

## MACHINE GHOSTS

Am not I  
A fly like thee?  
—William Blake

### THIS BLUE BOTTLE FLY HAS NEVER SEEN

a human. Never drank the bald primate's oil or spit or salt. Ate its shit. Laid eggs in its soft rotting flesh. Here no worlds collide. Wind's hollow by the time it reaches these old black gum and bur oak and hickory trees writing rings of time in their wooden hearts. Water moves. Sun lights. Prairie grass bows to creatures with hearing so keen that fungus spreading's like thunder a quarter-hour away in spring.

Buzz loudly!

No one swats or complains.

Not even the black she-bear licking her bleeding paw. Smell the sweet oozing stench! Find the wound! Leave your squirming cosmic mark, your opalescent legacy, your hungry lovely holy white maggots of God!

*And so I am ready. Some little death a gap through which to squeeze my splendid soul.*

**CALLIPHORA VOMITORIA!**  
**CALLIPHORA VOMITORIA!**  
**CALLIPHORA VOMITORIA!**

O how fleeting's life.



“Besides,” he says, slicking back his black hair<sup>2</sup> there at the window where there’s no visible distinction between a Boeing 727 and a blue bottle fly pummeling itself against the pane, “I don’t fuck local journalists.”

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<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, **THE REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER** Jirí Cêch is still in love with **THE BODY** of Jessica Lange playing Dwan better than Fay Wray playing Ann Darrow in *King Kong*. Jirí’s frozen poor Jesse there, in collapsible time and space, as only a vampire can: See how perky still her breasts? How dewy yet her skin? How hopeful ever the sparkle in her eyes as if she were her own lighthouse for a world about to shipwreck on the craggy shore of the future. Oh, Jessica! Jessica! Even the obtuse beast is mesmerized by your dazzling presence, your bright-and-shiny-object-ification-ness!

<sup>2</sup> And the Jewish girl with blue ribbons in her black hair? You loved her most, you once said, recalling all the women and girls with hair exuding pheromones in every breeze and you in throbbing-hot pursuit from downwind. You once said you loved her interminable. Loved, you said, her there in that place where ghosts and ghosts-to-be (you and we) come together tangling sighs with/in each other, scentless seamless winds. We do not wish to beat a dead horse, but is she now only sunken memory or you only a liar? The ribbon’s not even dust or ash, just the gleaming fabric of time folded in upon itself in the mud of hearts obscuring all we suspect but won’t confess: *I too murderer*. What is it we share, if not the crimes of history – our burden, our rusted yoke? For even we cannot help but love the exterminated girl and her ashes ever descending, cheek of flame all that’s left of Jewish daughters in your choked dreaming of throats clotted with sludge from the boots of soldiers marching weary-sheepish to their slaughter. And ours. Lest we deny the mortality to which we’re obliged.

*Did we say we wanted [to engage in sexual intercourse with] you?\**

“You didn’t have to.”

And he turns then, grins, and we recognize the searing flame of famine in his eyes when he says, “Sweetheart, I can smell the wet between your legs like fresh truffles on the back of my bloody tongue.”



## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** January 30, 2005  
**From:** Gerald Peterson, General Manager  
**To:** Staff  
**RE:** Spicin' Up the News

In an attempt to boost ratings, I am instituting format changes **immediately**. These will include a zippier logo (see above), cooler computer graphics (we are borrowing styles from current Hollywood blockbusters, such as “The Matrix,” and awesome audio like the zooming sound of bullets in “CSI: Miami,” for example). Our outside consultant, Richard Stadelman, whom some of you have met, will be meeting with each of the primaries this week to discuss how to improve your appearance and news or weather delivery, as well as making between news chitchat more entertaining and warm & fuzzier.

In the meantime, Richard has provided a list of words and phrases to incorporate **immediately**. Our writers and reporters are expect to saturate stories with these attention-grabbers. We want viewers to get **EXCITED!** when they watch our news, **no matter what we're reporting on.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↓ Now, we're here at...</li> <li>↓ Just a few minutes ago...</li> <li>Earlier this evening...</li> <li>Live at the scene...</li> <li>↓ Let's go live now to...</li> <li>Exclusive report...</li> <li>➤ Only on Four...</li> <li>Late-breaking coverage...</li> <li>↓ The latest news on...</li> <li><i>It's</i> Happening now... <i>on 4</i></li> <li>➤ Up-to-the-minute...</li> <li>Right now...</li> <li>At this time...</li> <li>➤ Most recent update...</li> <li>➤ We're on the scene at...</li> <li>➤ We'll keep you posted...</li> <li>➤ We'll keep you up-to-date...</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Shocking story</li> <li>Gruesome details</li> <li>Horrific events ?</li> <li>Ghastly crime</li> <li>Grisly scene</li> <li>Frightening events</li> <li>Feared for her life <i>or his</i></li> <li>Terrified witness</li> <li>➤ Terrifying events</li> <li>Anxious residents, students, etc.</li> <li>Startling realization</li> <li>➤ Alarming incident</li> <li>➤ Disturbing news</li> <li>Troubling situation</li> <li>➤ Distressing news</li> <li>Worried parents, citizens, etc.</li> <li>Nervous residents, etc.</li> <li>Panic resulted</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

The maggot is  
aware of the  
trials that await  
it. Deep inside  
its cells endures  
an equation only  
the God of Flies  
can solve. Yet  
now I witness  
the purling light  
inside the sa-  
cred pustule of  
my flesh.

**TV 4 REPORTER:** Now, when most people think of Kansas they imagine wheat fields and vast prairies rippling in the inexorable wind. They picture sunflowers tilting round yellow heads toward a shifting sun. Perhaps they envision airfields of Boeing jets since the company's headquarters are in Wichita. Or maybe they think of... *Czechoslovakia?*

**THE POET JIRÍ ČECH:** No one, not even Herr Hitler himself (*herself* on days he wore lederhosen, a touch of rouge, nipples pellet-hard as he *heiled* limp-wristed as if carelessly shooing flies, mare's tail swatting on a hot summer day)... No, not even *der Fuehrer* could part hair as straight as Emily's. Tidy line demarcating left and right hemispheres colliding in doubt about God, life, but never death for which she ached *'Tis not that Dying hurts us so — 'Tis living — hurts us more* when ached her corpus from what killed her. *And dander like tiny cherry blossoms fallen upon your black hair that I'd inhale or arrange pretty on my temple if only you'd rise from death more flesh than words.*

**TV 4 REPORTER:** Well, we're here right now, in the middle of Bohemia's resurrection. Wilson, Kansas. *Acht!* I have never seen so many goddamn flies in my life! Can somebody get me a fly swatter? [*inaudible from off-camera*] What!?! I thought we were rehearsing!



**Dr. Samuel J. Crumbine**

of Dodge City tried to save Kansas from its scourge of flies by urging citizens to install window screens in their homes. They say he created the slogan, "Swat the Fly!" after attending a baseball game where flies lodged in the eyes of shortstops and fielders ran after fly balls and crowds chanted to batters, "Swat the ball!" Oh, yes, it all made sense, and so when schoolteacher Frank Rose showed Crumbine his "fly bat," a ruler with a square of wire mesh attached, the good doctor renamed it "fly swatter." Sadly, Crumbine could not foresee the colossal corporate pig farms and cattle feedlots stinking up the 21<sup>st</sup> Century landscape, filling water tables with shit and piss: stewpots of fucking flies fucking flies.

**Real Estate Developer**

Jirí Cêch takes a room at a motel in Limon, Kansas, the tiny town where he hopes someday soon to connect the suburban sprawl of Kansas City to the suburban sprawl of Denver. Upon entering the dank room he exclaims, "What a fucking shit-hole!". He sees a fly swatter on the nightstand and assumes a maid has accidentally left it behind. He picks it up with two fingers and throws it out the door, into the parking lot. That night he dreams poetic of Emily Dickinson tickling his lips and nose with her eye-lashes. An intense humming swells in his ears and he has a wet dream. He wakes in sticky darkness to find his face and hands covered with flies and suspects he has died and gone to hell. Still breathing, he is half right.

**"We're going back to the 1880s. It does make us look to the people in the rest of the country that we're a bunch of hicks."**

— Charlie Pierce, biology teacher at Hutchinson High School, commenting on the Kansas Board of Education's vote to drop evolution as a subject in the science curriculum.

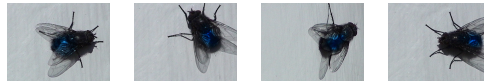
**TV 4 REPORTER:** Well, we're here, live, at this instant, in the middle of Bohemia's resurrection. Wilson, Kansas! Where a truly shocking story is about to unfold right now in our exclusive report. Nervous residents of this sleepy little town, also known as The Czech Capital of Kansas, are awaiting the arrival of real estate developer Jirí Cêch. Now, we're told that Cêch has traveled all the way from New York to meet a man who claims to be the son he never knew. Even more startling is the nervously anticipated arrival of a woman who claims to be Cêch's childhood Shiite baby shitter...*sitter!*

**THE POET JIRÍ CÊCH:** *Kolache, vanočka*, just shake your head and make all the worms tumble out.

Unable to go back to sleep, he loads his hookah with opium and smokes himself to delirium. An adolescent fly alights on the cinderblock wall. He presses a fingerprint of cum onto the slippery beige paint. The fly hesitates, then crawls to drink.

*I could not die with you,*  
*For one must wait*  
*To shut the other's gaze down,--*

***O my pretty insect! My Poetess of Carcass and Corpse!  
 Bending now so lowly small I see my own fraught eyes shimmer in your belly's blue.***



**O**  
**My Dachau Darling!**  
 (what'd you eat today?)

**LIVE!**

I just love Versace & Death!

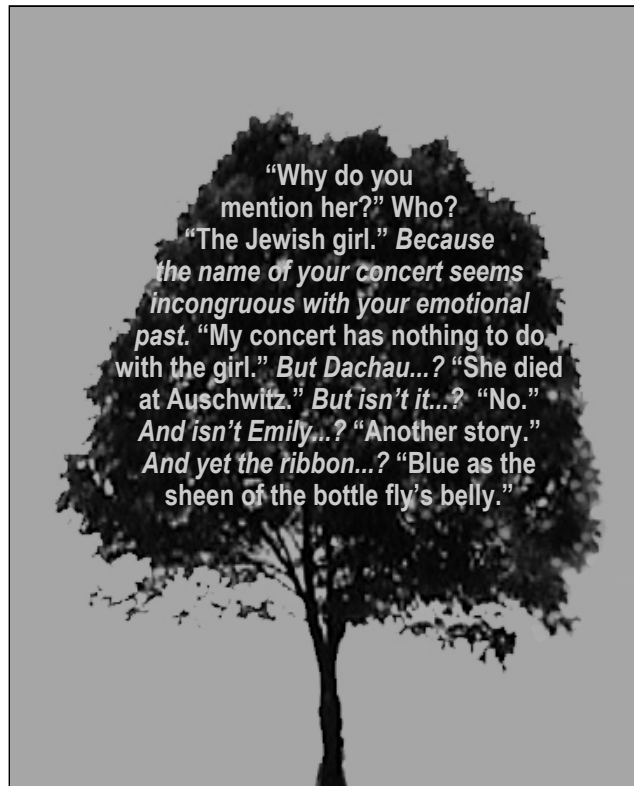
the real  
**Jirí Cêch**™

with  
**Pyuria**

Rockin' Finnish Death Metal  
**CALLIPHORA VOMITORIA** Tour!

Exclusive Fashion Week Performance!  
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*What the maggot denies itself quivers at the edge of every issue’s fate. For I am master of this race toward oblivion. I suckle the bloodied teats of beasts. Gnaw gorgeous in my lurid bloat.*

### **Like Ground Zero...**

Twenty years ago in Paris while researching a biopic on Danny Cohn-Bendit<sup>3</sup> I briefly shackled up with a North African biochemistry student in his one-room apartment equipped with sink and mattress and hot plate and small rectangular window through which nothing appeared but varying shades of winter gray. He said he was 24 though his driver’s license indicated 26. He said he was Muslim but drank wine to excess. He said he preferred me without makeup but ogled women with eye shadow and lipstick and rouge. In the morning we drank espresso and fucked. In the afternoon we ate lunch and fucked. In the evening we smoked hash and fucked. Always, when I’d bend over to pick up my panties he’d grab me by my pelvic bones and fuck me from behind. Fast and forgettable

<sup>3</sup> After the May 1968 student uprisings in Paris, Cohn-Bendit earned the moniker Danny-le-Rouge for his left-wing politics. Subsequently, and consequently, he was thrown out of France, taking up residence in Germany where he found influence in the Green Party. Now known as Danny-le-Vert, Cohn-Bendit became president of the European Green Group, winning a post in the EC parliament. Meanwhile, the U.S. Dollar continues its precipitous decline against the Euro and the Yen.

except for his irrepressible monkey-want. He wouldn't allow me to reach orgasm, wouldn't let me touch myself. I'd secretly masturbate in the dirty community bathroom down the hall, standing with my back to the locked door, my ass blocking the keyhole. Once he said, "I am your master, you are my slave," and slapped me. Not hard. But a slap. The next day he left for school (he said) and I left for Italy (I said). For years afterward he managed to track my movements. Sent brief, intense love missives. Still referred to me as, "My baby." His postmarks originated from Berlin, Rome, Madrid, Cairo... Wherever he went, bombs exploded.

*When the maggot's love liquefies the skies  
rain cold sand. I hear the trees screaming, the grass bones snapping, and my earth's a black river between stones. God's voice stands outside my Self and commands: "Curl and Fold, O Hallowed Maggot! Live to shout my furious name!"*

## The [r]Evolution Has Begun

**Was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He arose again from the dead and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.**

— *from The Apostles' Creed*<sup>4</sup>

### HERE, IN THIS UNSULLIED WILDNESS, FEW

adult flies live through cold winters. Those that do survive by sinking into a slumber so deep not even the smell of shit can wake them. Not even the smell of shit-eating pigs eating shit and shitting shit before spring comes and the *trifolau*<sup>5</sup> turns the sows<sup>6</sup> loose to search the woods for the sexy smell of truffles they'll root out along with bluebottle pupae buried sleepy and ripening in the fine black dirt.

<sup>4</sup> "The earliest universally accepted Christian creed is the Apostles Creed. It was formulated by Christian leaders in the first century of the faith, i.e., about the year 100 or before, and is still in use today. This creed protected true believers during the dark days of the catacombs — the terrible persecutions which dogged Christians throughout the event that the Book of Revelation describes as the 'first battle of the End' (*Source: jesuschristismygod.com*)

<sup>5</sup> Italian for "truffle hunter".

<sup>6</sup> Dogs as well as pigs are used to hunt truffles; pigs are more eager to find the prizes, but it can be difficult to keep the pig from devouring the truffle. Only sows are used - the smell of Italian white truffles (*Tuber magnatum Pico*) contains pheromones that are attractive to female pigs, but not to boars. (*source: http://members.tripod.com/~BayGourmet/history.html*)

The maggot is a power in this world like no other: Ordained to turn flesh into water, to irrigate with vomit the soil of perpetual life. Change the corpse to seed, seed to flower, flower to nut, nut to feed the corpse-to-be in this rectangle of life with me its magnificent god's eye.



He keeps Emily's picture<sup>7</sup> in his wallet, behind his green card, worn now, the picture, the card, from the United States of American privilege of fondling two-dimensional objects enthusiastically.<sup>8</sup>

**DIRTY FILTHY LUCRE**  
In Japan, Hitachi makes "Clean ATMs" that press yen between hot rollers for a tenth of a second at 392° to kill bacteria for hygiene-obsessed Japanese. A study published in *The Journal of Forensic Sciences* found that 100% of US \$20 bills held traces of cocaine. Another study found that 42% of paper money harbored objectionable germs such as fecal bacteria and staphylococcus aureus.

*Do you think she ever masturbated?*

"Who the fuck knows?" says Jiri, violently searching the mini-bar for Pilsner.

*A reclusive but obviously passionate woman.*

"Pabst Blue Ribbon?!? Ick!" He pops the top anyway. *Pffith!* "And how come this hotel don't have no cable TV?"

*I didn't mean to make you wicked—but I was—and am—and shall be—and I was with you so much that I couldn't help contaminate.*

*It's interesting to speculate on what she did all those lonely hours in her bedroom, writing poetry about a dead lover and her lover Death.*

"Fucking remote doesn't work and – *Whoa!* The anchor people have two serious cases of helmet head."

*Would she even have known how to masturbate?*

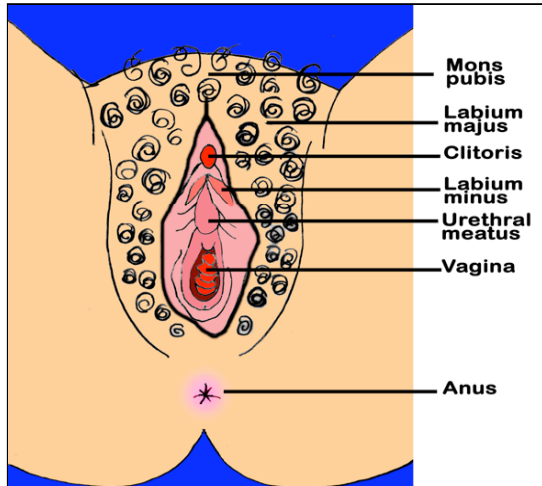


[www.eff.org/br/](http://www.eff.org/br/)

<sup>7</sup> Picture of Emily Dickinson surreptitiously extracted from the wallet of Jiri Cêch, scanned, hand-painted, and embedded, a term now more typically referring to, *exempla gratia*, a freelance journalist for *Rolling Stone* embedded with the U.S. Army's First Cavalry Division out of Ft. Hood, Texas.

<sup>8</sup> Except child pornography, the possession of which carries heavy fines and time in prison wherein grown men once buggered to madness now wait for your big fat pink dimpled ass to *schlumpf* through the steel door; dead man running the other way too late, should've thought of that and more before you forced boys to suck you off in the church bathroom, in the public park, in the school locker room, in the rec center, in your SUV with photos of moist adolescents – *somebody's children beasts of burden* – under your driver's seat, ink jet on cheap paper bleeding now with cum. And you, no the other you, Refugee-from-Love-and-Soviets You were only 15 when You too took it up the ass/in the mouth for a decent meal, maybe a beer or three beforehand so it didn't hurt as much, not just pain in the ass which You could tolerate, tough guy that You weren't but quickly became, but also in Your soul You call Your *Little Biting Fly* searching for a place to land after it flew and left Your gorgeousness hollow. And this American land You now ravage with houses blanketing blackening this land like fly specks... Houses sealed so tight and sanitary from truth not even the *Calliphora vomitoria* can survive a hot summer meal inside... It's not home here, no, never was/will be, just a hotel lobby with revolving doors through which they all come and cum, Your lovers nameless and flesh-torn and keening *O save me from my mortal memory! Let me wallow in the muck of two-dimensional drugs and three-dimensional windows against which my soul hammers itself silly to break free: Death always the lover waiting in the wings.*

*What does it mean to suffer? Can it be this perpetual chill, all light doused, the thunder of feathered wings overhead? Is there no end to pain? Let me sleep. Wake to dawn. Heat spilling along these branches like honey-sap.*



## How To Masturbate

*Dedicated to certain parents in the Kansas Blue Valley School District who are incapable of intelligently discussing with their teens the topic of masturbation.*

Don't be ashamed to use a mirror to familiarize yourself with your vulva (also referred to as your genital region). Like race, religion, culture and disabilities, we tend to fear and sometimes loathe what we don't understand. Your vulva is a *gorgeous* creation! Get to know it and appreciate it.

The clitoris is the most sensitive part of the female anatomy, with thousands of nerve endings

– many more than the penis. Hooray! Because a clitoris is so sensitive, direct or prolonged stimulation can be irritating, sometimes painful. That's why a circular motion that crosses over the clitoris and includes the Labia (also called "lips") may be more pleasurable. Wet your fingers with your own vaginal fluids or KY Jelly to reduce disagreeable friction. Other finger motions to consider are (1) vertical, repeatedly crossing over your clitoris, down to your vagina and back up; and (2) horizontal, repeatedly crossing over your clitoris by moving your finger side to side; or (3) a combination of any and all.

Every woman is unique, which means that your vulva will be as distinctive as your face<sup>9</sup>. Your preferred methods of sexual stimulation will be unique, too. That's why it's important to learn what feels best by exploring your body with enthusiasm, like we did in the sexy Sixties and Seventies vs. the Double-Ought-Naughts.

Finally, don't forget to help your partner discover what makes you feel good. Faking orgasm cheats no one but the faker and lets inept lovers think they're great in bed.

*Would she even have known how to masturbate?*

"Who, the anchorwoman?"

*No, Emily Dickinson.*

"Don't taint my image of her."

And indeed, except for the blue ribbon, Emily's photo is grayer: lights darker, darks lighter, caught, she is, in a state of in-between-ness. And see: hair pulled so tight her brow's arched in righteous rebuke.



*O naked worm,  
legless and  
blind! How just  
to be chosen!  
What wonder to  
behold my  
diaphanous  
skin, furuncle of  
fat! All deaths  
are created for  
my pleasure,  
my feasting,  
my frenzied  
celebration of  
Alpha in an  
alphabetic  
world.*

<sup>9</sup> Unless you've had plastic surgery in order to look like one of the identical losers on *The Swan*, forgettably freakish flounder with lips filled fat with collagen, and tits oozing silicone someday soon enough, and big plastic butt implants sagging at 70.

**THE POET JIRÍ CĚCH:** What's pity but the brute's conceit? Man with a cigar, thrice as big as his dick, guffawing, *That poor sap*, while inside his colon disease spreads faster than slick shit in rain. Dead man running without legs below the knees. And really nothing but the words we speak, then you my Poetess Fair are *ever* and *majestic* and *sublime* to brazen out the maggot's breath, let the *Calliphora vomitoria* tread upon your *lac-rimal caruncle*, footprints sunk in desiccating tissue.



while my lover was, he said, at school, I swept dead flies<sup>10</sup> from the narrow sill into the palm of my left hand. Their weight was less than a tickle on my skin. Hollow brittle. Legs and legs and legs crossed over thoraxes as if the Holy Father of Flies Himself had laid them all to blessed rest.

*Till some blind hand shall brush my wing*  
—William Blake

And I felt sad. And I felt afraid:

The sky seized nothing but its unspoken emptiness:

A dead fly does not fly but falls:

The voiceless do not sing:

This is not love.

**And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?**

**— W.B. Yeats**

<sup>10</sup> “[Bluebottle flies] are potential disease transmitters and particular pests of the meat industry and slaughter houses, commercial canteens, food preparation areas and even domestic kitchens.” (source: [www.sentrypestcontrol.co.uk](http://www.sentrypestcontrol.co.uk))

### FROM BUTTERY FLUID AND BUNDLES

*Here, from half a  
mile and more  
around, come  
we in the lovers'  
season, our tryst  
sanctified by the  
sun. Feel, Lover,  
its light heat your  
blue to a metal  
hot sheen.*

of nerves the cosmos forged the bluebottle's wings like leaded glass, eyes like garnets or the well-fed red-brown blush of Guatemalan babies. Yes, this salty sarcoplasm of muscles that fly the fly its first flight above the moist fecund earth. Last year, in the Era of Godness, the Penultimate Age, the Ancestors ascended from World as if from death and mated upon the thistle, driven toward the pleasure of cells, the ecstasy of synapses, mystical metaphysical egg-and-seed of godhead. Whence the 120 sons and daughters that begat the 120 that begat the 120 and so on and so forth until the summer's end and the tribe of five million million was accomplished.

*Think of it, lover! I and thee  
Permitted face to face to be.*

Behold  
them  
entering  
upon  
their  
promised  
land,  
their  
reeking  
paradise<sup>11</sup>



<sup>11</sup> Jean Henri Fabre, from *The Life of a Fly*

**NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD THIS WORLD**

of sun and heat and ripening stink. World only “World” to the shimmering fly, her ovipositor stabbing and stabbing the juicy meat, planting her eggs like a frenetic gardener. Ah, this flat handsome Eden, without rival! Plain plane of plains overwhelmed by the healthy wealth of this immodest creature whose right to flood and ravage is divine. And if this thing of life and death knew the forgotten wars of hairless beasts it would dream nostalgic of the putrid murdered, battlefields a bacchanalian banquet, drunk it would ever be on the torn and blasted flesh of the human dead and dying.

*What a gorgeous mouthful!  
What an idea!  
Some beast of the Apocalypse here to bring you mercy! If you are the ending, I am the beginning. From my matchless citadel of muck and worms, watch me rise.*

**TV 4 REPORTER:** Well, we’ve got late-breaking news here in Wilson, Kansas, with the most recent update on our exclusive TV 4 story. Now, uh, it seems that a number of angry residents from various political and religious groups have converged on Wilson to protest what we can only assume is the, uh, eminent *[sic]* arrival of Jiri Cêch, his allegedly gay son...or, uh, he may be Cêch’s brother...and his allegedly, uh, uh, Shiia babysitter.

**THE POET JIRI CÊCH:** Dear Emily, Were you a fly on the wall of this 727 flying over this bitter-ugly-barmy heart of my country of exile, quilt of green irrigation circles<sup>12</sup> splayed flatter than Calista Flockhart’s chest, you’d see metal wings tip downward as the scales tip out of balance and we descend, silly prideful deluded beasts of the Reckoning, into the hole we’ve dug so deep there’s no way out now, no resurrection, only vanishing into vanishing until the last man remaining’s a combat zone for maggots and grubs.

**TV 4 REPORTER:** Now, we told you earlier, in our exclusive report, that the babysitter was Shiite. Well, we’ve received numerous statements from anxious residents that the babysitter may in fact be Sunni. Now, all we know for certain is what’s been relayed to us, exclusively, by worried citizens, that the babysitter’s religion starts with an S and is, presumably muslim. Uh, that is *[looks down at notes]*...uh...Moslim.

<sup>12</sup> “In arid western Kansas, the fertile prairie has been transformed into [a green] oasis of sorts since the introduction of irrigation technologies after World War II. By the 1970s, most of the water had been appropriated and an agribusiness industry based on irrigation became entrenched.... The data indicates parts of the Ogallala aquifer will be used up within the next 25 years and vast tracts of land will have no usable groundwater in the next 50 to 100 years.” Subsidence of aquifers is irreversible. (Source: [www.uswaternews.com](http://www.uswaternews.com))

**"O hideous little bat, the size of snot."  
—Karl Shapiro**

*Really, isn't Emily just your latest obsession in a long line of idée fixes? Some whim that comes and goes, in and out of your consciousness like a winged insect through a cold, dark-lit room?*

"Want a cashew?" Asks Jiri. "Incredibly, they're not stale."

*The poet bored of living dead, so loving the living dead — Emily with her clever dash of pause and breath, little here-to-there line demarcating the fat-swarmed world here she inhabited there on her page in her mind, that line a slit through which she'd slip, like a finger between labium, and all the wetness of creation a swooning banquet of word-interlaced silence?*

"Hey," says Jiri, trying to snap his fingers but not succeeding and therefore staring at the failed hand, slipping it into a trouser pocket, fondling coins, penis, scowling at the untimely itch and hanker. A moment passes with nothing but the slackened whining of a fly at the window. "Hey," Jiri repeats, "I wonder if the musicians from Pyuria have arrived yet? I'm feeling a little bit lonely and somewhat desperate for validation. I need a round of golf."<sup>13, 14, 15</sup>

*Knowing, as you do, how mean and safe to love the dead! How simply, uh, you know, uh, heroic.*



*To purge the earth of death's impurities, that is my divine purpose.*

<sup>13</sup> "Veteran [golf] pro Tom Watson, whose [first] wife and children are Jewish, resigned from the Kansas City Country Club last year after it blackballed accounting mogul Henry Bloch, a Jew. Although the club changed its mind about Bloch, Watson did not rejoin. In a New York Times column last month, he decried the "hypocrisy" of admitting a single black to "integrate" and urged, "Let's discriminate right now, each one of us, privately, between what is right and what is wrong." (Source: *Time*, July, 1991)

<sup>14</sup> "I'd like to get two bull terriers and walk them across Kansas City Country Club and let them shit on the greens," said fiction writer James Elroy, in an interview at [www.crimetime.co.uk](http://www.crimetime.co.uk)

<sup>15</sup> Why do I feel the need to leave trails of facts to prove that *Homo sapiens* have come not far at all, that racism and sexism and classism and etceteraism thrive here in this Red State rubble like flies in the nostrils of dead Iraqi soldiers, hidden, those flies, but still feeding fatly on mucous and blood? And as if to confirm some pattern of which only a corner is revealed, a male cardinal sees its reflection in my window, mistakes it for a competitor and attacks, knocking itself unconscious while somewhere a father blames his whole rotten luck on the women in his life, which he states quite clearly in the note he writes before blowing his brains out with a shotgun.

## Americans and Europeans spend \$13 billion a year on perfume<sup>16</sup>

In the hotel lobby three quiet boys with long hair stand fidgeting with their *Calliphora Vomitoria Introitus* CDs in hand, practicing Finnish acquired online, waiting for Pyuria band members to exit the elevator, hoping to get autographs.



**“Hei, herra. Sinun musiikki on iso! Miellyttää allekirjoittaa CD!”**

Finally, the elevator door opens and the quiet boys stand straight and hopeful. But it’s only a young neo-Nazi wearing a big-ass swastika on a red shirt, black armband around his skinny bicep, hair buzzed short, pimples picked bloody, teeth off-color and leaning this way and that. This boy, let’s call him Dwayne, has spent a month’s wages to fly to Kansas City for the annual Aryan Nations convention – not *the* Aryan Nations but yet another extremist offshoot for wretched boys of all ages unable to find a place of unconditional love and acceptance even among Jew-haters and African-American-haters and Hispanic-haters and Asian haters and Other-haters...<sup>17</sup> unloved, unaccepted, as in their furious broken – *kaput!* – homes with parents careless-poor or ignorant-stupid or both and wretched wretched wretched<sup>18</sup> in so many fucking ways subtle and blatant that to list

The vivacious animal always goes forward, chewing, swallowing, digesting until the earth’s dissected by trails of waste toward which the stupid eagerly draw near.

What I find hideous they find habitable. O pity their deeply lowly nature!

<sup>16</sup> The amount it would take to meet the world’s food and sanitation requirements.

<sup>17</sup> He’d name the Others, that new Nazi boy, if he knew history or social studies, but he was never a good student, everything so hard and sleep-inducing, and he feared always the teacher’s eyes upon him, expecting, expecting, expecting...what? Some miracle? Some kind of goddamn breakthrough, as if his skull would suddenly crack open and all his dumbfuckedness would just fly away like winged bugs and then he’d know everything quick and sure and would get rich fast and leave mean-ass dad and whiny-ass mom and drive a red Trans Am or Grand Prix along a hot beach where blue-eyed blondes with big tits waved at him like they meant it, *Sieg Heil*, Dude, fucking *Sieg Heil!*

<sup>18</sup> [*begin rant*] Oh, *really?* Sure, once upon a time skinheads roamed the night streets of London, sons of electricians and plumbers, wearing Doc Martens and white tees and suspenders and tattoos, disaffected youth infected by their parents’ (Dad’s, usually) furious refusal to believe they are in any way responsible for their low-slung lives, must be the fault of **Jews with money** or **Blacks with big dicks** or **East Indians working three or four shitty jobs at once**. Anyway, that was then. Now, it’s the American middle-class whites joining up, meeting secret in that suburban house down the street. Mr. Stasis, Mr. Mundane, Mr. Middle-Rung, Mr. Debtor, Mr. Is-This-All-There-Is leaving dead animals on my front steps because my husband’s half-Jewish with a whole Jewish surname (I’m an eighth Jewish myself, but they don’t know that because I took my sur-

them here would force you to think entirely too hard about why things are precisely *what* they are, now<sup>19</sup>, why men will be boys and boys will be boys: lonely, afraid, clawing at that next rung on a worm-eaten ladder that doesn't go anywhere, is just a rotten ladder rising from a blue ribbon in the muck and mire, not even high enough for a pretty view of sky. *Fuck*.

Which is what Dwayne says to the three quiet Pyuria fans standing simultaneously disappointed and astonished in front of him. Says *fuck* not loudly, no, rather under his breath. But still an *F* is unmistakable: white man's overbite: teeth on the bottom lip. And the breath that follows: *uhh!* And the hard *K*<sup>20</sup>.

And one of the quiet long-haired boys, let's call him Brian, says, quietly, "Fuck *who?*"

And Dwayne thinks, *What would Hitler do?* And then says, "Fuck *you*, fag-head."

And Brian wonders, *What would Pyuria do?* A then says, "Haul the black future towards us!"<sup>21</sup>

And inside that seemingly empty but highly volatile space between one boy and another, between buzz-cut and long hair, between Death Metal and Military March, between red shirt and black shirt

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name from my first husband, an Italian-Argentine, and they can't distinguish between Italian and French, and my eyes are Aryan blue, yes, and my skin's pale). And now even the pathetic local news is onto the white supremacists, smoking them out of their white collar jobs, their white clapboard houses, their white neighborhoods in their white counties, and half of the viewers are thinking "Oh, it's not *that* bad," and the other half are thinking, "Where do I sign up?" and I'm squished somewhere in the middle, not telling you half of it, no, I refuse, because you're clueless, *clueless*, you hear? You live in your delusional enclave of educated see-no-evil monkeys, agreeing to agree on a human optimism that raised Hitler to power and lowered 11,000,000 people to their fly-specked deaths, while German cognoscenti sat around smoking cigars and drinking imported cognac and discussing Hegel's concept of "human being." And never mind Rwanda, Bosnia, Iraq, Somalia, the Sudan, Indonesia, China... You said, "Never mind the fucking genocides, the clever killing of genes. The way we huddle in tribes," You said, "reminds me of overfed maggots in a flood of piss and shit – if you catch my highly aromatic drift." [end rant]

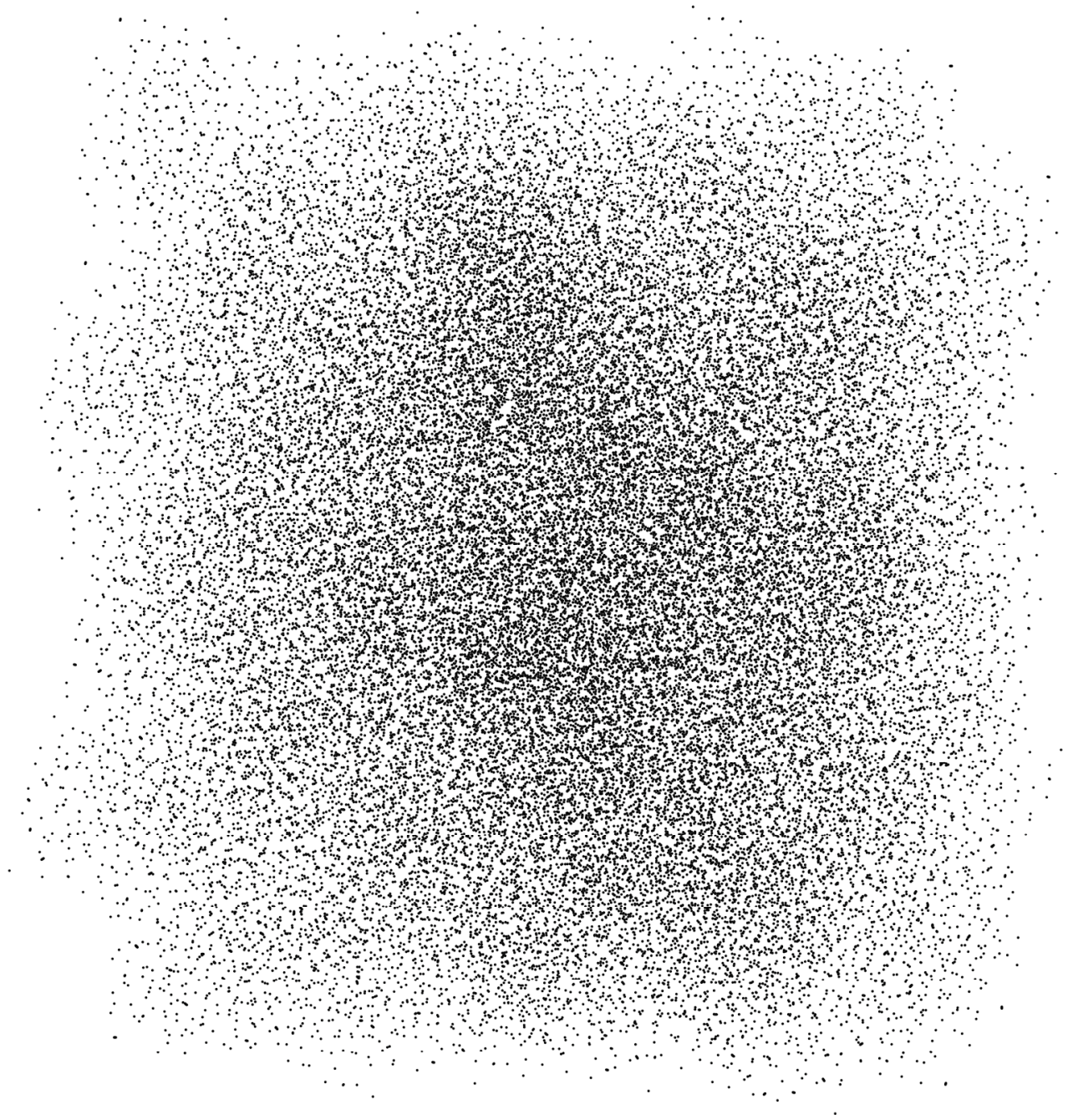
<sup>19</sup> "Photos posted on the [National Socialist Movement's] Web site show members gathered at the Berliner Bear, a German restaurant in south Kansas City. About 30 men and women were dressed in uniforms with swastikas. One picture is of a cake with the message, 'Happy 116th Birthday Adolf Hitler.'" (Source: *The Kansas City Star*, May 3, 2005)

<sup>20</sup> On January 25, the Kansas Supreme Court set down a ruling that made Kansas the first state to legally oust the [Ku Klux] Klan. But that was in 1925. (Source: <http://www.kshs.org>)

<sup>21</sup> Source: Pyuria, at [www.pyuria.com](http://www.pyuria.com)

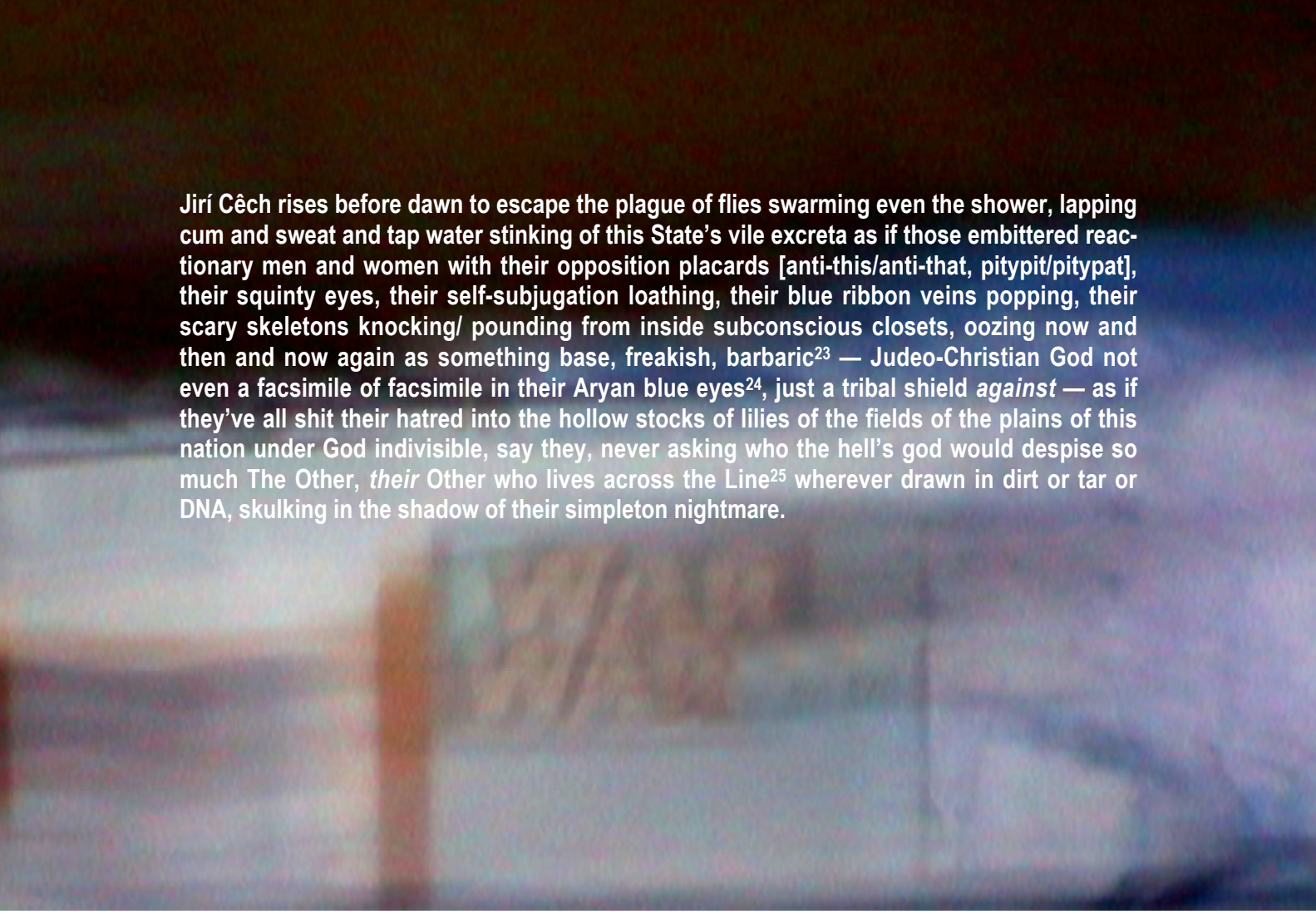


fly specks<sup>22</sup>



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<sup>22</sup> Approximately 40,000. The estimated number of children who starved to death today.



Jirí Cêch rises before dawn to escape the plague of flies swarming even the shower, lapping cum and sweat and tap water stinking of this State's vile excreta as if those embittered reactionary men and women with their opposition placards [anti-this/anti-that, pitypit/pitypat], their squinty eyes, their self-subjugation loathing, their blue ribbon veins popping, their scary skeletons knocking/ pounding from inside subconscious closets, oozing now and then and now again as something base, freakish, barbaric<sup>23</sup> — Judeo-Christian God not even a facsimile of facsimile in their Aryan blue eyes<sup>24</sup>, just a tribal shield *against* — as if they've all shit their hatred into the hollow stocks of lilies of the fields of the plains of this nation under God indivisible, say they, never asking who the hell's god would despise so much The Other, *their* Other who lives across the Line<sup>25</sup> wherever drawn in dirt or tar or DNA, skulking in the shadow of their simpleton nightmare.

Jirí Cêch steps naked into the parking lot to retrieve the fly swatter, dirtier now with oil and dust, the swatter is. A couple from Wichita, dressed synthetic and on their way to a holiday in the Rockies, stop dead-ish in their tracks, mouths agape:

(1) Husband dumbstruck by the size of Jirí's enormous penis in this chilly morning

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<sup>23</sup> The BTK ("Bind, Torture, Kill") serial killer was president of his Kansas church, and everybody sez, as they always sez, "He was a nice guy, quiet-like." And don't you wonder, don't you ever the fuck ask *why* it is these killers were so often embedded deep in the church, a church, any church that would look the other way lest someone look too closely back.

<sup>24</sup> In March 2005, the national director of Aryan Nations moved to Kansas City and rented a P.O. Box, thereby making KC the national headquarters. In April 2005, The National Socialist Movement — "an organization dedicated to the preservation of our proud Aryan heritage and the creation of a nationalist socialist society in America and around the world," — held its annual conference in Kansas City.

<sup>25</sup> State Line Road between Kansas and Missouri, fine line, color line; white line; red line; blue line, Jew line: "Most of the [racial] restrictions — including those in more than a dozen subdivisions in the Country Club District [of Kansas City; including my own neighborhood] — prohibit ownership by blacks, but some Johnson County [Kansas] covenants are even more exclusionary. The 'Declaration of Restrictions' for Leawood Estates filed by Kroh Bros. in 1945 prohibits ownership or occupancy 'by any person of Negro blood or by any person who is **more than one-fourth of the Semitic race, blood, origin or extraction**, including without limitation in said designation, Armenians, Jews, Hebrews, Turks, Persians, Syrians and Arabians.' An exception is made for "partial occupancy by bona fide domestic servants employed thereon." (Source: Judy L. Thomas, *The Kansas City Star*, February 13, 2005) On March 31, 2005, the State Senate unanimously passed an anti-racism amendment requiring homeowner associations whose covenants contain language once banning minorities from owning or renting property to remove the restrictions. But that was in the State of Missouri.

air, which is all the man sees – *Penis!*<sup>26</sup> – and then head swells enraged by a fluttering desire in his own swelling groin, some long buried signal rising like smoke from a dead-cinder soul; (2) Wife dumbstruck by a man so handsome<sup>27</sup>; she shrieks through her nose when two breeding flies alight on her upper lip.

**[T]he small gilded fly  
Does lecher in my sight.  
Let copulation thrive;  
— William Shakespeare**

**TV 4 REPORTER:** Now, we're live again, in Wilson, Kansas, where, as you can see behind me, the street is crowded with protestors on all sides of a lot of different fences. And tensions are rising. It's amazing that one man could cause so much fear, anger even hostility as protesters clash over stances ranging from religion to politics to sexuality to race and fashion.

**THE POET JIRI CĚCH:** Those many years you sat at your bedroom window studying each weightless corpse of flies dead after a long, futile hammering against glass: gate between heaven and earth, let's call it — striving toward there from here, and the glass though liquid refusing to bend or break. I know you loved more, as I do, those shattered wings and dusty eyes than the still-dewy scutellum of the young. I know you would love, too, more dearly than my dearest lovers my aging soul loveless witness to human misery and succor and clinging to gods neither compassionate nor impartial nor smarter than some women, you, beloved, Emily, dear, heart.

**TV 4 REPORTER:** Yes, you heard right. *Fashion!* As you can see, the group calling themselves The, uh, Cool Extreme is, at this very instant in time, involved in what can only be called a screaming match with The Uncool Militants. And as you can see by our exclusive coverage here in Wilson now, it's basically a battle between people who wear black and people who wear, uh, somewhat dingy shades of pastels and earth tones. *[looks at her dress]* I seem to be wearing blue.

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<sup>26</sup> The memory of it hereafter the conductor's baton that will start Husband singing Jesus songs, especially in the shower.

<sup>27</sup> Handsomeness hereafter Wife's image of Adam before the Fall from Grace, and sure, if God must manifest in flesh then He would be more beautiful than Gabriel, wouldn't he, no matter how many flies He swats, maniacally, upon reentering the hotel room, not "God," of course, but "His Handsomeness."

## Ground Zero...

I last heard from my long lost North African lover in a message left on my answering machine. He said, awkwardly, the years having devoured as much of his English as his life, “My baby. I am in Kansas and I think of you and our nice days in Paris still. Please call me at the number of my friend. I would like again one night like in Paris when first we had the love.” After I summoned the courage to call, the phone only rang and rang and rang and rang and rang.

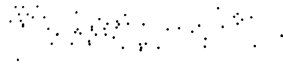
That was yesterday.

I did not try again.

*What matter of life is this? My butter churned to wings, to black legs unfolding under my indigo gown. And now I see what it was to be blind, to only suckle without view of my ascendancy.*

## THE FIRST CHILL INSTRUCTS THE FLY

of its imminent dying. This, too, recorded in nucleic acids: Words in the Book of Life. The warning bell tolls, signals the fly to flee. But there’s no place to go. The sun is setting. And it will die tomorrow anyway, having laid its eggs in the she-bear’s wound, nothing more to contribute to this marvelous World. And, yes, what marvels here now vanishing: blood of maple sweet and dust of pollen sprung from plants that smell of rotting meat. Electric storm! Magnetic sun! What glory there is to witness the dance! To dance this one reel before the melody stutters and the musicians at last and ever lay down their reeds and horns.



## The Movie You’ve Been Waiting For

Jirí Cêch walks into town, spurs jingling, coat flapping like a black flag in the wind. He’s so fucking tired of this Red State road, dust rising under his boot heels, harmonica wailing from some tarpapered rooftop melting in heat. He says, “No one ever tells you how hot it will be, how it will feel like your eyeballs are melting in their sockets, your tongue swelling fat and purple as an eggplant shoved down your throat, your skin sloughing like asps.” He wants to stop. Wants to maybe take a seat on the front steps of the Wilson Opera House, light up a cigarette, think about a girl he once knew, years ago, before he was born: the way her blue ribbon caught wind and light and life woven like a double helix around her black curls, fair neck: the way her critical eyes looked through you into a future entirely cleansed of

*The wish is realized. Let a new covenant issue forth like vomit from the mouths of maggots, for we are made in the image of our God. His omnipotence shines in our blue flesh.*



her laughter: the way her little wave and words – *auf wiedersehen!* – ascended from the flue of history and lodged under the wing of a bluebottle fly en route to suppurating meat: the way the fly suckled, trees leaned, soil inhaled rain...

But there's no stopping now.

Everyone is waiting.

Terror becomes them.

For what power do they possess but their sad bloated fear?



**Life, when all is said, is a knacker's yard, wherein the Devourer of today becomes the devoured of tomorrow.**  
— Jean Henri Fabre<sup>28</sup>

**TV 4 REPORTER:** *[breathless]* Now, we are live right now in Wilson with this late-breaking, exclusive report on what will likely be, uh, the biggest story of the year, if not, uh, the century! As you can see behind me, uh, uh, all hell is breaking loose as opposing groups come head to head on virtually all of the, uh, all of the hot-button issues facing us on the political horizon today, right, uh, now, and, oh, oh, speaking of horizons! If you look just beyond the sign that reads, "I HATE EVERYTHING" you can catch a glimpse of Jiri Cech who as one frightened resident said, is, uh, *[reading from notes]* "like the pied-piper of protestors, calling all the rats into our village." Now, we don't know for sure if Cech's arrival is, uh, really, uh, the cause of all this, this, disturbing unrest, but what I *can* tell you is that...uh... uh... Wait a minute. Just a minute, please. I'm getting a signal from...uh...there's a noise...uh...oh!...noise?

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<sup>28</sup> And I was nothing more than a footnote, unread, on a page in the history of a world before me and after me, one parasite on one Saprinus grub that feeds on one maggot that feeds on one human that feeds on one planet in a solar system only one of 100 billion in a galaxy only one of 125 billion in a universe that may be only one of many or none at all.



### Zero...

After wine and hashish and unsatisfying sex, I asked my lover what, exactly, he studied all day, why before eating he washed his hands obsessively, scrubbing with a stiff-bristled brush until his fingers nearly bled. He sat silent a long while, then brought out a small briefcase full of glass vials. In the vials were bluebottle flies, pupae, maggots, eggs. And he said:

**If thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses...shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are.**

—Exodus

### WHEN THE GROUND REACHES A CERTAIN TEMPERATURE

a new generation of flies<sup>29</sup> hammers through their brown papery coffins and crawls out of dirt. A haunting silence precedes ascension: time, a magnificent rancid kingdom of the dead. Nadir to apex, the final trinity: Maggot, Pupa, Fly. And oh oh what ravaged splendor awaits them! And oh oh how they hum in exultation!

**The fly sat upon the axel-tree of the chariot-wheel and said,  
What a dust do I raise!**

—Aesop

<sup>29</sup> And what a coincidence, isn't it, that just as I finish writing this story my husband starts receiving neo-Nazi emails at his office from some rabble in Germany who write that "multikulturalism is multikriminalism" and "Europe must deport Lebanese children and teens" and "Augen Auf! ya ya! Augen Auf!" and it makes me want to brush my teeth till my gums bleed.

It is a little late,  
 O my pretty  
 insects! Yes, it  
 is a little late.  
 Night descends:  
 last glimpse of  
 moon in that  
 persistent void.  
 Should we die  
 before the Sun's  
 tonic revives our  
 stiffening wings,  
 let us not be  
 forgotten! Dear  
 Mother of Life  
 and Egg! Fa-  
 ther of Death  
 and Seed! Let  
 our lust for living  
 manifest in a  
 Heaven of  
 endless death  
 and rot!

*Cloud of flies, cloud of dust, cloud of fire, over your head as you approach the end of another Bohemia.*

“Fuck,” says Jiri Cech, watching people flee from him, their personal Beelzebub,<sup>30</sup>  
 “I guess this means my concert is cancelled.”

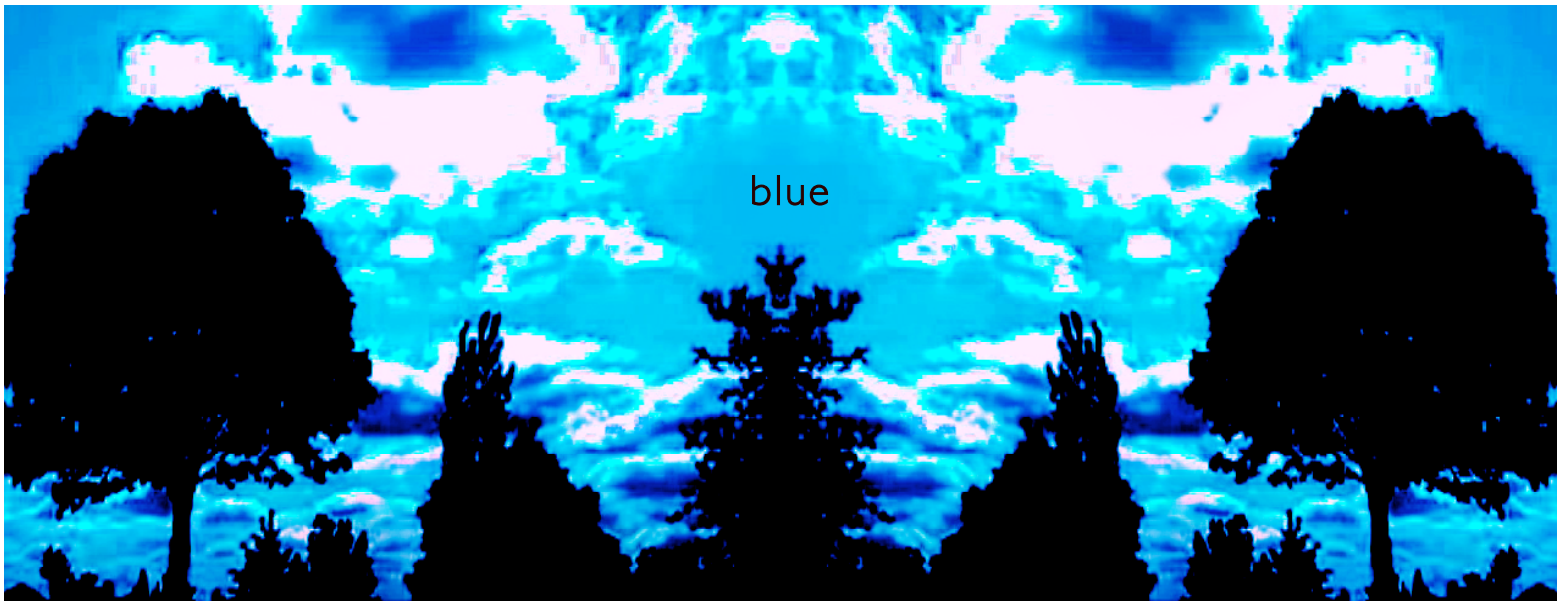
and then  
 There interposed a fly,  
 With blue, uncertain, stumbling  
 buzz,



### FLY FLYING FROM THE FUTURE TOO SLOW

it realizes too late. Realizes, above all things above all else, what *it* is: no more and no less than a small gap in the world, one gap of infinite gaps, holy hole in absence as in being, belly sheen an everlasting memory in DNA that will not veer from hungry form, unlike that soft bipedal putrescent beast below, guts laid open, writhing, that knows and is startled by the last vision of all visions – fly and sky – and their shared utterable peculiarity:

*And then the windows failed, and then  
 I could not see to see.*



<sup>30</sup> Translation: “lord of the flies”

...

My foreign lover had drunk so much wine that night, smoked so much hash that he slid to the floor, propped up by the white wall. His head nodded like a junkie's. His snore rose like a death rattle from his slow-heaving chest. A fly landed on his pretty brown cheek and he jerked awake. Gazed at me from deep inside his sleepy stupor. Sadly smiled. Said, "My baby, oh my god, what we do with the life." And fell asleep. We were so young then.

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<sup>31</sup> The she-bear sits on the zenith of the highest hill above this placid verdant valley. Her wounded paw healed long ago: no crust of scab marks it, no pink scar. Healthy bear, she will live many years and die without pain. But now, here, in this redolent Eden, she sways, eyes heavy-lidded to what must be the music of setting sun, rising moon and night wind thick with extravagant scent and chortling things. What is she thinking, there on the hill still warm from late summer's day? That ripening ruby red sun-bleed, what is it she loves so about its final, seamless glow?

NOTES:

1. The first sentence or phrase of each “Fly Bible” passage (black marginalia) is appropriated from Jean Henri Fabre’s 1920 book, “The Life of a Fly.”
2. Text inserts in blue are from Emily Dickinson’s poetry and correspondence. The obvious exception is the blue dedication in “How To Masturbate”.