-new

Car battery

Every time he turns it on

He sees some bloody coon

Whining about his lot

“Blasted jungle-bunnies”

He snarls,

“We worked hard  
To get what we have  
In this here Commonwealth  
And though it ain’t much,  
We don’t complain  
Like them niggers do”  
Or some fucking foreigners  
“Stinking wogs,  
Nobody ever gave us  
A handout”  
Everything he owns belongs to him;  
He worked hard for it  
He pays no bills  
For three and a half centuries  
His family and friends  
Have served the Commonwealth,  
Fought in all its wars,  
Received decorations  
And citations  
For bravery,  
And praised by Tories  
for contributing to its massive  
Wealth  
No matter if none of it  
Has ever trickled  
Into his hands  
He doesn’t need it, anyway,  
You can’t take it with you  
And greed is a sin before  
Jesus

## **Up On the Roof**

*For the victims of Hurricane Katrina*

We waited and waited, and finally we saw  
What looked like help coming from helicopters and  
Special boats. They stopped to look at us waving  
Hands and screaming for help. They didn't do anything  
Even though the water was so high, I saw it lapping  
Around the edges of the windowsill. People were  
Sliding off the roofs into the water and screaming.  
Then we realized that the guys  
in those nice green uniforms  
were taking pictures and  
giggling like a bunch  
of goddamn  
kids.

NEKOPIRATI

## Who Got Game?

My score card  
In the life-long dating game  
Speaks for itself:  
Three-hundred and fifty plus sexual partners  
And counting, and to be  
Brutally honest,  
95% of them are prostitutes.  
I won't even pretend to  
Be a fucking "player,"  
Whatever that really means:  
Black magic notwithstanding, it  
Ain't really happening between me  
And the ladies.  
It never was.  
Take the Romanian skank  
From sixteen years back:  
The only reason why I bothered  
To stay in a shithole  
Like Bucharest.  
Endless nagging in atrocious  
English about my refusal  
To buy her kiddie-junk  
And her fucked-up hooker  
Clothes and endless scheming...  
Or the Cuban *negra* whining  
About why I wouldn't buy her more shit  
And she boasting like an idiot  
That I'd knocked her up...  
Or the whore from Colombia  
Who dared call herself my "wife"  
Or the whore from Turkey  
Who resented seeing me with other whores  
Or the big-assed Thuringian  
Who talked like a Nazi

Or the greasy Tunisian  
Who smelled like fried chicken  
Or the spaced-out French “artist”  
Who complained about her ex-boyfriends  
No matter the woman  
The complaint lodged against me  
Was always the same  
and always couched in code:  
Phil/Feel/Feeleep/Faleeb/Felix/Pelipee,  
You are so selfish,  
You are too clumsy,  
You think too much,  
You don’t do what the other guys do,  
You are too distant and uninvolved,  
You are never there for me,  
You don’t have enough money or  
muscles for a woman like me,  
You’ll never find another girl as good as me,  
So I’m leaving in the fucking morning  
I say: good.  
I am not your piece of clay,  
Though you thought otherwise;  
You picked me out of the pile  
And thought I would be easy  
Because I look so meek, so vulnerable.  
However, the molding process  
Proved too tough for your  
Delicate fingers, so you  
Chucked me back in the pile.

I say: good.  
Today, I walk around this dingy  
Town digging the little green worms  
Hanging from the trees  
And wonder if my perpetual solitude  
And perpetually empty bed  
Is preferable to these shrews  
Hogging my sheets  
And my mind.

## **You Must Be Insane**

*(for the people in Gaza--and elsewhere)*

You must think  
I don't have a nose  
to smell all the shit  
you've dumped in my backyard  
all these years,  
let alone eyes  
to see the shit  
piled up everywhere,  
or ears to hear you gloating  
about how you did it.  
I heard what the fuck you said  
the other week  
when you dumped yet another  
pile of shit  
in my backyard...  
"I hope you choke on the stench,  
and that your family croaks  
from the germs  
of all this crap..."  
And the week before that,  
"It's all your fault, really,  
you started it, because  
people like you  
don't belong in this  
fucking neighborhood..."  
And before that?  
"Why don't you clean up  
all this shit?"  
All your fucking neighbors  
and pals  
chimed in, and told me  
to stop storing the shit  
in my backyard.  
Funny how no one ever listens

when I tell them that you  
dumped it there, not  
your neighbors, not even  
my own friends.  
They think I'm a maniac,  
they've even convinced themselves  
that I got a weakness for  
putting up with shit;  
and when I tell them  
I never wanted it there in the first  
fucking place,  
they tell me to just shut up  
and dump the crap.  
But when I tried to dump the shit  
you shot bullets through my window,  
you blew up my car,  
you raped my wife,  
you killed my two sons  
and put my daughter  
in a wheelchair  
You shot my grandfather  
and then raided his house  
with an armed mob  
and then trashed up my own  
goddamn house,  
and not just once, but  
countless times  
Now you claim that MY house  
belongs to YOU, since (apparently)  
I'm too stupid to clean up  
all the shit you've been  
dumping here  
for years.  
Of course, all the neighbors agree  
with you, more or less--  
there are a few that caught you  
in the act down through the years  
but are afraid to open their mouths  
for some goddamn reason--



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but none has ever bothered  
to stop you from dumping shit  
in my backyard.

But the funniest part of all  
is that whenever I raise a stink  
about the shit you've dumped,  
you claim I don't like you.

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