

The Woman Who Could Read  
the Minds of Dogs

LESLIE SCALAPINO 

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THE WOMAN WHO  
COULD READ THE  
MINDS OF DOGS

Leslie Scalapino

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Drawing by Valerie Hardy

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hmmmm \_\_\_\_\_

*This poem is dedicated to the Dog-Woman  
who appeared to me in a series of dreams.*

[The following is one poem. The segments should  
be read in the order in which they are arranged.]





Consider certain emotions such as falling asleep, I said,

(especially when one is standing on one's feet), as being similar to fear, or anger, or fainting. *I do.* I feel sleep in me is induced by blood forced into veins of my brain. I can't focus. My tongue is numb and so large it is like the long tongue of a calf or the tongue of a goat or of a sheep. What's more, I bleat. Yes. In private, in bed, at night, with my head turned sideways on the pillow. No wonder I say that I *love* to sleep.

## Dog

Suppose I *was* thinking something, say, not knowing I was thinking it,  
one day when I saw this dog before a house on the sidewalk, he  
not really sidling toward me, but more like loping sideways?  
Well, his tongue was lolling. And he was whining the way human heads  
loll forward in sleep and whinny. Something so hesitant and low  
More so, because it was a nasal sound, a neigh, the way  
*we* neigh, not thinking, when we are nervously mimicking a horse.  
So I mimicked him, the dog, right back. Really I was being flippant  
by pretending to gallop like that ; and all the while not moving,  
and letting my tongue slip forward between my lips, really laughing.

I know I am sick (someone will say to you) when all I can eat

I know I am sick (someone will say to you) when all I can eat is something sweet. Also I sweat. Foods like fruits, eggs, or meat, are things I can't eat. Furthermore, my disease is like rabies. I can't swallow. I am obsequious, and, on the other hand, I fawn so easily on others, i.e., a man or a dog, that dogs will be led by me, silently; for instance by my casting them a blank, although a soft, look. Certainly. For the dog and I, I'll say this at least ( here the person speaking to you purses his lips ), do *yearn* for each other .

Isn't it interesting how a woman like me  
pursues in man after man

the same face or even the same foot or hand. Like the man who loved a woman for her sheared hair. Sure. Loved her, he said, because she was like a hyena. Or, like a mongrel or like a short-haired dog. i.e. When in bed, the man said, while calling her pet names by whistling, he liked to nip her with his lips. And once, during intercourse, when he told her what he would like most from her, the man said facetiously: I want you to say the word yip, as in the yelp of a young dog.

Raising the hand in a certain way to the head

Weeks later, one day when I *did* see the man whom I kept thinking I had been seeing everywhere (think of me staring at men to see if they had the same walk and the same hair as he had), I noticed that the nod that he directed to me (as he passed me on the sidewalk with a woman with him) was like the bob of a head buoyed up, but swept along so that he seemed to be swooning. Literally. So I looked back, after walking a block or so, to see his back. And, remembering the provokingly sullen look on the face of the woman he was with (as if she had him on a leash), I wanted to put my fingers between my lips; so that, by pretending to be sullen and by pulling my lip down into a grimace, I would actually be saluting him (in the sense of someone making a gesture such as raising the hand in a certain way to the head ) .

so slowly, up and down, the way a woman's breasts will move

“No, it was not *him* whom I liked”, admitted a woman to me, about a man who used to trail her as she was leaving her house (even when she was taking a walk with another man).

“But once”, she said, “the man whom I was with and I, out on a walk together, outdistanced the one who followed me by circling the block (in order to see him from behind). We saw him, unaware of us staring at him, simply raise his hands (up to his chest) and, at the spot (I thought, if he were I) where my breasts would be, cup the air with his hands. Just seeing him”, the woman confessed, “moving his hands so slowly, up and down, the way a woman's breasts will move as she walks (as if she were loping in slow motion), made me imagine, suddenly, that I was seeing myself for the last time”.

I for one, a man will say (haven't we heard *this* before)

I for one, a man will say (haven't we heard *this* before)  
will dress a woman to make her look like she's fourteen.  
I mean that I want a woman to look pubescent (says the man),  
but on the other hand, what really appeals to me about her  
is the sagging of her breasts, say, inside the dress  
which I pick out for her. Or, I confess that it is  
the circles around her eyes which I find so compelling.  
Yes. Only at first sight do I imagine her to be fourteen.  
But afterwards, at least for me, it is her face that I see, me  
waking up at night and stammering out the words. . she, she.

She

She, remembering him a year later, one night, in the dark, alone, said to herself that what she liked about him was the way he lifted his nose. How he nuzzled the air, albeit not touching her (she said this aloud to herself in bed). “How he”, she said, “opening his mouth and keeping his eyes on me, seemed to imply uttering a moan”. And suddenly thinking of his lifted muzzle, like that of a dog with its mouth open, she knew why she, over a year later lying alone at night in her bed in the dark, was forced to emit her own sound. It was a laugh. Sure. Albeit *rapped out* like a bark. Sharp and short.



Haven't I said that part of having intercourse

Haven't I said that part of having intercourse  
with anyone, is loving them when they are weak,  
When they can't speak. When a woman, say, mews  
(while being flipped over on her belly by a man) i.e.  
if she utters some sound sort of like what a doll  
makes, when *it's* flipped forward. What I mean by this  
is: her eyelids, after flying open with her head  
flipped back, will drop shut when her head is forward.  
And in falsetto (we might even say mawkishly),  
the woman's mouth makes a sound like the word Mama.

How can I help myself, as one woman said to me about wanting to have intercourse with strange men, from thinking of a man

How can I help myself, as one woman said to me about wanting to have intercourse with strange men, from thinking of a man (someone whom I don't know) as being like a seal. I mean I see a man (in a crowd such as a theatre) as having the body of a seal in the way a man would, say, be in bed with someone, kissing and barking, which is the way a seal will bark and leap on his partly-fused hind limbs. Yes. Am I not bound, I guess, (I say to myself) to regard him tenderly, to concentrate on the man's trunk instead of his face, which in this case, is so impassive. Seriously, I am fascinated by the way a seal moves.

So I decided watching an *old* woman like her, who could rise so easily

So I decided watching an *old* woman like her, who could rise so easily  
on her hind legs, on her haunches, from a chair at a party  
in order to prance in front of a whole room full of people  
(but all the while surely and deftly singling out, like a sheep dog,  
a single young man) that women can also be satyrs. So erect.  
With even the same look on her face which I saw one day, later,  
as she passed me on the street as she was hurrying forward, rearing,  
and not seeing me. So women do too wheel, I thought,  
on the balls of their pelvis with a shock of hair standing out from  
their foreheads, and only the muscles of their haunches appearing to move.

(She, having arrived at my house the night before, with the man whom neither she nor I knew, said this about herself on the same morning on which I was moving out of my house) .

Thinking about it *now*, much later, remembering how, while I walked in and out, carrying the furniture out, she, a woman whom I knew, sat on somebody's lap and kissed him, I remember that (earlier in the morning) she had said that she was a vagabond. This was when she was standing in the kitchen, with her hands clutching the neck of her see-thru nightgown. (She, having arrived at my house the night before, with the man whom neither she nor I knew, said this about herself on the same morning on which I was moving out of my house) . Well, I removed all of the furniture, piece by piece, *anyway* (in fact, later I even said that I had all but "taken them out from under them", because I had to move) , except of course for the last piece: the sofa on which they sat. I left that .

“Well”, drawled a woman after a party during which someone else, for an entire evening, had seemed

(merely by the look on his face) to circle the other people like a fierce hunting dog, “I also once, after not talking to anyone for two weeks” (the woman continued her sentence) “found myself singling people out (as if I were scenting them). I did so”, she said, “in the same way that a dog will sniff at the hind quarters of another dog”. And, as she herself was snickering at this, I thought, carrying her idea a step further: she had actually *snapped* at the chance to finish her story.

Let me explain what I mean by saying I think about a man  
( by simply repeating, really, what has been said already  
by a man: “What can one *do* with beauty? It’s there, it hurts”)

Let me explain what I mean by saying I think about a man  
( by simply repeating, really, what has been said already  
by a man: “What can one *do* with beauty? It’s there, it hurts”)  
as being like a baboon. Whatever we usually say  
about the way we think about baboons, i.e. *per se* ;  
in undressing a man (such as sometimes when I see him  
for the first time, in public, on the street ),  
I undress him simply by thinking about the way he walks  
as being the way a baboon walks (slowly) on his hind legs  
with his tail held erect, with his buttocks (as a man’s  
are) bald (a man whom one looks back to see) and hair  
on the rest of his body, and emitting an alarm like a  
dog’s bark. So far, the idea of the dog’s bark is sim-  
ply the way I have found to describe a man’s sounds .

a woman who had been dressed by someone, in the same way that

“The second to the last time that I saw her”, said a man to me about the woman who, after not seeing him for a month or two, retrieved one of her dresses, by banging on the door of his house, “I thought that she would split the door open. Since she had wanted the dress so badly”, the man said, “later, when I saw her for the *last* time, one day, on the street, swaying toward me (she was moving so rapidly in the dress, with it slung around her, that for me, standing still and looking at her, it looked like she were running thru me), I thought to myself that now I was seeing a woman who had been dressed by someone, in the same way that an oyster will cover the irritant in him by coating it over and over”.

## Seeing the Scenery

Satisfied this morning because I saw myself  
(for the first time) in the mirror as a mountain. I mean by this  
I “saw the scenery” in myself. Whereas I had pores  
and veins and a brain, I was a mountain in the same way  
one has boulders or trees. How would this explain, I wondered,  
whatever emotions such as affection, cruelty or indifference I feel?  
And I knew no matter how careful one is,  
pebbles and grains *will be* modified put in a human form.



As Rimbaud said, I thought today sitting in the library  
absentmindedly leafing through a book on the habits of birds,

As Rimbaud said, I thought today sitting in the library  
absentmindedly leafing through a book on the habits of birds,  
isn't the way we find happiness precisely by losing our senses  
(oversimplified, of course. I was being facetious.) But still,  
I can see imitating a bird's call such as that of the fledgling  
of a goose or a swan (here I referred to the book) by forcing  
myself into a swoon. And, by way of finishing the thought, I,  
for the sake of appearances, since there were people sitting  
in the chairs around me, merely sagged forward in my seat and  
whistled as if I were asleep. Ssss, it came out, sort of a hiss,  
like the noise of a goose. So, almost before I knew it,  
I followed this by a low and guttural cough (was it goose again?)  
and leaned forward simply to expel some phlegm. Then quickly  
I took a glance around before I wiped my mouth. Feeling weary.

mira                      culously

Only when I walked out onto the diving board at a swimming pool, did I notice that a woman in front of me, standing ready to dive off the tip of the board, shot me one of her side-long glances, her lips, I noted, parted to show a line of teeth, and her hair shaggy. Well, I got up very close to her, crowding her a little before she dived off the board, I'm afraid. And then I followed her, diving in order to come up at the same spot (at least so I thought). Poor me. I was deluded, to be bursting up out of the water that way, with my jaws clenched (as if already I had my teeth into her). And she, snout now dripping water, miraculously bobbed up further away (naturally), as if taunting me.

By giving me such a look before settling down to her food, she forced me to see (what I would otherwise not have noticed):

By giving me such a look before settling down to her food, she forced me to see (what I would otherwise not have noticed): she was not seventeen or so. She was much older, was lean, had shaggier hair than mine, and now, sitting in a booth next to mine in a restaurant, was hunched over a glass of milk. Well, before I knew it (tho by this time, I had glanced at her), she put her snout down into her glass (I suppose she *was* teasing me, saying slyly that she was not afraid if necessary to get down on all fours in front of me) and began dipping her milk up with her tongue. Splash. Splash. the milk went. Now I knew she wasn't concerned about me at all; I thought this as she lapped the milk from her glass and spots of the milk were dashed on the seats and her own lap and clung to her lips.

the roots of her teeth. Her incisors. Her canines. And tho she did

No, it was *not* her whom I saw (a woman I know) passing me looking through me on the street one day. They had the same head. However, the one I saw was at least twenty years older: she had white hair. And, as she hurried past me, with her jaw thrust forward, I saw, since she had also lifted her lip (drawn it way back on her gums), the roots of her teeth. Her incisors. Her canines. And tho she did not look at me (no, as I say, she was hurrying), nevertheless, before she turned the corner, there was time for her to insolently and casually (and *this* is what hurts), stick out her tongue at me. Going so far as to, head thrown back, hold the tongue out a long time.

before releasing me) *I wish that I could make you yelp just once*

How was I to know that the woman, seated next to me on the bus, would, when the bus lurched, just appear to lose her balance, and, as if to keep herself from swaying, would take hold of my arm like that with her hand, so that, pressing me very hard between her finger and thumb, she actually pinched my arm. What pain. However, I believed (looking at her sideways, and seeing only that her lips were parted slightly, with her snout breathing softly in and out) that during the two to three minutes in which this pain lasted, far from her being simply mean to me, she was actually saying (or at least I imagined so from the length of time that she lingered over my arm before releasing me) *I wish that I could make you yelp just once* .

Let me say (and, as one man said about not being afraid

Let me say (and, as one man said about not being afraid of clichés, I will try not to be either) that one day, while I was listening to a record of a violin sonata (and, since I was feeling “high-strung”, I was holding a cigarette between my fingers), I was reminded by the sound of the violin bows, of the dipping of a series of birds. Anyway, I began to imitate this dipping and soaring motion (in the air), by using my own hands. In and out I made my hands flash and dip (I began by moving them slowly); with the cigarette caught between my fingers, flashing and dipping also. And, finally, taking the cigarette with one hand (as if by way of finishing the movement), I simply *lit* my left hand, by holding the tip of the cigarette to it .

EPILOGUE:

anemone

“About the night on which a man said he would spend a 100 dollars on me”, a woman described, (and he did use up most of it simply on taxi fares), “I was able to describe my feelings:

“About the night on which a man said he would spend a 100 dollars on me”, a woman described, (and he did use up most of it simply on taxi fares), “I was able to describe my feelings: by saying it was like being an insect who puts its feelers out into the flowers of a plant, and sucks from them, as we were (sucking) from the restaurants and bars of the city to which the taxi took us. All night we were surrounded by lights. As I lay back inside the taxi, just waiting for the man to make arrangements for me (in regard to *that* part of my feeling, I would describe the taxi as being more like a buoy), I had the feeling (thru-out it) of rising slowly, and of floating along side particular spots in the city. By morning, naturally, I was sated”.



“Having her under me”, the man said, “in bed, and remembering

“Having her under me”, the man said, “in bed, and remembering what she had said about going to bed once with a movie actor, I found that I wanted to imagine him (like looking into a mirror, etc.), as I made love to her. So, as her face lay under me, and I thought of her as a plant under me which only moves on a stem, her legs seemed to me to be like the stamens of the plant, i.e. It was the male part of her which attracted me, drew me in, literally, stirring against my legs, and holding me too, as I parted her labia, and finally gently entered her female part ”.

“One night, running after her thru the park”, the man said to me  
(and he kept using the word “her”, tho he was actually referring to me)

“One night, running after her thru the park”, the man said to me  
(and he kept using the word “her”, tho he was actually referring to me)  
 , “I found, that the deeper I followed her into the park  
(aware, having just left my bed, — after finding that she had left me, —  
and gone out looking for her, that the passers-by had begun to stare,  
since I was calling her name) ; far from seeming  
to lose contact with my bed in my room, I was like a water lily”,  
he said, (smiling at me), “or a lotus, with a stem attached deep in  
the bed of a lake. Meanwhile, I was running (altho it seemed like  
floating) with my head thrown back, and calling out very loudly LESLIE”.

we put our heads into the windows of a car which was passing, and,

One woman (I heard about this several years later) said :  
“being a prostitute” (this was said, by-the-way ,  
after her telling about approaching with 6 or so other women  
2 men in a car, on a street at 3 am in the city ) ;  
“means simply coming out of the hotels and streets of the city  
to the car (which is waiting with the men in it) in the same way  
that, say, the feelers of an anemone, (while being attached  
at the base to the anemone) in order to feed it, float out  
further and further into the water which encircles it. So it was:  
we put our heads into the windows of a car which was passing, and,  
putting our arms around the necks of the men, began kissing them”.

About the old woman who had propositioned him after riding next to him on a bus for fifteen hours (“she wanted me”,

About the old woman who had propositioned him after riding next to him on a bus for fifteen hours (“she wanted me”, he said, “to get off the bus with her and rent a hotel room for an hour during our stop-over”) ; he remembered : “Afterwards, (as the bus began to wind through the city) I had fresh in my mind the memory of me pressing her with my body up against the wall in the hotel room . How her limbs, under my (really gentle) pressure, seemed to grow loose, as if the limbs were just naturally spreading out from the mouth of her body in order simply to let me in”.

(in order, he said, each time he revolved, to spit on the body

He, referring to the incident which occurred when he was a boy riding a bicycle around and around a block in the city, (in order, he said, each time he revolved, to spit on the body of the drunk who was lying on the sidewalk) said: “I felt not as if *I* were floating (since I was hardly pushing the pedals of the bicycle) but, rather, that the surface of the *world* was whirling. There was the man. Who was curled up in the center. And he, since he was at the hub of my circuit, probably saw me, as I leaned over him over and over to spit on him, as being simply like, say, the shoots of a plant, e.g. like shoots of the grass as it flashed over him (since he was in the center of the world) i.e. First he would see me. Then the sky. Then me”.

Like the woman who had described once (altho *she* was old)  
about how she would walk thru her house all day naked  
(and, she added: that, after all, she figured that she'd be  
in the dark for a long time afterwards); I thought one night,

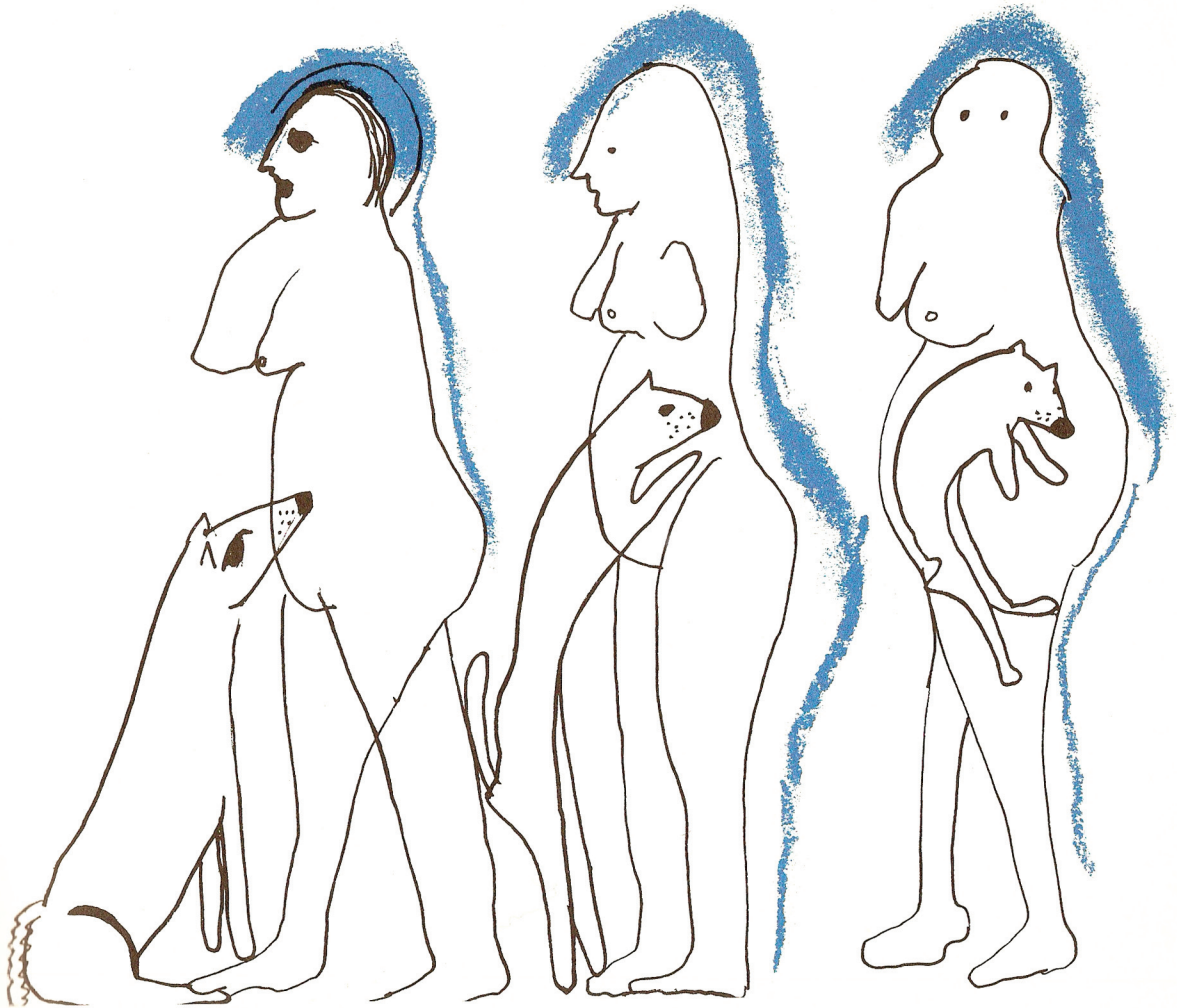
Like the woman who had described once (altho *she* was old)  
about how she would walk thru her house all day naked  
(and, she added: that, after all, she figured that she'd be  
in the dark for a long time afterwards); I thought one night,  
how I was like her — in that I was lying restlessly on my bed ,  
outside the covers , (only I was wearing a see-thru nightgown),  
in the way that a fish, say, rests on the bed of a lake:  
as if it were about to swim up into the dark water above the bed.

from side to side — like a fish weaving in and out of the limbs  
of plants in the water (this was the way she moved

Let me explain what I mean by saying I thought about someone  
(whom I saw ahead of me on the street one day) as looking like  
she were wagging her tail in the way someone will sway  
from side to side — like a fish weaving in and out of the limbs  
of plants in the water (this was the way she moved  
thru the people ahead of me on the street) . Since her arms ,  
(as they were pressed to her sides), looked like the fins  
of the fish, and her head was lifted so she could “follow her nose”,  
she seemed to be swimming ahead as if she had a hook in her mouth .









# The Woman Who Could Read the Minds of Dogs

[The following is one poem. The segments should  
be read in the order in which they are arranged.]



on itself. His red hair was standing up) “I just began to weep”.

Much later, after I had ceased to know the man who had once described to me how , driving his new car with its top down around and around the block (with his 1st wife in the car — he said that he had been downtown with her drinking in a bar) , while he was looking for the entrance to the hotel parking lot , he had collided, or rather, had grazed the sides of 3 parked cars ; as I said, it was much later when I was standing on the jetty of a marina and watching a man standing up in a motor boat, while he turned it around and around in circles. “Well”, (I remembered the man I had known saying about himself — as I watched the man in the motor boat turning it slowly on itself. His red hair was standing up) “I just began to weep”.

“while we were taking turns driving all night one night in the car

“My father”, (the man continued, telling me about how his father, while travelling in Europe one year with him and his brothers , had picked up a woman in one of the casinos) “had insisted on having her with us in the car. So, (we were unable to resist this — since she was such a lush herself), my brothers and I”, he said, “while we were taking turns driving all night one night in the car would tell her that we had to stop for us to drink out of the whisky bottle that we kept in our trunk. Well, I won’t forget how she, watching us passing the bottle between us, while we were standing beside the car (but we were just putting it up to our lips) was both afraid (since we were driving) and just eager for a drink”.

to the toilet or to some bar , and , (because she was drinking)

“About the woman whom my father”, the man said, “had insisted on picking up at one of the casinos (while we were driving in Europe): of course, she was constantly wanting to get out of the car to go to the toilet or to some bar , and , (because she was drinking) once, when we were driving around the curves in the mountains , she kept wanting to use my father’s felt pen on the windows — telling us, ‘I am drawing the mountains’, but, (because the car was moving), I told my father she was just making a mess on the window”.

## Cicada

“For once, while we were driving in the car with her (of course, my father ended up taking her with us to Mexico) , the woman (when we were driving in the desert, at least. It was 6 a.m.) , said very little; — as she seemed to be listening to the sound, like a high-pitched whine, (we must have been moving at 70 m.p.h.) made by millions of cicadas in the bushes by the highway. Well, so, my father said that in the hotel, later, she woke up in bed (obviously she had been dreaming) and said that she had had ‘one of them’, a cicada, in her mouth so that she was pressing it with her tongue and the roof of her mouth to make the sound come out (saying to him as she woke up ‘I was spitting its innards out’)”.



## The Woman Who Could Read The Minds Of Dogs

No, I was not thinking about the woman whom I had heard about once who could read the minds of dogs (as I remember, she even diagnosed dogs' illnesses), once when I passed a man on the sidewalk downtown (he was dancing, moving around and around in circles, to the music that was piped out of a bullhorn in front of the door of a music store);

but (maybe because of the way he pulled his neck back — with his shoulders heaving in time to the music — which is the way a dog bites down on a stick when it's being yanked out of his mouth) ,

I immediately had the idea that the man was hungry, undoubtedly feeling in me my own shrunken belly (since I had not eaten all day) .

so that I said to the person I was with that I was reminded of me ,

What the man whom we saw (he looked like a derelict) wanted (we didn't know him, of course) running like that alongside the car we were in (we were in downtown traffic — he seemed to want in with us, the way he was running beside us, without a word — so that I said to the person I was with that I was reminded of me , having refused to talk until I was three); I don't know.

However, I said he was like the woman who let her hair grow (I was thinking about it later), while she was living in a jungle backwater , and clawed and bit when they wanted to force her onto the aeroplane. So that they left her (just like we left him, standing worn out in the street, looking after us) with her hair standing up because of the wind.

by the time he reached Bombay, we were to have intersected with him.

“One of the memories that I have of my mother,” the man said ,  
“(I was young then) was that my father had asked her to come ,  
with my brothers and me , by train from Calcutta so that  
by the time he reached Bombay, we were to have intersected with him.  
Well, (by the way, I don’t remember that my mother ever  
said much to us. We were not with her often) on the way  
to the train station with her (our car, because there were so .  
many beggars in the streets in the way, was constantly slowed down),  
my mother (despite our driver’s instructions not to) insisted on  
dropping a paper bag that had a sandwich in it out of the window  
of the car. Whereupon,” the man said, “I saw one beggar tear open  
the bag, open the sandwich that was in it and toss the bread away” .

in my mouth with her fingers, saying to me, with each mouth-

“My seat”, the man said, “being by the window up near the wing of the aeroplane (we were on our way — this was when I was 17 — up from Khartoum to Cairo), my mother (my father had with him one of his underlings whom I kept seeing putting his hand on her back or on the nape of her neck as she leaned back — she said nothing to him) had to lean over me to look out the window . So, while we were being served hors d’oeuvres (and she kept saying to me, over and over, to look at this or that crag or rock on the desert, as we were flying over it) she would put hors d’oeuvres in my mouth with her fingers, saying to me, with each mouthful of crust with meat inside it, “I want you to suck on it , as if you were sucking the blood from a rock, drop by drop”

— so it was seven years after she'd been killed — since I was 29)''

In the dream, (I had this dream I think 6 years or so ago  
— so it was seven years after she'd been killed — since I was 29)''  
said the man, "I imagined that I saw my mother in the casket  
(as, in real life, the lid had been closed, I did not see her then).  
So, looking in, it seemed (this is so typical of all dreams)  
that she was herself but covered with a chitinous shell, like that  
of an insect such as, say, a beetle, but with wings where her arms  
had been (or rather, *were*, since they were both arms and wings).  
— I wanted (and for me, this is the center of the dream)  
to split the chitin on her by tearing it open with my hands and  
peeling it off of her. But I could not do so without hurting her ''.

## Foal

“During 52 hours of labor”, (a woman told this story to me),  
“the foetus in me — it was by that time so large, that it seemed  
to be bigger than for a human birth — kicked me so hard”, she said,  
“that I thought that it was something else: that it was a foal  
which was inside me and was kicking me with its four legs.  
It could not unfold them. Nor could I push it out. Finally ,  
obviously, as it would not come out of me in the other way , it  
just had to be taken out of me by force by them by caesarean ”.

mu seum

And it was in Mozambique, I said, where we saw — I was about 13 — (and he, a boy whom we had met recently at our hotel, who I remember was with me, was standing next to me when we were looking at that glass case, was 17) the dead fawns in the museum. Some of them had 6 legs. He said to me to look at that one that had 2 heads : it had horns just appearing on its heads. All of the fawns had the same face. He had me put my hands on the glass of the case .

so obviously I was irritated by it — I mean seeing this dog

“We were in a hurry (my wife”, the man said, — “This was my 2nd wife — had wanted me to return home for something so we were late); so obviously I was irritated by it — I mean seeing this dog just standing (actually we had seen it earlier too) in the center of the street and holding up traffic; and at the sound of the honking pacing on the center line or in front of a car and looking so eager. It had been doing this for hours, I said to her. So, (I don’t like it when I do this sort of thing in public) I simply rolled down the window and swore at the dog”.



“Oddly”, the man said, “( — for she used to be practically mute —

“Oddly”, the man said, “( — for she used to be practically mute —  
at least with me) what I guess I liked best about her —  
my 2nd wife — was the story, or the odd sense I got from it  
about her : when she was 17 (I guess she got this  
from her father — he went fishing) she dreamed about having  
a fly (like the ones, she said to me that are used as bait  
for a fish, as it was made out of silk feathers and had  
a hook on it) fly (while she was sleeping) up thru her nostril.  
It went on up into her head. And, on waking, — I say —  
she still had it in her . Obviously, the sense that I have of  
this story is, for one, that she would not have put it this way”

it was one he had had about his 2nd wife — “I made her ,

“In this dream that I had about her”, the man said, —  
it was one he had had about his 2nd wife — “I made her ,  
before we went to bed at night (this was in the dream,  
I mean) open her mouth (it seemed that she would  
do what I wanted her to) and had her swallow a bell  
like the kind that one would put around the cat’s neck .  
Well, hours later, (I had been sleeping so it was like a  
dream inside a dream) I heard the bell, as, obviously  
she had gotten up out of our bed ; I heard her go to the  
hall door , before I woke up getting up out of the bed”

Ni jin sky

According to Madame Nijinsky , Nijinsky prepared his own costume in order to dance in ‘‘L’Apres-midi d’un Faune’’ . His costume consisted of tights into which he had to be sewn. With flat curling horns on his head, his ears elongated with flesh-coloured wax (so that they appeared to be pointed like a horse’s), he looked like the half-beast adolescent faun he was supposed to be

So that I said I had read that in *one* country —

where rites of passage connected with magic were conducted —  
if somebody died (whether from old age or from an accident)  
they thought it just simpler to sew up the lips of the corpse  
so that if its name were called , it could not answer .  
According to this, cats (I continued) could bring them back.  
Anyone calling a dead cat in an alley at night, it was said,  
would *know* that the sound that came from the alley  
was the sound of the one who'd been killed .

“this was before she knew she was carrying our child)

“We were in the West Indies , (this was before my 1st wife” ,  
said the man, “ — maybe there really *is* something to their  
idea that a dog can slip into a woman’s womb  
when it wants to be born in a human form” — Obviously,  
he meant this facetiously ; “as I say”, he continued,  
“this was before she knew she was carrying our child)  
when the incident with the dog running alongside our car  
occurred. It was one of those thin, practically wild, dogs  
that hang around the run-down areas of Nassau. Oddly,  
she said that the dog was running beside her, perfectly silent.  
When she glanced out of the window and saw it , its head  
was almost level with hers — as if it were on its hind legs”.

I remember that there were kids — bands of them — of about the age of 7 or 10 or so there who would hang around the outskirts

“In Nassau” (he said, “this is where my 1st wife and I were when she was carrying our child. It was born there.)

I remember that there were kids — bands of them — of about the age of 7 or 10 or so there who would hang around the outskirts of the marketplace, say, or outside a cafe. They were beggars. My wife once — maybe she was associating their activity with the odor of fruit from the stalls of the bazaar (she had been standing waiting for me to bring around the car for her) — said the beggars were like wasps or like worker bees that were hanging around her (forcing her she said to tell them to go away) and still they wanted to fasten onto and to follow her after we were in the car”.

“It was one of the times I had taken our daughter”  
(said the man: “obviously this was after my 1st wife and I  
were separated) on an outing for the weekend to the ocean :

“It was one of the times I had taken our daughter”  
(said the man: “obviously this was after my 1st wife and I  
were separated) on an outing for the weekend to the ocean :  
Well, on one of the afternoons, I just watched her running;  
or rather, she was pacing in front of the water’s edge .  
Whenever a wave would come in, she would leap back  
(I was reminded of the way a dog or a cat  
will come down on its legs by making a twist in mid air)  
so that the waves would not reach her. Oddly, I thought  
she looked as if she were getting ready to jump over a gully ”

“Well”, (I remembered the man I had known saying about himself

Much later, after I had ceased to know the man who had once described to me how , driving his new car with its top down around and around the block (with his 1st wife in the car — he said that he had been downtown with her drinking in a bar) , while he was looking for the entrance to the hotel parking lot , he had collided, or rather, had grazed the sides of 3 parked cars ; as I said, it was much later when I was standing on the jetty of a marina and watching a man standing up in a motor boat, while he turned it around and around in circles. “Well”, (I remembered the man I had known saying about himself — as I watched the man in the motor boat turning it slowly on itself. His red hair was standing up) “I just began to weep”.





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